

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR  
WORKING GROUP MEETING #7



*Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*

2019-20 Board

September 22, 2019

*Terry Godfrey*

*Ellen Forbes*

*Lisa Ratner*

*Paula Collins*

*Sue Hermsen*

*Jean Lythcott*

*Lynne Russell*

*Karen Kalinsky*

*Ellen Smith*

*Lizzy Gardner*

*Liz Jensen*

*Myra Lessner*

Dear Mayor Filseth and City Council Members:

Re: North Ventura Comprehensive Area Plan (NVCAP)

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto supports efforts to increase the number and density of multiple-family units for all groups and income levels. We strongly urge the Council to continue to pursue a strategy of maximizing the opportunities for multiple-family housing for the North Ventura Area.

Since the 1980-95 Comprehensive Plan, the City has considered the Fry's site for housing. The subject site was then called the Maximart site. During that period, the City was facing an earlier version of the jobs-housing imbalance which has only continued to worsen.

The Council rezoned the site from CS to CS/RM-30, allowing for 30 units per acre. As with other rezonings at the time, the City allowed the property owner 15 years to replace the existing buildings with housing, and then allowed further extensions of time to continue the commercial uses.

This site has always been seen as suitable for housing, especially with such great access to bus and rail transit, as well as its proximity to shopping and services. It borders the busy Park Boulevard bike boulevard giving kids and adults easy access to schools and other Palo Alto destinations. The site remains an ideal housing and mixed-use neighborhood.

It is now past time to act. As the largest Housing Opportunity Site (in the adopted Housing Element) in town, this property is critical to achieving the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan housing goals.

With City Council support, combined with the review by the Planning and Transportation Commission, the North Ventura Group should continue to develop a housing plan for this area complete with the zoning and incentives that will maximize the housing reserved for low- and moderate-income residents.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Godfrey". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Terry Godfrey  
President, League of Women Voters Palo Alto  
tgodfrey.lww@gmail.com

cc: Planning and Transportation Commission

**From:** [Andrea Lacasia](#)  
**To:** [Council, City; North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)  
**Subject:** Palo Alto urgently needs affordable housing  
**Date:** Saturday, September 21, 2019 1:15:49 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Fry's Electronics will close in 2019, and that building and area is going through North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) process. NVCAP is a key housing area identified in our Comprehensive Plan.

Palo Alto desperately needs more low and moderate income housing and this area has been so designated in the city housing element; historical significant structures can be acknowledged with a mural or plaque.

Sincerely,

Andrea Lacasia  
Resident of Palo Alto

## CENTER FOR CONTINUING STUDY OF THE CALIFORNIA ECONOMY

385 HOMER AVENUE • PALO ALTO • CALIFORNIA • 94301

TELEPHONE: (650) 321-8550

FAX: (650) 321-5451

[www.ccsce.com](http://www.ccsce.com)

DATE: September 22, 2019

TO: **NVCAP Working Group Members and Staff**

FROM: Stephen Levy

SUBJECT: Housing in the NVCAP

I came to Palo Alto in 1963 and the center has had offices in my city since 1969. I write as a resident, someone who owns a small consultancy and a regional economist studying housing issues for regional planning agencies in California.

I write in support of developing plans for a substantial amount of housing in the area plan.

### **The Positives**

This area has always been seen as suitable for housing, with great access to jobs, shopping, services and rail and bus service. It borders the busy Park Boulevard bike boulevard giving kids and adults easy access to schools and other Palo Alto destinations. The site remains an ideal housing and mixed-use neighborhood.

It is now past time to act. As the largest Housing Opportunity Site in the adopted Housing Element, this property is critical to achieving the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan housing goals.

With City Council support, combined with the review by the Planning and Transportation Commission, the North Ventura Group should continue to develop a housing plan for this area complete with the zoning and incentives that will maximize the housing reserved for low and moderate income residents.

### **Making Local Control Work**

Many residents favor maximizing the opportunities to retain local control over housing planning. To achieve this goal, we must make maximum use of sites appropriate for housing and use a toolkit of incentives to make both market rate and BMR housing attractive to those who build housing.

Local control must mean an enabling policy and not what the country had to endure when I was growing up and local control and “quality of life” were excuses for exclusion of groups based on ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

While these prejudices do not exist in Palo Alto, there are still some who wish to use local control in a way that will fail to meet our own adopted housing goals.

### **A Cautionary Note**

Our adopted Comp Plan goal of adding 300 housing units a year is partly in response to our Regional Housing Needs Assessment target. The state Department of Housing and Urban Development (HCD) has adopted a new methodology for regions that is producing regional targets that are much higher than the previous ones by virtue of including catch up targets for overcrowding and cost burdens. The target for Southern California was three times the old target and it is likely that the Bay Area target released next year while the MNCAP is being developed will see a large increase.

The new RHNA targets make the North Ventura opportunity site that much more critical. HCD staff have made clear that removing or arbitrarily reducing housing on a site in a city’s Housing Element could make the city subject to legal action.

For all these reasons, please continue to pursue plans and goals that maximize the opportunity for Palo Alto to show that on this site local control really can produce good results for housing.