



**PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR  
Thursday November 5, 2020  
Working Group Meeting # 16**

**From:** David Meyer

**To:** North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan [NVCAP@CityofPaloAlto.org](mailto:NVCAP@CityofPaloAlto.org)

**Date:** Wed 11/4/2020 12:07 PM

Hello Palo Alto city staff colleagues,

Please find attached SV@Home's comment letter for tomorrow's joint meeting between the Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission and the NVCAP Working Group. We would greatly appreciate if this was shared as part of the public comment letter materials included in any advance packet.

As always, happy to answer any questions that you have. Thank you for all of your work on this important plan!

Sincerely,

David

**David Meyer**

**Director of Strategic Initiatives**

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November 4, 2020

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Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission  
North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) Working Group  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commissioners and NVCAP Working Group members,

On behalf of Silicon Valley at Home, we write today to provide comments on the connection between parks, open space, and affordable housing in the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP). While open space and residential development may appear on the surface to be at odds with one another, they are directly connected, and mutually reinforcing, in the areas of land use and equity.

As Palo Alto City staff have laid out clearly in their analyses, there is a relationship between potential community benefits achieved through the NVCAP and decisions related to land use and development capacity. New office and residential developments raise funds that can be used to support specific community benefits, such as the daylighting of Matadero Creek and the creation of deed-restricted affordable housing.

Additionally, increasing allowed densities and heights, especially in exchange for commitments to greater community benefits, can leave more land available for open space. The concept is simple and proven: allowing developers to build *up* in exchange for community benefits means that they don't need to build *out*, which can free up precious land that could be used for open space.

These two tables from the October 8<sup>th</sup> city staff report on NVCAP development alternatives illustrate the relationship between development capacity and community benefits:

Land Use	Existing Development	New Development		
		Alternative #1	Alternative #2	Alternative #3
Net New Housing Units	142			
<b>Realistic Potential</b>	-	<b>500</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,490</b>
Maximum Potential	-	860	1,620	2,130
New Office Commercial Sq. Ft.	744,000	8,600	33,300	126,700
New Retail Commercial Sq. Ft.	111,200	7,500	17,600	22,300
Parks and Open Space (potential approximate acres)	0	1.2	3.6	5.5
# of Potential Redevelopment Sites (Range = Realistic to Maximum Sites Turning Over)	n/a	16 to 23	37 to 41	37 to 52

Source: Santa Clara County Assessor's Office Data, Realquest.com Data, City of Palo Alto GIS Data, Accela Data, and City of Palo Alto, Planning and Development Services Staff.

Metric	Existing (Estimates)	Alternative #1	Alternative #2	Alternative #3
Below-Market Rate Housing Units (assumes 15% of total) (441 Page Mill, Rental BMR)	5	70	180	220
Residential Population	340	1,210	2,840	3,610
Office Jobs	2,460	30	110	430
Retail Jobs	200	10	30	40
Jobs/Housing Ratio (Housing Units Needed to Support New Jobs)	170	50	180	580
Parks and Open Space (acres/1,000 new residents)	0	1.0	1.3	1.5

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, City of Palo Alto GIST Data, Accela Data, and City of Palo Alto Planning and Development Services.

Access to open space and affordable housing reflect another key pillar of planning and community development: improving economic and racial equity. Earlier this week, Palo Alto took the step of opening Foothills Park to all, an important moment for the city’s equity efforts. Similarly, as the city considers potential new development and community benefits in North Ventura, equity should be placed at the center of decision-making. This means endorsing a vision for the NVCAP that not only creates great new community benefits like parks, new neighborhood-serving retail, and a possible community center, but gives more people of all incomes and abilities access to them.

This is precisely why Silicon Valley at Home supports Palo Alto going big on community and building a vision for the future in North Ventura. Only a large-scale, future-oriented vision will actually result in the numerous community benefits that Palo Alto residents want to see. And this type of vision is the only one that is inclusive of people of all incomes and abilities because it creates opportunities for a wider range of housing and affordable housing options.

**That is why we support *at a minimum* Staff Alternative #3. Not only does it create the most new housing and deed-restricted affordable housing opportunities, it also results in the largest amount of new open space and resources for other key community benefits.**

We urge the Parks and Recreation Commission and NVCAP Working Group to fully consider this connection between new residential development for people of all incomes and new open space and parks accessible to those same people in North Ventura. We also urge the Commission and Working Group to consider how these decisions can build a more equitable and accessible Palo Alto for all.

Sincerely,



David K Meyer  
 Director of Strategic Initiatives



**From:** [Rebecca Sanders](#)  
**To:** [ParkRec Commission](#); [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)  
**Subject:** Park Starved Venturans Hope You'll Recommend Parity With Other Neighborhoods  
**Date:** Thursday, November 5, 2020 10:19:04 AM

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Dear NVCAP Working Group Members and Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

I am looking forward to your conversation this evening about the naturalization of Matadero creek. I am eager to support adding as much park space to Ventura as possible.

As you deliberate please keep in mind that:

1. Ventura is deficient in neighborhood parkspace and therefore we have a chance here to max out parkland in the plan area.
2. The more massing in NVCAP the more parkland we are entitled to by the City's own law, which exceeds the standards of the Quimby Act.
3. Are there opportunities to link the creek as a park to the newly acquired AT&T parkland/Boulevard Park?
4. Where within the plan area are their opportunities to add parkland?
5. Keep in mind that building a park across ECR would be lovely, but is not practical for families with small children to be challenged with crossing ECR.
6. Finally how can we make the plan area walkable, bikeable?

Thank you for your consideration of these remarks.

Becky Sanders  
Moderator  
Ventura Neighborhood Association

**From:** [Steve Levy](#)  
**To:** [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)  
**Subject:** tonight's meeting  
**Date:** Thursday, November 5, 2020 10:33:44 AM

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Dear NVCAP and Parks and Rec commissioners,

I write in support of the letter sent by SV@Home.

As they note the staff report is clear that the amount of additional housing will affect our ability to get additional open space funded through the developments.

The higher housing alternatives have more open space.

I support expanding alternative 3 to provide more housing, more open space and more community benefits.

And also to show HCD that Palo Alto is stepping up to its housing obligations so we avoid needless and expensive lawsuits we will lose.

Stephen Levy

**From:** [Brown Jonathan](#)  
**To:** [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)  
**Subject:** NVCAP + PARKS & RECREATION JOINT MEETING THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2020  
**Date:** Thursday, November 5, 2020 6:39:25 PM

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Dear NVCAP and Parks & Rec.,

I would like to suggest that the NVCAP and re-naturalization plan consider whether the Lambert Bridge can be eliminated altogether. Lambert would dead-end on both sides of the creek. If a through road is needed, Portage can be extended to Park as part of the NVCAP development. This idea would reduce the cost of concepts 2A and 3 that are favored by creek lovers like me.

For reference, here are the remarks I read during the meeting:

I am Jonathan Brown, Chair of the Ventura Neighborhood Association's Parks Committee. We worked long and hard in conjunction with the City and the Commission to expand Boulware Park to include the Birch Street property. Concepts 2a and 3 take a lot of land away from the park. I love the idea of naturalizing the creek as much as possible, but if we do that, it becomes even more critical to expand the park. Boulware Park is small relative to the size of the population it serves, particularly compared to other parts of Palo Alto. The Birch Street addition helps, but it still remains undersized. I would like to see NVCAP and the Commission address the need to expand the Park so that we can make renaturalization and Boulware Park the best we can make it for our traditionally underserved community. Magical Bridge is a great addition to our City. How incredible would it be if we could do something even better here in Ventura!

From a more City-wide perspective, I would encourage the Commission to look around the City to identify other opportunities for naturalization and, more straightforwardly, for use of existing water district, utility, and other easements to give pedestrians and bicyclists access to our waterways and more safe pathways to traverse and enjoy our city. Thank you.

Jonathan Brown