



# HOUSING ELEMENTS 101

(How did we get here?)

CHANNING HOUSE | 7:00 pm | OCTOBER 9, 2024

**PALO ALTO**  **FORWARD'S MISSION**

**We work to expand housing and transportation choices for a more inclusive, affordable, and sustainable Palo Alto**

# WHO IS PALO ALTO FORWARD ?

- Community members who want housing & transportation options
- We care about affordability, sustainability, and equity
- We host community events
- We engage in long-range planning efforts
- We champion housing projects

# WHAT DOES PAF ADVOCATE FOR?

**HOUSING  
ELEMENT**  
GO BIG!

**EXPANDING THE ECR  
HOUSING FOCUS AREA**

**PARKING  
POLICY**

**TRANSIT  
& BIKES**

**ADU REFORM**

**FIXING OUR ZONING  
TO ALLOW MORE  
HOUSING ACROSS  
THE CITY**

**TRANSPORTATION  
DEMAND MGMT**

## LACK OF HOUSING LEADS TO:

A word cloud illustrating the various consequences of a lack of housing. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with some words being significantly larger and bolder than others. The colors of the words range from dark blue to green. The central and largest words are 'Housing Theory of Everything', 'Enhanced inequality', 'Unhoused', 'Long-commute misery', and 'Climate change'. Other prominent words include 'Lack of social cohesion', 'Traffic', 'Air pollution', 'No time with family', 'Lack of essential workers', and 'Inequality'. Smaller words include 'Lack of Opportunity', 'Less government participation', 'Health impacts', and 'Lower worker productivity'.

Lack of Opportunity

Lack of social cohesion

**Enhanced inequality**

Less government participation

**No time with family**

**Unhoused**

**Lack of essential workers**

**Traffic**

*Housing Theory of Everything*

**Inequality**

**Long-commute misery**

Lower worker productivity

**Climate change**

Health impacts

**Air pollution**

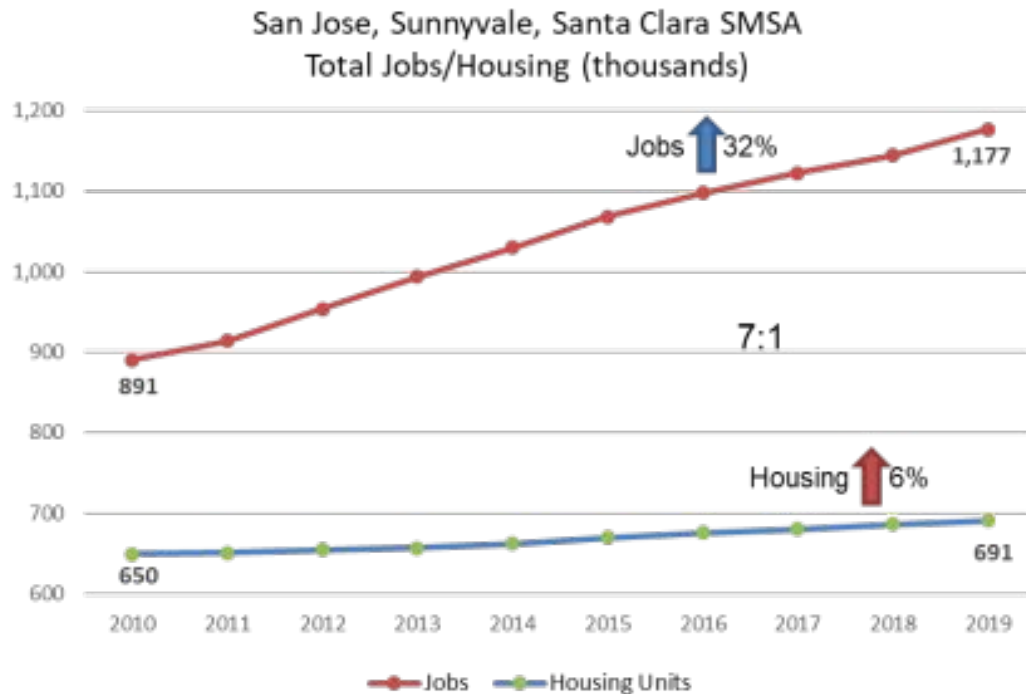
# CONTEXT FOR THE HOUSING CRISIS

## LOCAL

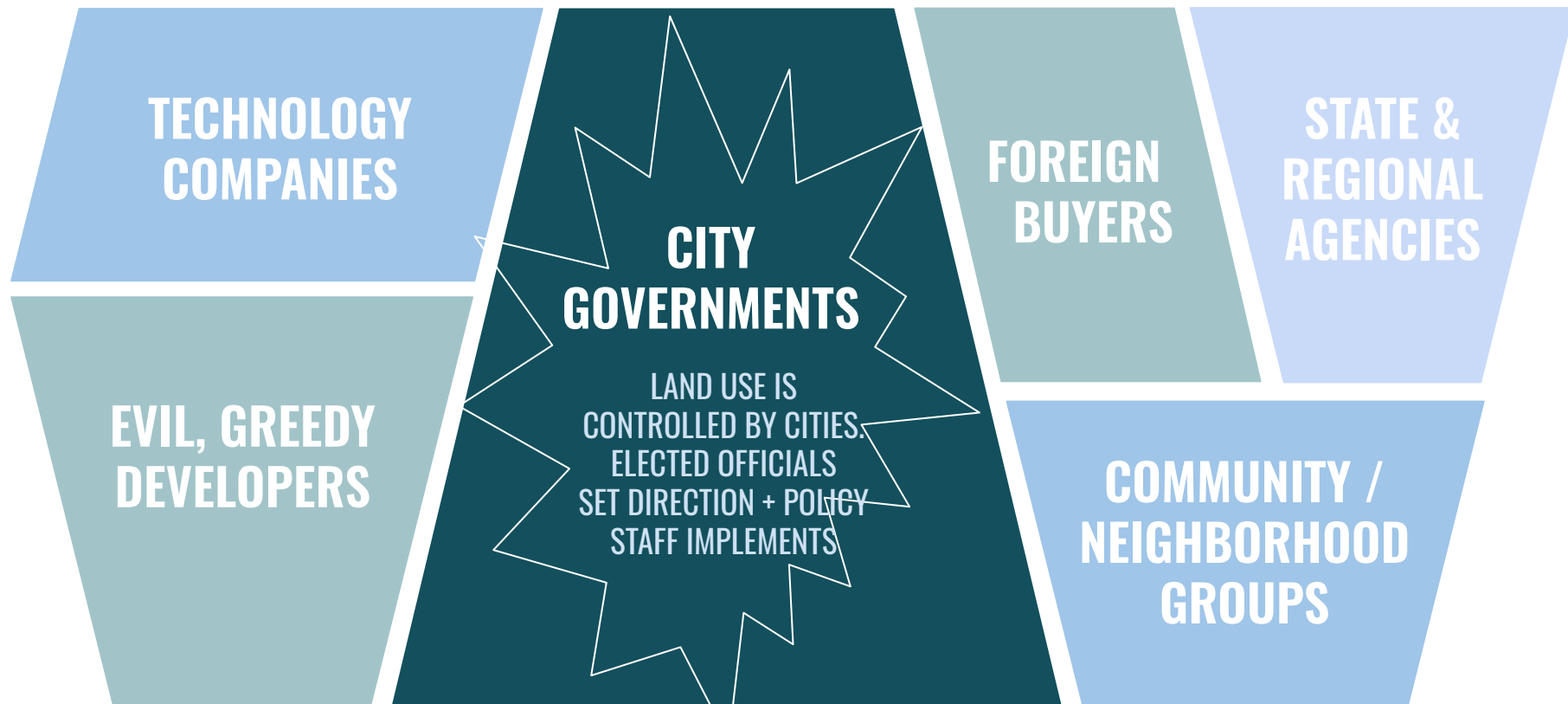
- Since 2010 in Palo Alto
- Jobs increased by 23%
- Homes increased 3.8%



## REGIONAL



# WHO'S TO BLAME FOR THE HOUSING SHORTAGE?



# WHO CAUSED THE HOUSING CRISIS & WHO CAN FIX IT?

<http://extras.mercurynews.com/blame/>

**“People are not focused on the source of the problem when it comes to our housing shortage — if they’re blaming tech companies and developers, then they’re not showing up at our city council meetings...That’s where their attention should be focused.”**

-Ethan Elkind, director of UC Berkeley law school’s climate program and an expert in land use and infrastructure policy.

# WHO IS IN PALO ALTO CITY GOVERNMENT?

## ELECTED PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL (7)

STONE (MAYOR), LAUING (VICE), LYTHCOTT-HAIMS, VEENKER, BURT, KOU, TANAKA,

## PALO ALTO CITY MANAGER

ED SHIKADA (APPOINTED BY CITY COUNCIL)

## CITY STAFF

(HIRED BY CITY MANAGER)

### PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

PLANNING DIRECTOR, JONATHAN LAIT  
TRANSPORTATION, PHILIP KAMHI

### PUBLIC WORKS

### UTILITIES

### SUSTAINABILITY

## COMMISSIONS/BOARDS

(APPOINTED BY CITY COUNCIL)

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION (7)

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW (ARB) (5)

HUMAN RELATIONS (HRC) (7)

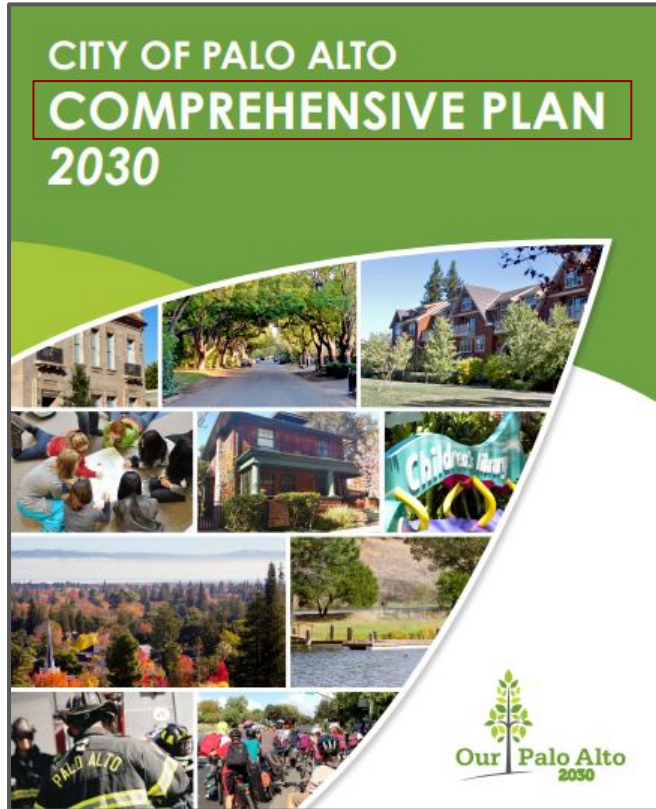
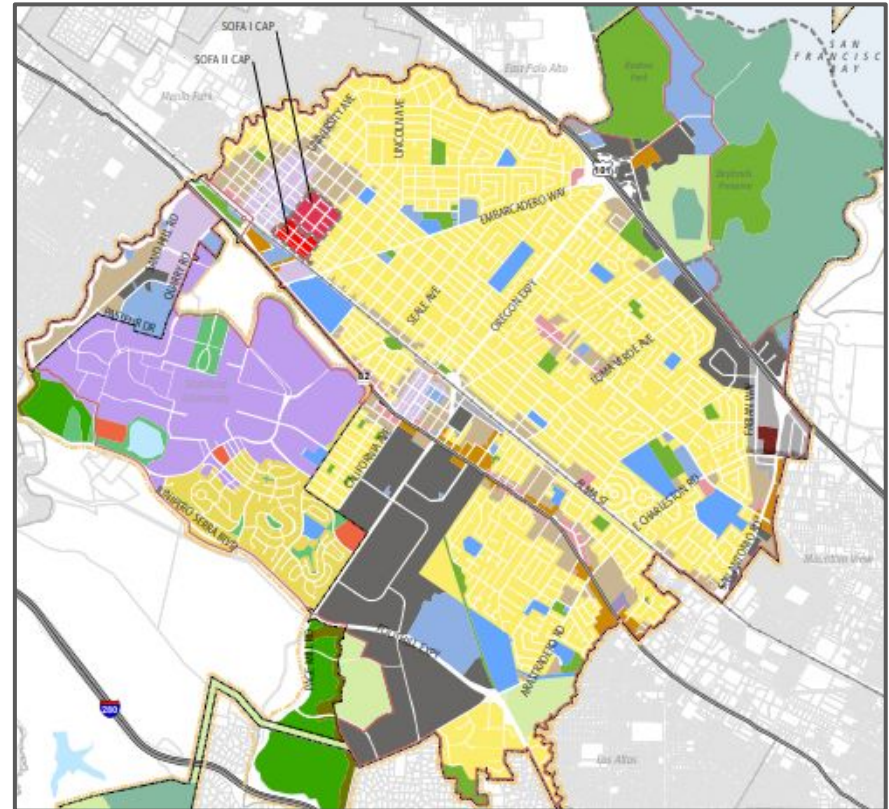
# WHAT IS A CITY'S ROLE IN HOUSING

**“While cities do not generally build housing – that is the function of private developers – they do adopt plans, regulations and programs that provide opportunities for how and where housing development occurs.**

**An example of an adopted plan is the Comprehensive Plan, which through its Housing Element provides housing programs and through its Land Use and Community Design Element guides where and at what densities housing can be built. ”**

<https://palaltohousingelement.com/>

# PALO ALTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE



# HOUSING ELEMENT BACKGROUND

**Step 1: Regional Housing Needs  
Determination (RHND)**



**Step 5:  
Legislative  
Fixes**



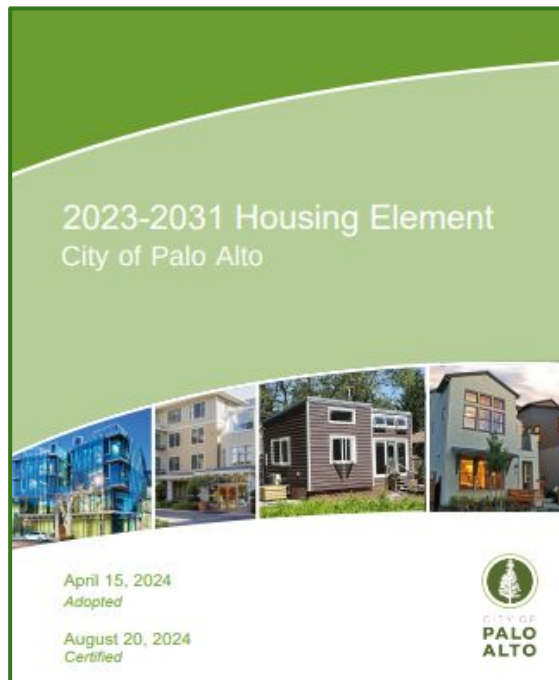
**Step 2:  
Regional Housing  
Needs Allocation  
(RHNA)**



**Step 4:  
Housing Element  
Enforcement**



**Step 3:  
Housing Elements**



**COMMUNITY  
NEEDS**

**HOUSING  
SITES**

**CONSTRAINTS  
ANALYSIS**

**GOALS, POLICIES  
PROGRAMS**

**AFFIRMING  
FAIR HOUSING**

# HOW MUCH HOUSING TO PLAN FOR? 6,086 UNITS

- Reduce overcrowding
- Reduce cost-burdened households
- Achieve normal (5%) vacancy rates
- Account for population & household forming behavior
- NOT based on job growth forecast

# HOW IS PALO ALTO'S HOUSING RECORD?

## CYCLE 4 - 2007 to 2014

What we  
needed

2,860 units

What we  
approved

1,063 units

37%

## CYCLE 5 - 2015 to 2023

What we  
needed

1,988 units

What we  
approved

774 Units

38%

# HOW DID OTHER CITIES DO IN 2015-2023?

Palo Alto **38%**

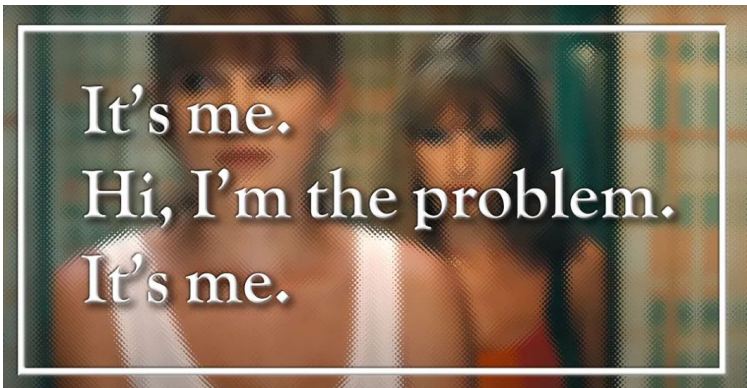
- Objective: **1,988**
- Actual: **744**

Redwood City **105%**

- Objective: **2,789**
- Actual: **2,935**

Mountain View **145%**

- Objective: **2,926**
- Actual: **4,270**



# WHAT'S IN THE HOUSING ELEMENT TO GET US TO 6,086?

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

Housing prices  
increased 11%  
from 2021-2022

Rents increased  
55% in last decade

Seniors & families  
struggling

## CONSTRAINT ANALYSIS

Palo Alto has few  
vacant sites

Restrictive height,  
density and other  
standards

Housing process is  
VERY long

## GOALS, POLICIES PROGRAMS

Place housing near  
transit (CalTrain &  
buses)

Upzone sites in key  
areas

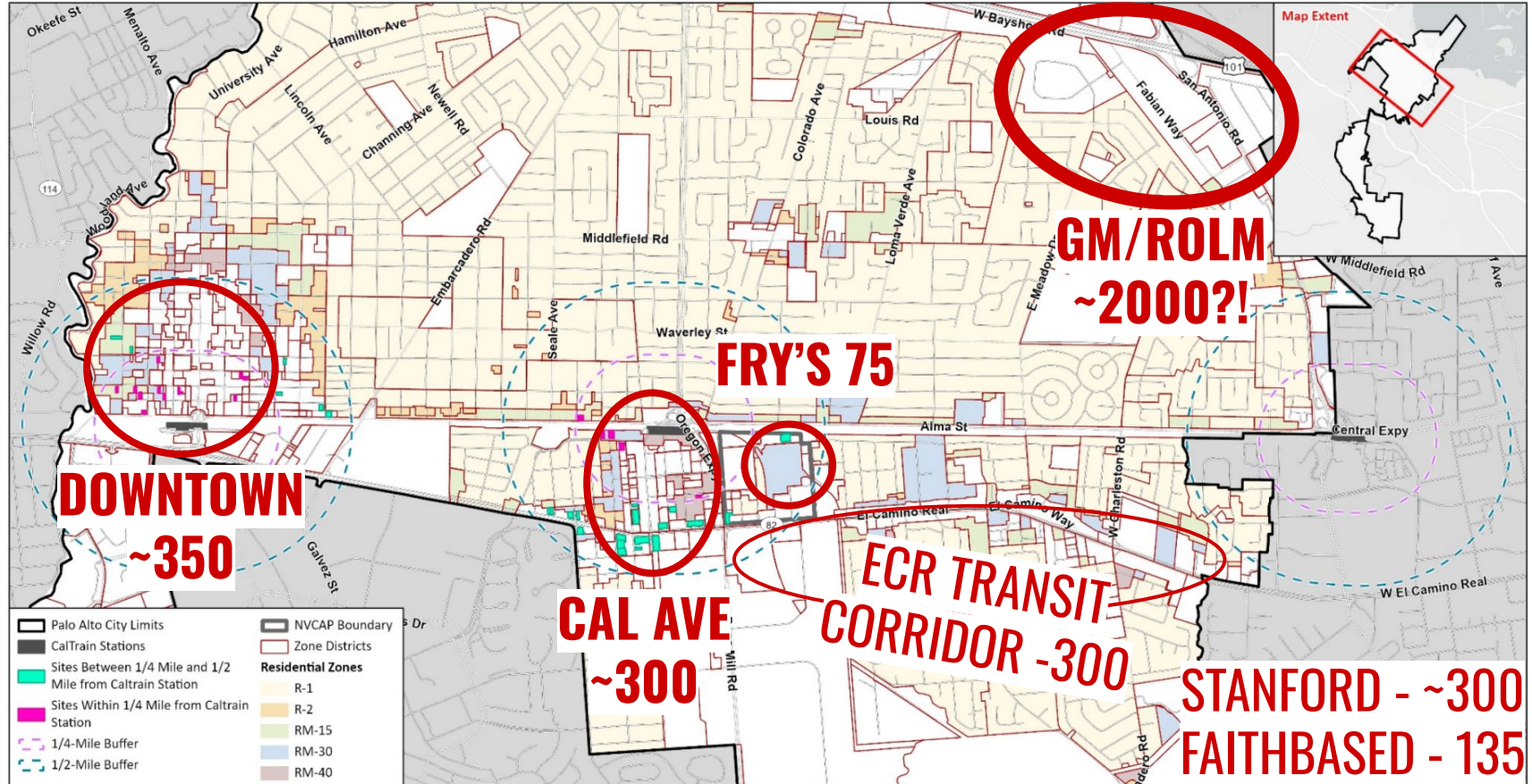
Craft opportunities  
on parking lots or  
faith based sites

## AFFIRMING FAIR HOUSING

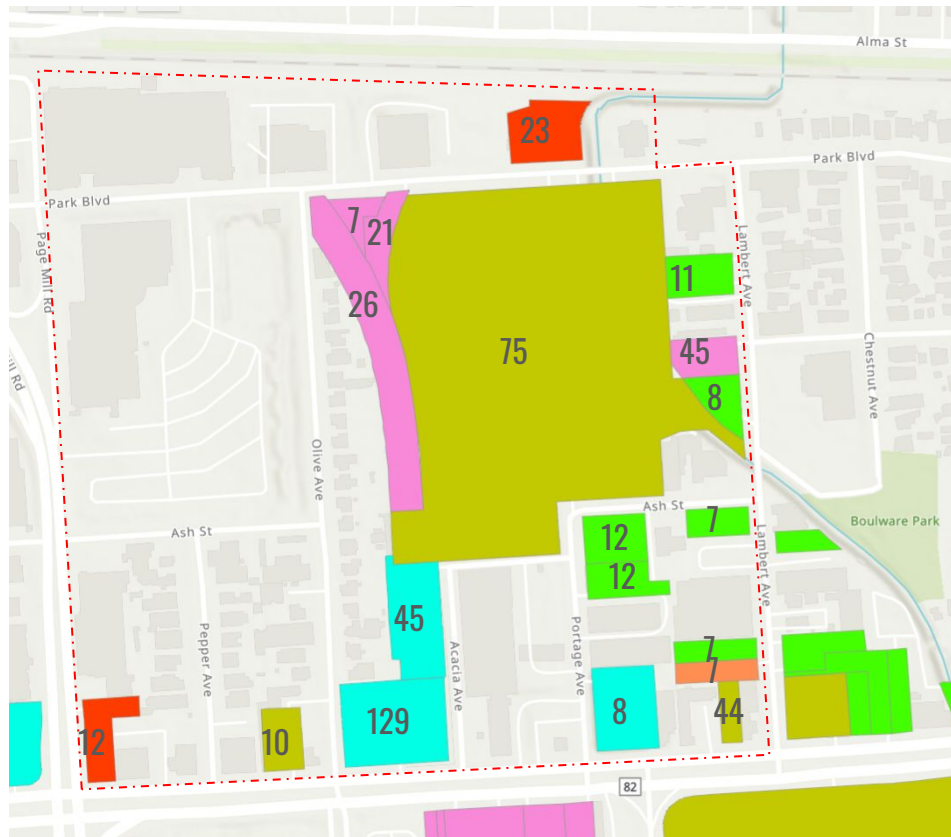
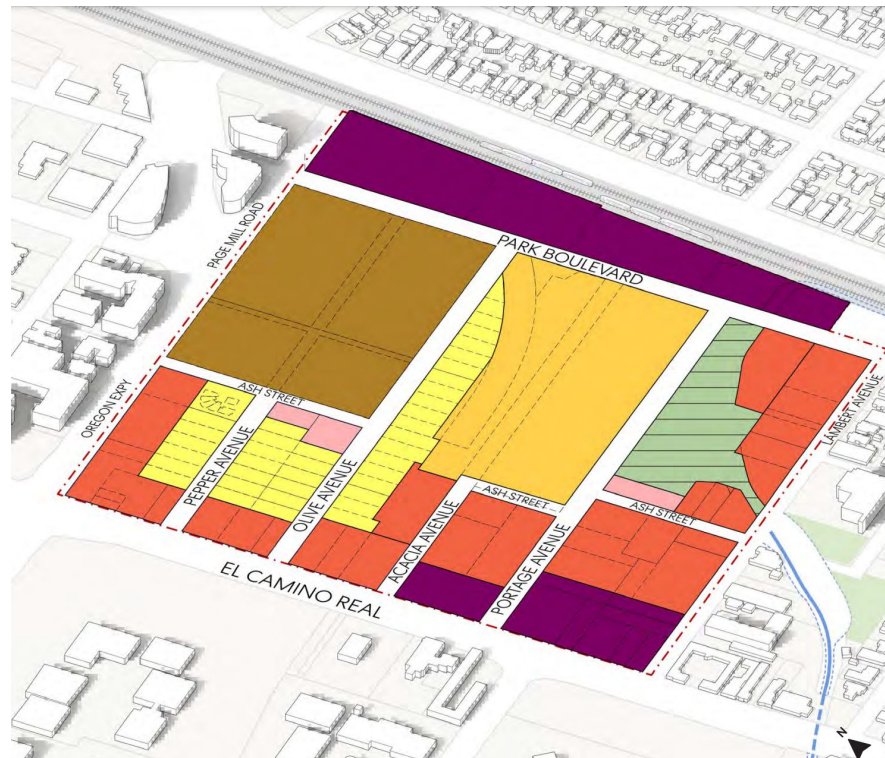
Acknowledge past  
tactics to deny  
housing to certain  
groups

Place housing for  
those groups close  
to opportunities,  
schools, services

# HOUSING SITES - WHERE DO 6,086 UNITS GO?



# HOUSING SITES - NVCAP



# PALO ALTO HOUSING ELEMENT DRAFTS



ALL CITIES TO ADOPT  
CERTIFIED HOUSING  
ELEMENTS BY JAN 31,  
2023. IF NOT,  
BUILDER'S REMEDY!

REDWOOD CITY H.E.  
CERTIFIED APRIL 20, 2023  
MOUNTAIN VIEW H.E.  
CERTIFIED MAY 26, 2023

20 MONTHS LATE!

# WHY WERE DRAFTS REJECTED?

- Housing sites not realistic, errors
- San Antonio area doesn't meet AFFH (fair housing) goals
- Weak plans to “fix” zoning & process
- No economic feasibility study

## ■ NEWS

### State again rejects Palo Alto's housing plan

State forces city to revise its newly adopted Housing Element, add more analysis of non-vacant sites, past patterns of discrimination

## ■ LAND USE

### Twice spurned, Palo Alto tries again with new housing vision

City Council prepares to re-adopt its Housing Element



by Gennady Sheyner  
April 12, 2024 8:29 am

## NEWS | POLITICS

### Consequences mount as Palo Alto's housing element hangs in limbo

By **Alec Regimbal**, SFGATE  
May 31, 2023



# SO....HOW'S PALO ALTO DOING SO FAR?

- 6,086 units in 8 years = 760 units per year
- Current pace is 274 units per year
- We are way behind

**36%!**

## 2023 - 2031 Housing Element Annual Report

How is Palo Alto doing?

Where we are

**274 units**

(including 159 ADUs)

Where we  
should be\*

**760 units**

\*Based on our Housing Element goal of 6,086 units by 2031.

# WHY ARE WE SO FAR BEHIND?

- Our rezoning didn't go far enough
- High fees
- High parking mandates
- Long processes
- City Council is generally anti-housing



# WHAT ABOUT BUILDER'S REMEDY?

- 2,000+ units submitted across the city
- Includes 400+ affordable units
- \$80 million for parks, libraries, community centers
- Millions in associated infrastructure improvements
- Process and timeline are unsure

# THERE IS HOPE

- San Antonio Area Plan
- ECR Housing Focus Area
- Policies to fix fees, processes, and parking
- State will monitor progress
- Smaller proposals submitted



**Downtown Housing Plan  
Community Meeting  
TOMORROW Oct 9 @ 6-8p  
Community Room City Hall!**

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Vote for pro-housing council
- Support housing projects
- Write to Council & PTC
- Talk about housing

## JOIN PALO ALTO FORWARD!

Zoom last Tuesday every month @ 6-7p!



**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO:**

**HUMANIZE** who benefits from housing

**PLANT SEEDS** for good policy

**CULTIVATE** & **SUSTAIN** housing leaders

**FUND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

Donate \$50/\$100/\$250

[www.paloaltoforward.com/join](http://www.paloaltoforward.com/join)





**QUESTIONS?**



**THANK YOU !**  
AND PLEASE CONNECT WITH US!

[www.paloaltoforward.com](http://www.paloaltoforward.com) | [info@paloaltoforward.com](mailto:info@paloaltoforward.com)



YOU MEAN DEAL WITH THE  
**PALO ALTO PROCESS?!**

\*FACEPALM\*

# AND WHAT HAPPENED?

## ■ LAND USE

### Twice spurned, Palo Alto tries again with new housing vision

*City Council prepares to re-adopt its Housing Element*



by Gennady Sheyner  
April 12, 2024 8:29 am



## ■ HOUSING

### With new housing plan, Palo Alto hopes to sway state

*City Council votes 6-1 to adopt Housing Element, with the goal of adding 6,086 dwellings by 2031*



by Gennady Sheyner  
April 16, 2024 8:55 am



## ■ NEWS

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*State forces city to revise its newly adopted Housing Element, add more analysis of non-vacant sites, past patterns of discrimination*

## NEWS | POLITICS

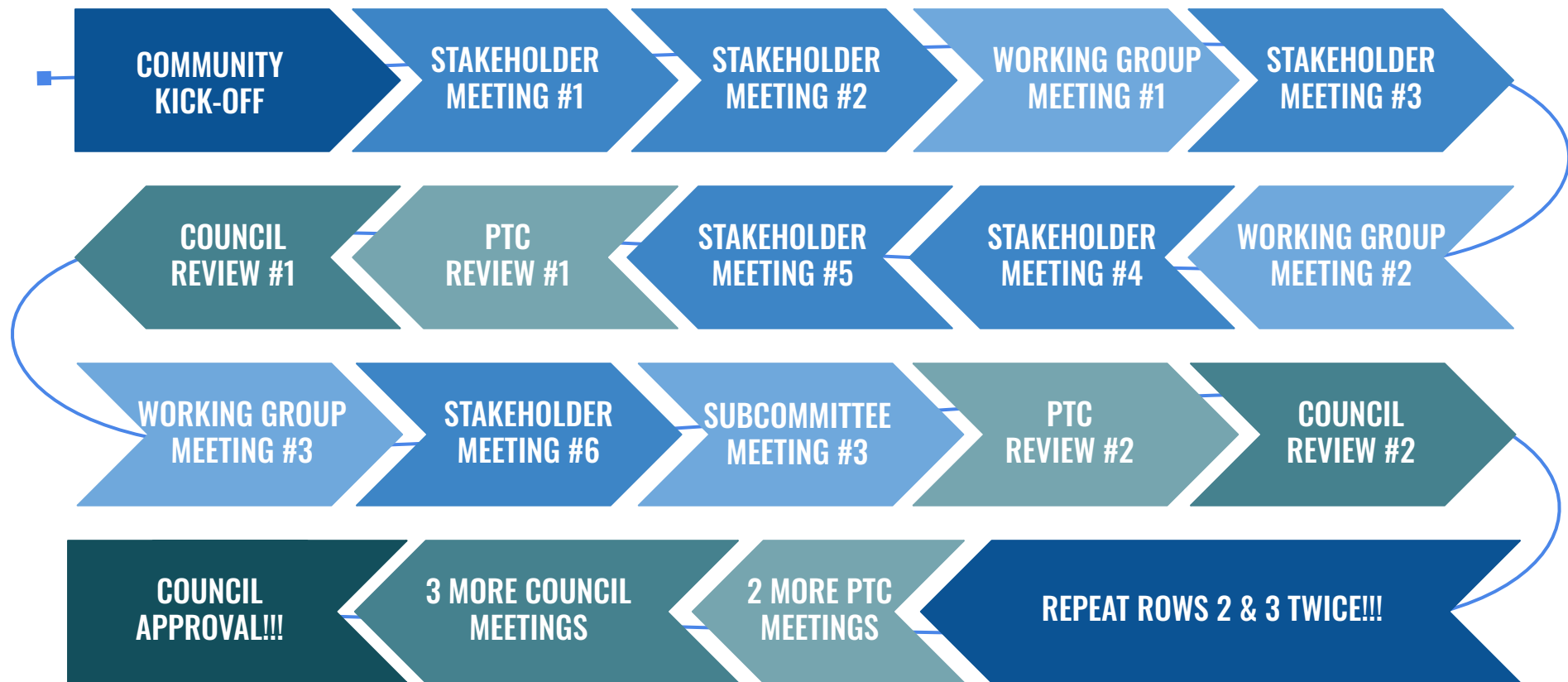
### Consequences mount as Palo Alto's housing element hangs in limbo

By Alec Regimbal, SFGATE  
May 31, 2023



**REJECTED**

# CITY HOUSING ELEMENT PROCESS



# HOUSING ELEMENT PROCESS

## CONSULTANT HIRED

PREPARATION OF  
HOUSING ELEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL  
REVIEW

MANAGE PROCESS

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

EDUCATIONAL PANELS

WORKING GROUP

HOUSING ELEMENT  
POLICIES SHAPED

HOUSING LOCATIONS  
DISCUSSES

## DOCUMENT PREPARED

PUBLIC COMMENT &  
HEARINGS BEFORE  
COUNCIL, PTC, HLC,  
HRC, ARB, PABAC

## PUBLIC REVIEW

COMMENTS RECEIVED

PALO ALTO FORWARD

SV@HOME

ENVIRONMENTAL  
GROUPS

RESIDENTS

## HCD REVIEW

THREE ROUNDS OF  
REVIEW & COMMENT

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

MEETINGS W/STAFF

# THREE YEAR PROCESS

# NO, REALLY.....WHAT WORKS?



# BUILDING APPROVAL PROCESS

