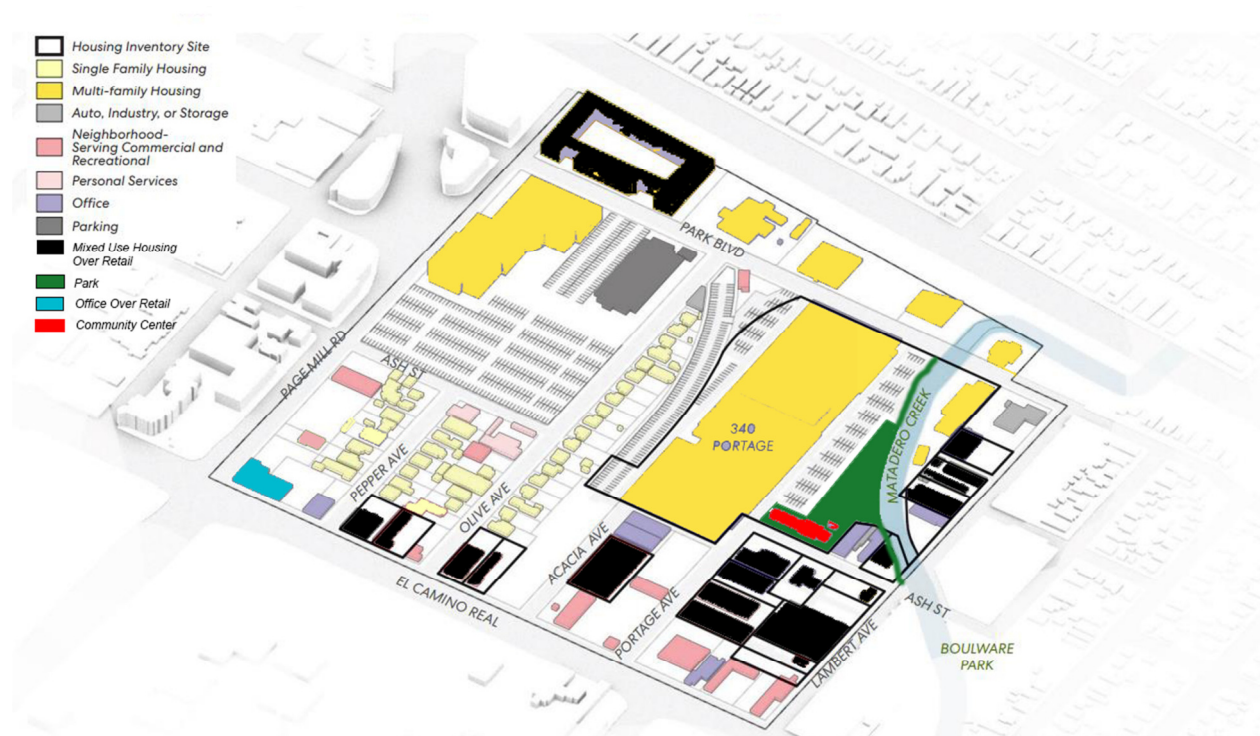


# ALTERNATIVE M

## Focused on Community Needs

- Welcomes teachers, seniors, people with disabilities, first responders, city workers, and other community members with approximately 400 below market rate housing units
- Provides up to approximately 770 other housing units through office phase-out and focused zoning
- Reduces peak hour traffic
- Improves job/housing imbalance
- Offers more space for community-serving retail, local services, and health providers
- Creates new community center and parkland
- Reduces cut-through traffic
- Beautifies streets
- Preserves all existing residences with no displacement of owners and tenants
- Fully parks all new buildings to prevent impacting neighbors and streets
- Preserves historic Fry's site building via adaptive reuse
- Widens bike lanes on Park by eliminating street spaces for parked cars
- Does not rely on developer incentives to provide key benefits
- Treats Ventura the same as other Palo Alto neighborhoods by not increasing allowed density



This alternative comes from NVCAP Working Group Members Keith Reckdahl and Terry Holzemer and Ventura Neighborhood Association Moderator Becky Sanders, with consultation from others experienced in affordable housing and local zoning.

## Adaptive Reuse of the Fry's Site

The site has been zoned for housing since the 1980s but the City Council granted it a special exemption for office and retail use so as to support Fry's Electronics. The owner, Sobrato Organization, has said housing wouldn't be profitable for it and wants to keep the present office uses. However, the office tenants are high-tech firms not serving the local community.

With Fry's now gone, we think it's time the site became housing, just as the city's zoning and housing inventory intended. Rather than providing incentives for the developer that inevitably increase traffic and density, we propose the City purchase the site and convert both the major building and the newer office building at 3250 Park Boulevard to below market rate housing. The wooden office building at 3201-3205 Ash will become a community center. Converting the major buildings from office to housing reduces parking requirements, enabling about three acres of new publically-owned parkland per our estimates.

Adaptive reuse of buildings is environmentally-desirable and enables the historic preservation of two buildings constructed by Chinese-American immigrant entrepreneur Thomas Foon Chew (pictured below), who created the third-largest fruit and vegetable canning company in the world in the early 1900s. Our city's Historic Resources Board determined that the buildings need to be preserved after an extensive historic review by an expert firm. Reuse of historic sites is common in cities other than Palo Alto, with architects creating wonderful modern interiors filled with light and open space.



### Why Below Market Rate Housing?

It's by far our greatest housing need. Virtually all of Palo Alto's unmet RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) 2015-2023 goal is for low-income housing, with about 2/3 being for people earning 80% or less of the Santa Clara County median income. For-profit housing projects create very few, if any, below market rate units and will never provide enough directly or through in-lieu fees to meet our RHNA goals. Rather than falling further behind, we propose to prioritize below market rate housing to serve teachers, seniors, people with disabilities, first responders, city workers, and other community members who are being priced out of Palo Alto.

### How Do We Pay for the Site?

As is common for cities, Palo Alto can offer 30-year municipal bonds to finance the purchase of the Fry's site. Interest rates on such bonds are very low. Bond payments will then be covered partially by tenant rents and a portion of the revenue from the business tax revenue favored by many in the community and likely to return once the economy recovers. This will create no financial burden on Palo Alto residents nor on City finances.

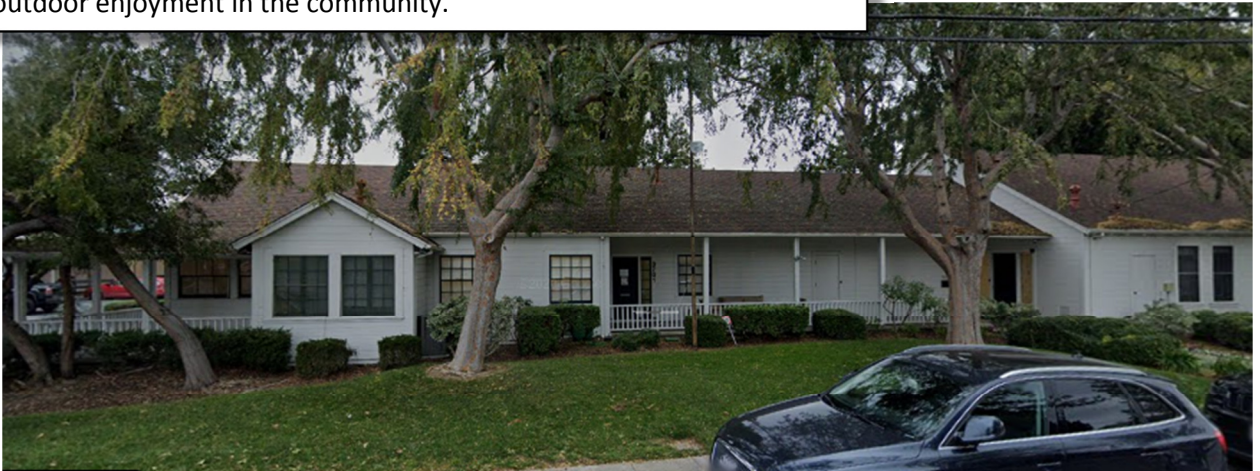


## **A New Community Center and Parkland**

Because the City will own the Fry's site, the historic building at 3201-3205 Ash (see below) that's part of the site can become a wonderful new community center. We envision the center housing a non-profit operating a small eatery, similar to Ada's Cafe, where residents of all ages will find comfortable and friendly service.

The center can also house community meetings, a historic display about the Fry's site and Thomas Foon Chew, and social events.

Adjacent to the community center can be new parkland, enabling indoor-outdoor events. The new parkland could also connect up with Boulware Park and its recent expansion to form a wonderful area for outdoor enjoyment in the community.



## **Safer Bike Travel on Park Boulevard**

Commercial buildings on Park Boulevard are supposed to provide parking for all workers and visitors, yet cars are parking on the street. We should prevent on-street parking in bike lanes to improve the safety of one of our city's busiest bike routes.

## **Zone for the Community, Not High-Tech Offices**

Over the years in Ventura, the City has allowed high-tech firms to replace local retail and community-serving offices such as health providers. These firms increase peak-hour traffic, price out local businesses, and mean we must go further to shop, dine, and get professional services.

We propose to end this trend by converting the zoning along El Camino and other streets in Ventura to allow only housing and true local-serving businesses. This will benefit residents, open up new housing opportunities, and benefit many local firms priced out of our community. It encourages walking and biking and helps convert North Ventura from an office park back into a neighborhood.

Without any increase to allowed density, we estimate this can add 349 to 431 housing units to the community with full parking.

We also envision converting office buildings along Park to housing through creative reuse. We estimate this can add 238 to 340 additional housing units. Sufficient parking already exists on these sites

As noted, all new housing will be fully parked. Much of Ventura suffers already from overcrowded streets. Underparked new housing will only create more problems so we have avoided it.

## **Beautify, Don't Densify**

Building office and housing towers in Ventura will create an enormous burden on one small neighborhood. We believe that no upzoning (increased density) is needed whatsoever to achieve significant community and environmental benefits.

We envision new street trees providing shade and cooling, a beautiful community center on the historic Fry's site, new parkland, new local shopping and services, and housing for people of all incomes.

