



2022 City Council Candidate Questions

HOUSING

What are your thoughts on limiting upzoning only for 100% affordable housing?

ALEX COMSA

Affordable housing is one of the top priorities for any City Council these days, and I believe 80% of Palo Alto would agree with that. I believe the current City Council is supporting the upzoning for the San Antonio area, and that's obviously one way to incentivize development. I seem to be in line with the current City Council on this one, and I would probably support the upzoning for projects that make sense, with the main focus on creating more affordable housing, but not sure if I would limit it to affordable only. Unfortunately, the City is not set up to drive projects like 100% affordable, and we need to rely on private developers to help re creating housing. We need the City to be more proactive in driving projects instead of being at the mercy of developers and reacting to issues. Being PROACTIVE is the way to go.

LISA FORSELL

I think we need to revisit our zoning for all levels of affordability.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

While this sounds like an interesting idea, it is not one that I support. Families that have purchased a home within a single-family home neighborhood should not be expected to watch their neighborhoods change into something entirely different.

ED LAUING

I am an aggressive proponent of TRULY affordable housing – deed-restricted - to make sure rents are capped by income level. Given our shortage of below market rate units, a 100% affordable project is highly desirable. But the reduced rents on such a project mean this cannot be the dominant model because developers won't build them. An all-housing project with a mixture of housing types is more likely and feasible. This type of housing also has the advantage of not creating the appearance of AH residents being second-class citizens as all income segment residents are in the same building.

JULIE LYTHCOTT-HAIMS

I am pushing for more housing at both market and below-market rate levels, and upzoning is a great manifestation for both. While some feel 100% affordable housing is the ideal to strive for, the reality is that this community may be a little scared by the idea of turning a previously low-density market-rate lot into high-density, 100% affordable. Plus, 100% affordable is very hard to fund. And, I am wary of a city that has ultra-expensive market-rate parcels and 100% affordable parcels as that could ghettoize the folks who cannot afford market rate. Rather, I envision city streets and neighborhoods with mixed-density housing where people who work blue collar jobs are neighbors with people who work white collar jobs.

DORIA SUMMA

I fully support this.

VICKI VEENKER

Upzoning only for 100% affordable housing would be an incentive for developers to build this type of housing. We will need some all-affordable housing projects in order to meet our affordable housing goals. However, there remains the challenge of paying for affordable housing. Also, the state requires that we build market rate housing, too. To do this, Palo Alto has previously upzoned for other than 100% affordable and will likely need to do so again to meet the state RHNA numbers. Thoughtful upzoning for housing in designated areas is preferable to imposing dense housing in or directly adjacent to low density neighborhoods. Also, upzoning for housing in commercial areas may be preferable to office development in those areas, even if it is not 100% affordable. Lastly, market rate housing has inclusionary percentages which are not as high as all affordable but they add to our affordable stock and do not segregate residents by income levels.