



2022 City Council Candidate Questions

HOUSING

The city's housing element has almost 2000 houses in the San Antonio corridor. What is the most significant (new) policy that will increase housing in Palo Alto? Other than in the San Antonio corridor, where else should we look for housing?

PAT BURT

I have supported ADUs (now~100/year). We have already moved to zone for more housing along the El Camino corridor and in the two downtowns. Going forward, I support significant housing in the Stanford Research Park (and Palo Alto Square) and Stanford Shopping Center.

We should be seeking to densify in areas that are already walkable, bikeable and have access to good transit.

Here are the housing policies that I believe will have the greatest impacts:

1. Inclusionary Zoning: It requires developers to include affordable housing units in new residential developments, ensuring a percentage of new housing is available to low- and moderate-income residents.
2. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior ADUs (JADUs): ADU and JADU has been incentivized, making it easier for homeowners to build these units.
3. Density Bonus Programs: These state mandated policies allow developers to build more housing units than typically permitted if they include affordable housing, incentivizing the creation of more affordable units.
4. Streamlined Permitting: We have implemented streamlining the permitting process, especially for affordable housing projects, in alignment with state laws like SB 35.
5. Commercial Linkage Fees: I endorsed imposing full commercial impact fees, requiring developers of new commercial spaces to contribute funds to support affordable housing and address the infrastructure needs generated by new developments.
6. Upzoning: The city adopted necessary upzoning for higher-density development in strategic areas near transit hubs and commercial corridors to create more housing opportunities.
7. Affordable Housing Funding: I led the charge on Measure K to increase our Affordable Housing Fund and advocated for raising Impact Fees to ensure we have the necessary resources to finance and preserve affordable housing.
8. Public Land Development: The city is pursuing housing development above surface parking lots in our downtown area to utilize public land for affordable housing.

KATIE CAUSEY

The most significant policy Palo Alto has added is relaxing zoning around the El Camino Real area, it is important we allow for tall dense housing near downtown and California Avenue, being near public transit and businesses will help keep cars off the road.

ANNE CRIBBS

I support developing the San Antonio Area Plan to address both the needs and challenges of creating these housing units with the necessary amenities and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans.

In addition to the El Camino and San Antonio area housing sites, I strongly support developing housing near services, shopping and jobs in the northern areas of Palo Alto like Downtown and around Cal Ave.

Our new housing should be broadly distributed throughout the city.

ADUs are proving more popular than expected. We need to be aware that the needs are different in each neighborhood. Detached ADUs are a special problem in flood zones since the bottom floor may have to be close to the top of "privacy" fences.. We can streamline the design, permitting, and inspection process for ADUs by providing a limited number of plans that could be adopted by those who choose them.

HENRY ETZKOWITZ

Did not respond.

GEORGE LU

On San Antonio, there are good opportunities, but we should also recognize that the city needed to start a planning process years ago. We have to plan for a park, among other improvements (discussed further below) as soon as possible.

On policy, we need to zone for housing outcomes, but most importantly we need to streamline housing across the board. We should look at the success of Los Angeles' streamlining (Executive Directive 1), which is producing tens of thousands of 100% affordable privately-funded housing units, and learn what can be applied here.

On locations for housing, the best housing is transit-oriented. We need to look to Downtown, Cal Ave, and El Camino, and in particular look at surface parking lots (which could be replaced with mixed-use buildings with parking). We must also push Stanford hard to get more housing in the Research Park and Shopping Center.

KEITH RECKDAHL

I support housing along the El Camino corridor, California Avenue, and University Avenue, as these areas are walkable and bikeable and also have good access to transit.

I also support collaborating with Stanford to develop additional housing in the Stanford Research Park and the Stanford Shopping Center area, as proximity to Stanford and Research Park employment will make that housing attractive to the nearby employees, potentially reducing traffic.

GREER STONE

There is no one single policy that will act as a panacea to solve our city's affordable housing shortage. Instead, we require a multifaceted approach with a variety of policies as identified in our recently certified Housing Element. One of the most significant policies to increase housing in Palo Alto is expanding zoning for higher-density residential development, particularly near transit hubs and commercial corridors like El Camino Real, California Avenue, and Downtown. This can help create mixed-use developments that offer housing close to services, reducing the need for cars and promoting sustainability.

DORIA SUMMA

We need to find housing opportunities across Palo Alto. One under-utilized area is the Stanford Research Park. I was the first person in a public hearing to propose that the city consider housing in the Stanford Research Park, and I still believe that this is a great opportunity.

CARI TEMPLETON

Incentivising new housing in Palo Alto is a complex issue, and no single policy will resolve the problem. Creating incentives, analyzing timelines, and understanding development obstacles are areas the City can explore with developers to streamline the process and make building here more attractive. We should be looking for opportunities to build new homes throughout the city, not just on the edge near San Antonio and definitely not in the Baylands.