

LWVPA positions on Natural Resources and the Housing position under Social Policy were reviewed in 2017 in light of current concerns about sustainability and climate change. Some modifications to our positions were made, primarily to make specific reference to climate change, to adopt current terminology, and to remove portions that have become outdated. This also resulted in moving one objective to the City Finance position under City Government. A resolution on the urgent need to act on issues related to community sustainability and climate change is proposed.

NATURAL RESOURCES

PALO ALTO LAND USE AND PLANNING (revised 1993, 2007, 2017)

Support of continued efforts toward effective general planning in Palo Alto

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Inclusion of social planning and environmental planning in the comprehensive plan. Social planning should include, but not be limited to: housing, jobs, mixed uses, transportation. Environmental planning should include, but not be limited to: ~~open space~~, conservation, and sustainability (including water resources quality, air quality, energy,) ~~open space~~, and geological conditions.
- ~~2. Implementation of an open space element in the comprehensive plan~~
- ~~2~~3. Evaluation of physical planning decisions in terms of their effects on people
- ~~3~~4. Zoning decisions that include consideration of social, environmental, and economic effects
- ~~4~~5. Evaluation of local planning decisions in a regional context
- ~~5~~6. Basing major planning decisions on analysis of development alternatives. These alternatives and their probable consequences should be publicized and presented to the public at appropriate stages before final decisions are made.
- ~~6~~7. Requiring the effects of allowable build-out to be clearly identified when considering land use and zoning designations
- ~~7~~8. Use of interim zoning and moratoriums as mechanisms to restrict development in areas under special planning studies or zoning change consideration
8. State-mandated building codes for energy use and conservation that currently exist for new buildings. City measures to improve codes if they are cost effective. Performance, not specification, should be the criterion for building codes and for performance rating. [Moved from deleted 1980 Energy position.]

TRANSPORTATION (revised 1993, 2007, 2017)

Support of transportation planning measures and actions by the City of Palo Alto that promote efficient flow of traffic, that minimize the use of single occupant vehicles (SOVs),~~the private automobile and encourage the use of alternative transportation~~ that are designed to provide safe and convenient transportation for motorized vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and that reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). The overall transit system should address the needs of mobility for all, be designed to reach employment, educational and shopping locations, and be effectively and efficiently coordinated.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Measures which will reduce ~~commuter and general~~ public dependence on ~~private~~ automobiles, especially SOVs
2. ~~Encouraging development and use of p~~ Public transportation that supports mobility for all, including public and private subsidies, and as well as other alternatives to the automobile, including subsidies where justified with readily available route information
3. ~~Evaluation of new developments in terms of:~~
 - a) ~~Carrying capacity of existing roads and assurance of availability of public transportation~~
 - b) ~~Alternative solutions to anticipated traffic, with priority given to solutions not dependent on the private automobile~~
 - c) ~~Regional impacts~~
4. ~~Zoning changes or other regulations related to anticipated traffic designed so that businesses and services needed and/or desired by the community are not forced out of the city~~
- 3 5. Measures to mitigate local and regional traffic impacts, including, but not limited to, bicycles, ride sharing, Transportation Demand Management (TDM), improved road design, and public transit and public and private shuttles that are integrated with employment, housing and land use
- 4 6. Cooperation with other cities and counties in regional and sub-regional efforts to create integrated solutions to resolve land use, transportation, and housing/employment concerns; promotion of a universal fare system and coordinated schedules
5. Design of roads to accommodate all travel modes (motorized and non-motorized)

FOOTHILLS (revised 1993, 2004, 2017)

Support of measures to retain the maximum possible undeveloped land in the Palo Alto foothills with efforts to preserve, protect, and restore landscape resilience, characterized by healthy functioning ecosystems. with safeguards to preserve and protect the natural quality of the land. By foothills, we mean lands between Foothill Expressway and Skyline Boulevard within the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto sphere of influence.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Continued maintenance and enhancement of ~~Foothill Park~~ city parks and open space preserves in the foothills, with retention of its their natural characteristics
2. ~~Preservation of parks and open space~~ Acquisition of additional public open space as opportunities arise
3. For any public or private project, C ~~careful~~ careful consideration by city planners of the natural hazards of the foothills, such as earthquake, earth movement, and fire, and also careful consideration and protection of wildlife and native vegetation
4. Planning and authorization by the city of safe and esthetic road circulation before allowing any ~~major~~ development in the foothills
5. Imposition of strict safeguards, such as:
 - a) Mechanisms to insure open space in perpetuity
 - b) ~~Cluster not to be used as a device for the developer to raise density~~ Support of cluster development only if it increases contiguous open space

6. ~~The concept of i~~ Interjurisdictional coordination for foothill planning and management

Opposition to:

1. Industrial parks or extensive commercial development in the Palo Alto foothills and foothill lands within the Palo Alto sphere of influence

BAYLANDS (1976, 1977, 1978 ; revised 1993, 2004, 2017)

Support of measures to retain the maximum possible undeveloped land in the Palo Alto Baylands with safeguards to preserve and protect the natural quality of the land and with particular emphasis on the impacts of climate change (especially sea-level rise). By Baylands, we mean lands between Bayshore Freeway and the Bay within the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto sphere of influence.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Considering the following factors when planning for the Baylands:
 - a) An understanding of the total ecology of the Baylands
 - b) Impact of sea-level rise
 - ~~b~~ c) Effects on the environment
 - e d) Geological and other natural hazards
 - ~~d~~ e) Possible city liabilities
 - e) f) Services the city would be required to provide
 - £ g) The role of the Palo Alto Baylands in the total San Francisco Bay Community
 - g-h) Economic, environmental, and ecological implications of dredging and recreational development
 - i) Cooperation with relevant regional agencies
2. ~~Future use of the current refuse disposal area for park or open space. The area is large enough to support more than one low-key~~ Preservation of Byxbee Park for passive recreational use
3. ~~Plans for landfill closure drawn with maximum flexibility allowing for options. They should be environmentally sound and economically sound.~~
4. ~~Enforcement of requirements and regulations for landfill closure~~
- 5-3. ~~Preservation of marshlands in their natural state~~ as healthy functioning ecosystems, retaining their designation as park-dedicated land
- 6-4. ~~The p~~ Preservation of the flood basin in its natural state. Primary use is for flood management with secondary uses for habitat preservation and education
5. Use of antenna farm site to serve maximum community benefit
7. ~~The ITT property to remain as is or used for passive recreational use~~

Opposition to: (1977, 2004, 2017)

1. Deposit of dredging spoils on park-dedicated lands ~~with the possible exception of the refuse area, where the use should be restricted to cover material on the active sanitary landfill~~
2. ~~Any further dredging of the yacht harbor without a plan which will preserve the unique Baylands environment accepted by all agencies involved~~
- 3 2. ~~Future use of the current refuse disposal area~~ Byxbee Park for commercial recreational facilities or intensive recreational activity

~~4. Housing and/or commercial development on the ITT land~~

WATERSHED (1968, 2004,2017)

Support of measures to protect the watershed from sedimentation, erosion, pollution, and flooding.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Continuation of the city's philosophy which regards our creek beds as a natural asset and the moisture which falls on the hills as a valuable water resource instead of as a drainage problem to be carried as quickly as possible to the Bay, and finds it desirable to maintain our stream channels without excessive erosion and scarring as positive natural open spaces
2. Measures to implement this philosophy and to prevent sedimentation and erosion
3. Assumption of responsibility by the city for ecological and esthetic considerations in erosion and flooding using flood plain zoning, exploration of a linear park concept, and consultation with hydrologists and/or ecologists
4. Flood management projects which approach the 100-year flood level if ecologically and economically feasible
5. Flood management costs borne by the entire watershed
6. Willingness to bear some additional flood management costs to provide for recreational uses, keeping creek beds in a natural state, and beautifying flood management structures, with public access where possible
7. Storm water and runoff measures that minimize pollutants and debris to the Bay

WASTEWATER TREATMENT (2004 - previously part of Watershed Position; 2017)

Support of:

1. Planning for implementation of more advanced sewage treatment which would consider environment, need, economic feasibility, and technological advances
2. Encouraging reclamation and reuse of wastewater
3. Assumption by industry of the responsibility for its special wastes

~~ENERGY (1980)~~

~~Support of inclusion of an energy element in the Comprehensive Plan. [with objective #1, now covered by state law]~~

~~OBJECTIVES~~

~~Support of:~~

1. ~~The energy element in the Comprehensive Plan should be a general statement that takes other portions of the plan into consideration~~
2. ~~Raising rates for energy sources to compensate for revenue loss associated with conservation. A "life line" rate must be provided however. [moved to City Finance, new #7]~~
3. ~~City involvement in educational programs leading to voluntary conservation measures [Covered by other levels of LWV]~~

4. ~~State mandated building codes that currently exist for new buildings. City measures to improve codes if they are cost effective. Performance, not specification, should be the criteria for building codes and for performance rating. [moved to Land Use]~~

SOCIAL POLICY

HOUSING (revised 1990, 2002, 2010, 2017)

Support of policies and actions by the City of Palo Alto towards the goals of: maintaining the vitality of both immediate and larger neighborhoods, including the general green and open feeling of all residential neighborhoods; improving the diversity of housing opportunities for all economic levels, ages and ethnicities; ensuring that all housing is open to everyone without discrimination based on gender, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or marital status; promoting a balance of jobs and housing; and promoting regional planning and programs.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Use of zoning and planning powers to achieve these goals and to ensure that good standards of quality will prevail
2. Increasing the density of single-family residential areas in various ways, including dividing of existing units, extra kitchens, denser use of corner lots, zero lot lines, cottages, duplexes and triplexes dispersed throughout on appropriate lots
3. Increasing the number and density of multiple-family units, ~~with access to public transportation including especially near transit centers and along transportation corridors~~
4. Careful consideration in designing any housing (as in objectives 2 & 3) to blend into existing neighborhoods including factors such as traffic, parking, visual impact, and intrusion into daylight plane. Neighborhoods include commonality of interest, schools, stores and services.
5. City efforts to encourage the development of subsidized or other low-to-moderate and below-market-rate housing by private and/or non-profit developers, or whatever method will lead to housing which will remain in the ~~lower income~~ low-to-moderate and below-market-rate housing stock
6. Priority for eligible local employees and residents in government subsidized units, including employees who are necessary to meet emergency needs
7. Encouragement of Stanford University in its efforts to house its students, faculty and staff. The city and Stanford should work together to solve mutual problems.
8. Mixed-use development which includes retail/housing combinations, housing/office combinations, and varieties of housing types. Such developments should include, but not be limited to, neighborhood-serving retail, medical offices, and recreational facilities, with special attention to safe walkability and bicycling.
9. Adequate supporting infrastructure such as water and power supplies, public transit systems, schools, and parks and open space
10. Palo Alto's continued participation in the Santa Clara County Housing Authority
11. Palo Alto's working with other cities in the region to encourage joint planning for housing in the region
12. Actions by the city which would promote a mixture of ownership and rental housing

CITY GOVERNMENT

CITY FINANCE (1988; modified 2017)

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II. Support of maintenance of city services and programs at the highest level possible under budget constraints. Support of the concept of raising reliable revenues as efficiently as necessary to meet these needs.

OBJECTIVES

Support of:

1. Evaluation by the city council of current programs to determine their conformance to the needs of a changing community
2. Evaluation of ALL programs and services as they interrelate before cutbacks are considered
3. A thorough examination of both current operation and capital expenditures prior to proposing either a substantial increase in revenues from current sources or the tapping of new sources of revenue to finance operating expenditures. The aim of such an examination should be to assure citizens that all possible economies are being affected without impairment of the desired level of service.
4. Raising of revenues, if necessary, by a variety of methods, including, but not limited to the redistribution of the state sales tax, the utility users tax with lifeline rates, and user fees with consideration for special circumstances such as age, residency, and income
5. ~~Support of~~ User fees which are cost effective and economically feasible to collect
 - a) Non-resident fees should be higher than those for Palo Alto residents. Fees should not inflict a hardship on Palo Alto residents.
 - b) User fees should not necessarily be expected to cover the complete cost of a program (administration and/or capital costs).
 - c) There should be an annual review of user fees to determine if they are reasonable and/or counter-productive (i.e. high building permit fees, resulting in illegal building).
6. ~~Support of~~ Raising utility rates as the cost to the city of utilities rises, but not to the point of surrounding private utility rates. As utility income transfer to the city diminishes, there could be cutbacks in programs, if necessary.
7. Adjusting utility rates to support infrastructure as conservation and alternative energy use increase. A life-line rate must be provided, however. [from deleted 1980 Energy position]