

PALO ALTO HOUSING

C O R P O R A T I O N

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May 22, 2013

RE: MAYBELL ORCHARD PROJECT

Dear Planning Commissioners,

As you consider our project, please remember the significant need for affordable senior housing in Palo Alto where close to *20% of our Palo Alto seniors are living near or below the federal poverty limit*. This need is undeniable.

In response to neighborhood concerns, Palo Alto Housing Corporation has listened and made significant design changes to the Maybell Orchard project plan over the last 6 months as follows:

1. PAHC is proposing affordable senior housing rather than affordable family housing to minimize impacts on schools, traffic and the surrounding neighborhood.
2. We are maintaining the existing location of the street barrier at the intersection of Clemo Avenue and Maybell Avenue.
3. Site plan density has been redesigned to locate the higher density components of the site plan away from the existing single family homes.
4. Driveways for 14 of the 15 proposed single family homes located on private alleys adjacent to the senior housing rather than on Maybell and Clemo.
5. Driveway aprons were created for 9 of the proposed new single family homes to provide an additional 18 off-street parking spaces.
6. Single family home heights and architectural designs have been redesigned to provide variation and interest along the Maybell streetscape.
7. We facilitated a HUD approved easement through our adjacent property for secondary project access and traffic abatement.
8. We are providing a sidewalk on the Maybell Avenue frontage for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
9. We widened the Clemo driveway entry to the site to 22 feet for greater visibility.
10. We will continue to work with city transportation officials to enforce no parking on the Maybell Avenue frontage during the day and installing shared roadway markings.
11. We will provide a shared van for our residents to further minimize the need for car ownership.
12. We will install a commemorative plaque paying respects to the history of the orchard.

As you review the Maybell Orchard project, please consider the following facts:

A. THERE HAVE BEEN NO AUTO ACCIDENTS INVOLVING A PEDESTRIAN OR BIKE IN THE MAYBELL CORRIDOR DURING PEAK TRAFFIC HOURS FROM JANUARY 2005 THROUGH DECEMBER 2012.

The City of Palo Alto Records Dept. reports no automobile-related pedestrian or bike accidents in the Maybell corridor between January 2005 through December 2012 during peak traffic hours. Records maintained by the City verify that there has only been one reported collision involving a pedestrian crossing Maybell Avenue while jaywalking around 9:40 AM and one reported collision involving a bicycle on Maybell Avenue at 8:58 PM. Both of these incidents occurred during off peak hours.

B. AFFORDABLE SENIOR PROJECTS GENERATE MINIMAL PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC.

Studies show that low income seniors have even lower impacts on traffic because they drive less and have lower car ownership rates. Affordable seniors drive during off peak hours because most no longer work. Current demographic data from local Palo Alto senior projects include:

Arastradero Park Apartments (adjacent to the project) – **89% do not work and 55% do not drive.** 42 of the 47 seniors do not work and the remaining 5 have a combination of part-time jobs, full-time or self-employed from home.

Sheridan Apartments – **98% do not work.** In the 57 units at Sheridan Senior Apartments (a total of around 66 residents), only 1 senior works part-time.

Further, Hexagon traffic consultants studied three existing senior rental apartments in Palo Alto to cross-check their forecasted counts. The Stevenson House, Sheridan Apartments and Monte Vista Terrace together had an average observed trip rate of 0.11 trips per unit during the AM peak hour, which is lower than the published national rate at 0.13 trips per unit during the AM peak hour.

PAHC expects the Maybell Orchard project will parallel the traffic patterns found in other Palo Alto affordable senior projects at a trip rate of 0.11 trips per unit or 6.6 new AM peak hour trips.

C. EXISTING ZONING WOULD PERMIT 34 SINGLE FAMILY HOMES THAT PRODUCE 38% TO 52% MORE PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC THAN THE PROPOSED AFFORDABLE SENIOR PROJECT.

The Hexagon's traffic study verifies that the proposed Maybell Orchard project would have only 16 net new AM peak hour trips and 21 net new PM peak trips. A 34 unit single-family project would generate 22 net new AM peak hour trips and 32 net new PM peak hour trips.

D. THE PROPOSED PROJECT HAS MINIMAL IMPACT ON SCHOOLS.

15 SINGLE FAMILY HOMES – Per discussions with school district officials, the 11 net new single family homes would yield approximately 8 new students for local schools.

60 AFFORDABLE SENIOR UNITS- Based on historical statistics in Palo Alto affordable senior projects, PAHC expects zero impact to the schools from the senior site. None of our senior units have children occupying them. PAHC requires proof of legal custody for a resident to have a minor move into one of our apartments. As part of our eligibility/qualification documents, we ask for copies of birth certificates for all minors. If the parents listed on the birth certificate are not any of the adults living/moving into the apartment, we will require proof of legal custody. As long as we are in compliance with fair housing laws, we will work with PAUSD to avoid school impacts from the senior housing.

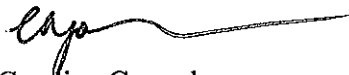
E. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT does “not anticipate any significant traffic issues for the Fire Department specifically related to the Maybell Orchard development.”

F. THE PROJECT HAS RECEIVED ARB APPROVAL

The architectural features, facades, and setbacks of the project have been reviewed by ARB and have been deemed appropriate.

Thank you for considering our project.

Sincerely,
PALO ALTO HOUSING CORPORATION



Candice Gonzalez
Executive Director