

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am writing to you about a bill that is about to be signed by the Governor.

This bill, although purported to increase affordable housing, it is actually more like a lottery where there are some big winners and lots of small losers. It provides a few units of subsidized housing for a few but at the cost of allowing even more jobs to be moved into the area which increases demand of housing and increases the price for the rest of us. The other big winners are developers whose properties are now more valuable. How do they do this? Through the Density Bonus Ordinance.

We have zoning to match developments to infrastructure to give all the property owners their fair share. What this does is it gives a few developers the right to overdevelop. In Palo Alto, that means not just taking their fair share but further overloading an infrastructure that is already stressed.

What is this “infrastructure” that the developers are exempted from paying for? Schools. Our congested streets that get more traffic. Parking, especially that in neighborhoods near commercial areas.

What are the big concessions that this bill gives to a developer in Palo Alto? For example, for a painfully few affordable housing units, the developer gets to increase the number of square feet of office space which experience shows will be packed with employees. But, can the City require that the building be fully parked? This bill says NO.

A recent example is an approved project for a 3-story building at 441 Page Mill <https://goo.gl/maps/NYWPjw66YLs> , between El Camino Real and the Underpass. This building is expected to have about 19,000 square feet of office space. For a building in this location expect 1 employee for every 90 – 150 square feet. This translates into 100-165 employees. Then there is the ground floor retail with its employees and customers. So how many parking spaces? 91. Then housing? 5 affordable; 11 market rate. Oh, did I mention garbage pick-up? It will be from the front with the garbage truck stopping on Page Mill Road. Read the story <http://palaltoonline.com/news/2015/06/16/page-mill-development-clears-final-hurdle>

**The bill I am referring to is Assembly Bill 744 (AB744) Planning and zoning: Density Bonuses.**

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB744](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB744) .

### **What can you do?**

- 1) Write a letter to Governor Brown to veto this bill on the basis that it is an unfunded state mandated Bill which requires new duties of local agencies on a statewide concern without the ability to get reimbursements. Time is short, your letter must be submitted before October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Use email, click here <https://govnews.ca.gov/gov39mail/mail.php> . It will ask for you to provide your name and email address, (in the menu under “**Please Choose Your Subject**”, scroll to topic AB00744/Planning and Zoning, choose it. What you write does not have to deathless prose, staff will be reading and just counting the major topics and forwarding to the Governor.

Sample Letter:

*Re: Assembly Bill 744 – Request for Veto*

*Dear Governor Brown:*

*I am writing to respectfully request that you veto Assembly Bill 744, related to Planning and Zoning and the Density Bonus ordinance.*

*This bill presents a significant unfunded mandate on local agencies, including public schools. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. It is a legislative finding of the Bill that sufficient affordable housing is a statewide concern, therefore, the state should reimburse for such a mandate.*

*Again, I respectfully request that you veto AB744. Thank you for your consideration.*

*Sincerely,  
Lydia Kou  
Resident, Palo Alto, CA*

- 2) Write a letter to City of Palo Alto Mayor and City Council members to encourage them to write to Governor Brown to veto this Bill. You can email to [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)
- 3) Encourage the Mayor and City Council Members to instruct the City Attorney to prepare measures as how to mitigate potential negative impacts when this bill is passed.

Lastly, on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, City Council will be discussing the Land Use and Community Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan. This element provides guidance as to how our city will look, feel and grow (our City's physical form). I also think what is built, where it is built and how it is built determines the impacts to our city, positive or negative. I ask you to bring your voice and let Council know we are in dire need of sensible and managed growth.

Here is the Council Meeting Agenda for Monday evening <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/49217> . The discussion on Land Use is on the agenda for 8:00PM.

Here is the staff report <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/49184> , page 22 starts the Land Use element.

Thank you for your help in writing the letter to the Governor.

Sincerely,

Lydia