



CITY OF  
**PALO ALTO**



**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**  
Issues of Interest

## Have You Reserved Your Place at the Comp Plan Summit?

The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan is the City's primary tool for guiding preservation and development. The ongoing update to the Plan will build on shared community values to guide preservation and to manage growth and change. That's why we are all looking forward to the upcoming Our Palo Alto 2030 Summit to be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30p.m. on Saturday, May 30, 2015 at the Mitchell Park Community Center at 3700 Middlefield Road.

We've planned a full day of activities and discussions to help guide the plan's development. We will be holding sessions on transportation and mobility, sustainable growth and housing for the next generation of Palo Altans and their grandparents. At lunchtime, participants will be able to visit information stations in the courtyard and delve deeper into related planning efforts on issues like water, parks, the Baylands, the urban forest, environmental sustainability, public art, safety, Stanford's General Use Permit, bicycle & pedestrian planning, and fiber to the premise.

It's not too late to reserve a spot for this important event and get involved in the next phase of the planning process. Your input is vital to our success. [Click here to join us!](#)



**Hillary Gitelman**  
Director of Planning and Community Environment

**Watch Our Video to Learn More About the Comprehensive Plan!**

## OUR PALO ALTO 2030

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What are the seven key themes of the [#ComprehensivePlan](#) and why do they matter? Click on the image at left to watch a short video to learn more about the purpose of the Plan and the process the City is following to update it.

## City Council Discusses Potential Ground Floor Retail Protections for California Avenue

On Monday, May 18, 2015, the City Council discussed desired adjustments to ground floor retail protections in the California Avenue Area, including possible adjustments to the uses allowed and the boundaries of that district. This part of the city is well known for its distinctive character. Residents and business owners cherish its uniqueness and are proud that it is distinguished from other commercial centers in the community. However, concern has been expressed about the vulnerability of independent 'mom and pop' stores and their ability to maintain a presence on California Avenue with rising lease rates and the prevalence of national chain stores.



Staff held two community meetings, conducted intercept interviews with visitors to the area and posted an online survey to receive community input on the topics of formula retail, restaurants and the California Avenue district boundaries. Additionally, staff researched formula retail regulations implemented in other California cities.

Council directed staff to explore an expansion of "retail" overlay zone and address "formula retail" such as chain stores, working closely with the Planning and Transportation Commission.

Click [here](#) to review the staff report and summary of community outreach.

## Council to Consider Office Cap Options at June 1 Meeting



On June 1, 2015, staff will be presenting options for Council consideration to potentially limit the pace of office development in portions of the City by creating an annual limit or "cap." The City has been adding an average of about 67,000 square feet of office and research-and-development space annually since 2008. This new development has contributed to job growth and to traffic and parking impacts, and has raised concerns about the changing character of the affected commercial districts.

Previously, the City Council discussed testing the idea of an annual cap in Downtown, the California Avenue area, and the El Camino Real corridor over the next couple of years, and evaluating its effectiveness as part of the ongoing Comprehensive Plan Update. The June 1st discussion will delve into some of the issues that would need to be resolved before crafting an ordinance to implement the annual limit.

The complete staff report and background information will be available online by May 28, 2105.

## Council Passes Interim Urgency Ordinance to Prevent Ground Floor Retail Conversion

On May 11, the City Council passed an Urgency Interim Ordinance of the Palo Alto Municipal Code to prohibit conversion of existing ground floor retail and retail-like uses to office or other uses on a citywide basis effective immediately. With adoption of the proposed interim ordinance, existing ground floor retail and “retail-like” uses (which are defined in the ordinance) would be prevented from converting to office or other uses. The interim ordinance would apply citywide and remain in effect for 45 days, at which time it can be extended.



The City Council has expressed its intent to maintain a citywide prohibition on conversions of ground floor retail and retail-like uses until permanent adjustments to the City’s zoning standards can be developed and adopted. Those adjustments would be intended to add ground floor retail protections where there are currently none and strengthen protections that currently exist.

[Click here to review the staff report and background information.](#)

## BuildingEye



Are you interested in a specific development project application making its way through the planning process? [Click here to view recent and pending planning applications on the Building Eye webpage.](#)

## Bicycle Boulevard Program

Are you interested in the scope or status of one of the City’s ongoing projects aimed at implementing the 2012 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan? [Click here to explore the Bicycle Boulevard Program.](#)

