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**To:** Neilson Buchanan  
**Subject:** San Jose Merc and Palo Alto Daily Post pull the news together

FYI. I hope important questions will ensue up and down the Peninsula long after the November election. This election cycle is a mere blip in time.

I am convinced that few of the municipal jurisdictions in the immediate future are able to step back and see the big picture. Cumulative impact is difficult for city governments but not impossible to grasp.

However, arcane local zoning, CEQA and rote EIRs cloud the big picture and impede rational planning. Ideally ordinary citizens and schools will awaken and raise the issues to their local elected officials. The scope of impact is well illustrated in the attached Daily Post article today about Burlingame.

How will dozens of city councils respond to just three simple questions? If every city in the Bay Area increased housing as discussed in the Burlingame article, then

Who will take command and control of regional transportation to serve that population? Certainly no city government.

What are the locations and design of schools, playgrounds and parks? Certainly local school districts working with the city governments

Is there enough water to support new population growth in scenarios of long term severe or moderate droughts? Certainly to be determined by somebody.

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## Coalition forms to combat city's development plans

MENLO PARK -- A new coalition has formed to oppose what it calls "the dangerous direction that our elected officials are taking" on development.

Steve Schmidt, a former Menlo Park mayor, is a core member of the coalition called Voters for Equitable & Responsible Growth (VERG).

Schmidt said it grew out of discussions among community members in recent weeks while the city reviewed a Facebook expansion project and the General Plan update at the same time.

"We just don't find that the commissioners and council people, who are our stewards, are really asking the right questions about (impacts to) schools and parks and residents," said Neilson Buchanan, a member of the coalition.

Councilman Ray Mueller said the coalition is prematurely blaming the council for following a standard review process.

"I appreciate concerns that are being raised by VERG, but I think it's unfortunate they are blaming the council for reviewing and doing an impact analysis of what came out of the (General Plan) visioning process," Mueller said.

The group's members consist of residents and people who work in Menlo Park, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and Atherton. Along with Schmidt and Buchanan, Cafe Zoe owner Kathleen Daly, Belle Haven resident Martin Lamarque, Willows resident Jim Wiley and East Palo Alto Council of Tenants Education Fund president William Bryan Webster are core members who signed the coalition's announcement this week.

The coalition is concerned that neither the review of Facebook's expansion nor the review of the General Plan adequately addresses displacement of Belle Haven residents or traffic congestion.

In its announcement, the group accuses city officials of creating a climate favorable to office development.

"The impending Menlo Park General Plan Update will facilitate a boom of 50% population and 70% employee growth," the letter states. "This council has neglected to seek a balance between office buildings and the need for housing. Our communities are swamped by office commuters who have no choice but to seek housing in less expensive and distant communities."

Schmidt suggested the coalition would back a candidate for the council, which has two seats open in November.

"We're beating the bushes for at least one candidate to run against the incumbents," he said. The group has hired Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP, a San Francisco law firm that on Monday issued a 19-page letter to the city stating its analysis of the Facebook expansion at 301-309 Constitution Drive violates the California Environmental Quality Act.

"After reviewing the DEIR, we conclude that it does not comport with CEQA because it fails to analyze traffic and transportation, fails to propose adequate mitigation measures to

address those impacts, and fails to properly assess and mitigate for cumulative impacts both in Menlo Park and in the greater Bay Area region," the letter states. "As a result of the DEIR's serious inadequacies, there can be no meaningful public review of the Project's population and housing impacts and transportation impacts."

Mayor Rich Cline said early Thursday said he was hopeful the city would be able to work with VERG to address its concerns.

"Angry emails and opportunistic lawyers sending threatening letters is democracy in action," Cline wrote in a text to The Daily News. "We shouldn't be defensive or surprised -- just open-minded."

Mueller said the draft General Plan update has been reviewed by a number of city commissions, including the Transportation Commission on Wednesday, and none have noted any CEQA issues.

"The approval for the document is a long way off," he said. "Until it's ready and done and we have the support of the entire city, it's not done, period."

The letter contends Menlo Park's review of the Facebook project didn't take into account the "direct population growth" that will result from 6,550 new employees along Constitution Drive by 2019.

Daly said she joined the coalition after hearing that the city had omitted a comment letter submitted by an East Palo Alto coalition on the Facebook expansion. That coalition -- Envision, Transform, Build - East Palo Alto -- forced Menlo Park four years ago to create a planning document that zoned for an additional 1,000 affordable housing units.

"As a small business owner with some sense of responsibility to help make life better for my employees, housing is personal," Daly said. "There's no good options. ... We're all just one rent payment away from something that could take the roof over your head away."

Daly said she has had many discussions with Mueller about her housing concerns and trusts his judgement.

"When I've seen a concern in Menlo Park, in my experience he's always been there and is willing to listen," she said.

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## NEWS

# City's population could skyrocket

## Thousands of new homes may be built

BY EMILY MIBACH  
Daily Post Staff Writer

Burlingame may face a 30% population increase by adding 4,171 homes by 2040, according to the draft of the city's general plan, which the Planning Commission reviewed in a study session last night.

Currently, there are multiple projects planned to provide 1,027 to 1,099 homes in the next few years, which would be part of the 4,171 benchmark. These projected numbers are from the Association of Bay Area Governments, better known as ABAG, which sets quotas for additional housing in the region.

### Rezoning along Bayshore

One of the main points of the draft plan was looking at rezoning along Bayshore Freeway. Currently, there are warehouses along the freeway, and the general plan proposes to make the area a mixed-use zone, with homes and commercial uses.

However, during public comment, some residents were concerned about rising sea levels and how that could affect the zoning of a residential area.

"Just because there are flood zones doesn't mean we should ignore the

proposal," commission member Peter Gum said. "I'm not trying to be cavalier, we must address this issue, but I want to see this vision incorporated in the community."

### Can schools handle influx?

Another question raised by some residents in attendance, as well as some commission members, was how the schools would handle a large influx of residents.

Laura Stetson and Dan Amsden, of planning firm MIG, who presented the draft general plan yesterday, said they have been in contact with the school boards that cover the region in order to brace the schools for incoming students.

Stetson and Amsden also floated the ideas of reconfigurations along California Avenue and El Camino Real, which they said polled favorably with their general plan focus groups.

However, Stetson said that they only wanted to poll residents to see if they were in favor of the reconfigurations before making any plans. They didn't reveal any plans for reconfigurations during the meeting.

A draft of the general plan, which is supposed to project to 2040, could be reviewed by the City Council in early fall, Stetson and Amsden said. The last complete general plan for the city was in 1969.