

TIME SENSITIVE

Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024

To: Flood Triangle Neighbors

Subject: Concerns about Atherton's draft multifamily rezoning for Bay Road

Dear Neighbor,

I'm a longtime resident reaching out to you with major concerns about Atherton's proposed multifamily housing for Bay Road/Ringwood Avenue and how it will impact our homes and the Flood Triangle and adjacent Menlo Park neighborhoods.

Brief Background

Every eight years, the state of California requires each city to identify locations for new housing. The mandate requires that each city and county plan for its share of the state's housing needs at all levels of affordability.

In the cycle for the current housing element for 2023-2031, the state has determined that Atherton must add 348 new units. Thus far, Atherton has been unable to draft a plan acceptable to the state. As it has no commercial property within its city limits to use, Atherton's required multifamily housing (e.g., apartments, condominiums) must be folded into its existing residential areas. To date, Atherton has taken great pains to identify properties to rezone as multifamily that will impact its residents least. Most of these properties are on its boundaries, on busy streets like Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue which are under the jurisdiction of Menlo Park.

"The [Atherton] Housing Coalition had a ton of one-on-one meetings with [Atherton] council members, and in those meetings we were told 'don't worry, we'll take the perimeter properties, Bay, Ravenswood, Ringwood, and we'll limit the multifamily to that...'—from 8/14/24 article in The Almanac. See last section for link.

Proposed Sites Bordering Flood Triangle — Size and Density

Atherton has identified the following four residential properties at the corner of Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue for multifamily rezoning. Combined, they represent up to ~40+ units, up to four stories tall or 42', on adjacent parcels that are less than 1 acre each.

ADDRESS	LOT ACRES	PROPOSED NET RESIDENTIAL UNITS FROM ZONING OVERLAY
999 Ringwood Ave. (<u>Note</u> : this corner property actually fronts/has a driveway on Bay Rd.)	0.90	9+
352 Bay Rd.*	0.92	9+
318 Bay Rd.	0.94	9+
296 Bay Rd.	0.93	9+

If Atherton obtains approval from the state for this rezoning, the current residents at these addresses may remain and do nothing, sell to someone as a single family home, or sell to a developer for multifamily housing at any time during the current eight-year housing element. **Potentially, all of the properties in Atherton as well as nearby in Menlo Park will be in real estate limbo for eight years as disclosure of Atherton’s zoning plan is required.**

**Atherton’s proposed plan is already one factor delaying the sale of 352 Bay Road, Atherton, according to the listing agent.*

Negative Traffic Implications for Flood Triangle and Adjoining Menlo Park Neighborhoods

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) transportation analysis in Atherton’s HEU from 2024 determined that Atherton’s peripheral properties at the corner of Ringwood Avenue and Bay Road are “located in an area where the existing [Vehicle Miles Traveled] is 13.0 daily VMT per resident, which is above the established threshold of 12.4 daily VMT per resident and is referred to as being a ‘high-VMT area.’” A high VMT indicates negative public health impacts. The state would require mitigation to reduce this number. To achieve this, Atherton recommendations include—

- **a traffic light at the intersection of Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue,**
- **modifying eastbound and westbound traffic at Ringwood Avenue and Sonoma Avenue,**
- **and adding left-turn lanes on Ringwood Avenue and Bay Road necessitating full use of public right-of-way, removal of existing landscaping, and relocation of existing utilities.**

Is it fair for Atherton to recommend traffic mitigation measures on Menlo Park streets while at the same time adding more traffic by building high-density, multifamily units?

Pending Menlo Park Development within 1.3 miles of Atherton’s Proposed Four Sites

Menlo Park must add 3000 new housing units for the 2023-2031 housing element and its plan has been accepted by the state. Traffic in city and county neighborhoods east of El Camino Real like Flood Triangle will be greatly impacted by the accepted Menlo Park plan.

Within 1.3 miles of the proposed Atherton sites on Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue, Menlo Park will be adding as many as 1600 or more new housing units. Largest sites include office buildings.

LOCATION & NAME OF DEVELOPMENT	UNITS
SRI site: Parkline	800
Sunset Magazine site: Willow Park	665
James Flood School site: Ravenswood School District employee housing	88
VA site: Additional veterans' housing	62

As residents know, Flood Triangle and adjacent neighborhoods in Menlo Park are already impacted by significant commute and school traffic related to U.S. Route 101 (Marsh Road & Willow Road exits), Laurel School Lower Campus, and Menlo Atherton High School. (School traffic includes car, bike, and pedestrian travel.) Clearly Atherton needs to develop new multifamily housing sites on Atherton streets where it can manage the traffic impacts.

Conclusion

Atherton's rezoning on Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue goes against the spirit of California's housing mandate which directs **all cities to share in the responsibility of providing new housing**.

"You have these small, wealthy cities who are able to flex their political power within this obscure and arcane process, and they're able to shunt the number [of allocated affordable housing units] to their poorer neighbors," said Aaron Eckhouse, regional policy manager with California Yimby, an advocacy group. 'It's absolutely ridiculous that we let these wealthy and exclusionary cities continue to push housing out to other places.'" —from 12/6/20 article in *The Guardian*. See last section for link.

As a Menlo Park resident living in the 300 block of Bay Road, directly across the street from the proposed Atherton multifamily sites, I find Atherton's proposal personally distressing and fundamentally unfair. Atherton is attempting to push their housing requirement onto an already busy Menlo Park street of small, single-family homes in the Flood Triangle neighborhood. To honor the state's goals, Atherton should locate new multifamily housing within Atherton.

If you share my concerns, please take some or all of the two actions below. Significant feedback from the Menlo Park community—especially the Flood Triangle neighborhood—is vital for change to occur, and for Atherton to locate its four-story, ~40+ unit, multifamily housing within its city limits, not on already congested peripheral boundary streets that belong to other cities.

Regards,
Jane Garratt

Act Now

1. Attend Meetings

There's time for public comment at all meetings.

- August 28 at 6PM, Atherton Planning Commission Meeting, 80 Fair Oaks Lane.
- Sept/Oct meeting, date and time tbd, Atherton City Council Meeting, 80 Fair Oaks Lane. Look for details to come at <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/Calendar.aspx>

2. More Importantly, Send Letters

If you agree with any of the above, feel free to incorporate information in this letter in your messages. You may send the same message to all three entities listed below. Suggested subject line, “Atherton housing proposal for Menlo Park street.”

- **George Rodericks**, Atherton City Manager, grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us
- **Connor Finney**, State Analyst reviewing Atherton’s proposal, connor.finney@hcd.ca.gov
- **Office of California Housing and Community Development**,
housingelement@hcd.ca.gov
The state government office that reviews, rejects, or accepts a city’s housing plan (element).

Select Additional Information

Atherton 2023-2031 Housing Element. *(Please note, links from this page slow to load.)*

<https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/627/Housing-Element-Update>

Atherton Housing Element Update: Transportation Analysis. 13 February 2024.

https://files.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/299963-1/attachment/7rCF-PVDMjYyl4mJyEnXsY81Ix_SseeMG B1eCC-QHXyWZF99ZpNxtYJ9l9PQzM64VvMqniW5TzJ-d_Y0

Rabb, Eleanor. “Atherton’s draft housing element and environmental analysis show sites under consideration for multifamily housing.” *The Almanac*, August 14, 2024.

<https://www.almanacnews.com/atherton/2024/08/14/athertons-draft-housing-element-document-s-and-environmental-analysis-show-which-sites-are-under-consideration-for-multifamily-housing/>

Ho, Vivian. “‘Flexing their power’: how America’s richest ZIP code stays exclusive.” *The Guardian*, December 6, 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/dec/06/atherton-california-wealthy-zip-code-zoning>

Search *The Almanac* for more local articles on Atherton’s housing element within the last two+ years. <https://www.almanacnews.com/>

“[Atherton] was so concerned with retaining ‘its current character’ that it endorsed the closure of its Caltrain commuter train station, in part because the [S.B. 50] bill – which its author, the state senator Scott Wiener, has committed to resurrecting in some form – would have eliminated zoning restrictions specifically on transportation to allow for more high-density housing.” —from 12/6/20 article in *The Guardian*. See section above for link.


Bay Road rezoning proposal

Jane Garratt <>

Thu 8/22/2024 7:51 AM

To:Planning Commission <planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us>

Cc:Jane Garratt

 1 attachments (135 KB)

MPBayRd_BigConcern_AthRezone_Aug24.pdf;

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Commissioners,

As a resident of Bay Road, Menlo Park, I strongly object to Atherton's proposal to rezone the four Atherton properties on/at the corner of Bay Rd & Ringwood Ave to allow high and dense multifamily housing. The attached PDF details my concerns.

Regards,

Jane Garratt

Menlo Park, CA


As a Sent from my iPad

Re: Bay Road rezoning proposal - Additional Atherton Contact

Veselin Stoyanov

Thu 8/22/2024 9:38 AM

To: Jane Garratt <jane.garratt@gmail.com>; Planning Commission <planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us>

 1 attachments (135 KB)

MPBayRd_BigConcern_AthRezone_Aug24.pdf;

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

As a resident of Bay Road, Menlo Park, I strongly SUPPORT Atherton's proposal to rezone the four Atherton properties on/at the corner of Bay Rd & Ringwood Ave to allow high and dense multifamily housing.

I support related efforts to increase housing density in my neighborhood.

Thanks:

-- Ves Stoyanov
Menlo Park, CA

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jane Garratt** >

Date: Thu, Aug 22, 2024, 8:51 AM

Subject: Fwd: Bay Road rezoning proposal - Additional Atherton Contact

To: Jane Garratt

Dear Flood Triangle neighbor,

Please also send your letters of concern to the Atherton Planning Commission who will be voting on the proposal to rezone the four properties on Bay Road. They will be making a recommendation to the city council.

Email: planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us

Best,
Jane

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jane Garratt**

Date: Thu, Aug 22, 2024 at 7:51 AM

Subject: Bay Road rezoning proposal

To: <planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us>

CC: Jane Garratt

Commissioners,

As a resident of Bay Road, Menlo Park, I strongly object to Atherton's proposal to rezone the four Atherton properties on/at the corner of Bay Rd & Ringwood Ave to allow high and dense multifamily housing. The attached PDF details my concerns.

Regards,

Jane Garratt

[Menlo Park , CA](#)

As a Sent from my iPad

Atherton's proposal to rezone 4 properties on Bay for multifamily housing

Bob Giannini <>

Thu 8/22/2024 4:50 PM

To: Planning Commission <planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us>

Cc: Derek Lorenz

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

I am aware of the proposal for rezoning single family to 4 - multi family lots at Ringwood & Bay. I wanted to let you know of my concern. My husband and I live nearby in Menlo Park on Oakwood Place (for over 30 years). I am an architect and am familiar with the State housing quotas and the issues around them. I support the State's goal to provide this housing and in fact masterplanned a similar development in Palo Alto myself. That project, however was on El Camino where the traffic impacts could be addressed and mitigated. Even so, to date it has not been realized.

My concern at your proposed location is that it is already severely impacted, primarily due to the two schools on Ringwood that generate a great deal of traffic in the morning. It is also a connector to freeway onramps at Marsh and Willow. Many days Bay road becomes a parking lot for hours in the morning. I no longer even try to go to Starbucks on Marsh at 8AM due to the gridlock... not the end of the world - we bought a coffee maker. It seems so unlikely that the results of a traffic study to implement the projects you intend could ever be accepted, even with road changes you might suggest. It's hard to imagine that the small local roads just can be jiggered to handle the traffic of 4 multi family projects. I expect a developer trying to make the case would have a tough entitlement process. I know I would be there in opposition.

I would encourage you to explore locating this required housing in an area closer to collector roads that can handle the cars, pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists. Thanks for your time to read this.

Bob Giannini

Menlo Park, CA

Bay Road Rezoning Proposal

Candice van der Laan

Thu 8/22/2024 12:04 PM

To: Planning Commission <planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us>

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hello Commissioners,

As a long time resident of Bay Road, Menlo Park, I strongly object to Atherton's proposal to rezone the four Atherton properties on/at the corner of Bay Rd & Ringwood Ave to allow high density multifamily housing.

This would impose severe traffic implications for the Flood Triangle and adjacent neighborhoods in Menlo Park that are already impacted by significant commute and school traffic related to U.S. Route 101 (Marsh Road & Willow Road exits), Laurel School Lower Campus, and Menlo Atherton High School. (School traffic includes car, bike, and pedestrian travel.) Clearly Atherton needs to develop new multifamily housing sites on Atherton streets where it can manage the traffic impacts. Just this morning alone, with all schools in session (MA + Laurel Lower), it took 30 minutes to travel 0.2 miles on Ravenswood.

In addition, the pending development of the four new sites in Menlo Park (SRI site, Sunset Magazine, James Flood School site and Ravenswood School District employee housing and Flood Park rejuvenation will add even more traffic and congestion in our neighborhoods and city streets - when we don't have much room to begin with!

There have to be better alternatives especially when Atherton residents have so much more property per household versus Menlo Park. Why should we pay the price of denser living conditions when we are being good corporate citizens/taxpayers/neighbors in this community?

Atherton's rezoning on Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue goes against the spirit of California's housing mandate which directs all cities to share in the responsibility of providing new housing.

“You have these small, wealthy cities who are able to flex their political power within this obscure and arcane process, and they're able to shunt the number [of allocated affordable housing units] to their poorer neighbors,” said Aaron Eckhouse, regional policy manager with California Yimby, an advocacy group. “It's absolutely ridiculous that we let these wealthy and exclusionary cities continue to push housing out to other places.” —from 12/6/20 article in [The Guardian](#).

As a Menlo Park resident living in Flood Triangle, across the street from the proposed Atherton multifamily sites, I find Atherton's proposal distressing and unfair. Atherton is attempting to push their housing requirement onto an already busy Menlo Park street of small, single-family homes in the Flood Triangle neighborhood. To honor the state's goals, Atherton should locate new multifamily housing within Atherton.

Thank you,
Candice van der Laan

Atherton housing proposal for Menlo Park street

Vickie Peng

Thu 8/22/2024 10:53 AM

To: Vickie Peng

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hello -

I am writing to express my strong concerns about Atherton's proposal to rezone properties at Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue for multifamily housing. This plan unfairly shifts the burden of Atherton's housing obligations onto Menlo Park streets, which are already congested and impacted by current and upcoming developments. The proposed rezoning could lead to significant traffic issues, further straining our infrastructure, while undermining the spirit of California's housing mandate, which is meant to distribute the responsibility fairly among all cities.

As a resident of Menlo Park directly affected by this proposal, I urge you to oppose the current rezoning plan. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Vickie Peng

From: Jeff Bui

Subject: Atherton Multi-Family Housing Proposal

Date: August 25, 2024 at 4:45:09 PM PDT

To: "grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us" <grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us>

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr. Rodericks,

I'm reaching out to you with major concerns about Atherton's proposed multi-family housing for Bay Road/Ringwood Avenue and how it will impact our homes, Flood Triangle and adjacent Menlo Park neighborhoods.

I was born and raised in Menlo Park and have seen how real estate density has changed traffic patterns, infrastructure and quality of life over the years. Atherton's proposal to rezone four single family properties at the corner of Ringwood and Bay Road (296/318/352 Bay and 999 Ringwood) for multi-family housing places a significant hardship and undue burden on the adjacent Menlo Park neighborhoods.

For starters, access to the properties in question relies on Menlo Park streets, so any additional density will need to be absorbed onto the already crowded Bay/Ringwood thoroughfares. This area has unique and heavy traffic flow to begin with, since there are two schools on Ringwood and Bay serves as only one of two connections between Willow and Marsh. Moreover, the proposed multi-family housing unit at Flood Park for the Ravenswood School District is going to add more vehicle traffic on Bay and the surrounding streets. Couple the Atherton and Flood Park projects with the Parkline at SRI and Sunset Magazine sites and you have a recipe for even more tremendous traffic congestion, not only during busy morning and afternoon commutes, but throughout the entire day.

As a home owner on Oakwood Place, our street currently sees a large number of cars cut down Del Norte during the morning commute, which violates a "no-turn" traffic law between 7-9 am that applies to everyone, including local residents. These cars then turn onto Oakwood and back onto Ringwood to bypass a line of cars backed up on Bay from the intersection at Ringwood/Bay. Adding more cars from Atherton's multi-housing project to this already congested area isn't fair to the local residents or commuters, nor is it appropriate for Atherton to recommend traffic mitigation solutions on Menlo Park streets for their project, since it's out of their jurisdiction. Finally, it is deeply irresponsible and unjust for Atherton to place these multi-family units on the periphery of their city

limits, especially when they are not close or within easy walking distance to any large-scale public transportation lines or local businesses (i.e. grocery stores, shopping, restaurants, etc.).

The California housing mandate directs all cities to share in the responsibility of providing new housing, so I implore Atherton to find a more central location for these multi-family units. I find Atherton's proposal to be personally upsetting, fundamentally unfair and not consistent with the spirit of the law, since it adversely and disproportionately effects local Menlo Park residents for what is Atherton's mandate.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey Bui, MD, MS

Col (Ret), USAF, MC

Menlo Park, CA

From: Alice Newton

Subject: Don't rezone 4 single-family properties on Bay Road

Date: August 23, 2024 at 2:32:32 PM PDT

To: "grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us" <grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us>

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

To George Rodericks, Atherton City Manager:

During the 37 years we have lived on Del Norte Avenue, Menlo Park, near Bay Road, we have witnessed commute traffic on Bay Road between Marsh Road and Willow increase and increase as those roads connect Dumbarton Bridge commuters to Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Redwood City and other destinations. On Ringwood, commute traffic includes vehicles to and from M-A High School and Laurel School which are on Ringwood and Peninsula School in Menlo Oaks. Many students bike or walk to these schools on Ringwood. Bicyclists also commute on Ringwood on both sides of Bay Road to cross Highway 101 via the footbridge on their way to and from work in east Menlo Park and to Tide Academy High School. Making that situation even more difficult and dangerous are the cars often parked along Ringwood under Atherton's "No Parking Anytime" signs. Cut-through traffic has occurred for decades on Del Norte Ave, Oakwood Place, and many streets in the Flood Triangle neighborhood between Van Buren and Bay Road for decades as people rush to get a better position at the Bay/Ringwood intersection or to avoid the intersection and get onto Bay Road. Cut-through traffic also occurs in the Atherton neighborhood of Lindenwood and would increase. It is inevitable that these traffic problems will only get worse with nearby developments such as at the old Flood School site, and developments coming on Ravenswood and Middlefield roads as well as mid-week users of the sports fields, courts, and new all-abilities playground in the renovated Flood Park. Adding more high-density housing right at the already problematic area of Bay Road and Ringwood would be extremely misguided and increase these already severe traffic congestion and safety issues.

Sincerely,

Alice Newton

Menlo Park, CA