

Public Comments (Digital Commenter) – Safety

Topic	Public Comments
Hazardous Materials	<p>One of the hazardous materials overlooked or ignored by the government, including Palo Alto's police and City Council, is the toxic brew stirred up by leaf blowers. Our noses are insulted by the combustion products of a gasoline powered leaf blowers, our ears are assaulted by the screeching whine of the blowers, and our eyes are irritated and watering from the dust and debris blown about.</p> <p>There is no reason for gasoline powered blowers in residential neighborhoods. In addition, they have been against the law for many years now. Electric blowers are bad enough, they kick up a cloud of dust, debris, fecal matter, spores, pollen, etc. and have an annoying sound.</p> <p>Perhaps it is time to emphasize enforcement and in addition to fining the gardeners, levy a fine against the home owner whose yard is blown by a gasoline powered blower. The fine should be increased for each subsequent violation. This should quickly put an end to gasoline powered blowers, or else provide the city with another revenue stream.</p>
Solid Waste	<p>The current trash versus recyclable materials guidelines can be somewhat confusing and take up a lot of kitchen space that is needed for other things.</p> <p>I think that instead of requiring individual residents sort items for discard into several categories, thus requiring the City to have several trucks passing through each neighborhood each week, the City should change to Single Stream recycling and waste disposal. I have seen this work very well in other places. For example, it is available in Cortlandt Manor, NY (near Peekskill, NY) and the residents like it. All items to be discarded are placed into a single container which is collected weekly and sorted at a central facility.</p> <p>This could save the City the cost of running three trucks each week, decrease air pollution, general neighborhood irritation from the noise and three instead of one truck cluttering up narrow streets.</p>
Natural Hazards	<p>1) Fire hazards are best mitigated by studying the local risks and developing a reasonable risk assessment and working with homeowners. Based on current guidelines, establishing a Clean and Green 30 foot perimeter, and 100 feet of reasonable defensible space is the modern CalFire solution. Based on the Loma Fire, thousands of acres in a dry season can be hit by wild fire in hours. This can place citizens and state workers at risk. Defensible space is the best safety option but requires hard work and tremendous effort. Rewarding that effort by working with those homeowners who are responsible and listening to concerns is the best option.</p>

	<p>2) Earthquake retrofit needs to be promoted, through low cost permitting and those with experience in the building department. This is not a planning issue, but a building issue. In an earthquake, the earthquake will damage infrastructure in minutes, and liquidate the Earthquake insurance pool very quickly. Earthquake retrofit is the solution but again is hard work. Installing Simpson ties and solid plywood reinforcement with headers is the appropriate solution. This is not a theoretical issue but is common sense. This takes hard work, as the Simpson ties have to be individually nailed, and you are working hard to prepare for the outlier scenario. Having said that, every home standing is a community asset, and every damaged home becomes a community liability, so the city wants to protect assets and prevent liability. There are years to prepare for an earthquake, so focusing on home improvement is the key.</p>
Natural Hazards	<p>POLICY N-52 needs to more closely consider future sea level rise and plan/zone accordingly.</p>
Infrastructure	<p>The intersection of Churchill and Paly is very dangerous for the pedestrians (mostly students) since there is no traffic light or stop sign. And when school ends every day, it is very hard for cars to get on to Churchill east bound from Paly parking lot.</p> <p>Suggestion: put a 2-way stop sign at that intersection. Or during the time when school ends every day, restrict that cars can only turn right from Paly parking lot onto the Churchill west bound, and add a right turn lane on Churchill so cars can turn right onto El Camino without waiting in the single lane (there is plenty of space at the corner of Churchill and El Camino to add a right turn lane).</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Maintaining pedestrian and bike-friendly streets and SIDEWALKS on a regular schedule. Fix street lighting: new lamps may be energy friendly but are too high above the canopies to light the sidewalks. Since sidewalks are in appalling shape, it is hazardous to walk at night.</p>