



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio  
District 6

**SUBJECT:** 10.2 GENERAL PLAN  
AMENDMENT EVANS  
LANE

**DATE:** June 25, 2016

APPROVED:

*Pierluigi Oliverio* SS

## RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve General Plan Amendment
2. Direct staff to explore permanent housing

## BACKGROUND

Approving the general plan amendment as stated affirms the city's intent in purchasing the property in 1998, thus I am in favor of the GP amendment (even though if I was on the city council in 1998, I likely would have voted for this land to remain commercial). The Evans Lane parcel is relatively large, city owned, and is conveniently located near a light rail station. Development opportunities such as this are rare, so I believe it is in the best interests of the city to direct professional planning staff to review the best long term uses of this parcel, and provide various alternatives to the short term, transitional housing proposal.

The area surrounding the proposed site is challenged by a very unusual road network that isolates the neighborhood from the rest of the city. It is also presently characterized by a concentration of low income housing developments, some of which have been a challenge to manage. The number of calls for law enforcement in this area is significant in comparison to other neighborhoods, and has generated warranted concern from adjacent residents and commercial tenants.

I believe housing staff should engage private developers in short order on a potential partnership to build permanent housing rather than temporary transitional homeless housing. The city ownership of this six acre parcel provides great leverage in creating a land deal that could produce a significant number of permanent low income housing units. Focus could be on serving veterans, battered women with children, and the physically disabled.

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I would also suggest staff explore the possibility of dedicating one and half acres of the six acres as a small park for a community garden and dog run. The existing residents of River Glen Mobile Home Senior Park, Ventana apartments, Catalonia apartments and Curtner Gardens SRO have no existing facilities of this nature. A small park in this area would still leave ample space for a housing development that would permanently shelter more people than the temporary transitional housing proposal.

Alternatively, there are two significant ballot measures that could potentially supply valuable funds for low income housing projects (\$950 million county ballot measure, and \$3 billion from state funds). Either or both sources of funding could be used to finance permanent housing at this location. Housing or Planning staff may want to consider starting an EIR process (if found necessary) to allow for fast tracking of such a proposal.

The current proposal (that has not been approved) has been met with strong opposition from immediate neighbors and other residents from the surrounding area. I attended the one Planning Department led community meeting regarding the General Plan amendment proposal, and it was immediately apparent that the overwhelming majority of the speakers, regardless of gender, age, race or income level, were against the proposal. I even witnessed a resident of the adjacent SRO and a County of Santa Clara homeless caseworker who both spoke against the transitional homeless housing project, two speakers that I would have expected to be sympathetic to the proposal but in the end, were not.

In conclusion, if a private land deal cannot not be achieved, or if county/state housing low income housing funds fail to materialize, then the council should revisit a temporary transitional homeless project in November/December 2016. During the interim, the Housing Department could bring a verbal progress report to the CED committee in August/September regarding a potential land deal.

In short, my memo allows for permanent housing alternatives that in the end may be the best long term solution that also builds community for the existing residents of Evans Lane and adjacent neighborhoods. Thank you to my council colleagues for their sincere consideration.