

## Petition

To: Mayor and Town Council

From: Julie McClintock for CHALT

Date: September 19, 2018

CHALT wants the Town Council to step back and re-evaluate its current emphasis on land use intensification—e.g., construction of 90-ft tall apartment buildings— in selected areas of town. Instead, we ask our town leaders to use the “Charting Our Future” land use map as an opportunity to examine carefully the Town’s financial and ecological constraints, the amount of new construction either already approved (but not built) and in the pipeline, and, most importantly, take into account the significant impacts of climate change, seen most dramatically in our frequent flooding events.

A recent town survey asked citizens what they thought should happen in various selected parts of town. The survey, however, overlooks our physical infrastructure capacity and the financial limits of paying for them. There is a disconnect.

- For example, the Town government has encouraged high-density development on major transportation corridors, such as MILK Blvd and Fordham Blvd, assuming adequate service for these areas from our excellent bus system. But our fare-free bus transit system is struggling to replace its fleet of old buses and lacks the resources to increase service to meet all the new demand we have created. So a well intentioned policy results in traffic gridlock
- Another example is the excellent work underway in the subwatershed studies of our Bolin and Booker Creek. We’ve learned we could only afford 1/10 of the needs for one watershed. The good hydrological information does not get transferred to the land use map where the Council determines where buildings get built.

Eastgate is an integral part of the Ephesus-Fordham district, now renamed “Blue Hill”, and it floods extensively and will continue to do so. Every business took on 9 inches of water after Hurricane Florence. This flooding happens for two reasons: (1) changing climate conditions, and (2) upstream development.

The economic damage caused by this flood event hurts business and our local merchants, flooded homes hurt our residents, and flood waters are unhealthy for everyone.

Here are specific steps we recommend:

1. Add an overlay map to the land use map that maps all flood prone areas; update the map every 5 years as flooding conditions change and grow.
2. Ask the Planning Department to reevaluate areas presently selected as a growth areas such as “Blue Hill” and report back to the Council if floods can be managed and if they can’t change boundary lines. It is nonsensical, costly and dangerous to continue to build in areas destined to flood.
3. Start tracking the amount of impervious surface that we are adding to each watershed and make regular reports to the Council.
4. Ask one of our stormwater planners such as Alison Weakley to speak to the Council about land use decisions and stormwater so we can all learn more.