

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PTT

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### E. Palo Alto can 'develop' without huge projects

**ASSUMING THAT** the word "develop" means putting up buildings, should East Palo Alto attempt to match or outstrip Palo Alto and Menlo Park in terms of development? Why are less developed communities — e.g. Atherton, Portola Valley, Los Altos, Woodside — never considered as appropriate models for East Palo Alto?

The common cry is that East Palo Alto needs to expand its tax base in order to provide services — mostly better police protection. Yet, according to recent disclosures, the sum needed to pay for adequate police services is really not all that great. An additional million dollars in the budget would, apparently, more than suffice. Modest amounts of development and sound

management, logically, should bring in this increased revenue. Also, the present, welcome coordination of police services between San Mateo County and the city shows promise for great improvement in police services at no extra cost to East Palo Alto.

However, increasingly forthright statements favoring massive development here are being made from inside and outside of the city. Little thought is being given to the preservation of East Palo Alto's historical, agricultural and rural heritage. A recent Times Tribune article boldly announced what city leaders have been hesitant to say in public: The city's longstanding agricultural industry is being phased out to make room for commercial and multi-unit residential development.

It is not too late for city leaders to turn away from this mistaken course. Economic development should not be equated with the construction of buildings (especially large ones). Even street vendors can play a vital role in the economic development of a community. It would be better to develop the practical skills of our people than to develop the land.

Ironically, Times Tribune editorials repeatedly talk about the devastating global ecological problems we face. Clearly, the pace of urban development around the Bay Area does not present a model of how to avert ecological catastrophe, here or elsewhere in the world.

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EAST PALO ALTO