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News Digest

East Palo Alto housing forum on Monday

In the last two-and-a-half years, the amount of affordable housing units in East Palo Alto has nearly doubled from 235 to 451.

So out of more than 7,000-plus total units, nearly 6 percent of them are now permanently affordable.

"That's an enormous number for any jurisdiction," according to Housing Services Director Lisa Hamburger.

At 6 p.m. Monday, March 3 inside City Hall, the city will present a report on the state of housing in the city. "It's really a celebration of accomplishments to date," Hamburger said.

In part, the growth of affordable units is due to tools given by the council and Planning Commission to Hamburger's department, such as a zoning ordinance that requires that each new development provide affordable units.

"I'm trying to give East Palo Altans a fighting chance in a very crazy, local economy," Hamburger said. "I can't fight gentrification, but we can — as a community — be smart about the economic and sociodemographic forces and use them as tools to get what we need done here."

All in all, the total housing stock in East Palo Alto has increased nearly 10 percent over the last few years. ■

—Bill D'Agostino