

PROPOSED 80 WILLOW ROAD PROJECT, MENLO PARK

80 Willow Road Would Build Less Than Half the Homes Its Own Workforce Needs

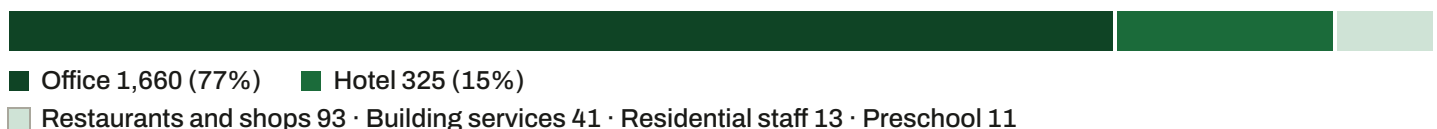
N17 Development’s proposed 80 Willow Road project, on the former Sunset magazine campus, would build 665 homes alongside offices, a 130-room hotel the developer markets as 5-star, and restaurants and shops. Using conservative assumptions, Menlo Forward estimates the project would bring about 2,140 jobs. Housing those workers would take about 1,430 homes at the ratio many planners consider balanced. Rather than easing Menlo Park’s housing shortage, the project would add to it.

2,143 jobs on site, 93% of them in the office and hotel	1,429 homes needed to house that workforce	665 homes the project would build [1]	764 homes short of housing its own workforce
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Homes needed vs. homes built



Where the 2,143 jobs come from



Where Menlo Forward stands

We support housing on this site. We do not support the office space and hotel. Together they account for nearly 2,000 of the project’s estimated 2,143 jobs, bringing more workers than the project could house. Removing them would mean the homes built here help ease Menlo Park’s housing shortage rather than add to it. The City’s May 6, 2026 determination makes a related point: it found the project meets the residential square-footage requirement to count as a “housing development project” under state law, and pointed to the hotel as the reason it still doesn’t qualify.

We also believe this project should get an official housing needs assessment so that decisions rest on official figures rather than estimates like ours.

No official housing needs assessment exists for the proposed 80 Willow Road project. In Menlo Park, these assessments have been prepared alongside the environmental impact reports for projects such as Meta’s Willow Village and Menlo Portal, under a 2017 settlement with East Palo Alto [7][8]. Both were prepared for the City by Keyser Marston Associates, which we refer to below as the City consultant. Without an official assessment for this project, it falls to neighborhood groups like ours to do the math. Wherever we had a choice, we used the conservative figure. The published figures we started from are listed on page 3.

Step 1: We calculated the number of jobs from each use

USE	SIZE	ASSUMPTION	JOBS	BASIS
Office	332,000 sq ft [1]	200 sq ft per worker	1,660	MPK21 runs about 185; we rounded up to 200 to be conservative [3][4]
Hotel	130 rooms, 5-star [1][2]	2.5 staff per room	325	Low end for 5-star hotels, which run 2.5 to 3+ per room [5][6]
Restaurants	~11,300 sq ft (4 of 6 tenants)	144 sq ft per worker	79	City consultant’s dining ratio, Willow Village [7]
Bakery, ice cream	~5,700 sq ft (2 of 6 tenants)	400 sq ft per worker	14	City consultant’s counter-service ratio, Menlo Portal [8]
Building services	349,000 sq ft office + retail	1 per 8,470 sq ft	41	City consultant’s ratio, Willow Village [7]
Residential staff	665 homes	1 per 50 homes	13	City consultant’s ratio, Willow Village [7]
Preschool	~3,000 sq ft Montessori [2]	State licensing ratios	11	State child care licensing rules (Title 22) [9]
Total jobs on site			2,143	<i>Carried into Step 2</i>

Retail figures assume equal space for each of the six tenants the developer describes [2].

Step 2: We calculated how many homes those workers need

Planners generally treat 1.3 to 1.7 jobs per home as a balanced ratio. We used the midpoint, 1.5 [10][11].

Jobs on site (Step 1)	2,143
÷ Balanced ratio, jobs per home	1.5
= Homes needed to house the workforce	1,429
– Homes the project would build [1]	665
= Gap	764 homes
Share of needed homes the project builds	47%

From the public record

Our estimates start from how the City and the developer describe the project.

- › The City's April 13, 2026 review describes the project as 665 homes, 332,000 sq ft of office, a 164,000 sq ft hotel with 130 rooms, and 17,000 sq ft of retail. [1]
- › The developer, N17 Development, markets the hotel on its own website as a "130 room, 5-star hotel" and describes the retail as a bakery, an ice cream shop and four restaurants. [2]
- › Meta's MPK21, a 2018 office building in Menlo Park, is about 524,000 sq ft and was reported to house more than 2,800 employees, roughly 185 sq ft per worker. [3][4]

Checks and caveats

- › **What we left out.** Jobs created off site by residents' spending, which the City consultant counted for Willow Village [7]; staff for the pools at the residences and "the club" [2]; and crews for the 4.9 acres of open space the developer describes [2]. Each would raise the number of homes needed, so leaving them out keeps our estimate conservative.
- › **The developer's own office figure.** The developer's website lists 324,000 sq ft of office, slightly less than the City's 332,000 [1][2]. Using it, the gap is 737 homes and the project still builds less than half the homes its workforce needs.
- › **Office occupancy.** Meta's MPK21 figures date from the building's 2018 opening, before hybrid work became common. The future office tenant for the proposed project is not known.

About Menlo Forward

Menlo Forward is a volunteer-run community organization founded to promote smart growth in Menlo Park and neighboring cities. We support new housing, including affordable housing, and believe new development should add homes in step with the jobs it brings. At 80 Willow Road, we support the housing and oppose the office space and hotel.

SOURCES

- [1] [City of Menlo Park, 80 Willow Road Fifth Consistency Review, Apr. 13, 2026](https://menlopark.gov/80willow). menlopark.gov/80willow
- [2] [N17 Development, Willow Park project website \(willowpark.life\)](https://willowpark.life). Accessed Sept. 24, 2026
- [3] [Metal Architecture, "Real-Life Facebook Connections" \(MPK21 size and headcount\)](https://metalarchitecture.com). metalarchitecture.com
- [4] [Phys.org, Facebook's new Menlo Park office building, Sept. 2018](https://phys.org). phys.org
- [5] [Stay Experience, staff-to-room ratios in luxury hotels](https://stay-experience.com). stay-experience.com
- [6] [MMCG, the hospitality market by chain scale](https://mmcginvest.com). mmcginvest.com
- [7] [Keyser Marston Associates for the City of Menlo Park, Willow Village Housing Needs Assessment \(Draft EIR Appendix 3.13\), Apr. 2022](https://menlopark.gov). menlopark.gov, Willow Village project page
- [8] [Keyser Marston Associates for the City of Menlo Park, Menlo Portal Housing Needs Assessment \(EIR Appendix D\), 2020](https://menlopark.gov). menlopark.gov, Menlo Portal project page
- [9] California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12: licensed child care centers
- [10] [HousingForward Virginia, jobs-housing balance basics \(citing Ewing, 1996\)](https://housingforwardva.org). housingforwardva.org
- [11] [Sustainable San Mateo County, housing analysis](https://sustainablesanmateo.org). sustainablesanmateo.org



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*Menlo Forward estimates, not City figures. Menlo Forward is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. EIN: 99-4589465.
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