



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning  
817 Montgomery Street  
Mountain View, CA 94041

June 12, 2017

Mountain View City Council  
City Hall, 500 Castro Street  
PO Box 7540  
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: 938 and 954 Villa Street Historic Resources

Dear Mayor Rosenberg and City Council members:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed elimination of two historic resources to accommodate an office and restaurant development at 938 and 954 Villa Street. We are concerned about the loss of historic resources that contribute to downtown Mountain View's unique character or sense of place.

Historic buildings tend to have characteristics that contribute to downtown vibrancy and economic viability. Resources such as 938 and 954 Villa Street encourage walking and increase walkability because of their varied and interesting eye level features. They make our downtowns more attractive as lunchtime and nighttime entertainment destinations. As the public turns to online shopping place making, or attractiveness of our commercial districts as distinct destinations, is becoming more central to their vitality. Historic commercial streetscapes and buildings are often featured when marketing the attractiveness of city life. They help people feel comfortable with a more sustainably urban lifestyle. And they give community members a sense of belonging and a sense of history.

According to the staff report both 938 and 954 Villa Street fit criteria that would qualify them as historic resources under California law. The proposed project, therefore, would be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All steps in the CEQA process must be followed.

The staff report indicates that, as one step in the process, the project would require a Statement of Overriding Considerations. The MVCSP is concerned that the proposed development would eliminate historic resources while increasing the jobs/housing imbalance. It seems, therefore, that a Statement of

Overriding Considerations may be inappropriate in this situation. The project may also set a negative precedent, making it more likely that we lose other downtown historic resources.

Given the concerns, we recommend that council pause to consider alternatives to the project as proposed. Many Peninsula and South Bay cities, including Redwood City, Campbell, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto and San Jose, have comprehensive historic preservation planning processes and incentive tools that may suggest a better path forward for the properties at 938 and 954 Villa Street.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

*Alison Hicks*

Alison Hicks  
for the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc:

Eric Anderson, Senior Planner

Randy Tsuda, Community Development Director

Terry Blount, Planning Manager/Assistant Community Development Director

Lorrie Brewer, City Clerk

**About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning**

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a group of local volunteers dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

For more information, see <http://www.mvcsp.org>.

To contact us, send email to [mvcsp.info@gmail.com](mailto:mvcsp.info@gmail.com).