



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

April 17, 2017

Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

Subject: North Bayshore Precise Plan Transportation Impact Analysis

Dear Environmental Planning Commissioners:

MVCSP members were able to study Appendix J of the North Bayshore Precise Plan EIR (NBPP EIR), and we provided formal comments to the EIR. We had the opportunity to discuss a number of the key assumptions with City Staff and the EIR and transportation analysis consulting team in a meeting on April 7, 2017. We are very pleased with the presentation of the NB Transportation Impact Analysis (NBTIA) for this April 19th EPC meeting that lays out the key assumptions and the findings of the sensitivity analysis in an easy-to-understand manner. One of formal comments of the MVCSP letter on the NBPP EIR is that a general public summary document be prepared for the NBPP EIR. The narrative in the Staff report is exactly the type of understandable presentation that should be provided for the key transportation section of the overall NBPP EIR summary. MVCSP's detailed EIR comments can be found at: <http://www.mvcsp.org/news-and-updates/mvcsp-comments-on-north-bayshore-precise-plan-dseir-to-planning-division>

There are three key assumptions utilized in the transportation model analysis that are not consistent with the vision and standards of the NBPP Precise Plan that promote a walkable, bikeable complete neighborhood in a mixed use activity center. In detail, MVCSP has recommended that these key assumptions in the NBTIA and NBPP EIR be changed:

- The parking standard is too high, and should be set to .6 to reflect the "new mobility paradigm" in North Bayshore. 0.6 residential parking spaces per unit is the blended rate in the NBPP and the standard parking rate of 1.2 is utilized in the NBTIA analysis.
- The percentage of SOV travel for residential trips leaving North Bayshore in the transportation model should be reduced from 77% to 60% (again reflecting the new mobility paradigm). The City Council should adopt a residential SOV goal similar to the 45% SOV goal for inbound commuters.
- The internal trip percentage (trips that begin and end in North Bayshore) should be increased from 27% to 35%. Development sponsors should have the flexibility to establish policies that enable a higher level of trip internalization that would increase the internalization rate.

Providing consistent assumptions to the vision of the NBPP would help to maximize the amount of housing that keeps within the North Bayshore gateway capacity.

It must be stressed that MVCSP fully supports a phasing in of the parking standards, so that initial residential developments can have higher parking levels; however, overall, the average standard for full buildout of North Bayshore should be 0.6 parking spaces per unit. As reflected in the NBTIA, there is a strong correlation of parking standards and person trip generation.

Let us directly provide direct input to the Staff questions in the staff report:

EPA Question No. 1: Stevens Creek bridge crossing.

MVCSP has long supported a high occupancy vehicle bridge crossing over Stevens Creek for many of the transportation benefits identified in the staff report. We are pleased with the EIR finding that either of the bridge options can be mitigated to less than significant levels through application of the mitigation measures. The increase in the gateway capacity according to Table 1 enables significantly more housing in North Bayshore, and we would like EPC to endorse a policy for the Stevens Creek bridge crossing. The MVCSP preference is for the Charleston crossing, as it provides better connectivity with the Charleston Transit Boulevard should result in a higher likelihood of a higher transit mode share in North Bayshore.

EPA Question No. 2: Does the EPC recommend adjusting the Precise Plan's household characteristics for unit size mix and/or parking ratios.

MVCSP has been supportive of the target unit size mixes and the average 0.6 parking spaces per unit that were in the 2016 Draft NBPP because they are very consistent with the vision for North Bayshore. As cited earlier, we believe that early residential developments can have more parking per unit since the transportation alternatives and infrastructure has not been fully developed. However, we feel that the average 0.6 parking spaces per unit is an important element of having a car-light environment in North Bayshore.

What needs to be changed in the Final NBPP EIR is that 0.6 parking spaces per unit should be for the Proposed Project and not the 1.2 parking standard included for the analysis.

EPC Question No. 3: Does the EPC support adding Precise Plan action items for new gateway feasibility studies for a Charleston Road underpass and/or a Stevens Creek transit/carpool bridge.

Table 1 on Page 17 of the April 19 staff report shows the importance of improved gateway capacity to enable up to 9,850 dwelling units in North Bayshore. Therefore, we are supportive of gateway feasibility studies that would enable additional high occupancy vehicle (transit, vanpools, carpools), pedestrian, and bicycle trips. We are against any gateway capacity improvements for single occupancy vehicles during the peak commute periods.

MVCSP has a number of questions on the potential for the Charleston underpass. Many of these questions will need to be addressed during the detailed feasibility study.

EPC Question No. 4: Does the EPC support adding a Precise Plan policy and action item regarding a residential vehicle trip performance standard.

In short, this was part of the formal comment letter we sent for NBPP DSEIR, and we repeat it here from our April 17 comment letter to Martin Alkire for your reference:

“Of the 73% of future North Bayshore residents who are presumed to work outside of North Bayshore, it is assumed that 77% of the residents commuting to jobs outside North Bayshore will drive alone, a very similar figure to the existing average for all Mountain View residents today. This figure is not reflective of the 2016 Draft NBPP vision of a car-light environment, nor does it reflect mode shift potential to transit, bicycling, and walking by residents based on the proposed significant transit and active transportation investments planned for North Bayshore.

“The vision for the 2016 Draft NBPP is to have less driving and more alternative transportation use by both residents and employees of North Bayshore. To this end, the 2016 Draft NBPP requires a 45% single occupant vehicle (SOV) goal, and this is captured in the transportation modelling. There are requirements for aggressive residential TDM that would have a goal of substantially less SOV use than the average residential commuter in Mountain View. While no goal for residential SOV use has been established for resident commuting outside of North Bayshore, the North Bayshore vision assumes less driving, and this should be reflected in this key assumption for the Proposed Project.

“From the April 7th discussion, we were told that many of the transit improvements being designed or proposed were included in the EIR analysis. However, we are unsure if this includes some or all of: the electrification of Caltrain, reversible dedicated bus lane on Shoreline, light rail extension to North Bayshore, and Automated Guideway system between Caltrain and North Bayshore. This will provide significant public transportation alternatives for North Bayshore residents. Please specifically document what transportation improvements are included in the transportation modelling.

“For the office commute trips, the achievement and sustainability of the 45% SOV goal is very dependent on the existing private transit network provided in North Bayshore. This network will very likely be available for residents commuting out of North Bayshore as well as office commuters into North Bayshore. If not, this could be an important mitigation measure. We are assuming that currently the 2017 NB DSEIR does not reflect the availability of private transit leaving North Bayshore. We are requesting that both the substantial investment in private and public transportation be considered for the mode share assumption for North Bayshore residential work trips outside of North Bayshore in the transportation modelling.

“We are therefore requesting that at least a 60% SOV goal (or a goal adopted by the City Council) for residential driving be utilized in transportation modelling for residential commute trips leaving North Bayshore as part of the Proposed Project. This is a reasonable assumption reflective of the vision for the North Bayshore.”

EPC Question No. 5: Does the EPC support a Precise Plan action item to study the feasibility of reducing SOV rates for office?

The current SOV goal of 45% is very ambitious, and there are not good comparables for achieving and, more importantly, sustaining such a low SOV rate in a suburban business park setting. MVCSP does feel that, with the transformation to a mixed use development and with Google providing the leadership in implementing aggressive TDM measures, it is a long term feasible goal. MVCSP is not supportive of reducing SOV rates for office development, but instead having a robust performance monitoring programs with sufficient tools to affect commute modes in the future. We address the importance of performance monitoring, a feedback loop, and a robust toolbox of carrots and sticks if the 45% goal is not achieved in addressing EPC Question #7 below.

EPC Question No. 6: Does the EPC support a Precise Plan action item to include a congestion pricing feasibility study?

This is a subject area that MVCSP has not had sufficient time to discuss, and we are therefore not going to recommend a position on this. However, as author of this letter, I am more supportive of paid parking for both office and residential uses if performance monitoring finds that mobility goals are not met.

EPC Question No. 7: Should the Precise Plan include a North Bayshore District Transportation Performance Monitoring policy and action item?

MVCSP strongly supports a robust monitoring policy. The assumptions utilized above in the transportation impact analysis are informed professional judgement and have a significant range of uncertainty as to their effectiveness. The major mixed use development and new mobility paradigm need to have regular performance monitoring. The proposed policy in the staff report needs to have more specific policies for considering carrots and sticks if the performance standards are not met. Carrots include increased financial incentives for considering commute alternative offered by employers and residential managers. Sticks include providing the potential for paid parking measures as an interim step before considering congestion pricing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NBTIA and Staff questions to the EPC.

Sincerely,



Cliff Chambers
On behalf of Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc:

Terry Blount, EPC Staff Liaison

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.