



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
Mountain View, CA 94041

February 28, 2016

City Council
City of Mountain View

Re: Agenda Item 8.1, March 1, 2016: North Bayshore Precise Plan Residential Uses Policy Framework

Honorable Mayor Showalter and Members of the City Council:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning, a group of Mountain View residents concerned with our city's sustainability, would like to comment on item 8.1, North Bayshore Precise Plan Residential Uses Policy Framework

We applaud the Community Development staff for an excellent staff report on the North Bayshore Precise Plan Residential Use Policy Framework. The report reflects the consensus input from the 2015 community meetings and advances the input provided by the Environmental Planning Commission and direction provided by the City Council in November 2015. The residential policy framework for North Bayshore Precise Plan has an excellent potential for enabling sustainable mixed use development including up to 10,250 housing units. Succinctly summarized, it is city planning at its best!

The staff report poses several excellent questions for City Council direction. We would like to comment on several of these:

1. *Providing residential development incentives is absolutely critical to actually building the neighborhood areas in North Bayshore.* Pragmatically, the landowner with existing commercial development needs to have the flexibility and incentives to convert existing office space to residential or mixed use development that includes housing, office, and retail. To achieve this policy objective, MVCSP supports FAR bonuses for development proposals that help each sub-area move toward desired residential development targets. The incentive policies should be crafted such that a development proposal in the neighborhood planning sub-area receives approval only if the jobs/housing imbalance is improved, and the commercial component will not exceed the trip cap. As a basic planning principle, mixed use development proposals in the neighborhood sub-areas should provide more residential units than jobs created. To enable this, we support the Bonus Floor Area Ratio for increased residential development if it provides additional community benefits and additional affordable housing. MVCSP also strongly supports the transfer of office space FAR to elsewhere in the Precise Plan area. The policy framework should allow this transfer of FAR to exceed the office FAR standard outside of the residential sub-areas if habitat is not impacted, community benefits are provided, and the trip cap is not exceeded.

2. *The maximum residential building FAR by tier is on the right policy track but could include even more incentives for additional affordable housing.* We like the inclusion of the 15% affordable housing units in the Tier I FAR and 20% in the Tier II FAR. We are supportive of the EPC suggestion of increasing the Tier II affordable housing percentage to thirty percent if the Precise Plan consulting team economist determines that a 30% affordable housing incentive is economically feasible. Regardless, an applicant should be able to propose 25% or 30% affordable housing units as part of the development proposal, and this should be considered as one of the community benefit options.

3. *We support the three neighborhood planning sub-areas but believe the portion of the Gateway area that currently allows for housing should continue to be included as a fourth neighborhood sub-area.* The existing precise plan allows up to a maximum FAR of 2.35, the highest density area of Precise Plan but the FAR does not consider housing. We believe the other incentives we support in #1 and #2 above should apply also to the Gateway area. This is an excellent area for mixed use development including high density residential development. There is no city planning policy rationale for excluding housing from the Gateway character area. This is especially true since MVCSP also supports the concentration of retail and services uses near Shoreline and Pear Avenue. Not allowing housing in the Gateway area would be a significant missed opportunity.

4. *We support the open space policies but feel there should be a specific acreage target in each of neighborhood planning areas.* The general guidelines are too vague with “one ‘anchor’ public park/open space.” The policy should include a minimum and target park/open space acreage standard.

5. *There has been significant progress in illustrating the urban design elements that will be considered in the Precise Plan’s standards and guidelines.* Image 1 in the staff provides an inviting streetscape. The illustrations in Attachment 1 provide excellent real world examples of exemplary urban design that can, we hope, be replicated in North Bayshore. Our only comment is that the images should reflect more ADA compliant features and take into account the full range of mobility in our population.

6. *The TDM plan needs to be strengthened to incorporate multimodal mobility options for mixed use development.* Currently, there are TDM components for commercial development in the existing precise plan. This staff report proposes basic TDM program for residential development. With flexible policies allowing a mix of housing, commercial, and retail, we need more innovative thinking on how to incorporate TDM strategies into mixed use development. The Mobility Chapter of the Precise Plan needs to be redone with the substantial inclusion of housing in North Bayshore, and the mixed use TDM strategies should be addressed there.

7. *Parking policy and supply are highly correlated to the overall objective of minimizing auto trips in North Bayshore.* Overall, we hope that the Mobility Chapter of the Precise Plan rethinks the overall parking strategy for North Bayshore. MVCSP strongly supports unbundling of parking to improve housing affordability, parking maximums to match parking supply to reduced auto trip goals, and shared parking. MVCSP believes unbundled parking is a perfect application in North Bayshore and should be the prevailing parking policy for both residential and mixed use development. With a desire to have a “car light” North Bayshore environment, the overall parking supply should be correlated to achieving and sustaining the trip cap requirement.

8. *MVCSP supports exempting residential development from the vehicle trip cap as one more incentive for residential development.* The policy could be limited to the first 3,000 housing units with a study after that to determine if there are unintended consequences from the exemption.

9. *MVCSP supports the EPC recommendation to study the habitat impact as part of the EIR process.* The habitat overlay zone in the current North Bayshore Precise Plan should be the base case studied in the EIR. If there are significant and unavoidable impacts, then the habitat overlay and other features to protect habitat resources should be considered, but only after the scientific findings of the EIR are known.

MVCSP would again like to thank the Community Development staff for a job well done. We have full confidence that this City Council will continue to move forward with exemplary residential policies that encourage sustainable mixed use development in North Bayshore,

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



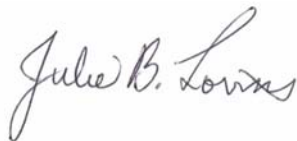
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