

Glaser, Heather

From: Cox, Robert [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:09 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Hicks, Alison; Margaret Abe-Koga
Subject: Livable Mountain View Comment on Item 3.1: Study Session "Downtown Precise Plan Comprehensive Update, Scope of Work, and Determination of Temporary Office Cap".

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Vice Mayor Showalter and Members of the Mountain View City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Item 3.1: Study Session "Downtown Precise Plan Comprehensive Update, Scope of Work, and Determination of Temporary Office Cap".

Here are our recommended responses to the staff's questions to council in their report:

- (1) (a) **Limit the scope of work:** While we acknowledge the value of updating the Downtown Precise Plan, we would caution against extensively expanding the scope of work. Our downtown is a vibrant public space that is acknowledged as the heartbeat of our community. The goal of this precise plan update, therefore, should NOT be to essentially take wrecking ball to it by completely changing its character. In particular, we look forward to changes that will:
 - a. Update the precise plan to reflect the housing element requirements and parking changes required by AB2097
 - b. Preserve the historic retail and restaurant district with ground floor retail and other public serving uses
 - c. Preserve more of our heritage trees, especially large redwoods near the edge of any proposed development
 - (b) **Do not expand the Downtown Precise Plan boundary to include the transit center:** Two key council members, Alison Hicks and Margaret Abe-Koga have been recused from participation in this part of the Downtown Precise Plan Update. They have extensive expertise in the area of transit and public space making and it is imperative to have them participate in the discussion and votes on the future of the transit center. So, we do NOT support extending the Downtown Precise Plan boundary to include the transit center, as it would require these two council members to be recused.
- (2) **Do not form an advisory working group:** Unfortunately, we have seen that such advisory groups are often composed of almost exclusively of special interest advocates. Their advisory group meetings frequently lack wide public participation. They sometimes produce voluminous reports that are submitted to the council for an up or down vote. We prefer to use the knowledge and experience of our city staff to conduct public outreach, make recommendations to council, and let our elected council members make decisions that reflect the values of those who elected them. The recent outreach to the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association was particularly well done by staff and well attended. We need more of the same.

(3) Support maintaining a temporary office cap until the Downtown Precise Plan Update is complete:

The council already voted to put the temporary office cap on the work plan, and so staff should respect that vote and go ahead with it. As we all know, there are already many new downtown office projects just approved or in the approval process: projects by: Sobrato, Marwood, Smith Realty, and for the Agave/Jurian building. Clearly, Mountain View is still allowing new office development despite a general Bay Area downturn in office space demand. We need a pause on even more office development to protect the downtown while the Downtown Precise Plan is moving forward and keep the cap that was already voted for in place, until the council decides how to best achieve an appropriate office/housing balance in our downtown.

Thank you for considering our views.

Robert Cox, Louise Katz, Hala Alshahwany, Jerry Steach, Diane Gazzano, Li Zhang, Muriel Sivyler-Lee, Maureen Blando, and Leslie Friedman
For the Steering Committee of Livable Mountain View



November 6, 2023

Re: November 7, 2023, Agenda Item 3.1 – Downtown Precise Plan Update

Dear Mayor Hicks and Members of the City Council:


The League of Women Voters (LWW) supports policies that increase the stock of affordable housing and supports informed and active participation in government.

We are pleased to see the scope of work for this Comprehensive Update explicitly cover increasing the housing opportunities in downtown, with an economic feasibility study to see what it takes to make housing successful and objective standards to provide developers and the public clarity. We are interested to see what additional development strategies under topic 7 might encourage a better jobs-housing balance.

We support the proposed outreach strategy to gather the input of the whole community. However, we are unclear regarding the rationale behind staff's suggestion of creating an ad-hoc advisory body, as the body could duplicate other proposed actions (i.e. community workshops/forums) and the work of existing city bodies. If the City were to move ahead with an advisory body, we recommend setting clear expectations for its role and specifying stakeholder spots on the body, as we do with the existing Downtown Committee. The advisory body should also comply with the Brown Act for full transparency.

Please send any questions about this letter to Kevin Ma, Co-Chair of the Housing Committee, at housing@lwvlamv.org.

Sincerely,


Katie Zoglin
President
Los Altos-Mountain View Area LWW

C: Diana Pancholi
Eric Anderson
Aarti Shrivastava
Kimbra McCarthy
Heather Glaser