

June 5, 2019

Aarti Shrivastava
Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Draft East Whisman Precise Plan

Dear Ms. Shrivastava,

We write in reference to the City of Mountain View's Draft East Whisman Precise Plan (hereafter 'Draft Plan') that was publicly released in early April 2019. Collectively, we include Google, Miramar Capital, Prometheus, Sand Hill Property Company, The Sobrato Organization, SummerHill Housing Group, and Vanni Properties. We represent approximately 27 % of the land ownership in the East Whisman Precise Plan area and five active projects and two pending projects, including residential, office, and mixed use developments.

First, we would like to thank City staff for their efforts to date in the development of the Draft Plan. Since Council approved the East Whisman Precise Plan effort in early 2016, staff have worked diligently on this Draft Plan, including numerous public meetings, community workshops, and the developer roundtable in December 2018, which we participated in. Since the release of the Draft Plan, we have reviewed the document, listened and participated in the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) and City Council study sessions, and provided comments on the Draft Plan.

We strongly agree with the City Council's direction to further explore a number of topics related to the Draft Plan including the jobs housing linkage, local school strategy, community benefit requirements, development standards, and character area targets. We respectfully request that City staff schedule additional community workshops and developer roundtables this summer to address these issues, so that the Precise Plan will be ready for Council consideration and adoption without significant delay in Fall 2019.

Over the past month, several of us have individually submitted written comments to the EPC and City Council regarding the Draft Plan. We are submitting this letter to outline what we collectively consider opportunities to enhance the plan and ensure its grand vision can be implemented.

LOCAL SCHOOL STRATEGY/COMMUNITY BENEFITS

East Whisman has multiple landowners, and the Draft Plan's requirement for applicants to individually negotiate with the Mountain View Whisman School District and Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District is unlikely to result in a cohesive and productive outcome for all parties. Accordingly, we recommend that the City, School Districts, and the East Whisman landowners collectively work on a comprehensive and transparent process to develop the proposed local school strategy in a manner that provides certainty for all parties. As such, we are pleased by staff's indication that they are working on a City-wide plan/guideline with the two School Districts.

Our recommendations:

1. Include East Whisman developer representatives in any future discussions between the City and the School Districts in formulating a City-wide plan/guidelines as it relates to the implementation of the local school strategy under the Draft Plan.
2. The City-wide plan/guidelines should include clear, specific and uniform recommendations that provide certainty and set reasonable expectations for both applicants and the School Districts. This could include a comprehensive scope of facilities, support, and services required by the District and a suggested Level 1 fee multiplier or equivalent fixed contribution that would be part of an applicant's community benefit package.
3. Establish a deadline for adopting the City-wide plan/guidelines that generally aligns with the proposed adoption of the final East Whisman Precise Plan.
4. The City should acknowledge that any voluntary contribution to the School Districts above state mandated fees are part of an applicant's community benefit package.

CHARACTER AREAS & UNIT MIX

Each Character Area has specific targets as it relates to residential yield, residential unit mix, office and retail square footage, and park acreage. Given the jobs housing linkage envisioned by the Draft Plan, it is critical that there be some flexibility in the allocations. Specifically, the Plan should provide the ability to move allocations between Character Areas, or provide an overall square footage allocation to East Whisman similar to the overall allocation in North Bayshore. For example, allowing additional office in the Mixed Use Commercial Area provides more opportunities for housing developers to partner with office projects (e.g. if there is a slow down in redevelopment in the Employment Areas) and to allow for more mixed use development, which would increase the certainty of achieving a jobs housing balance in East Whisman.

We are also concerned about the unit mix proposed for the Mixed Use Character Area, being the primary location for new housing in East Whisman. While we understand the City is trying to accommodate for families, which we encourage, we feel that the proposed targets for the size of the units and the number of bedrooms per unit, particularly the high target for three-bedroom units, will negatively impact project feasibility and present inefficiencies or compliance challenges for stacked housing. A flexible unit mix would allow residential projects to respond to market conditions.

Our recommendations:

1. Establish an overall East Whisman Precise Plan area square footage allocation rather than an allocation per Character Area; or allow a mechanism to transfer square footage between Character Areas.
2. Provide more flexibility in unit mix to allow developers to respond to market conditions.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The vision of the Draft Plan is to create a transit-focused and mixed-use neighborhood development. Therefore, the Draft Plan's development standards should facilitate the implementation of that vision. As drafted, we believe that the development standards do not facilitate the residential densities needed to support neighborhood-serving commercial development and reach the City's target of 4,900 new homes without needing to apply for Bonus FAR. We are of the opinion that this is contrary to the Draft Plan's vision to create a complete neighborhood. Furthermore, as it relates to non-residential development, a Base FAR of 0.4 often equates to the gross floor area already existing on the site, and in some cases is lower than existing FAR. As such, it provides little motivation to redevelop an existing office site. Again

this affects the implementation of the plan, specifically if the delivery of new office is the trigger for delivering more housing

Our recommendations:

1. Increase the residential Base FAR from 1.0 to 2.5. This would allow for residential densities of 50-60 units per acre within the Mixed Use and Village Center Character Areas.
2. Increase building heights to at least 130ft (from 95ft) in proximity to the Middlefield VTA Station to facilitate higher densities around this transit node to both encourage public transit utilization and help create a local population that will support entertainment, restaurant, and retail uses.
3. Provide flexibility in the development standards for elevator penthouses and other necessary building infrastructure to exceed height limits.

PED/BIKE CONNECTIVITY, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

The Draft Plan calls for a network of greenways, mews, paseos and multi-use paths ranging from 30-50 ft wide, which are intended to be publicly accessible. We note that while an applicant is required to improve and make these 'civic spaces' public, they are not counted as part of a project's parks and open space dedication. An applicant is therefore burdened with a non-credit dedication while still being required to comply with the parks and open space dedication requirements - in effect paying twice for public space.

Additionally, we have concerns regarding some of the connections, particularly those which do not appear to have reciprocal connections (e.g. proposed Hetch Hetchy ped/bike connections dead-ending into the Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course, and into North Whisman). Rather than requiring specific locations for the connections, the Draft Plan should identify key destination nodes and allow applicants to demonstrate how they will provide connectivity.

Our recommendations:

1. The City should prepare a demand analysis to determine the types and quantities of parks and open space needed in the Precise Plan area to ensure that parks and open space are located and sized to meet demand.
2. All public off-street pedestrian and bicycle connections required by the Draft Plan should be counted as part of an applicant's compliance with the park land ordinance requirements.
3. A privately-owned public open space (POPOS) credit, similar to that adopted for North Bayshore, should be expanded to include East Whisman.
4. Applicants should be afforded a credit against park and open space requirements/fees for any fully improved, publicly accessible park or open space area and any off-site connections required by the plan.
5. Indoor common amenity spaces such as fitness centers and club rooms should count towards the Common Useable Open Area requirement. Fitness centers and club rooms provide a year-round alternative to outdoor exercise and lounge areas; by not allowing these areas to count towards Common Useable Open Area, the Draft Plan discourages assigning floor area to these types of amenity spaces.
6. The typical minimum dimension for Common Useable Open Area should be reduced from 25 feet to 20 feet, consistent with other Precise Plans, and smaller open areas should count towards the Common Useable Open Area requirement if the areas have lounge seating, fire pits, outdoor grills, game spaces, or other passive or active amenities.

STREET SECTIONS

The widths required in the Draft Plan for private streets and bikeways, planting strips, sidewalks, and building setbacks are excessive, and they do not match the character of the sustainable, transit-oriented residential neighborhood and employment center that the City wants to achieve in East Whisman. While the requirements might be suitable in a suburban business park, they will discourage the type of active engagement that is appropriate for a complete neighborhood. The Draft Plan should be revised to allow more flexibility in streetscape design. Reduced street width sections will discourage and reduce automobile traffic and promote pedestrian and bicycle traffic .

Our recommendation:

1. Allow flexibility in streetscape design for private streets, paseos, greenways and multi-use paths, such as reduced building to building setbacks and reduced planter strips, where the adjacent uses would benefit. On internal streets, reduce the building to building setbacks and setbacks between buildings within a development to create an improved pedestrian experience.

RECYCLED WATER

It is a requirement of all office developments requesting Bonus FAR to be eligible for LEED Platinum. To achieve one of the LEED points, office projects must generally connect to a recycled water network (e.g. purple pipe). Applicants have two years from the completion of their project to complete the LEED accreditation process. The City currently does not have a purple pipe system in the East Whisman neighborhood, and the City's current Capital Improvement Program does not include an extension of the recycled water network into East Whisman. As such, an applicant's only alternative is to install a project specific ±\$1M cistern that will consume floor area and would become obsolete once the City extends purple pipe into East Whisman.

Our recommendations:

1. In the interim before the City extends purple pipe to East Whisman, we request that the City enter into an agreement with the City of Sunnyvale to enable East Whisman developers to connect to Sunnyvale's recycled water network.
2. Consider a developer-funded extension of the City's recycled water network, from US101 and Ellis Street, into East Whisman as a community benefit. This could be analyzed in a nexus study and contributions required of future development projects. Also consider waiving interim cistern requirements.

JOBS HOUSING LINKAGE

As stated above, collectively we represent a range of developers and landowners with interests in East Whisman including residential, office, and mixed use projects. Amongst our group, there are varying opinions on the jobs housing linkage as currently described in the Draft Plan. While we acknowledge the policy position that the City is taking, and support the creation of mixed use, livable neighborhoods, we are all in alignment that the linkage program, as currently written will not work as intended as it relies too heavily on:

- Pairing individual residential and commercial projects together; and
- Expecting commercial and residential projects to move forward simultaneously, without acknowledgement that the plan is creating a new commodity (housing credits), or residential and commercial market cycles.

Accordingly, we believe the program requires additional discussion to develop a solution that is practical and realistic and will ensure that the City's vision for a complete neighborhood in East Whisman can be realized.

Our recommendations:

1. City staff to reconvene the developer roundtable that was previously convened in December of 2018 to discuss the jobs-housing linkage and other topics raised in this letter. We believe such a forum or series of meetings would allow us to brainstorm collectively and work towards ensuring the vision of the adopted plan can be brought to life.

We support the City's overall vision for creating a mixed-use, transit oriented development in East Whisman and look forward to the opportunity to work with the City to finalize the Draft Plan.

Sincerely,



Michael Tymoff
District Development Director
Google



Perry Hariri
Principal
Miramar Capital



Jon Moss
Executive Vice President & Partner
Prometheus



Steve Lynch
Director of Planning and Entitlement
Sand Hill Property Company



Tim Steele
Sr. Vice President, Real Estate
The Sobrato Organization



Katia Kamangar
Executive Vice President & Managing Director
SummerHill Housing Group



Chris Vanni
President
Vanni Properties, Inc.

Cc: Mayor Matichak, Vice Mayor Abe-Koga, Councilmembers
Dan Rich, City Manager
Wayne Chen, Assistant Community Development Director
Stephanie Williams, Planning Manager
Martin Alkire, Principal Planner
Eric Anderson, Senior Planner

Anderson, Eric - Planning

From: Alkire, Martin
Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2019 3:56 PM
To: Anderson, Eric - Planning
Subject: Fwd: E. Whisman Precise Plan and San Antonio TDR's

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Nancy Morimoto
Date: June 13, 2019 at 3:40:47 PM PDT
To: <epc@mountainview.gov>
Cc: <malkire@mountainview.gov>
Subject: E. Whisman Precise Plan and San Antonio TDR's

Dear Environmental Planning Commissioners,

As an active member of both the San Antonio and the Los Altos School District communities, I want to remind the EPC of just how important it is to nurture the complex set of transactions that will make it possible for LASD to successfully complete the purchase of the Kohl's site *and* have enough remaining funds to build the much needed 10th school campus. Any school facility and its accompanying park, field space and athletic amenities are very much desired by the current Mountain View residents in the vicinity who have been suffering from a lack of nearby open space for many years. I'm also taking the liberty of speaking on behalf of the coming influx of new residents to the San Antonio area. The creation of this significant open space is a San Antonio Precise Plan goal and a stated priority of the city council and it hinges on negotiations with multiple parties.

That's why I'm emailing you on this topic as you prepare to discuss the East Whisman Precise Plan Area. The district needs to be able to easily and profitably sell the transfer of development rights (TDR's) from its cooperative agreement with the city to jointly create this extremely valuable open space. These excess density allowances to be sold and used in other parts of Mountain View are from not building as densely as allowed by the San Antonio Precise Plan. For the plan to work as envisioned, these development rights need to be as attractive as possible to potential developers, very importantly by making building in the East Whisman Precise Plan Area using TDR's not be difficult.

As someone who understands the importance of reducing the jobs/housing imbalance and who has at times been unhappy with some developer's plans that push the boundaries of density even in a change area, I am sympathetic to the impulse to impose limitations on developers as plans move forward for East Whisman. However, I strongly urge you to think of the whole "city ecosystem" and safeguard the plans to create a great neighborhood in San Antonio as well. One way to do this is to make exceptions for San Antonio TDR purchasers to all or most of the extra restrictions that may be generated for East Whisman development, such as requiring housing

development to happen first. That way, most of the overall plan will advance the goals of East Whisman, while some parts advance the goals of San Antonio.

If you would like to discuss the background or other brainstorm other win-win options further, I'm happy to meet with you at your convenience early next week.

Sincerely,

Nancy Morimoto