



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
c/o Aaron Grossman

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GreenSpacesMV
c/o Bruce England

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May 18, 2022

City of Mountain View Environmental Planning Commission
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: 5.1 Housing Element Update - Draft 2023-2031 Housing Element

Dear Chairperson Cranston and Environmental Planning Commissioners:

Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) and GreenSpacesMV appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Housing Element agenda item for your meeting on May 18th. We agree with points made in letters from the League of Women Voters and MV YIMBY. Accordingly, our intention here is to make points that might not have already been made in the other letters.

Through the Housing Element work, we fully support anything that can be done to provide increased housing inventory in Mountain View, in particular affordable housing for all income levels. This availability is needed in no small part to help address our *serious* jobs-housing imbalance.

We also support quality, low-carbon building and infrastructure-sensible landscaping (that is, native, drought tolerant, climate resilient, pollinator-friendly, and location-appropriate) and increased canopy and park space. And strong consideration for safe routes to school and school availability planning for all projects, and also for eliminating parking minimums for proposed development projects are both essential.

Finally, we would like to see consideration for fair labor standards, as well articulated by our regional trade unions and their members; this means preference for hiring local and incorporating benefits and apprenticeship programs

into project contracts. We understand that the City does not want to build fair labor into individual contracts. Therefore, the alternative is to build this into citywide standards as appropriate, and these are steps we ask the City to take.

The following are in reference to particular sections of the Staff Report:

- On page 8, section b) regarding public space ratios: A claim is made that our ratios are too high in comparison to Sunnyvale's or Santa Clara's. However, it is not reasonable to only compare to places with lower land values. If we want to establish more parks and open space, we need to have fees that are in proportion to the cost of land in our city. Developers recognize the value of the land, and that value means that infrastructure will cost proportionally more as well.
- On page 8, section c) regarding parking: We agree that parking requirements should be reduced or removed, with considerations to explore increasing active transportation. Just as a bathtub is not required in every single family house to support a family with kids, not every house needs a garage to support a family with a car. With reduced parking requirements, we recommend providing bicycle infrastructure, such as bike racks and robust public thoroughways, such as paths for pedestrians.
- On page 19 regarding rezoning: We are excited by the opportunity provided by rezoning the village centers. Updates that make them include more housing could also be used as an opportunity to make them more walkable, bike friendly, and nature-enhanced. The public spaces within them would also be much better for the environment than the huge parking lots they currently contain.

Additionally, in the Draft 2023-2031 Housing Element Plan, we appreciate the outline of goals and policies that will guide City decision-makers and Staff in implementation. As natural elements in the landscaping and streetscapes can provide a multitude of benefits including beauty, increased property values, energy and water efficiency (e.g., stormwater management, urban heat island mitigation, and shade), we recommend incorporating strategies to preserve and increase trees and native biodiversity. A healthy urban forest and increased green spaces support the City's strategic priorities in sustainability and livability. Please consider ensuring there is coordination and alignment with the City's Community Tree Master Plan and plans to increase biodiversity and protect wildlife in Policies 1.3, 1.7, 4.2, and 4.3.

In closing, we hope you will consider all we have presented in this letter for inclusion with your recommendations to City Council for their study session on June 14th.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment!

Sincerely,

Bruce England
for the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

Silja Paymer
for GreenSpacesMV

cc:

Ellen Yau, Senior Planner

Eric Anderson, Principal Planner

Aarti Shrivastava, Community Development Director / Assistant City Manager

Wayne Chen, Assistant Community Development Director
Micaela Hellman-Tincher, Housing & Neighborhood Services Manager
Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager
Heather Glaser, City Clerk

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a local volunteer-based organization 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.

About GreenSpacesMV

GreenSpacesMV is a community group that has come together since the end of 2020, doing what we can to further develop a healthy community that thrives with parkland, urban tree canopy, nature, and native biodiversity.

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

To contact us, send email to greenspacesmv.info@gmail.com.