

From:

Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 10:18 AM

To: , Planning Division <Planning.Division@mountainview.gov>

Subject: Objection to item 5.1 - Administrative Zoning Meeting, Wednesday August 25, 2021, 4:00 PM

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1. The project is labelled as an infill project when the land is currently in use and contains a public road. While one parcel of land (on the southwest corner) is an infill, the removal of a whole public road (being used by multiple residences and providing space and public utilities to multiple residences) is not infill.

2. The CEQA guidelines are being waived completely, when this is not actually a high density project like in an inner city. There is plenty of space in Mountain View and buildings are spread out, with few buildings over 2 storeys high. We need an environmental review on this project. This will affect the removal of heritage trees and issues like construction noise and inconveniences for the neighboring communities, which has not been addressed.

3. There has been no inconvenience fees offered to the residents of 1970 Latham St, who will have to bear the construction noise, pollution and reduced light and ventilation due to a new building, exceeding standard height and density restrictions.

4. The density bonus law does not allow demolition of functional rental units

the ratio of the local government's initial subsidy to the fair market value of the home at the time of initial sale.

(3) (A) An applicant shall be ineligible for a density bonus or any other incentives or concessions under this section if the housing development is proposed on any property that includes a parcel or parcels on which rental dwelling units are or, if the dwelling units have been vacated or demolished in the five-year period preceding the application, have been subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of lower or very low income; subject to any other form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power; or occupied by lower or very low income households, unless the proposed housing development replaces those units, and either of the following applies:

(i) The proposed housing development, inclusive of the units replaced pursuant to this paragraph, contains

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5. The applicant is requesting 13 waivers in total! And this does not include CEQA waivers. There are numerous environmental and building code breaches being allowed, without any benefit to the neighboring community.

6. The applicant is requesting to buy public land, which is designated as a road, and is not for sale. Who has authorized, on behalf of the citizens of Mountain View, the sale of a public asset into the hands of private investors? The City council is not a speculative enterprise, but is meant to protect the public's assets to be used in the interests of the public. How can the public's assets be sold, without the approval of the public?

7. There is not enough information given about the 22 BMR units being promised. How much will the units be sold or rented for? Who will own the units? How will the City council choose the 22 recipients and make sure they are eligible? What will be the size of the units? How much will the HOA fees be, and how much will these increase each subsequent year? All of this information should be provided to the public, who is giving the concession for this project to take place, to supposedly make housing more affordable.

8. CEQA guidelines are being removed for the demolition of a tar sealed roadway, full of toxic chemicals and engine oil, the demolition of numerous houses, as well as heritage trees. How will the environmental damage be assessed in the absence of these guidelines?

9. Sanctioning this project will not solve population density or high rental prices in Mountain View. Mountain View has an abundance of apartment units and there are for lease signs on every corner. Adding another building will not help, as long as there are no rent control laws, and adding 11 low income units to a population of 80,000 is a laughable attempt at bringing down rental prices. This project will only cause a disturbance to a peaceful neighborhood.

From:

Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 2:59 PM

To: Netto, Margaret <Margaret.Netto@mountainview.gov>; , Planning Division <Planning.Division@mountainview.gov>

Subject: Comments for Mountain View Joint Administrative Zoning and Subdivision Committee Public Hearing- August 25, 2021 - Gamel Way Project

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Hello,

I have no fundamental objections to the condominium project planned for 1919, 1920, 1933, 1938, and 1945 Gamel Way, 574 Escuela Avenue, and 1970 Latham Street, although it is sad to see houses levelled. Hopefully the planned measures to assist displaced tenants in lost apartment buildings will be helpful. In general I think that a new condo complex with underground parking could be an asset to the neighborhood.

I do have three main concerns, which I hope can be considered and addressed, if they have not already been.

Parking:

First, I am unsure of the exact waivers that the developer has been granted, but if they involve requiring any less parking than normal, I would strongly suggest reconsidering these. The project needs to include at absolute minimum, two parking spaces for a two bedroom unit, and it would be smart to include more, and no unit with less than one space (Even studios and one bedrooms usually end up housing at least two people, at least one of which will use a car regularly). As I am not sure that the Zoning Board is fully aware, the current neighborhood is already very densely populated, and many residents do use, and need to use and park vehicles at their residences and on the surrounding streets. Most of the current apartment buildings were built when it was normal for a one bedroom home to possibly only have one car or driver, so one parking space per unit was common. Even larger units have maybe one or two assigned parking spaces. It is evident by visiting the neighborhood that residents here now own or use more cars than when the neighborhood was originally developed. Where originally a one bedroom apartment or condo might have housed a couple with one car, now if a couple lives in a home, it is likely that both work and may need to drive cars. In reality, given how much more expensive it is to live here than when most buildings were originally created, most apartments are at high density, with at least two, but likely far more adults in a one bedroom, and two bedrooms with often four or more adults. Some families with teenagers or adult children share apartments, even one bedroom ones. All of these people need to go to work to pay rent, often rushing to multiple jobs. Some might take public transportation exclusively, but it is much more common that most of them need to drive to work and other activities on a regular basis. That means that there could be two to three or more parking spaces needed in a studio or one bedroom apartment with one space, and 4 or more spaces needed in a one bedroom with one or two spaces assigned (I think there are often quite a few more people sharing an apartment than this.) It is no wonder that cars are overflowing on the streets. This is likely to get worse with pending upzoning and predicted new population growth. Places are only going to get more expensive, so people will still be sharing places built for fewer people.

There is some current magical thinking that all people will and can take the bus on El Camino for all of their needs, or that people will no longer need or want to own and park cars in the future, so less parking

will be necessary. This seems very likely to be untrue. We are still a suburb, so public transportation is still not adequate for all activities (i.e., buses don't go to all of the places people need to go, and schedules are too far apart except for limited rush hour times, when people without cars need frequent transportation at all times), new construction is slowly eliminating strip malls with retail that can be walked to or easily access by buses, which makes it even more likely that people living at this building will need the drive, and therefore rely on parking. Even if ride sharing lasts long term, this doesn't eliminate the need for adequate parking spaces in a building. The failure to plan for increased future parking when the current structures were built, is why parking is so bad here now. I know that some people are trying to use more public transit, and that some young people don't currently own cars, which is great. However, people's situations change. Also, parking in the neighborhood now is a chore for many people without parking spaces, many of them young and ecology-minded, but they still drive. If they could avoid it, I'm sure that they would (I know I would if I could.). The fact that they drive, and the current existence of so many cars now, is a sign that they are still necessary, and the idea that they will not be at all in the future, is a serious exaggeration. As a result, building a project like this should anticipate future need and capacity, which is likely to increase. Even if it doesn't, we should prepare for the scenario in which parking needs do increase, as we know that in general, density in the area will definitely increase. That means that even if a much smaller percentage of people own cars in the future, there will still be a larger number of people who use cars than there are now, because there will be more people in the neighborhood and city. I hope that we learn from our mistakes, and use new construction to make the parking situation better, rather than worse. If, magically, people stop needing parking, there is nothing wrong with having too many spaces. They can be reconfigured to bike parking, other uses, or even rented out. However, if the project is built without sufficient parking, it can't be added later, and the problem will just get worse for generations.

Note also that eliminating parking negatively affects the elderly and low-income residents, who may have limited alternative options for driving between jobs, to far away jobs, and to appointments or to visit family members far away, who can't afford to live here.

Even where residents use public transportation (as I do for many activities), it is often not sufficient for getting to work or all activities. Even if a couple is fortunate enough that both have jobs which can be accessed by the nearby bus, during the course of ownership of a condo, it is very likely that one or both will change jobs to a location which is not accessible without a car. Even many public transportation commutes realistically involve driving to a transit hub (i.e. Bart). If the same couple has a child, daycare requirements will make driving a car necessary on a regular basis. Many activities and locations are just not practically done by public transportation at all times, so that even if people do use public transit, they may need to at least have a car, which they park at their homes, for many activities. For example, I have a sister and many friends who live in Oakland and the East Bay (which most people do, because it is a cheaper place to live, and many can't afford to live here, or choose to live elsewhere), and it can take about three hours one way to visit them using public transportation. On the weekend, this can be worse, as train and other schedules are limited. I used to use Caltrain almost exclusively to visit friends in San Francisco, but when the schedule changed, it was very difficult to schedule a departure time, and on return I was stranded often. I find it necessary to drive a lot of the time. I used to take public transportation to work (usually by train and bus or walking, which was time consuming due to schedules which didn't line up), but my office location is changing and there is no reasonable public transit route, so I will need to drive. My need to drive so far, have sometimes increased due to changes in transit schedules, and work hours. Many people (especially in this neighborhood, where many people have multiple jobs or work in service jobs at bars and restaurants which open/close early/late) have jobs which are outside of transit hours, or for the bus, transit hours which are not unreasonably long. These people need to drive. I know that there is discussion about how many people just take ride sharing services, so they don't need cars. I note that many of these Uber etc. vehicles are owned and driven by people in this neighborhood, who have to park them on the street, due to lack of parking in their building. Even when people don't own cars, they are still using them in the neighborhood, and they need places for

parking. When I didn't own a car, I still needed to rent one, often for several days) sometimes, and I needed a place to park.

Sewage:

Are substantial upgrades being made to the neighborhood sewer system in advance of this construction? The current system does not appear sufficient even for the current population. There is a seriously bad roach and rat problem in the neighborhood. For example I've seen roaches crawling out of the sewers on the corner of Latham and Escuela in broad daylight, and they just appear to be everywhere. Rats are way too common in the area too, as evidenced by the fact that you occasionally see some run over around the same intersection. A neighbor told me that she heard from the city over a decade ago that it knew that the system needed a serious overhaul, and that changes would be made, but she hadn't heard of any done. I am concerned that without serious upgrades in conjunction with this project, that the problem could get worse. I think that it is already a very serious health threat, and am worried about this becoming a bigger one. Especially with the global pandemic, and recent small outbreaks of plague in Lake Tahoe, this is something that needs to be taken very seriously and addressed before adding new housing units, especially in large scale projects. This is an opportunity to improve the sanitation of the neighborhood, rather than make it worse. Please make sure that these improvements are made, to ensure the safety of the new residents of the new project, and the surrounding neighbors.

During construction:

I'm also very concerned about what measures are planned to eliminate or at least significantly reduce problems with pests during demolition, excavation, and construction. Even in neighborhoods without known pest problems, it is common for this type of construction activity to cause pests to relocate to neighboring buildings, causing serious problems and unsanitary conditions. Even if the current buildings are really well maintained, there are likely to be rat and/or roach populations under the buildings, in attics, etc. since they've had half a century to get comfortable. Excavating for the parking structure alone is likely to displace many creatures. I've seen this in recent new apartment construction projects in Oakland, where the neighborhood previously seemed fine, but as soon as construction began, large rats could be seen chasing each other around during daylight hours. During the several years of construction, the conditions were unsanitary and horrifying for neighbors. Please make sure that adequate, thoughtful, and complete pest control measures are taken in conjunction with this project. If this is not done, instead of improving the neighborhood, this will cause significant damage to it.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Regards,
Amy

From:

Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 1:27 PM

To: Netto, Margaret <Margaret.Netto@mountainview.gov>

Subject: Proposed project on Gamel Way

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hello Margaret,

Apologies for this late email; apparently I had a typo in the address of the initial email that I sent.

We unfortunately will not be able to attend the Wednesday hearing due to a work engagement.

As owners of property (in Mount Vernon Court) immediately next to the proposed development, my husband and I have these questions and request clarification for the following:

1. Can you verify-- yes or no-- whether the proposal plans to demolish and replace the units on the north side of Gamel way (e.g., 1926 Gamel Way)?
2. Assuming yes for #1, what exactly is proposed for the land immediately adjacent to the fence along the 1915 Mount Vernon Court lot line?
3. Regarding #2, if it is a proposed vehicle driveway, please confirm that the project will install permanent mitigation to reduce the resulting exhaust, noise, and car head- and tail-lights that such a driveway and possible garage entrances along this path will generate? (Note that the fence currently along the 1915 Mount Vernon Court property will not suffice since it is permeable to air and light.)
4. Prior to and during construction, what steps will be put in place to ensure there is no damage to our units or plantings in the adjacent Mount Vernon Court properties? For example, will a survey be conducted for our immediately abutting units to benchmark wall integrity, ground levels, and so forth prior to construction?
5. What is the exact plan to ensure that utilities (water, sewage, electrical, gas) in this older portion of Mountain View will be upgraded to properly handle the increased volume due to adding this size of development in this area?
6. What are the plans to update traffic control on Escuela Ave and Latham Street to handle the increased vehicle traffic? At various points of the day, Escuela Ave becomes quite busy due to the grade school that is across from this development.
7. What is the proposed timeframe for this work. As you can imagine, since we are right next door and required by our companies to work from home, we are hoping the disruption will not commence immediately.

Thank you for your attention to these questions.

Best regards,
