



October 18, 2021

Chair Cranston and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: EPC Meeting October 20th, Agenda Item – 5.1. – Housing Element Update

Dear Chair Cranston and Members of the EPC:

The LWV supports a regional housing plan that provides for balanced and equitable housing throughout the region, as well as legislation that facilitates the implementation of regional housing goals. Therefore, we have consistently been an advocate of Regional Housing Needs Allocations and Housing Elements.

First, we applaud Staff for the comprehensive report explaining the requirements for the Housing Element and pointing out the significant new requirements. We also compliment the City for a wide range of accomplishments during the current Housing Element cycle, including increasing Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance (TRAO) benefits, CSFRA implementation and recently rent stabilization for mobile home residents, production of and planning for numerous all-affordable housing developments, and aid to tenants affected by the COVID pandemic. The City has also started adopting new standards for R-3 zoning districts, an important step because the current standards have led to many older rentals being demolished and replaced by high-end rowhouses.

We particularly recommend the following policies, based upon the Staff Report and the comments of stakeholders at the outreach meetings:

- Be pro-active using SB 35 to expedite the approval process; seek other ways to streamline the permitting process.
- Provide pre-approved ADU/JADU designs; expedite the approval process.
- Reduce parking requirements and park in-lieu fees for residential construction as these have been shown to be a significant constraint to housing production.
- Find ways to affirmatively further fair housing such as creating opportunities for low-income households to live within specific school boundaries. This may become more important should the MVWSD create a Community Facilities District with a parcel tax as such a tax will become a barrier to building more housing in this area of Mountain View. The City is leaning heavily on sites in the MVWSD to meet its RHNA goals, making this a significant constraint to achieving its needed housing production.
- Seek additional financing sources for affordable housing as there are many affordable housing projects in the pipeline. More funds would allow the City to acquire older naturally affordable housing developments, set up land trusts, or Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) options.

Finally, we urge Mountain View to seek the HCD “Prohousing Designation”, which increases chances at obtaining state grants and assistance. If the City adopts some of the policies mentioned above, along with those proposed by Staff, such a designation is within reach. (Please submit any questions about this letter to Donna Yobs at dmyobs@yahoo.com)

Karin Bricker, President LWV of Los Altos Mountain View
Donna Yobs, Co-Chair, Housing Committee

cc: Kimbra McCarthy

Aarti Shrivastava

Ellen Yao

Eric Anderson



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October 20, 2021

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

Re: Housing Element Update 2023-31

Dear Honorable Environmental Planning Commission members:

We know parents choose to reside here for the quality of work and life in Mountain View, driven primarily by our quality schools. While parks, city services, transportation and other amenities play a role, ultimately, families choose to stay in Mountain View because of our wonderful schools. Enrollment growth is a certainty, and we need your help to provide for our community's students. We are asking for formal inclusion into policy along with MVLA and LASD to provide for the students who will live in these future homes.

Growth is coming. It's been estimated that up to 20,000 new residential units will be added in Mountain View in the next 10 to 15 years. The recent RHNA requirement, coupled with already approved projects (2349 that impact MVWSD) and an upcoming master facility plan for North Bayshore, East Whisman and possibly Terra Bella further cements that growth in our area is a certainty. As of our last estimate, this growth likely will result in more than 2000 new students to our schools (Link to: [MVWSD Board meeting presentation, 9/9/2021](#)). This is more than the future needs of Los Altos (LASD) and Mountain View Los Altos High School (MVLA) districts combined.

Affordable housing is important to families. MVWSD welcomes housing of all kinds; especially ones that make it more affordable for our families, teachers and staff to live within the great confines of our city. The actions of our Board of Trustees over the past seven years complement the city's approach. In the coming years, MVWSD will contribute to creating close to 175 affordable housing units in Mountain View or in a neighboring community. We applaud the leadership that Mountain View City Council, the staff and the community has taken to create more stable housing for all. More importantly, we are extremely grateful for, and encouraged by, our upcoming meetings with city staff to find a solution.

Neighborhood schools. As outlined in the City staff report (10/20/2021), the HCD provides guidance on factors that should be used to select housing sites. Second on the list is the "equitable access to high-resource areas (high-performing schools and jobs)." I am confident in our community's ability to provide the jobs, and I am hoping that we can work together to create the schools. Our community has come to expect elementary schools that are within a mile radius of the neighborhoods that they serve. But without the community's (businesses, City Council, residents) assistance, I fear that the promise of an equitable education will only be afforded to those who reside in certain pockets of our community.

A billion-dollar facilities problem. Achieving that promise, especially for our most vulnerable families, will require considerable resources that stretch beyond what the District can currently absorb. As you know, MVWSD is faced with a billion-dollar facilities problem (the cost of land and facilities for a new middle school and three new elementary schools). Alone we do not have the ability to raise the necessary capital or leverage alternative revenue streams to completely fund the cost of building additional schools. We will be forced to not only reevaluate our District's physical and organizational milieu, but also consider unconventional funding and land strategies.

Resources are needed no matter where new schools are located. Additional school facilities, which are often the civic center of any community, should be nestled into burgeoning new communities. But no matter where future housing is located, MVWSD is required to provide the schools necessary for enrollment growth. For example, relocating new housing toward the southern part of the city to avoid the formation of a community facilities district (CFD) only puts a strain on school sites that are already overburdened. It will inevitably force boundary changes, and the possible building of schools on existing district lands where schools are currently not located (Sylvan & Cooper). Boundary changes will only solve our immediate short term needs. Avoiding a CFD could potentially shift the resource burden to a general bond measure that taxes all current and future residents.

Together, we can create the communities that our future neighbors deserve. Building housing, especially affordable housing, should never be a zero sum game. We all have a moral obligation to build a vibrant community that serves as a beacon of hope for all.

We are proud to serve the students and families of this vibrant, dynamic community. Moreover, we are grateful for your direction to develop a solution, and for the ongoing dialogue and thoughtfulness that City staff has shown over the past seven years while we worked toward a solution.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AR', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Ayindé Rudolph
Superintendent

Cc:
City Council
Kimbra McCarthy
Aarti Shrivastava
MVWSD Trustees

From: isaac stone
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 10:12 PM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: 6.1 Housing Element Update

As part of the housing element I would appreciate if the Environmental Planning Commission took a minute to consider the impacts of current Parking and Zoning requirements

The North Bayshore Gateway study shows that mixed-use developments can have lower parking needs, as parking is used for different uses at different parts of the day. Parking is expensive to build, and allowing mixed-use development can lower the overall costs.

Additionally mixed-use promotes active transit, as destinations can be closer to where people live.

I would appreciate if the commission could discuss

1. Reducing parking requirements and allowing un-bundling of parking
2. Expanding the R3 update to include CN and CO areas

From: Cox, Robert
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 11:28 AM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: Comment on Item 5.1 "Housing Element Update"

Chair Cranston and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Item 5.1, "Housing Element Update".

As Mountain View approaches its update for the next RHNA cycle, it is important that city staff reach out to the Planning Commission, Council, and the residents of Mountain View to get meaningful input leading to the selection of the sites which will be put forth to HCD to ensure Mountain View has provided enough zoning to meet HCD's and ABAG's requirement.

First, I recommend that Mountain View choose sites with unbuilt capacity in existing precise plans as its first choice of sites to meet the RHNA. These precise plans were drawn up after extensive consultation with the residents and approval of the Planning Commission and Council. In particular, North Bayshore and East Whisman should contribute to the bulk of the RHNA requirement.

While there has been some interest in the new R3 rezoning proposal put forth at the council meeting in April, I recommend against using this R3 rezoning proposal as the basis of meeting the RHNA requirement. In particular:

- (1) The current R3 proposal does not have broad council support and also has low support among residents in many of the affected neighborhoods.
 - a. The character of our Mountain View neighborhoods is at stake with this proposal.
 - b. Setbacks of 5-15 feet to 4-9 story buildings will darken private green space and diminish our capacity to benefit from solar power.
- (2) Redeveloping in R3 will lead to the destruction of naturally affordable housing, which will count against our RHNA totals in those affordability categories.
- (3) Redeveloping in R3 will disproportionately impact Mountain View's low-income residents and lead to greater racial inequity.
- (4) Redeveloping in R3 will require the replacement of a lot of older buildings, which will increase our carbon footprint and negatively impact the environment.

Beyond this, it is my hope that staff will present a set of ALTERNATIVES for the RHNA allocations. This will allow the residents and the Planning Commission to weigh in on the alternatives, and for the Council to make a real choice. Otherwise, the RHNA allocation could effectively become a closed-door negotiation between city staff and HCD without the transparency that such an important community choice should have.

Thank you for your consideration of my views and concerns,

Robert Cox

From: Jessica Gandhi
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 11:00 AM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Cc:
Subject: neighborhood request on RHNA numbers

To the EPC Commission-

I am writing on behalf of the North Whisman Neighborhood Association in Mountain View. We are a small neighborhood of single family homes built in the 1950's near Moffett Blvd. We have been meeting with city council members and other neighborhood association members to learn more about and voice our concerns over the new R3 Zoning proposals and the RHNA numbers assigned to MV. I am writing to you today to urge you to keep the following in mind as you discuss RHNA numbers.

First off, it seems very unfair that Mountain View has been asked to shoulder the bulk of the RHNA numbers in the peninsula area. For a small town these numbers are outrageous. That being said, I understand there may be nothing you can do to get out of this from the state, so I beseech you to make a case for making Mountain View's RHNA numbers from the existing precise plans for both the East Whisman and Bayshore projects that have been well thought out and received community support and NOT from the current proposal for new R3 Zoning changes.

These new R3 proposals have NOT been well thought out. Redevelopment in these areas will not only disproportionately affect Mountain View's low-income residents, thereby leading to greater racial inequity, but will also lead to the destruction of naturally affordable housing, which will count against our RHNA totals in those affordability categories, not to mention the increase in carbon footprint and negative impact to the environment that replacing these older buildings will cause.

In addition, the current R3 proposal is not broadly supported among the council nor most of the residents in the affected neighborhoods. In fact, most of the people that I mention this new zoning to are completely unaware of its existence. The city has not done a sufficient job of communicating these potential irrevocable changes and far more work and input needs to be done before even considering this as an option for making RHNA numbers.

So please, as you meet today to discuss your recommendation on meeting RHNA numbers, do NOT count on new R3 Zoning, but rather the precise plans for East Whisman and Bayshore developments.

Thank you,

Jessica Gandhi

North Whisman Neighborhood Association

From: Leona Chu

Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 10:52 AM

To: epc@mountainview.gov

Subject: Meet RHNA NUMBERS USING ZONING DESIGNATIONS IN PRECISE PLANS

I am concerned that Mountain View meets its RHNA numbers in a responsible, fair way that benefits all our residents and environment. We need to meet our RHNA numbers by using existing Precise Plan's' zoning designations. These zoning designations have been carefully thought out and have our community's support.

R3 Zoning is NOT the way to meet Mountain View's RHNA numbers. Serious and harmful problems will happen if we meet RHNA numbers using R3 Zoning. Several harmful results to avoid would be:

@ SETBACKS of 5 to 15 feet to 4-9 story buildings will darken private green spaces and decrease our ability to benefit from solar power.

@ Redeveloping in R3 will destroy naturally **affordable housing** which will count against Our RHNA totals in affordable housing category.

@ Redeveloping in R3 will **negatively affect low income residents** and lead to greater racial inequity.

It's important that Commission recommend Mountain View meet its RHNA NUMBERS by using the zoning designations in existing Precise Plans, ie, Noth Bayshore, which have been carefully thought out and have the support of our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my concerns about how our city meets its RHNA housing allocations .

Leona Chu

From: Kevin Ma
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 1:12 PM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: For a Strong Housing Element (Item 6.1)

Dear EPC,

I recognize that our city has done much to assist the housing needs of its residents, with implementation of the CSFRA, TRAO, precise plan updates, and the current eviction help. Comparatively to other cities, we have also had a greater amount of housing production. However, given the extent of the housing issues, we cannot rest easy on the gains we've made, especially as rents start to bounce back.

The current map of change areas leaves a lot of the city untouched, which on its face seems problematic from an AFFH standpoint. With North Bayshore specifically, it inherently rests on whether Google is able to develop all of its residential projects in the next 8 years of the RHNA period, which inherently seems a bit "putting all eggs in one basket." People of all incomes, whether in the city for 30 years or 30 days, should have the ability to live among all neighborhoods and enjoy all of their associated resources.

We should strive to plan for much more housing than what the RHNA baseline is. The chance for any parcel to be developed in the next 8 years is inherently low, of which we should undertake feasibility studies to exactly quantify that. Failure to do so leads to two problems: an underproduction of housing (which is bad by contributing to the high cost of living), and an inability to proactively address concerns (e.g. the constant complaint of traffic is partially because of mismatched zoning near transit).

I echo the comments provided by the League of Women Voters. Planning processes should be streamlined to provide predictability for both developers and residents, to shorten timelines, to reduce the overall costs so that developers other than the big names have a shot. There's a reason the legislature and HCD created the Prohousing designation.

Sincerely,
Kevin Ma

From: Tootoo Thomson
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 3:31 PM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: R3

Hello dear EPC members,

Thank you for volunteering your time and effort to make our city a better place. I am a fellow member at the city's art committee. We might have virtually met each other at the recent celebrations hosted by mayor Ellen.

This letter is to express my concern over the R3 zoning regulation change. It seems aggressive and lacks community support. A noticeable amount of residents in the R3 zones reject this.

I kindly wish you to please recommend to city council to fill our RHNA obligation with housing in existing precise plans that have been thoroughly planned and have community support. For example, the North Bayshore and East Whisman neighborhoods. R3 zoning should not be used for this.

Warmly
Tootoo Thomson

From: Chuck Muir
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 3:29 PM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: Questions regarding proposed R3 zoning.

Dear EPC,

I am a resident of Mountain View. I live in the North Whisman Neighborhood area. I have been a resident of Mountain View since 1994. My wife and I own a single-family home. We have concerns about the new proposed R3 zoning changes which impact all zones in Mountain View. We understand that the proposed R3 try to address ABAG RHNA housing needs for low income populations and to provide additional housing. However, we feel the proposed R3 zoning does not take into consideration the potential impacts on residents who live adjacent to multiple-family dwellings (apartments). The proposed height increases plus potential bonus allowances (even tall units) will allow and encourage older multi-family units (apartments) to be redeveloped, new units built which will be significantly taller and closer to property lines. If the R3 zoning gets approved it will impact single stories homes by looming over, block out sunlight and cast shadows into yards, reduce privacy, and increase traffic and reduce parking in neighborhoods.

My questions are:

1. We would like to see alternative proposed zoning changes besides the proposed R3 zoning changes. What other zoning changes can be proposed rather than the R3 zoning standards? When can the alternative zoning changes be provided to the public to review? I recommend providing a total of at least three options.
2. We would like the City to use the planned community/precise plan districts to meet the new RHNA allocation rather than densify existing communities. Can the City use the planned community/precise plan districts to satisfy the new RHNA numbers - why or why not? Can the City acquire property in the North Shoreline area and the East Whisman area, zone for housing, and encourage developers to build new affordable housing in these areas? What tools can the City use to incentivize developers to build more housing in the planned community/precise plan areas? Can the City use Shoreline Regional Park Community Fund monies to purchase property or encourage developers or encourage google to build housing sooner in North Shoreline or East Whisman?

I would like to receive a written response to my questions by City staff.

Thanks.

Chuck Muir