

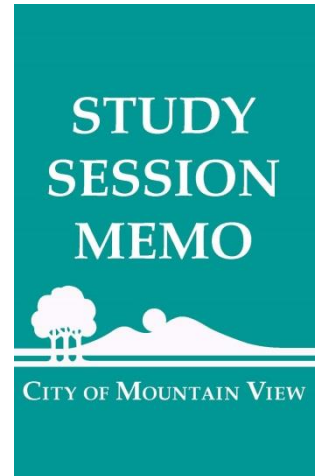
DATE: September 6, 2016

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Lindsay Hagan, Senior Planner
Martin Alkire, Principal Planner
Randal Tsuda, Community Development
Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: East Whisman Precise Plan – Visioning and
Land Use



PURPOSE

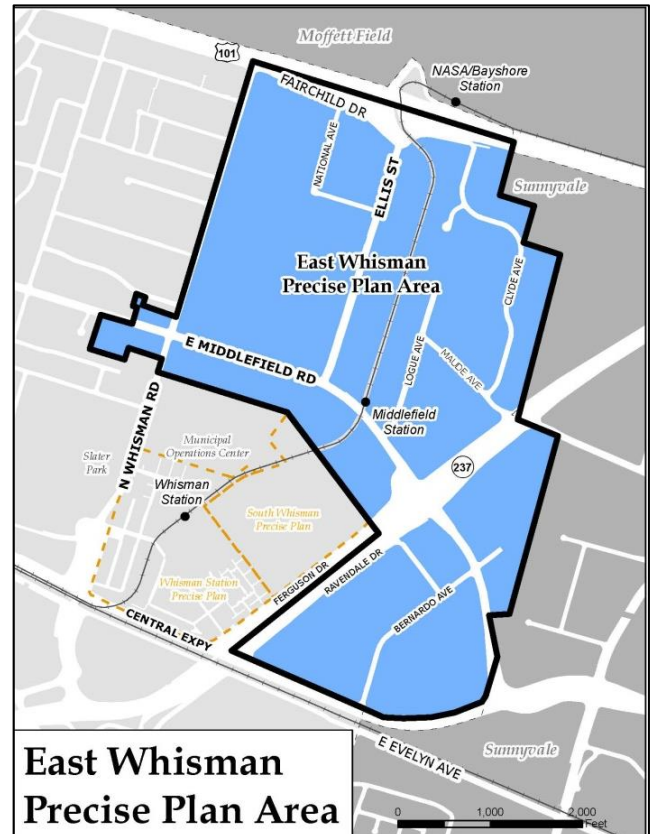
For City Council to provide policy direction and input on the East Whisman Precise Plan vision, land use locations, and intensities.

BACKGROUND

A New Precise Plan

Development of a new East Whisman Precise Plan (EWPP) is a 2030 General Plan Action Item. The Precise Plan will implement multiple General Plan goals and policies for the plan area, such as improved connectivity and pedestrian/bicycle amenities, incentivizing sustainable and transit-oriented development, and encouraging use of alternative transportation through public transit and incorporation of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies (see Attachment 1 for General Plan Action Items for East Whisman).

The 368-acre plan area is bounded by the U.S. 101 freeway and NASA Ames/Moffett Field to the north, Sunnyvale city limits to the east, Central



Expressway and South Whisman and Whisman Station Precise Plan areas to the south, and Whisman Road to the west. The plan boundary also includes the retail area and gas station at the intersection of North Whisman and East Middlefield Roads, referred to as a “Village Center” in the General Plan and in this report (see Attachment 2 – East Whisman Precise Plan Map).

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light rail line travels north-south in the plan area with one station in the boundary – Middlefield Station – and two stations just outside the plan area – Whisman Station to the south and Bayshore/NASA Station to the north. A summary of existing characteristics and conditions of the plan area, including maps, are provided in Attachment 3 – Existing Conditions Summary. Also contributing to the character of the area are 11 development projects which have been approved in the EWPP area, or immediately adjacent areas, over the last 15 years. A map of these project locations and brief descriptions of the projects are available in Attachment 4.

Prior Meetings

Residential Land Use – February 2015

At a February 3, 2015 Study Session, City Council directed staff to study residential land uses in the EWPP area as part of a larger discussion on potential new residential land use strategies in the City. Therefore, while the current General Plan and zoning regulations do not allow residential land uses in East Whisman, the project scope includes new residential land uses.

Planning Grant – June 2015

The City Council accepted a VTA Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant in June 2015 to fund the new Precise Plan. The grant program supports planning efforts that encourage housing and employment growth near public transportation in the County. As part of the grant, the City will expand the existing Whisman Station PDA boundary to include the EWPP area. The grant funds the Precise Plan consultant team: Community Design + Architecture (CD+A), Raimi + Associates, Strategic Economics, and Fehr + Peers.

Environmental Review – March 2016

On March 22, 2016, City Council authorized City staff to enter into a contract with David J. Powers & Associates for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Precise Plan. Work on the environmental review will begin after a preferred

development alternative has been endorsed by the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) and City Council, anticipated in early 2017.

EPC Visioning Study Session – August 2016

On August 24, 2016, the EPC held a Study Session to provide policy direction on visioning and land uses in the Precise Plan. A summary of Commissioners' comments has been included with each question in this report for Council reference (see Attachment 5 – EPC Study Session Staff Report).

In summary, Commissioners were supportive of the addition of residential land use in the plan area and envision a higher-intensity residential neighborhood with greater retail services, the addition of open space, and improved multi-modal improvements and connections throughout. Three members of the public spoke at the meeting. One resident provided suggestions on improving the community workshop activities, while another resident raised concerns about business operations of the existing 7-Eleven store. A representative from the League of Women Voters commented that the plan should include incentives for affordable housing and also supported the visioning policy concepts in the EPC staff report.

Precise Plan Process

The purpose of the new EWPP is to update the 2030 General Plan vision, goals, and policies for East Whisman and create new development standards and guidelines to replace current zoning regulations in the area. The Precise Plan is expected to be completed in two years – by mid-2018 (see Attachment 6 – Precise Plan Project Schedule). The major components of the process include:

- *Public Outreach* – Such as community workshops, public meetings, stakeholder interviews, meetings with outside agencies, a project web page on the City website, and use of Open City Hall online surveys. Two community workshops are anticipated and will be focused on visioning, land use, urban design and character, and connectivity.
- *Background Analysis* – Background reports will analyze topic areas for development of the Precise Plan, such as land use and urban design, retail demand analysis, parking demand and TDM strategies, multi-modal analysis, and implementation funding analysis.
- *Development of Plan Alternatives* – Plan alternatives will be created regarding urban design, land use, and multi-modal transportation options. A preferred plan

alternative will be endorsed by the EPC and City Council prior to preparation of the EIR for the project.

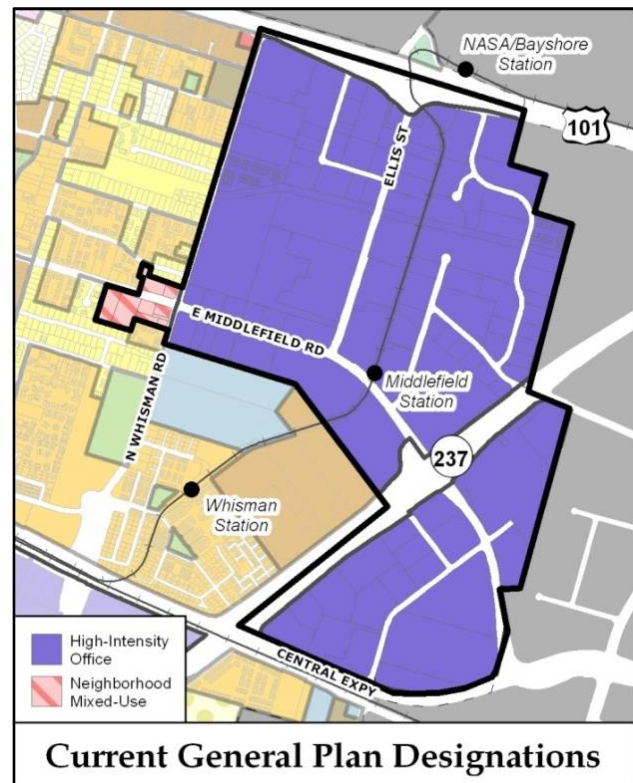
- *Environmental Review*—An EIR will be prepared to analyze potential environmental impacts of the plan’s preferred development alternative, in addition to a General Plan Amendment, to allow residential uses in the East Whisman area, and a Zoning Amendment to create a new Precise Plan.
- *Final Plan*—A final plan will include a vision, development standards and guidelines, a community benefit strategy, sustainability requirements, and maps and graphics.

Plan Area Context

General Plan

The 2030 General Plan identifies East Whisman as a “Change Area” for future development and includes a vision for the area. The vision describes East Whisman as a transit-oriented employment center with greater commercial intensity, pedestrian and bicycle connections, highly sustainable development, and commercial services to support residents and workers in the area (see Attachment 7).

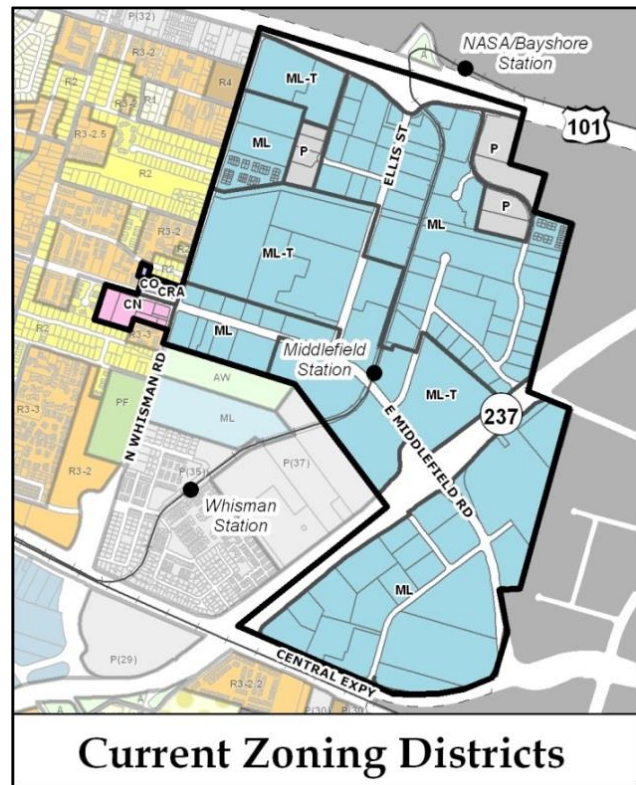
The current General Plan Land Use Designation for the plan area is High-Intensity Office (shown in purple) with Neighborhood Mixed-Use at the Middlefield Village Center (shown hatched in red-pink).



The High-Intensity Office designation permits office, light industrial, and research and development (R&D) uses with floor area ratios (FARs) ranging from 0.35 to 1.0 and up to eight stories in height for highly sustainable development. The Neighborhood Mixed-Use designation supports mixed-use centers that provide a range of goods and services in convenient locations to residential areas at FARs up to 1.05 and heights up to three stories for projects with appropriate transitions to surrounding properties.

Zoning

Most of the EWPP area has a zoning designation of Limited Industrial (ML) (shown in blue) with a transit-overlay (ML-T) designation for those properties meeting the following requirements: located within 2,000' of a VTA Light Rail Station, three to five acres in size, and inclusion of transit-oriented design elements or amenities, and pedestrian/bicycle improvements. The T-overlay designation permits an FAR range of 0.5 to 0.65, exceeding the ML District maximum of 0.35 FAR. Three parcels are shown as Planned Community (P) designations in gray, which are higher-intensity office developments consistent with the General Plan High-Intensity Office FAR allowances (between 0.65 and 1.0 FAR).



The Middlefield Village Center area has three zoning designations, including:

- *Commercial-Neighborhood (CN) District*—This district permits retail and commercial service uses in convenient shopping locations for surrounding residential neighborhoods and permits a two-story height limit with an FAR up to 1.05. Properties with this designation are currently occupied by restaurants, retail, and child-care facilities on the south side of Middlefield Road.
- *Commercial/Residential-Arterial (CRA) District*—This district permits a range of commercial, office, and residential uses along the City’s major roadways and permits a three-story height limit with FARs ranging from 0.35 (for office) up to 1.35 (for mixed-use). The property with this designation is currently occupied by a gas service station (Rotten Robbie) located at the northwest corner of Middlefield and Whisman Roads.
- *Commercial-Office (CO) District*—This district permits professional, medical, and financial office uses with a two-story height limit at an FAR up to 0.35. The

property with this designation is currently a vacant parcel on the north side of Middlefield Road adjacent to the gas station.

Public Outreach

July 2016 Community Workshop

On July 16, 2016, the first community workshop was held at the German International School with approximately 60 members of the public attending. The workshop included: (1) an overview of the Precise Plan process and area; (2) a small group visioning discussion; (3) a live-polling visual preference survey on development scale, land use, urban design, and pedestrian/bicycle amenities; and (4) an individual map exercise where participants placed stickers in desired locations for new or expanded land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, retail, open space, community facilities) and bicycle/ pedestrian connections, which were shared within the small group and concluded with a discussion on development transitions. The workshop presentation, visual preference survey, and additional materials are available on the project web page: <http://www.mountainview.gov/eastwhisman>.

Overall, workshop participants supported adding residential uses in the plan area and locating higher-intensity office away from existing residential neighborhoods. There was a strong desire for more open space adjacent to residential areas, and more pedestrian/bicycle connections throughout the plan area and into adjacent areas. A summary of the workshop outcomes is included in Attachment 8.

Online Survey

In addition to the community workshop, an online survey was conducted through Open City Hall on the City's website to gather additional input. Of the 31 participants, many supported residential uses in the plan area and were undecided on increasing office intensity in the area. However, the preferred locations for office were along Middlefield Road and around Middlefield Station. A summary of survey results is included as an Appendix to Attachment 8.

DISCUSSION

I. Visioning

Residential and Office Land Uses

Currently, the EWPP area includes approximately 5.6 million square feet of predominantly office and industrial-to-office conversions. No residential land uses exist in the plan area. Therefore, any conversion of land from office/industrial to residential will result in the loss of potential land area for office uses. While the amount of potential land area conversion is unknown at this time, the residential plan concepts discussed later in this report show a preliminary range between approximately 20 acres to 110 acres (out of a total of 368 acres). This loss of office land area can create challenges in implementing desired land use change as property owners may not be incentivized to convert to residential uses with a strong local office market. However, there are strategies and/or incentives to encourage residential development over office development through development standards (i.e., greater height, FAR) or policies (i.e., tying office square footage to residential unit creation, transfer development rights). At the same time, the strong community interest for creating new residential land uses may outweigh retaining or expanding office uses in the plan area.

Recognizing there is a relationship between office and residential land uses, staff is seeking City Council direction on land use preferences for the EWPP. The interest is not on a specific amount of square feet per land use, but on how to relate these uses to current conditions. To clarify, the current condition assumes the development of 1.15 million square feet of office land use as studied under the 2030 General Plan (for which approximately 200,000 square feet remain). A more detailed discussion on the location and intensity of potential EWPP land uses is discussed later in this report.

EPC Comments

The EPC supported adding residential uses to the plan area, but were split between whether to increase office intensity beyond that studied under the 2030 General Plan or maintain the amount of office intensity under the General Plan (Options C and D in Question 1). While more Commissioners supported maintaining existing office intensities under the General Plan (Option C) in a straw vote (3-2), Commissioners generally desired more information before making any final conclusions.

CITY COUNCIL QUESTION 1: *What is the City Council's preference for how residential and office land uses are integrated in the EWPP area?*

- a. *No Changes* – Do not add residential land use and maintain existing land area for office uses.
- b. *Increase Office Intensity* – Do not add residential land use and increase office intensity.
- c. *Add Residential* – Add residential land use and maintain existing office intensity (potentially allowing transfer of square footage in key locations).
- d. *Increase Office Intensity and Add Residential* – Add residential land use and increase office intensity.

Visioning Policy Concepts

The existing East Whisman vision is on Page 1 of Attachment 7. From public input received from the workshop and online survey, the following visioning concepts were identified for East Whisman (see Attachment 8):

- Include housing with varying styles, intensities, and affordability to support jobs in the area, creating livable neighborhoods.
- Focus new development around the VTA Light Rail Station.
- Locate new and higher-intensity office development along major corridors and freeways in East Whisman.
- Encourage a job-housing balance in the area.
- Create a modern, urban neighborhood with a balance of commercial, residential, retail, educational, open space, and transportation amenities.
- Establish a transportation hub for shuttles and buses.
- Incorporate mixed-use development throughout the plan area.
- Provide greater neighborhood services and amenities, including a grocery store, restaurants, and shops.

- Improve connectivity and walkability into and within the plan area, with separated pathways, high-quality landscaping, and clear signage.
- Increase the amount of parks, open spaces, and plazas.
- Incorporate urban design features to support safety and safe places.
- Encourage parking off-street and underground.

EPC Comments

The EPC supported the community's vision concepts outlined above. Commissioners agreed the EWPP can accommodate a significant amount of new housing at higher intensities and greater heights, allowing for a greater mix of affordable housing at various incomes. Some Commissioners mentioned greater building heights are desirable (8 to 10 stories, 13 to 15 stories like in North Bayshore, and Avalon Towers on El Camino Real), with other Commissioners concerned that these heights may be inconsistent with comments heard at the July workshop. Some additional EPC comments included:

- Concerns with placing residential land uses in the Middlefield-Ellis-Whisman (MEW) Superfund area;
- A concern with extreme housing mix—do not want to see rowhomes next to residential high-rise buildings;
- Desire to see more retail services in the area;
- Greater bicycle/pedestrian connections within the plan area, including to the south plan area, Bayshore VTA Station, and Sunnyvale, and a complete network of sidewalks and bike lanes;
- Include residential shuttle stops as part of the Mountain View Transportation Management Association (MVTMA); and
- Encourage private open spaces of office campuses to be accessible to local residents.

CITY COUNCIL QUESTION 2: Does City Council have any comments or additional direction on the preliminary visioning policies identified by the EPC or community?

Scale and Design of Plan Area

For the workshop, a visual preference survey was used to gather input on participants' preferred "look and feel" of East Whisman. The survey included questions regarding scale and design of residential, office, and mixed-use buildings, as well as open space designs and bike and pedestrian improvements. Staff has received feedback on the visual preference survey format and suggestions for improvement in future workshops. Staff is requesting high-level feedback from EPC and City Council on their preferred look and feel for the plan area.

EPC's feedback on their preferred "look and feel" for EWPP includes:

- Supporting a mix of architecture with variations in massing and height;
- A desire to see a diverse variety of architectural styles;
- Locating office buildings closer to the sidewalk;
- More development intensity around transit;
- A desire for pedestrian improvements with greater connectivity throughout the plan area for people of all ages;
- Use building and open space examples from North Bayshore Precise Plan and other communities, such as Portland and Canada; and
- Focus more on multi-modal improvements and less on vehicular improvements.

CITY COUNCIL QUESTION 3: Does the City Council agree with the EPC or have any additional comments on the preferred "look and feel" of buildings or improvements in the plan area which supports Council's vision for the EWPP?

II. Land Use and Intensity Locations

Summary Maps

The Precise Plan team created summary land use maps by consolidating results of the community workshop mapping exercise. Four summary maps were created representing office, housing, open space, and retail locations. The concentration of a particular land use is shown in gradient colors (light to dark) with the highest

concentration appearing as the darkest color (see maps, below). All four summary maps are provided in Attachment 8.



Workshop Summary Map – Office Locations



Workshop Summary Map – Housing Locations

Overall, the majority of workshop participants supported:

- **Housing** in the plan area at locations on the south side of Middlefield Road, around the Middlefield Station, at the intersection of Middlefield Road and Ellis Street, and in the south part of the plan area (along Bernardo Avenue);
- **Additional and/or higher-intensity office** along the freeways (U.S. 101 and SR-237), the northeast quadrant of the plan area (along Clyde Avenue), along Ellis Street, and on the east side of SR-237 at Middlefield Road;
- **More open space** throughout the plan area, particularly adjacent to new housing locations;
- **Intensifying existing retail** on Middlefield Road at the Village Center with new retail on Ellis Street at Middlefield Road near the VTA station. Some additional retail locations were shown at the intersections of Bernardo Avenue and Middlefield Road, and Ellis Street and Fairchild Drive; and
- **New pedestrian/bicycle connections** throughout the plan area, including east-west through the plan area connecting the Hetch Hetchy Trail to Maude Avenue,

connections into Sunnyvale along the east side of the plan area, and a new crossing over/under Central Expressway.

Land Use Concepts

Based on workshop outcomes, the Precise Plan team created land use concepts for the plan area. These concepts are not intended to designate individual parcels with a specific land use, but instead aid discussion on where general land uses could be located within the plan area. Land uses shown can be “mixed-and-matched” (or rejected) by the City Council. Additionally, these concepts display a “higher-intensity” option for residential and office (shown in darker colors), which are intended to start discussion on where greater intensity could be located in the plan area. Lastly, the open space locations are shown for general reference to reflect comments received at the workshop, but are not intended to be tied to specific locations.

It is important to note that some of the land use locations shown were not outcomes of the workshop, but are included by the Precise Plan team based on existing conditions or other factors for discussion purposes. None of these concepts are intended to exclude other ideas or show a “preference” for one land use over another.

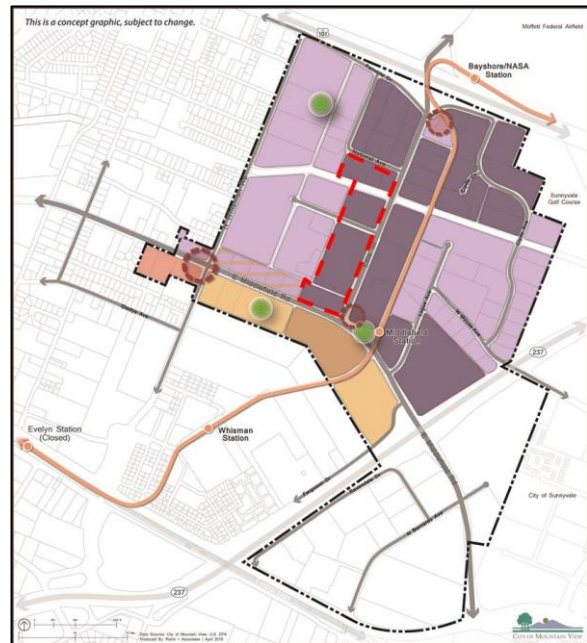
Planning Sub-Areas

The plan area has been divided into North and South sub-areas, divided by the SR 237 freeway, with two concepts for each area—an office-focused and a residential-focused concept. All four concepts are included as Attachment 9 to this report, with modifications to the concepts from EPC provided in Attachment 10.

North Plan Area



North Plan Area Concept 1 – More Residential



North Plan Area Concept 2 – More Office

The North Plan Area is bordered by two freeways – U.S. 101 to the north and SR 237 to the east – with existing residential neighborhoods to the west and south. Middlefield Road and Fairchild Drive provide major east-west access to this sub-area, while Ellis Street and Whisman Road provide primary north-south access. The plan area abuts the South Whisman and Whisman Station residential communities to the south. Additionally, the MEW Superfund area is located on the western half of the plan sub-area, west of Ellis Street. All of the recent development and bicycle and pedestrian improvements are located in, or adjacent to, this sub-area (refer to Attachments 3 and 4). Lastly, the County and City of San Francisco property (referred to as the Hetch Hetchy) runs east-west through the plan area shown white in the concepts.

North Plan Area Concept 1 shows a higher amount of residential uses throughout the plan area along the south side of Middlefield Road and in proximity to the Middlefield Station, with higher-intensity residential closest to the station area. While few participants indicated housing on both sides of the VTA light rail line and further east along Maude Avenue and Clyde Avenue, the Precise Plan team has added these areas for discussion as they are equally accessible to the station and have older building stock (shown with a red dashed line). The hatched areas represent where residential or office uses could be located, providing potential residential opportunities on both sides of Maude Avenue and Middlefield Road. Office uses are maintained along Whisman Road with higher-intensity office along U.S. 101 and SR-237 freeways and immediately east of the Middlefield Station.

North Plan Area Concept 2 shows a higher amount of office uses in the plan area, with higher-intensity office around Middlefield Station, along the freeways, and on both sides of Ellis Street. While workshop maps did not indicate as much office along the west side of Ellis Street as shown here, the Precise Plan team has included it as discussion for a “balanced” street environment along Ellis Street (shown with a red dashed line).

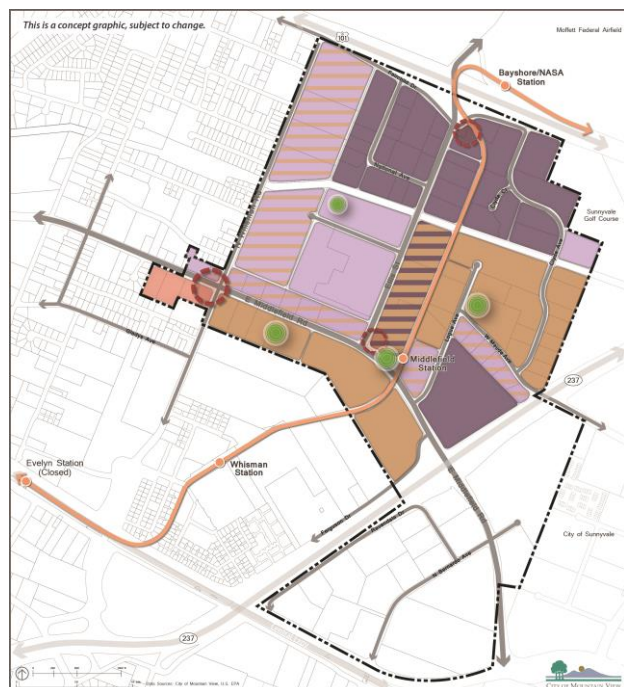
Both North Plan Area Concepts—For both concepts, higher-intensity residential is shown along the south side of Middlefield Road nearest the station as a transition to the higher-intensity residential development in South Whisman (500 Ferguson Drive) immediately south of the plan boundary. Additionally, ground-floor retail locations are shown at the Middlefield Village Center, Ellis Street and Middlefield Road intersection/VTA station, and Ellis Street and Fairchild Drive to reflect preferred locations identified by workshop participants.

Lastly, the concepts do not show major land use changes along Whisman Road in the northwest quadrant of the plan area as workshop participants identified the area as an important perimeter between the plan area and existing residential neighborhoods where appropriate building height and intensity transitions are desired. Buildings along Whisman Road are some of the newest in the plan area, so redevelopment of these properties may be less likely. However, some participants commented that adding housing along Whisman Road could be a desired land use transition toward Ellis Street, where office uses could be concentrated.

EPC Comments

The EPC supports maximizing housing from Concept 1 with higher intensity residential land use in all locations where residential land uses are shown, particularly along both sides of Middlefield Road and around the VTA station. Some Commissioners mentioned concerns with residential in the MEW, but none wanted to preclude residential land uses in that area at this point.

When asked where additional residential land uses were desired, Commissioners stated along Whisman Road and on the

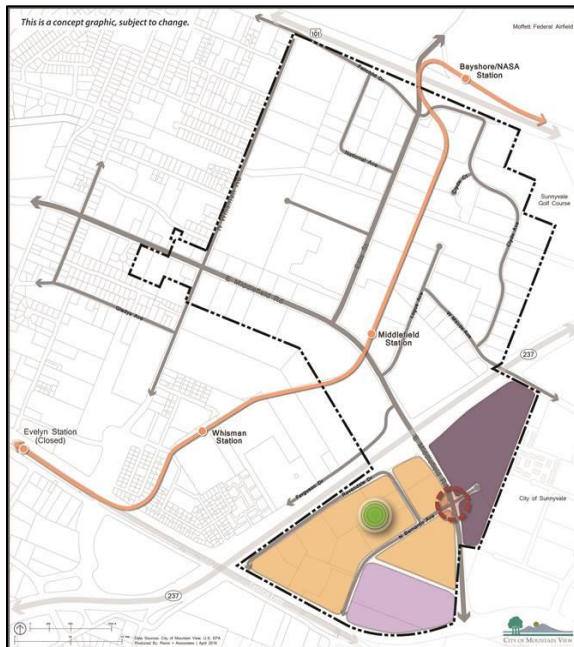


North Plan Area – EPC Comments

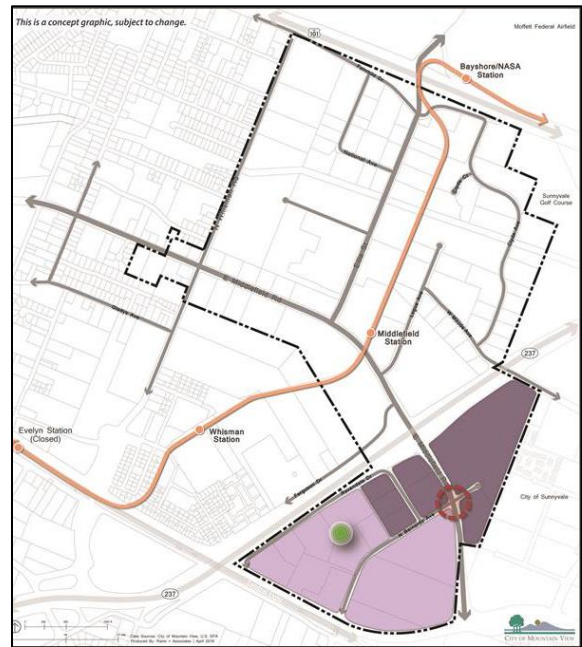
north side of Middlefield Road. For additional office, a Commissioner stated higher-intensity office on the west side of National Avenue, while another Commissioner suggested higher-intensity office on either side of the VTA light rail line north of Hetch Hetchy with residential or office (shown hatched) on the east side of Ellis Street south of Hetch Hetchy.

CITY COUNCIL QUESTION 4: Does the City Council support the EPC’s comments on the Residential and Office land use locations and intensities for the North Plan Area, as show in the image on the previous page (and in Attachment 10).

South Plan Area



South Plan Area Concept 1 – Residential



South Plan Area Concept 2 – Office

The South Plan Area is bordered by SR-237 to the west, Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course and Maude Avenue to the north, a Sunnyvale residential neighborhood to the east, and Central Expressway to the south. Office and light industrial buildings are located along Maude Avenue in Sunnyvale, adjacent to the golf course. This plan area is accessed from the North Plan Area via Middlefield Road and Maude Avenue under SR-237 and, from outside the plan area, from Middlefield Road, and Maude Avenue, Bernardo Avenue, and Ravendale Drive via Central Expressway. The South Plan Area has the most significant barrier (SR-237) separating it from the North Plan Area and Middlefield Station.

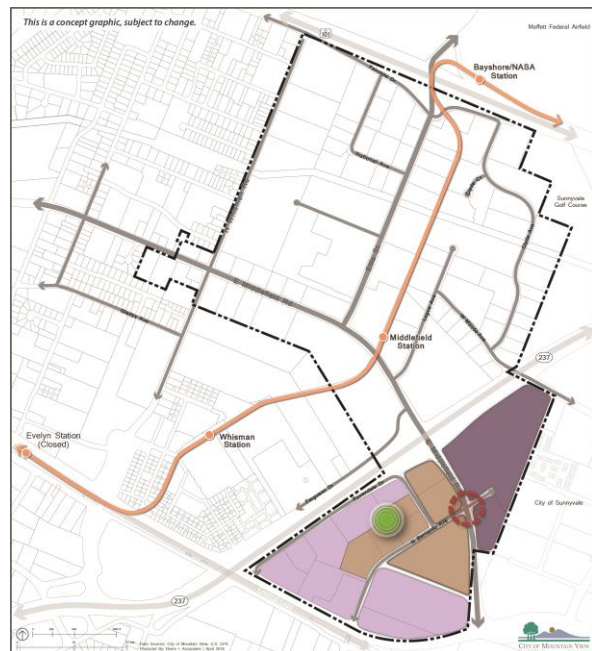
South Plan Area Concept 1 shows residential uses south of Middlefield Road, while maintaining office uses along Central Expressway. Higher-intensity office is shown north of Middlefield Road. This concept aligns with the housing and office sticker locations from the workshop.

South Plan Area Concept 2 shows office uses throughout the plan area with higher-intensity office along Middlefield Road and the freeway.

Both South Plan Area Concepts—For both concepts, higher-intensity office is maintained along SR-237 north of Middlefield Road, as shown in the workshop summary maps. Potential ground-floor retail is shown at the intersection of Bernardo Avenue and Middlefield Road, in response to some workshop participants’ interest for retail in this sub-area.

EPC Comments

The EPC supported Concept 1 with higher-intensity residential land use in the South Plan area, particularly along Middlefield Road. Some Commissioners suggested office along the perimeter (along Ravendale Drive) and housing in the interior of the plan area. Additionally, Commissioners generally desired greater connectivity of the South Plan area to the North Plan area and Sunnyvale.



South Plan Area – EPC Comments

CITY COUNCIL QUESTION 5: *Does the City Council support the EPC’s comments on the Residential and Office land use locations and intensities for the South Area Plan, as shown in the image above (and in Attachment 10)?*

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An EIR will be completed once the Precise Plan preferred development alternative is endorsed by the EPC and City Council, which is anticipated in 2017. The EIR and draft plan will be presented to the City Council for consideration at a later date.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council provide direction to staff based on the questions in this report.

NEXT STEPS

Following the City Council Study Session, the second community workshop will be held in November. The workshop will focus on getting input on development scenarios through land use intensities, urban form and character, and new pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections.

After the workshop, staff will return to the EPC and City Council with workshop outcomes, seeking direction on refinement and selection of a preferred development alternative. These meetings are targeted for December 2016 and January 2017, respectively.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The Council's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners within the plan area and within a 500' radius of the plan area were notified of this meeting by mailed notice. Other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting via the project's e-mail notification system. Project and meeting information is posted on the project website: <http://www.mountainview.gov/eastwhisman>.

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- Attachments:
1. General Plan Action Items for East Whisman
 2. East Whisman Precise Plan Area
 3. Existing Conditions Summary
 4. Current and Recent Development Projects
 5. [EPC Study Session Staff Report](#)
 6. Precise Plan Project Schedule
 7. General Plan Vision for East Whisman
 8. Community Workshop #1 Summary
 9. Plan Area Concepts
 10. Plan Area Concepts – EPC Comments