

From: Toni R

Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 4:52 PM

To: epc@mountainview.gov

Subject: Public comment wrt how to meet Mountain View's obligation under RHNA

Dear members of the Environmental Planning Commission,

I would like to ask you to recommend fulfilling Mountain View's RHNA obligation with housing in existing precise plans, such as the North Bayshore and East Whisman projects. These projects together provide more than the required number of housing units, which is already a massive allocation: Per capita, Mountain View's RHNA allocation is **by far** the highest of any city in Santa Clara county (see graph at end):

The R3 upzoning project makes a poor candidate to make the RHNA numbers for many reasons:

- Importantly, the project has not seen widespread consensus. The city council is split on the issue and it is unpopular with residents in many of the affected neighborhoods. This should come as no surprise, because it jeopardizes the character of Mountain View's neighborhoods. It is allowing buildings that are 3 times taller than existing buildings (or more) with 5 foot setbacks next to single family homes, effectively ignoring existing neighborhood character. Some R3 neighborhoods are most similar in character to R1. The project will reduce green canopy, access to light, walkability and foster more anonymity by moving towards closed gate apartment communities.
- In addition, R3 rezoning as proposed is incompatible with the general plan in many areas. Homeowners have made purchase decisions based on the change areas identified in the general plan and importantly, those that were not. Many affected residents are unaware the R3 rezoning project even exists.
- **R3 rezoning is unlikely to create a large amount of affordable housing.** If an apartment building with affordable housing under rent control would be redeveloped, the developer can build as many as 6.6 times the number of units before any additional affordable units would have to be built (this assumes 15% affordable units to obtain the density bonus). This is unlikely to happen in a lot of projects. Even if the apartment has no affordable units to begin with, the vast majority of added housing units will be market rate, whether it be for rent or ownership. This has three effects:
 - **Further increase in the imbalance of affordable vs. market rate apartments,** leading to gentrification of low income neighborhoods
 - Displacement of tenants during construction. Where will they be housed? Some of them are unlikely to return to their original units after several years of construction as guaranteed by SB-330, leading to **effective loss of rent controlled housing.**
 - Loss of affordable housing during redevelopment, which counts against MV's RHNA allocation.
- Finally, the R3 rezoning project ignores the enormous resource constraints that Mountain View is already facing: Water, schools, traffic and access to parks are all important considerations that are entirely absent from the proposal.

Well designed, new housing in precise plan areas such as North Bayshore and East Whisman has the best chance of providing affordable housing and meeting Mountain View's RHNA obligation, while not destroying perfectly good housing stock that has to be replaced at great cost to the community and the environment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Toni Rath

Graph showing how Mountain View's RHNA allocation of ~11k units is **by far** the highest of any city in Santa Clara county (per capita based on 2019 population numbers):

