

From: Salim Damerdji
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 7:07 AM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: Agenda item 6.1 - Housing Element Update

To the Members of the Environmental Planning Commission,

When the next housing element cycle ends, I'll be 35 and most of my friends will be married, looking for a home to settle down in. To me, this housing element is not boring city planning; it's the major deciding factor in whether my friends and I can afford to settle down in Mountain View.

That's why I was so happy to read the staff report. With a city this diligent about our housing element, we are on a great track to reduce rents, displacement, and evictions.

There's much in this report to commend - from its distillation of HCD requirements to its honest appraisal of where our site inventory stands without additional upzoning - but I'll focus on a few opportunities.

For outreach, we should do more targeted AFFH outreach by holding sessions with the Day Worker's Center, the Mobile Home Alliance, folks who use the safe parking program, and other at-risk groups. (And it goes without saying that these meetings should lead to new housing element programs with specific timelines and concrete commitments - otherwise we're just wasting these folks' time and they'll trust city outreach less in the future.)

For the site inventory analysis, the city should use a data-driven approach to calculating the likelihood of redevelopment of nonvacant inventory sites. Currently, Mountain View is on track to develop around 21% of its 5th RHNA cycle site inventory, so we should apply great scrutiny to a housing element that claims the median inventory site has much more than a 21% chance of development by 2031.

With respect to the city's priorities, I'd like to recommend a few things:

- Affordable housing providers and market rate housing providers agreed tremendously in their respective stakeholder meetings. Both stakeholders suggested *we should streamline permitting, remove (or reduce) parking mandates, and invest in city staff capacity*. Let's feed two birds with one scone and make these priorities for the housing element.
- We should pursue affordable housing funding by pursuing HCD's pro-housing designation. Mountain View is one of the most pro-housing cities in California, and there's a strong chance we can get this rare designation, thereby granting the city priority status for affordable housing grants from the state.

Finally, I'd like to note that much of our housing element depends on details. Do we set concrete timelines for programs? Are those programs 'exploratory' or will we commit to action? Will our solutions be big enough to match the scale of the crisis? Much of this remains to be seen, but I'm optimistic. I hope the city releases components of the draft plan as soon as they're available - particularly the site inventory in Excel format - so the public has sufficient time to give feedback on the details.

Thank you,
Salim

From: Lenny's Sonic

Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 12:40 AM

To: epc@mountainview.gov

Cc: wcranstonmv@gmail.com; kammy.lo.mvepc@gmail.com; caprilesmountainview@gmail.com; hankdempseymv@gmail.com; preeti.hehmeyer@gmail.com; jyin.mvepc@gmail.com

Subject: Housing Element

Mountain View is doing a good job of planning for new housing, but our ability to generate below-market housing is constrained by the high cost of producing such housing. Staff has done a great job of identifying potential policy topics.

Here are some areas that I hope will be addressed in the Housing Element Update:

To preserve and expand our stock of affordable housing, we need to stop allowing the demolition of apartments that are not collapsing on their own. It's not enough to provide relocation assistance to tenants. Every lost unit creates an additional financial burden on the below-market housing sector.

Therefore, we should consider an approach, similar to that adopted by the City of Los Angeles, to require the replacement of protected (rent-controlled) housing or other housing occupied by low-income residents.

Furthermore, we should take a strategic approach to funding affordable housing. That is, we should assess the cumulative need for funds and try to budget to meet that need.

Planned housing in East Whisman and North Bayshore will make a significant dent in our housing development obligations, but because of the complexity of the Google/LendLease projects much of that construction will not necessarily be completed within the eight-year timeframe of the housing element. Furthermore, those Precise Plans will not improve our jobs-housing imbalance. It is important, therefore, to repurpose other commercial areas – such as the Terra Bella area and Charleston Plaza - where development can proceed more quickly.

Land dedication in East Whisman and North Bayshore will provide opportunities for the development of below-market housing, but there is no guarantee that those projects will be built in a timely fashion, if at all. The City, County, Google, Sobrato, etc. should convene meetings designed to accelerate development on those parcels, beginning with the site-specific identification of preferred affordable housing developers.

The northern half of Mountain View is ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, but the southern half is relatively affluent with few residents from Latinx, African-American, or Southeast Asian backgrounds. The city should use census data to confirm or disprove this observation.

Given the paucity of developable property south of El Camino, the city should address the lack of diversity by creating a program that goes beyond allowed the development of companion units

(ADUs), actually facilitating the construction of below-market companion units with design, permitting, and financing assistance, perhaps even arranging construction or the acquisition of pre-fabricated units. Such a program would have the auxiliary benefit of helping retired homeowners extract value from their properties without leaving the community.

There is one major parcel south of El Camino that is well located – that is, near schools, health care, and retail - for affordable housing and already owned by the city: The Cuesta Park Annex. The only reason not to evaluate its housing future would be the anticipated NIMBY outcry.

Page 7 of the staff report discusses homelessness, stating: “The City has been an active player in the response to homelessness, including the support and operation of local transitional housing, the development of new emergency housing, and COVID-19 rent relief funding.” I support these programs, but it’s time for us all to admit that in many cases “transition” is a euphemism for forcing people out. People should not be pressured to leave transitional housing, such as LiveMoves Mountain View or Safe Parking, unless they have a suitable place to go. In most cases, leaving Mountain View or couch surfing is not an acceptable outcome. In fact, Mountain View should explore creating RV parks, where vehicle residents could live until they find better alternatives.

Lenny Siegel

From: Leora Tanjuatco
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 12:39 PM
To: epc@mountainview.gov
Subject: Agenda Item 6.1

Dear Environmental Planning Commission,

As a Mountain View homeowner and resident, I wholeheartedly support building as much housing as we can as a part of this housing element cycle.

Housing policy is environmental policy, and I feel so lucky to live in a place that has a lot of transit, and some bike lanes. We should make room for as many people as we can. Thank you for your service to our community!

Leora Tanjuatco Ross



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

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

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):

