

## CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

### ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION

#### STAFF REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 5.1 **Public Hearing for Consideration of a General Plan Map Amendment from General Industrial to High-Density Residential Land Use Designation; a Zoning Map Amendment from the P-30 (Sylvan-Dale) Precise Plan to the R4 (High-Density Residential) District; a Development Review Permit to Construct a Four-Story, 116-Unit Affordable Apartment Project with Two Manager Units and One Level of Underground Parking; a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Remove Six Heritage Trees; and Adopt the 779 East Evelyn Avenue Family Housing Project Mitigated Negative Declaration**

### RECOMMENDATION

The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) adopt:

1. A recommendation to City Council to adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the 779 East Evelyn Avenue Family Housing Project per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (see Exhibit 1);
2. A Resolution Recommending the City Council Approve a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment to Change the Property at 779 East Evelyn Avenue from General Industrial to High-Density Residential Land Use Designation (see Exhibit 2);
3. A Resolution Recommending the City Council Approve a Zoning Map Amendment for the Property at 779 East Evelyn Avenue from the P-30 (Sylvan-Dale) Precise Plan to the R4 (High-Density Residential) Zoning District (see Exhibit 3); and
4. A Resolution Recommending the City Council Approve a Development Review Permit for a Four-Story, 116-Unit Residential Apartment Building with Two Manager Units and One Level of Underground Parking and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit for the Removal of Six Heritage Trees at 779 East Evelyn Avenue (see Exhibit 4).

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

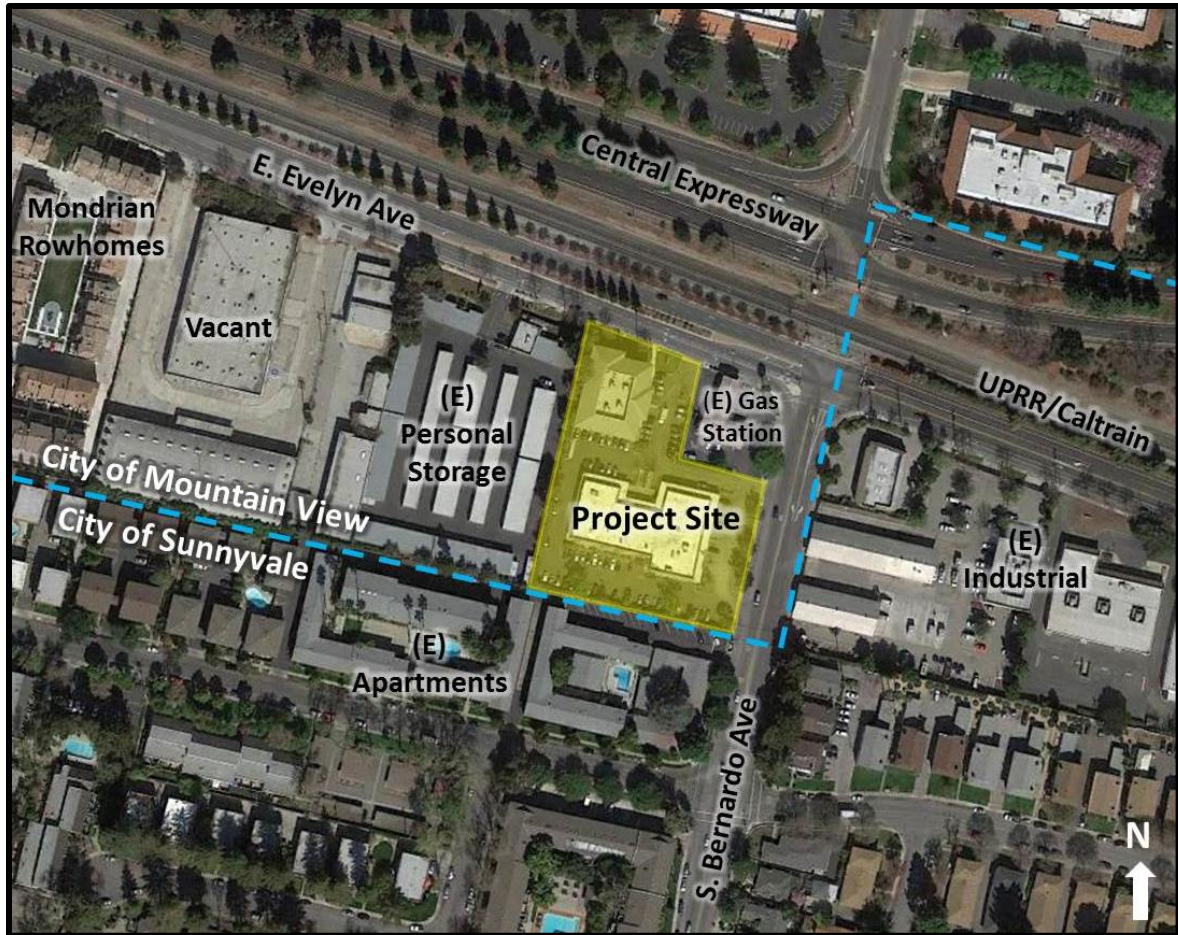
The EPC's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's Internet website. All property owners and tenants within a quarter-mile radius of the project site and other interested parties were notified of this meeting. A City Council meeting will be held regarding this project, and property owners and interested parties will be notified.

## **BACKGROUND**

In February 2014, the City of Mountain View released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for affordable housing developments. As part of the NOFA process, ROEM Development Corporation (ROEM) received a \$21.5 million reservation of funding from the City Council in December 2014 to develop 116 affordable rental units. Final funding terms and authorization will be considered by City Council at the same time as the planning entitlements.

The project targets the workforce population with incomes at or below 60 percent of the Average Median Income (AMI) in Santa Clara County. Rents for the units will range from approximately \$903 per month for a studio to \$1,604 per month for a 3-bedroom unit, depending on family size and income. Households typically qualifying for these rental rates have a maximum annual income of \$37,250 for a one-person household to \$63,780 for a four-person household.

## Project Site



The L-shaped, 1.93-acre project site is located at the southwest corner of East Evelyn Avenue and South Bernardo Avenue and is occupied by a two-story office building and a single-story commercial building with offices and a convenience store. The project site shares two driveways with the existing gas service station located at the immediate corner, which will be retained.

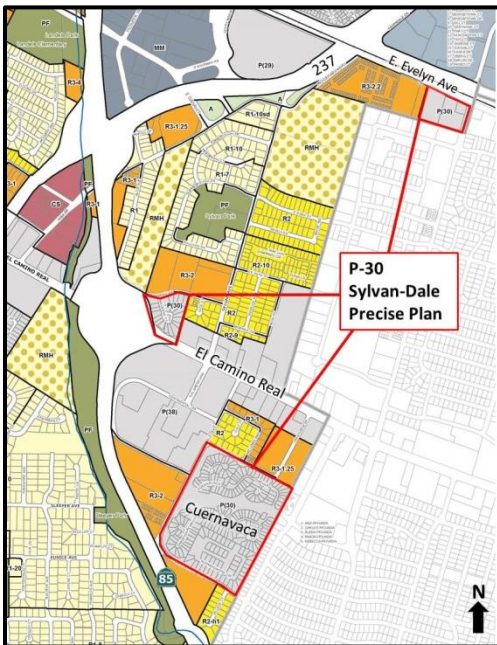
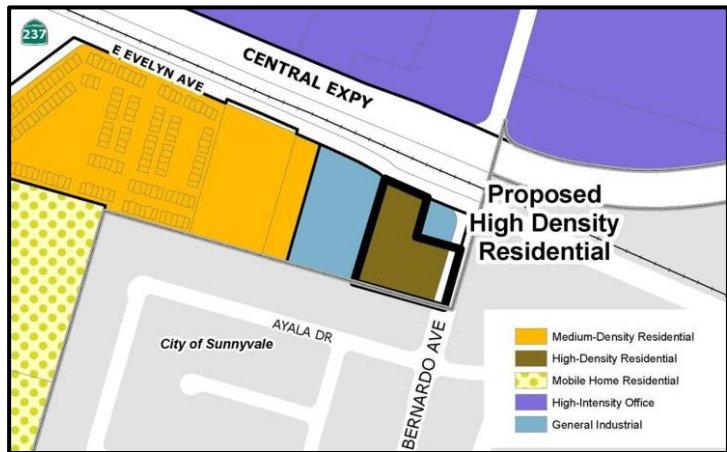
The project is located adjacent to a personal storage facility to the west, a gas service station and the UPRR/Caltrain railroad tracks to the north, industrial uses to the east (a metalworking/machine shop), and a two-story apartment complex to the south. The project site is at the City limit border, abutting the City of Sunnyvale to the east and south.

## General Plan and Zoning

In December 2014, the project received Gatekeeper authorization from City Council to review General Plan and Zoning Map Amendments with the proposed redevelopment of the site.

### General Plan

Per the General Plan, the project site is currently designated General Industrial. A large portion of this segment of Evelyn Avenue, between Moorpark Way/SR-237 and the City limit border, has transitioned to Medium-Density Residential with approval and construction of the Mondrian residential community, located at the corner of Moorpark Way and East Evelyn Avenue.



To construct a residential project, the applicant is proposing a General Plan Map Amendment from General Industrial to High-Density Residential. The High-Density Residential land use is intended for multi-family residential housing with a density of up to 80 units per acre and a height of up to five stories. The proposed project is within these guidelines at 60 units per acre and four stories in height (see Exhibit 2 – Resolution for General Plan Map Amendment).

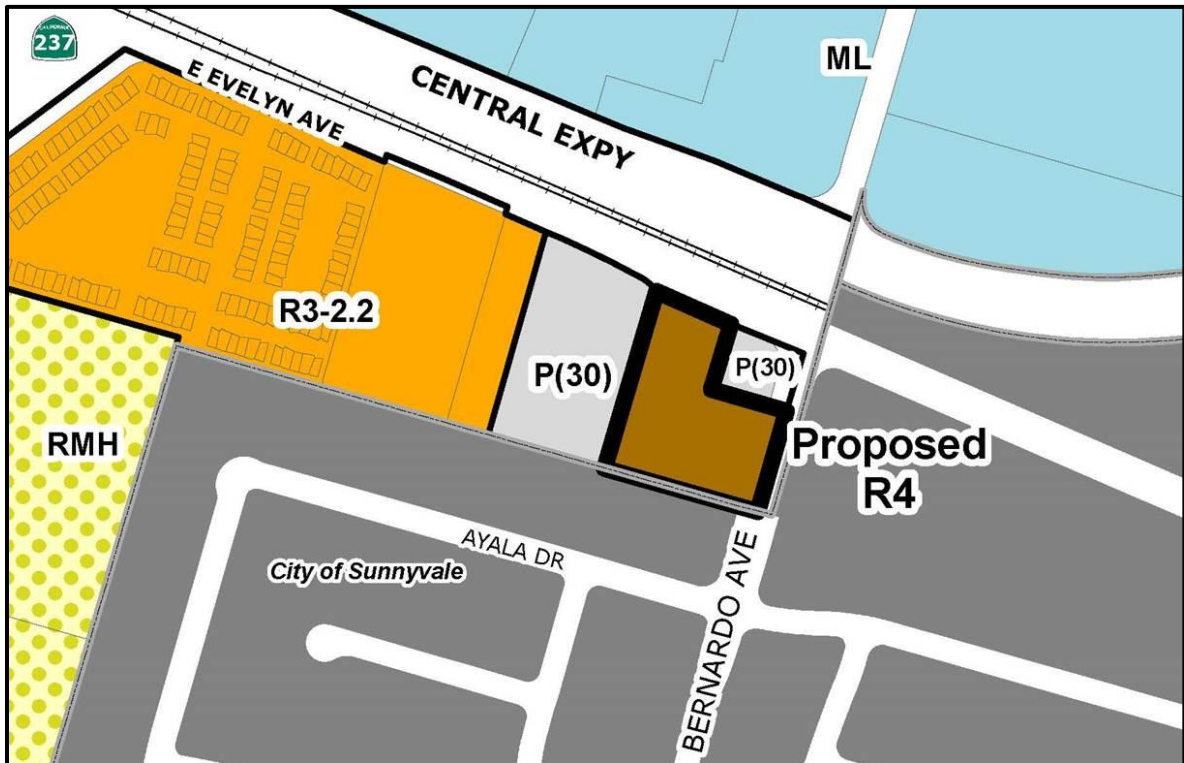
### Zoning

The project site is currently located in the P-30 (Sylvan-Dale) Precise Plan, a neighborhood area plan adopted in 1974 which covers the Sylvan Park Neighborhood. This plan differs



from other City Precise Plans as it is a land use guide with limited (to no) development standards traditionally found within Precise Plans. Today, the Precise Plan covers the remaining industrial properties on Evelyn Avenue and built-out residential communities, Cuernavaca and Bourbon Court. Within the Precise Plan specifically, the project site is identified as industrial.

To redevelop the project site, the applicant is proposing to rezone the property to the R4 (High-Density Residential) District, removing it from the P-30 Precise Plan. By rezoning to an established zoning district within the City, the site can be developed in accordance with the R4 District design and development standards (see Exhibit 3 – Resolution for Zoning Map Amendment).



### Industrial-to-Residential Conversion

The City has policies regarding the conversion of land uses from industrial to residential in order to provide guidance on consideration of applications for development projects with conversions. The Evelyn Avenue corridor between Moorpark Way and the City limit border, where the project site is located, is within an area identified for consideration of future conversions. The majority of this segment of Evelyn Avenue is residentially zoned with an established residential neighborhood to the west and south of the project site.

For this project, the conversion to residential land uses is appropriate based on the project maximizing the number of housing units achievable, being contiguous with an existing residential neighborhood, being appropriately designed so as not to impact the adjacent business operations, and the conversion will not result in a land use island which is incompatible with the adjacent land uses. It should be noted that while the project site is slightly under the desired 2-acre minimum for land use conversions (at 1.93 acres), the project meets the intent of the site size criteria by achieving the highest unit count achievable while maintaining compatibility with adjacent development in scale, massing, and height.

### Project Description

ROEM, the applicant, is proposing to demolish the existing two-story, 14,800 square foot office building and the existing single-story, 29,600 square foot office building and convenience store to construct a four-story, 116-unit affordable apartment complex with two levels of parking (one below grade level and one at grade level). The 116 units, 2 of which are for on-site managers, will be comprised of the following unit mix: 11 studios, 45 one-bedrooms, 45 two-bedrooms, and 15 three-bedrooms.



The project is oriented along two street frontages—Evelyn and Bernardo Avenues—with vehicle access on South Bernardo Avenue, adjacent to the main

leasing office/lobby and a small guest parking lot, where the parking garage entrance and truck loading area are located. A secondary lobby entrance is located on Evelyn Avenue, in addition to three of the first-floor units having direct access to the street, consistent with the Mondrian residential community to the west. The building includes amenities for residents such as a bike storage room, a computer/homework room, a fitness center, personal storage lockers for each unit, and a central courtyard area with landscaping, barbecue facilities, dining areas, and a play structure. Please note, Sheet A0-0 is the preferred project site plan with an outdoor amenity area adjacent to the rear parking lot and vehicle entrance, which is not consistently shown in the plan set (see Exhibit 4 – Resolution for the Project Conditions of Approval and Exhibit 5 – Project Plans).

The four driveways at the existing gas station will remain, with modifications to the two driveways nearest the project site. These driveways will be reconstructed to connect to the gas station property only and will not have connection to the project site. Additionally, the project street frontages are proposed to be improved with new separated sidewalks along Evelyn Avenue and Bernardo Avenue. Lastly, the applicant is proposing street improvements to increase vehicle and bicycle safety by installing a new center turn lane and new bike lanes on Bernardo and Evelyn Avenues.

## **Previous Meetings**

### Gatekeeper and Funding Reservation

In December 2014, the City Council reserved City Below-Market-Rate funding and authorized a Gatekeeper request to review General Plan Map and Zoning Map Amendments for the proposed development project (see Exhibit 6 – City Council Report – December 14, 2014). Through the NOFA and Gatekeeper authorization process, City Councilmembers, members of the public, and City staff voiced concerns of the site's location within the City and distance to public transit, schools, and neighborhood amenities. Council suggested the applicant consider "gap measures" to improve access for residents through encouraging bicycling, providing a shuttle to schools, and coordinating with the Mountain View Community Shuttle. The applicant has proposed a series of alternative transportation measures for residents of the project, which are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

### City Council Study Session

In May 2015, City staff presented a parking study to City Council for the project, which reviewed a lower parking ratio than required by the City's Zoning Ordinance for multi-family residential projects. Per the City's Zoning Ordinance, reduced parking requirements may be considered when a parking study indicates that a lower parking ratio will be adequate for the projects parking demand. For affordable housing projects, parking demands are significantly lower than market-rate projects because lower-income households typically have fewer cars and often use alternative transportation options, including public transit (see Exhibit 7 – City Council Report – May 26, 2015).

The parking study included a comparative analysis of three existing affordable housing projects in the cities of Sunnyvale and San Jose with similar unit mixes, distances to major transit services, and access to neighborhood commercial services/amenities. While the parking study suggested a ratio of 1.68 spaces per unit, staff recommended a higher ratio at 1.75 spaces per unit, based on the highest sample collected. Council authorized the project to proceed with a parking ratio of 1.75 spaces per unit to which the project has been designed to meet.

### Development Review Committee

The project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) on April 15, 2015 and November 4, 2015, where they recommended conditional approval of the project design. Comments provided by the DRC and incorporated into the project design include:

- Establishing a 15' setback around the side property lines to allow adequate space for trees and landscaping;
- Recessing the windows along street frontages to add depth;
- Highlighting the main entrance by projecting out the entry on Evelyn Avenue, adding a taller/grander awning, and widening the staircase to the street;
- Adding vertical and horizontal breaks/relief in the building elevations at key elements; and
- Applying some of the same horizontal detailing proposed on the exterior facade to the interior courtyard facade.



Additionally, the DRC did request the applicant to study adding landscaping at the rear of the property with an increased landscape buffer and/or removal of surface parking stalls. The applicant has removed the majority of surface parking stalls, replacing them with an outdoor amenity area for residents.

### Neighborhood Meetings

ROEM hosted two neighborhood meetings at Landels Elementary School. The first meeting was held on November 18, 2014 and was attended by five members of the public. This meeting was held prior to the City Council public hearing on the Gatekeeper request and reservation of funding for the project. Concerns expressed at this meeting were primarily regarding the lack of public transit options and difficulties for children to walk to the local elementary school from the project site. One participant suggested the community shuttle be extended into this area of the City. Additionally, questions were raised regarding construction and development impacts of the potential project to surrounding neighbors and properties.

The second meeting was held on November 12, 2015, where approximately 20 members of the public were present. Those in attendance included a mix of neighbors, business and property owners, and those interested in living in the project. Most of the comments received from the public included questions about the project design, types of units, rental rates, amenities, and procedures on applying as a resident. Additionally, there were concerns raised as to why the existing convenience store could not be relocated into the project, about impacts to schools with the addition of more children from future residents of the project, and about dust and other construction impacts on adjacent neighbors nearest the project site.

## ANALYSIS

### Project Design



ROEM is proposing a contemporary architectural style, with stone and stucco elements, a combination of flat and sloped roofs, dark bronze-framed windows, fabric window awnings, metal railings, corbels, and precast medallions. The lobby and leasing office entries will have tall, glass storefronts with metal awnings, highlighting them as main entries. To add interest, the applicant is proposing a series of complementary paint colors to highlight various projections, floor levels, and articulations on the building exterior.

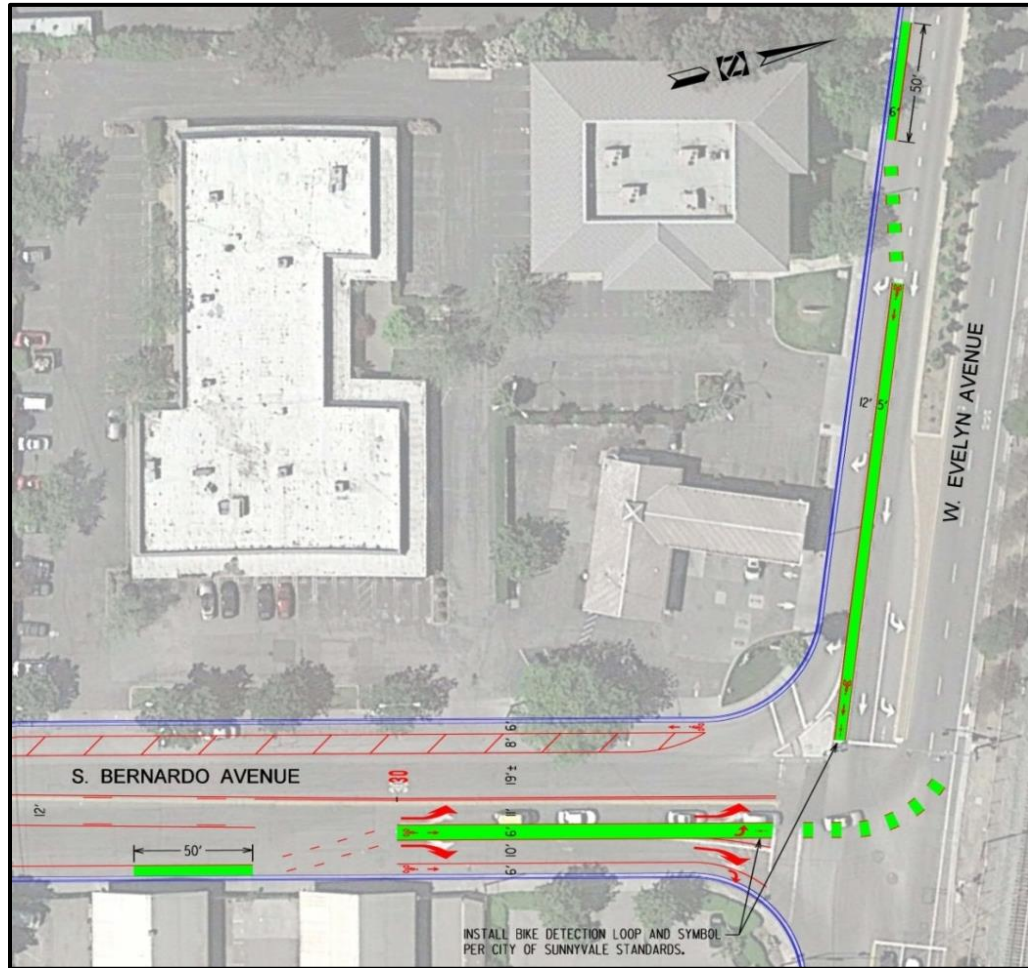
The building includes balconies for each unit, excluding three ground-floor units where balconies are not feasible due to the streetscape design or building entries. The units range in size from approximately 530 square feet for studios, 650 square feet for one bedrooms, 870 square feet for two bedrooms, and 1,175 square feet for three-bedroom units.

Dense landscaping is proposed along the side property lines within the 15' building setback to provide buffers from the personal storage facility and gas service station, and along the rear property line within the 51' building setback to add visual screening from the adjacent one- and two-story residential apartment to the south. The building is proposed to be four stories with a total height of 57'6", within the maximum permitted height of 60' per the R4 District. The building is proposed to be designed to meet LEED Gold.

To construct the project, the applicant proposes removing 41 of the 46 trees on-site, of which 6 are Heritage, including 4 pear trees, 1 privet tree, and 1 Mexican fan palm tree. The applicant is proposing to retain 4 existing street trees on Bernardo

Avenue, which are in good health, and 1 pear tree on Evelyn Avenue near the street. Staff is continuing to work with the applicant on design alternatives for the ramp entrance on Evelyn Avenue to see if the second pear tree (proposed for removal as a Heritage tree) can be retained.

### Proposed Street Improvements



As part of the project, the applicant is proposing street improvements to increase vehicle and bicycle safety in the area (see Exhibit 8—Proposed Street Improvements). The street improvements include:

- A new center turn lane on South Bernardo Avenue, which will allow cars to turn into and out of the project driveway, in the northbound direction, without impacting vehicle queuing in the existing lane;

- Remove street parking on the west side of South Bernardo Avenue, from the intersection of Evelyn Avenue to the City limit, to increase safety for bicyclists and reduce conflicts with the existing gas station driveways. Street parking is currently not permitted on the east side of Bernardo Avenue;
- Install new bike lanes, including green striping, on both sides of Bernardo Avenue in the City of Mountain View city limits, with a new left-turn bike lane added on the northbound Bernardo Avenue approach onto westbound Evelyn Avenue;
- Install green striping on existing bike lanes on Evelyn Avenue, approaching the Bernardo Avenue intersection; and
- Install bike traffic light sensors at the Evelyn Avenue and Bernardo Avenue intersection.

The proposed bike lane improvements are from the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan Update, adopted in November 2015, where the Evelyn Avenue/Bernardo Avenue intersection was identified for improvement. Evelyn Avenue is a major bicycle corridor within the City with approximately 70 peak-hour a.m. and p.m. bike trips traveling through the intersection. Additionally, these bike lane improvements offer a good alternative for residents from the project to access the Mountain View Transit Center, downtown, or other amenities within the City. Because this intersection and streets are shared with the City of Sunnyvale, City staff has reviewed these preliminary plans with Sunnyvale city staff who are supportive of the improvements.

### **Alternative Transportation Program**

In addition to incorporating bicycle facilities and improvements into the project, the applicant has included alternative transportation options to aid residents in getting around the City to access school and work. The applicant proposes the following program:

- A private shuttle bus to local Mountain View public schools (elementary and middle schools) in the a.m. and p.m. hours to drop off and pick up students who are residents of the project. The shuttle will also travel to the Mountain View Transit Center during peak commute hours to drop off and pick up residents. The private shuttle is an alternative to the Mountain View Community Shuttle, which already has an existing station stop at Sylvan Park, approximately 0.5 mile from the project site (as the crow flies);



- Provide Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Eco Passes, or an equivalent transit pass option, to all residents for the life of the project at no cost to the resident;
- One dedicated car-sharing vehicle on-site for residents to utilize on an as-needed basis, for those who may not be able to afford car ownership; and
- An on-site bike-sharing program for residents to “sign out” bicycles on an as-needed basis.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was prepared for the project, which analyzed potential environmental impacts of the project and identified mitigation measures for significant impacts related to air quality, hazardous materials, noise, and utilities on the project site. With the incorporation of mitigation measures, these impacts can be reduced to less than significant.

Staff received and responded to one public comment on the IS, which is located in the First Amendment Section of the IS/MND. The comment was from the VTA, who supported the project’s streetscape design and had clarifying questions.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following a recommendation from the EPC at this public hearing, the project will be heard at a City Council public hearing scheduled for March 1, 2016, where Council will consider the EPC recommendation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends the EPC adopt resolutions recommending adoption of the IS/MND for the 779 East Evelyn Avenue Family Housing Project, General Plan and Zoning Map Amendments, and approval of the project to the City Council as it includes new high-quality, multi-family housing options at affordable rents for residents of the City.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the project with modified conditions.
2. Refer the project back to the DRC for additional consideration.
3. Recommend the Council not adopt the CEQA document, deny the General Plan and Zoning Map Amendments, and deny the project, including the bike lane and roadway improvements.

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LH-VG/7/CDD  
823-02-17-16SR-E

- Exhibits:
1. Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
  2. Resolution for General Plan Map Amendment
  3. Resolution for Zoning Map Amendment
  4. Resolution for Project Conditions of Approval
  5. Project Plans
  6. [City Council Report – December 14, 2014](#)
  7. [City Council Report – May 26, 2015](#)
  8. Proposed Street Improvements