

From: [James Kuszmaul](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: Item 6.1 Housing Element - Parking Policies
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022 8:45:06 PM

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Mayor Ramirez and Councilmembers,

There are a plethora of important aspects to our upcoming Housing Element, but I would like to call attention to one in particular: Parking policy. Residential parking requirements and policies have an outsized impact on our transportation system and on the feasibility and affordability of housing, and with the Housing Element being the guiding document for the next 8 years of development in Mountain View, we should use this opportunity to commit to substantial reforms. In particular, we should strongly consider:

- Eliminating all residential parking requirements.
- Imposing parking maximums near existing transit (e.g., a maximum of 1 space / unit within 0.5 mi of “high quality transit”).
- Requiring unbundling of parking for rental units to make it so that residents need not pay for parking more cars than they have.

Additionally, we may wish to consider streamlining the Residential Parking Permit program to better price on-street parking so that new developments do not result in congestion of on-street parking.

There would be a wide range of benefits to these policies, including, but not limited to:

1. **Lower rents** for car-free or car-lite households, to the tune of \$300-\$600 / month [1]—\$600 / month is about at the level required to go from the Very-Low-Income to Low-Income rent maximums for affordable housing, suggesting that reductions in parking would go a long way towards helping housing affordability.
2. **Reductions in car ownership.** Both from removal of parking requirements [2] and from unbundling of parking [3]. The availability of parking is comparable to, if not greater than, the presence of transit in determining mode use among residents, and if we require that our new housing all be built with parking, we are locking in a large amount of continued car-use for the lifetime of those buildings.

a.
I will not re-iterate *all* the reasons that increased driving is bad, but would note that increased driving (rather than transit ridership, walking, and biking) implies: Increased congestion; increased carbon emissions; reduced air quality (and thus reduced health in our vulnerable populations); reduced safety (see Mountain View's Vision Zero policies); increased paving costs to the city; higher traffic enforcement costs.

3.
Greater variety in architectural styles. If housing must accommodate a driveway (even if it is an entrance to an underground garage), that severely limits potential ground floor layouts and uses, especially on small lots. This makes it harder to provide ground-floor retail, and limits the number of units that can be made accessible without an elevator.

4.
Fewer driveways. The presence of driveways creates pedestrian-car conflicts, makes sidewalks harder to navigate due to extra up/down bumps, and prevents the city from using the curb-space taken up by the driveway for anything else (e.g., street trees, bike lanes, delivery zones, or even just on-street parking).

5.
Removing parking minimums and instituting parking maximums is criteria 1F for **HCD's "pro-housing" designation**, which would qualify the city for additional affordable housing grant money (as well as some additional grant categories).

The benefits of reducing parking in new developments are copious, and even all the new housing stock being built in this upcoming RHNA cycle will still only end up representing ~a quarter of the housing stock in the city, and that housing stock is likely to be with us for the next half century. If we are to begin making progress on our sustainability goals, it behooves us to begin making progress as soon as possible. If Buffalo can eliminate parking minimums, then so can Mountain View.

Thank you, to both staff and commissioners, for the time and effort you are putting into this process, and I hope that we can make the most of this opportunity to shape Mountain View's future for the better,

James Kuszmaul

Footnotes:

[1] See references in <https://padailypost.com/2021/06/24/opinion-citys-parking-laws-raise-housing-costs/> —~\$250 - \$300 / month for one spot; most 2+ bedroom units in Mountain View are currently required to be built with 2 or more spaces.

[2] See this comparative study from San Francisco: https://people.ucsc.edu/~jwest1/articles/MillardBall_West_Rezaei_Desai_SFBMR_UrbanStudies.pdf

[3] See the summary numbers in Table 3 of <https://www.vtqi.org/park-hou.pdf> , suggesting that a ~\$100 /

month parking fee can incentivize a 15-30% reduction in car ownership.

From: [D.Offen or G. Nyhan](#)
To: [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Showalter, Pat](#)
Cc: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: 3/8/22 Housing Element Study Session
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022 8:54:15 PM

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Dear Council Member,

Per your discussion of the Housing Element, we would like to support affordable housing south of El Camino Real. We are long-time homeowners on Barbara Ave. in the Cuesta Park neighborhood. One good possibility is the vacant land at Cuesta Park Annex. Another future option would be Blossom Valley Shopping Center. Instead of zoning for offices, please prioritize housing or mixed-use housing/retail to continue to decrease the jobs/housing imbalance in our city. This principle could also be applied to the Charleston Plaza property vacated by REI and other businesses.

Thank you for your service,

Dave Offen & Gail Nyhan

From: [Salim Damerdj](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Cc: [MV YIMBY](#); HousingElements@hcd.ca.gov; [Kevin Ma](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 6.1 - Housing Element
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022 9:01:23 PM
Attachments: [city_council_march_7_letter.docx](#)

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Dear Mayor Ramirez and City Council Members,

Please find MV YIMBY's letter on item 6.1 attached.

All the best,
Salim

Dear Mayor Ramirez and City Council Members,

The city's housing targets have almost quadrupled, and before you is a site inventory methodology designed to maintain the status quo. If we do not create a realistic plan to build far more housing across the income spectrum, we are doing a disservice to the working people who came to housing element meetings to ask for a real plan to address the housing crisis.

The draft site inventory is too small. The city cannot accommodate a 3.8x increase in our housing target while excluding R1, R2, and R3 lots. **No data or evidence is provided to show that this methodology leaves us with enough zoning capacity to realistically hit our housing targets.**

To predict what will happen, we should look at what is happening now. Mountain View is on track to develop around 21% of its 5th RHNA cycle site inventory. So, Mountain View YIMBY believes **we should apply great scrutiny to a housing element that claims the median site has much more than a 21% chance of development by 2031.**¹ Of course, many sites are quite likely to develop - as in North Bayshore and East Whisman - but even these projects face risk² and include land donations for affordable housing that lack development timelines. Other sites have near zero chance of development, as is the case with 555 Showers (Target), 384 San Antonio (Bank of America), and 2633 California (China Wok) – all of whom have landowners uninterested in housing. On whole, **the site inventory contains over a hundred businesses and offices, and the city presents no case for thinking these businesses will be demolished by 2031.** Such a case would be hard to make.

The story is even worse for Low & Very Low Income housing. The sites in the inventory are projected for lots of BMR, whereas actual projects being built have much less.³ And so, to reach the BMR target, the city should list many more sites, donate land for all-affordable projects, or both. To make all housing more likely, we recommend eliminating parking minima and removing the requirement for council approval from higher tier densities in precise plans.

Furthermore, the lack of sites south of El Camino is glaring, especially considering the racial diversity difference between the areas. Census tracts south of El Camino have no more than 11% Hispanics. However, that percentage rises to as high as 40% in census tracts north of El Camino. Furthermore, all census tracts south of El Camino are rated Highest Resource by the state Tax Credit Allocation Committee, whereas most northern tracts are Moderate Resource.

¹ See Table A.1. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6786z5j9>

² One project in East Whisman - 415 E. Middlefield - already failed due to financial feasibility. For North Bayshore, the city's plan on how to streamline North Bayshore is still in flux and may not guarantee Shorebird South (1794 homes) by 2031. Last, MVWSD's proposed Mello-Roos style tax, if approved, will render new housing infeasible.

³ According to Table 2 on page 7 of the staff report, opportunity sites are projected to be 5,462 / 6,830 = 80% BMR units, whereas actually proposed projects in the pipeline are on track to be 1,842 / 8,236 = 22% BMR units.

To remedy this, we recommend including the Cuesta Park Annex and Blossom Valley Shopping Center, which should be proactively rezoned since the General Plan already contemplates housing there. Furthermore, the city should search for and find other opportunity sites south of El Camino.

We would also like to add the following policies and programs in the housing element:

- **Develop a local no-net-loss policy for rent controlled units** by requiring a 1-for-1 replacement with right of return at current rent and temporary relocation assistance during construction for existing tenants similar to the provisions in SB330. This should be tied to a policy to greatly increase density upon redevelopment of older buildings near transit and high opportunity areas, so redevelopment is feasible. (Goals 1 & 2).
- **Expand and solidify the Eviction Prevention Program** currently managed by the rent stabilization staff. Built to mitigate COVID's economic impacts, the city should expand the Eviction Prevention Program and fund it to assist tenants not covered by CSFRA. Since most clients of the Eviction Prevention Program were non-native English speakers, the city should provide more resources to the Multicultural Engagement Program (MEP). (Goal 2)
- **Invest in diverse opportunities for community owned housing** including Community Land Trusts and Community Development Corporations and adopt policies to enable community development and acquisition of housing properties like COPA/TOPA. (Goal 4)
- **Create a citywide housing portal** for all affordable housing in the city to make it easier for residents to find and apply for below-market-rate (BMR) units. It should also be clear that people can apply regardless of immigration status. (Goal 2)
- **Expand safe parking and other rapid re-housing** support for unhoused residents. (Goal 3)

Many of these policy and program recommendations have segments in the city workplan and are among the list of example policies of AFFH under HCD guidance. We hope to see these policies added to the housing element.

Kind regards,

Salim Damerджи and Kevin Ma

On behalf of Mountain View YIMBY



From: [Daniel Hulse](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 6.1 - Housing Element
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022 11:39:19 PM
Attachments: [DHulse_Item61_HousingElementLetter.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Ramirez and City Council Members,

See my attached letter for comments regarding agenda item 6.1.

Best,
Daniel Hulse

Dear City Council,

It has been said in previous council meetings that the city “does not have a NIMBY bone in its body.” Indeed, there are many encouraging parts of the cycle's housing element process (including pursuing the pro-housing designation) that deserve applause. However, I worry that city staff's approach to meeting the RHNA cycle housing requirements—one of the foundational pieces of the housing element—fundamentally does not match the city's well-known pro-housing reputation.

I say this because I think the approach taken is far too conservative, *deliberately aiming* for “minimal rezoning”—it instead relies on “opportunity areas” to fill in the gaps in the existing pipeline projects to be developed next cycle. There are a few problems with this approach:

1. Many pipeline projects may not come to full fruition in the RHNA cycle and are subject to significant project risk throughout the planning, development, and approval process
2. A cursory look at the “opportunity sites” shows that many of these sites are much less likely to be developed than assumed because the owners do not personally have interest in redevelopment
3. Large-scale projects take a long time to build and develop, meaning that if an “opportunity site” does not enter the pipeline in the next 3-4 years, it may not end up contributing to the next RHNA cycle at all
4. While large-scale projects like this produce above-AMI market-rate housing (naturally) and affordable housing (via density bonuses, subsidies, etc), it at present is not producing more moderate-AMI housing (as currently developed—reducing parking, stair land grant, and other requirements can help with this). It is also not clear how so many of these “opportunity sites” will thus meet moderate+affordable requirements in the RHNA—it appears that they are mainly using it as a “fudge factor” to make the math square given what is already in the pipeline

While the development of all of these sites is certainly worth pursuing, that does not mean that we can credibly meet RHNA requirements by solely going in this direction. The purpose of the RHNA is to provoke cities to *make the changes required* to produce enough housing to meet demand—it is not merely a mathematical exercise. Given the ambitious requirements on the city this cycle, it makes no sense to leave rezoning off of the table, especially when the state government (through SB-10) has provided the city significant leeway to pursue this option with this intent in mind.

City council should thus direct staff to propose a slate of rezoning options to complement the other housing production efforts this cycle. I personally recommend that they pursue the following proposals (for which I have attached some preliminary analyses):

1. Uniformly upzone all R2 to 10 du/parcel. This proposal is common sense because the vast majority of R2 is near high quality transit and because R2 landowners would likely be more amenable to the opportunities this would provide. It would also increase total city capacity by 12,520 units.

2. Upzone all R1 to 10du/parcel from ½ to ¼ mile from high quality transit. This proposal would keep the majority of R1 in the city intact while providing between 11,000-33,000 units of new housing capacity where it is needed most—around walkable, transit-oriented communities (where development is already planned) with pre-existing amenities (like parks and schools).

While it is unlikely that these areas would be built out to full capacity during the RHNA timeframe, considering a modest probability of development of 5% would still produce around 1000-4000 new units in the next cycle, depending on the options. This would supplement, not replace, the existing projects that staff is using, providing an additional housing source that would help the city meet RHNA requirements even if large projects do not come to fruition in the desired time-frame.

It would additionally provide the following benefits:

1. Contribute to the meeting the AFFH requirement, since development would be distributed throughout the city (and especially in high-amenity areas)
2. Develop moderate-AMI housing missing from the current approach (recent analysis from San Jose shows that 10-plexes pencil out to being affordable at AMI), complementing the city's current approach
3. Give home and property owners additional opportunities to redevelop their land. Contrary to popular belief, these opportunities raise property values rather than lowering them, because it opens up property development (often only accessible to big companies) to everyday homeowners
4. Create "missing middle" buffer zones around high-density areas that give neighborhoods a smooth transition between high and low density areas
5. Create more housing types (specifically -plexes) that could accommodate a wider variety of housing needs and living arrangements than is currently available.
6. Create housing without burdening council, city staff, and city advocates with endless meetings and "process"--which may well be a choke point on future development

I appreciate your consideration of my proposal in reading this letter. Pursuing upzoning will help the city maintain its pro-housing credentials, will be a necessary step to making sure we meet our RHNA requirements long-term, and will make our city a better, more accessible place to live for thousands of people.

Sincerely,
Daniel Hulse
(on my own behalf)

Impact of Upzoning R1 Near Transit in Mountain View

San Antonio Area:
749 1/2 mile Lots
80 1/4 mile Lots

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Total R1 Lots: | 8205 |
| Total 1/2 Mile R1 Lots: | 3739 (46%) |
| Total >1/2 Mile R1 Lots: | 4466 (54%) |
| Total 1/4 Mile R1 Lots: | 1205 (15%) |
| Total >1/4 Mile R1 Lots: | 7000 (85%) |

El Camino North / Shoreline West:
533 1/2 Mile Lots
186 1/4 Mile Lots

MV Caltrain North:
52 1/2 Mile Lots
39 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino South / Gemello:
322 1/2 Mile Lots
136 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino North / Old MV:
753 1/2 Mile Lots
334 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino South / St Francis:
479 1/2 Mile Lots
213 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino North / Sylvan:
164 1/2 Mile Lots
32 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino South / Cuesta:
464 1/2 Mile Lots
165 1/4 Mile Lots

El Camino South / Martens:
223 1/2 Mile Lots
20 1/4 Mile Lots

Legend

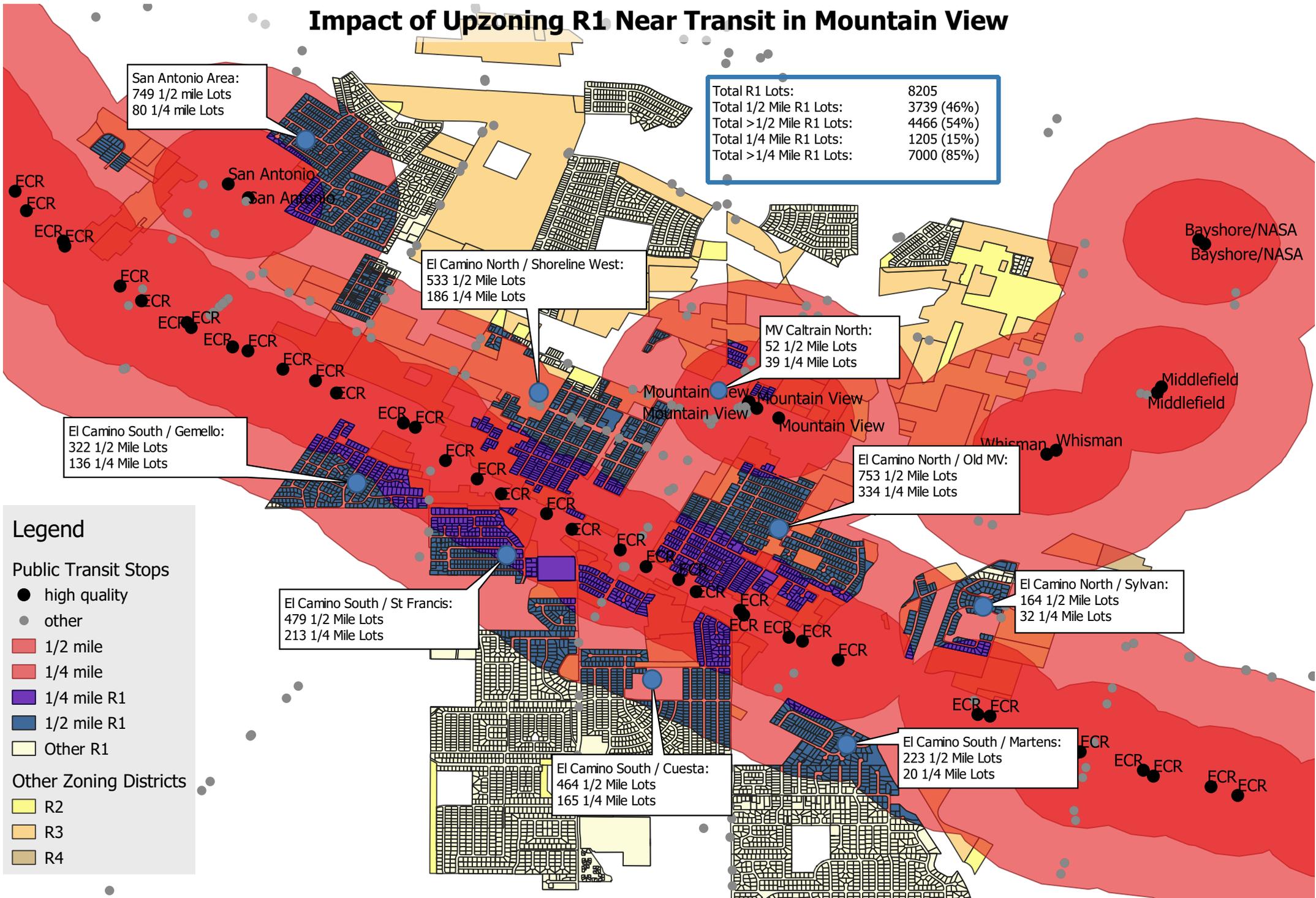
Public Transit Stops

- high quality
- other

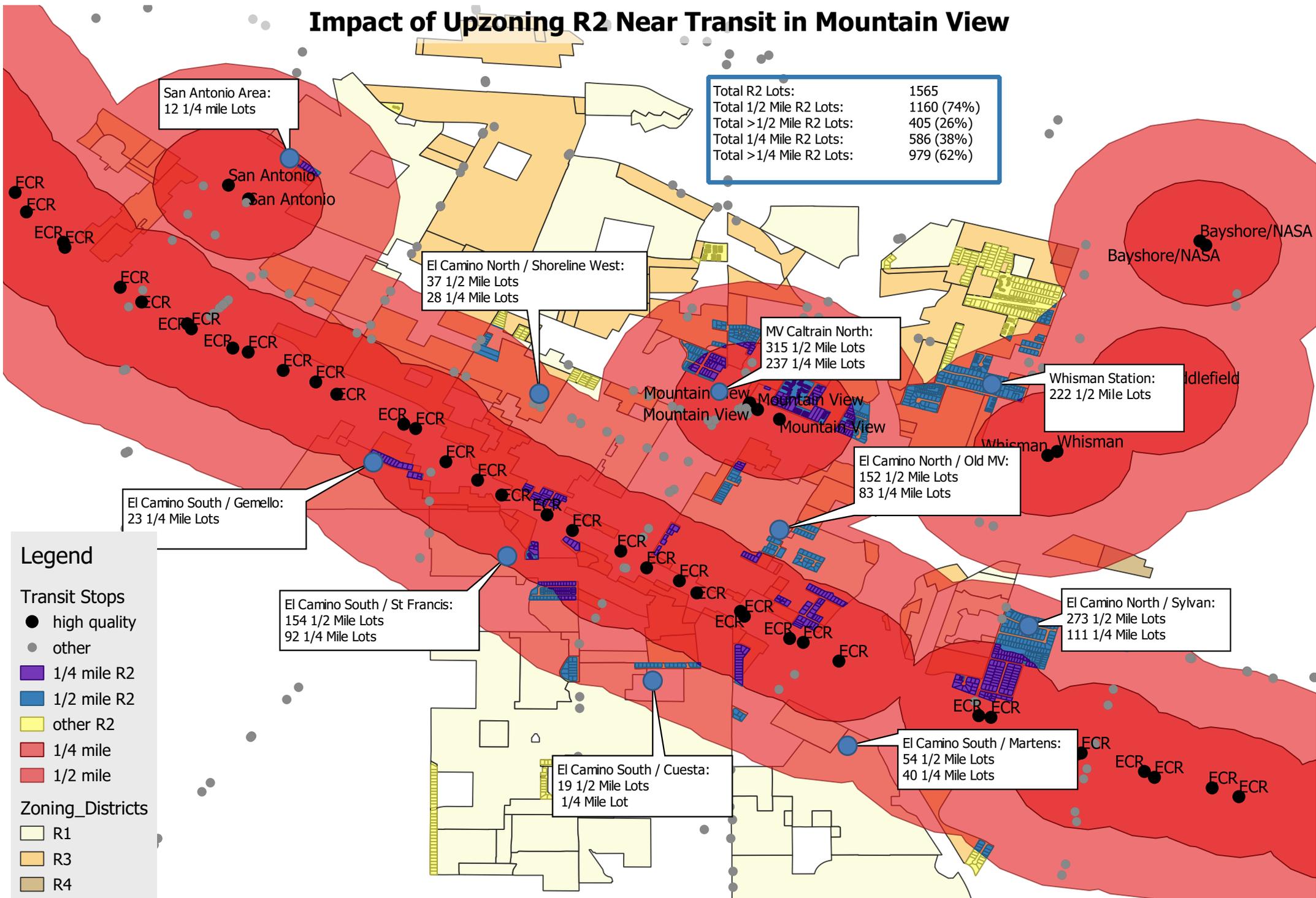
- 1/2 mile
- 1/4 mile
- 1/4 mile R1
- 1/2 mile R1
- Other R1

Other Zoning Districts

- R2
- R3
- R4



Impact of Upzoning R2 Near Transit in Mountain View



From: [John Lashlee](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: Agenda item 6.1 - Housing element update
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 8:20:09 AM

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.

Council City Council,

Please don't treat housing affordability in this city as a paper pushing exercise: the city needs a realistic plan to hit its housing targets in the next decade.

The city's housing targets have almost quadrupled, but the draft site inventory methodology was designed to preserve the status quo. Needless to say, the status quo is not working for renters whose rent has gone up 78.9% since 2009. Every year of delay on meeting the city's housing needs is another year that residents - our neighbors and our friends - get displaced.

The draft inventory is not realistic: it includes sites whose owners have explicitly said they will not build housing; it includes over a hundred businesses and offices that would have to be demolished by 2031 for the city to meet its housing targets; and it even includes a urgent care facility.

To create a real plan, the city should:

- Create a realistic site inventory with a data-driven approach to projecting how likely sites are to develop.
- Create a fair site inventory that adds more housing growth to high opportunity areas than low opportunity areas.

John Lashlee

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Flynn Ave [REDACTED]

Mountain View, California 94043