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**Subject:** 5.1 Retreat and Development Review Process Overview

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Chairperson Yin and Environmental Planning Commissioners:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) has regular interface with several advisory bodies to City Council including the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC).   We are having a discussion at one of our upcoming monthly meetings on how to make the advisories bodies more effective in advising City Council to achieve their Work Plan objectives.

MVCSP regularly comments on development proposals that come before both the EPC and the City Council.   One thing we have noticed over the years is that often the EPC only reviews projects very late in the approval process. There is very little opportunity to provide constructive input in order for the developer to consider changes to address community concerns.

On major development proposals, MVCSP is fortunate to have developers provide a presentation on the project to receive our input before the application submittal is complete.  This provides MVCSP members the opportunity for informed input on important details of specific projects.  The letters and public testimony we are able to provide are more informed, focused and thoughtful as a result.  Keeping in mind the Permit Streamline Act,

 it would be also desirable to give developers of major projects the opportunity to **voluntarily** present preliminary plans earlier in the project development process and to receive input and feedback from the EPC even before completing the development application.   In our opinion, this would help to strengthen the role of EPC as an advisory body to City Council, as it would likely not only expedite project review, but would likely result in projects that achieve both the goals of the developer and the City Council, a win-win outcome.

It was my hope that given the recent experience with the Development Agreement (DA) for the Google North Bayshore Master Plan, that this retreat would be utilized to review the purview of the EPC in MVCC 36.44.10.   At our last MVCSP meeting, we decided to write a letter to the Mayor to ask for a change in the ordinance section to enable the EPC to review Development Agreement in order to provide improved input on development proposals to City Council.  We have not sent that letter yet, as this meeting provides the opportunity to see if EPC members agree on the wisdom of being able to review DAs.  We would enjoy hearing your thoughts!

For the May 3 EPC meeting,  our letter expressed disappointment that the EPC should have had the opportunity to review and comment on the Development Agreement.   As it turned out, the DA was publicly released shortly after the EPC meeting before the Zoning Administrator hearing on the Master Plan DA.   Based on comments made by Commissioners at the May 3 EPC meeting, I was quite concerned about the contents of the DA.  On behalf of MVCSP, I wrote a draft letter to the Zoning Administrator pointing out several issues that we wanted revised in the DA before supporting the Master Plan approval before both Zoning Administrator and City Council.  We shared this draft letter with both City staff and Google representatives. In response to those discussions, several changes were made to the DA in a redline version of the DA that satisfied our concerns and was subsequently approved by the Zoning Administrator.  You can see the original DA and the redlined DA on the City website to see what I consider very significant changes to the DA.

The Google Master Plan in my opinion is perhaps the most significant land use decision in the history of Mountain View. In our opinion the EPC should have had the opportunity to provide comment and input to the DA before approval by the Zoning Administrator.  I am asking the EPC to join MVCSP in requesting the Development Agreements be added to its purview.   If this not desirable from the perspective the EPC, we would like to hear why not.

This letter is my opinion and while representative of the sentiments of MVCSP, there was not sufficient time for MVCSP to go through its normal review process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cliff Chambers

Resident of Mountain View