



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022

April 12, 2015

Mayor John McAlister and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: Council Meeting, April 14, 2015 – Agenda Item #7.1 North Bayshore Precise Plan Housing Study and Scope of Work

Dear Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council:

The LWV would like to comment on the proposed work plan discussed in the Staff Report. We see the study of North Bayshore as an amazing opportunity to try to come to a consensus on what will make a vibrant and viable neighborhood in North Bayshore.

We think that Option 3 as discussed in the Staff Report is probably the preferred option. We definitely agree that the focus on urban design is critical. With that in mind, we would like the Council to consider soliciting help from some well-known, innovative urban designers, in addition to the team outlined in the Scope of Work. We encourage using a charrette, where Mountain View residents, including those already living in North Bayshore as well as residents of the entire City, and stakeholders participate early in the planning process; the charrette might involve several urban designers collaborating with the community to come up with a design that has some degree of consensus. This has the added advantage that the participants would feel a sense of ownership in the agreed-upon plan.

The Scope of Work described in the Staff Report includes community participation, but we would like to see a process that ensures that the community meetings achieve consensus. This might mean requiring participants to commit to going to a number of meetings; those that can't commit to the entire sequence of meetings could attend and speak, but they would not have as active a role in the design of the plan. We also want to ensure that the meeting process is designed to be productive, so that confrontational positions don't lead to stalemate.

We would like to see more emphasis in the Scope of Work on the following:

- How do the screening maps work together and which ones are critical? Hazardous materials, sea level rise, and noise are mitigatable, for example.
- What is the minimum number of residents needed to create a sustainable, walkable neighborhood?
- What type of housing would be appealing to high-tech employees who now commute from San Francisco and might become carless? (Unbundling parking could play a critical role here.)
- What is the minimum number of residents and employees needed to support public transit?
- How can we ensure that some affordable housing is included?

Generally, we support the maximum heights referenced in the Staff Report, high density (although we prefer to focus on FAR and form-based codes because density can be very misleading, especially if micro-units and or efficiencies are developed), and a variety of housing types. However, it is important that the entire community weigh in on these issues and that they are evaluated with reference to the issues we spelled out above.

It is critical that the footprint for this new vibrant neighborhood, where housing will be a major component, be defined fairly quickly so that office space is not entitled in this area, thereby precluding housing being built.

If the Council is reluctant to proceed with both the amendment of the North Bayshore Precise Plan and the EIR, perhaps it would be possible to authorize studying the update of the North Bayshore Precise Plan now and wait until the next fiscal year budget to approve the funds for amending the EIR.

Thank you for considering our input.

Donna Yobs
Co-Chair, Housing Committee
LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area

Cc: Dan Rich
Randy Tsuda
Martin Alkire