



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING + URBAN RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION

654 Mission Street
San Francisco, California
94105

415.781.8726 t
415.781.7291 f

www.spur.org

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July 3, 2012

Mayor R. Michael Kasperzak, Jr.
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA -94041

Dear Mayor Kasperzak:

I am writing to share SPUR's thoughts on your Draft General Plan.

SPUR is a 100-year old public policy organization that promotes good planning and good government throughout the Bay Area. We are based in San Francisco and have an office in San Jose. Over many decades we have written numerous policy reports and papers about urban planning issues in the region, on topics ranging from preparing for climate change and sea level rise to reshaping public transit to improving urban design and environmental outcomes at the local level.

Earlier this year, SPUR published a report on the Urban Future of Work (spur.org/urbanwork). In that report we argued that the Bay Area's economic competitiveness will improve by appropriately increasing employment densities in current job centers. We also discussed how mixing uses, particularly through adding housing and retail into current employment centers, can reduce traffic and create a better link between job areas and nearby neighborhoods. This approach will also strengthen local economic development by fostering interaction in the public realm, an important attribute for the knowledge economy.

Your proposed Draft General Plan is precisely the sort of plan that adheres to these principles and is a leading example for the entire region on how to retrofit office parks and corporate campuses in a more environmentally sustainable way.

We are writing to encourage you to adopt the Draft 2030 General Plan, Draft Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program and Final 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report, with the modification to include Charleston East as a mixed-use designation. Last week your Environmental Planning Commission took a major step and endorsed the Draft General Plan.

We believe that the City of Mountain View has arrived at a General Plan that performs very well on environmental attributes. There are three aspects to this Draft General Plan we think are particularly significant:

First, the plan incorporates some housing into an otherwise single-use job district. Based on your own analysis, adding the proposed 1,100 housing units into the North Bayshore area reduces the same amount of traffic as would be generated by a typical 500,000 square foot office building. This analysis demonstrates that incorporating housing into North Bayshore (i.e. providing housing in close proximity to jobs) is a

means to reduce overall trips and traffic in this area. It also supports a broader strategy of creating a more successful district that has eyes on the street in the evenings and on weekends.

Second, the plan allows for the transfer of development rights from one part of North Bayshore to another. Transfer of Development Right schemes have been successfully used throughout the region, including as a tool to preserve significant historic buildings.

Third, the plan allows for an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) that will support both job growth and better urban design. By increasing the FAR to 1.0, you will begin to shape an urban form in North Bayshore that is more walkable and less auto reliant. This approach will reduce congestion and strengthen the community's character.

In closing, we support your leadership in helping adopt what we think is one of the most visionary General Plans in the Bay Area.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you. Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ET', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Egon Terplan
SPUR Regional Planning Director
c.c. Mountain View Environmental Planning Commission, Mountain View City Council