



Dear Members of the Mountain View Environmental Planning Commission,

I am writing today to reiterate Google's support for adoption of the Draft Mountain View General Plan Update, which you will be considering at your upcoming hearing on May 16th. We believe that the Draft General Plan represents a strong move forward for Mountain View, and provides benefits to the City's residents while allowing growth for innovative companies like Google, as well as smaller businesses.

Specifically related to North Bayshore, which has been designated as a significant "change area" in the Plan, we are hearing questions regarding (1) how the transportation system can serve anticipated growth, (2) if there is a role for housing in this traditionally office oriented area, and (3) what the effect of new development in North Bayshore may be on open space. We believe the Draft General Plan and the subsequent implementing plans provide the necessary tools to address these topics.

With regard to transportation, we fully recognize the importance of this issue not just for North Bayshore, but regionally. Google has been a pioneer in addressing this issue, with our successful bus shuttle program. We see the Draft General Plan as a very strong step in the right direction. The Draft Plan calls for moderate development densities that will be more attractive to public transit providers and will make any transit system more efficient.

Land use and transportation efficiency are inextricably linked, and the densities proposed in the Draft General Plan guide North Bayshore in the right direction toward transit-oriented development. The Draft Plan also calls for more bicycle and pedestrian connections, and Google certainly supports those goals. They improve quality of life and offer transportation alternatives.

In addition to the forward-looking land use framework, the Draft General Plan also provides for use of established planning tools such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). TDR will allow development to be shaped for multiple benefits:

- to plan for the possibility of Bay Level rise by transferring development from at-risk areas;
- to support creation of more open space of all types;
- to create transit 'nodes', where it will be easier to provide enhanced transit access.

It is clear that new investments in transportation infrastructure will need to be made to serve North Bayshore. Google looks forward to being a partner in collaborative efforts to address this issue. Our conversations with our neighbors, City staff and others suggest that the model of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) will be a great tool to solve these issues. In fact, we would support a Sustainability Management Association (SMA), an emerging model organization, to address access issues, but to go further and seek environmentally responsible

measures of all types: transportation, energy use, water use, waste, etc.

With regard to housing, the Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update indicates that providing residential land uses will in fact help address the transportation concerns. When employees can walk to work, they don't clog up the roads and highways. Google sees value in this approach, as we have many very dedicated staff who are younger, have not yet started families, and frankly, work long hours. Many of these staff would welcome the chance to live close to the Google 'campus' during this early phase of their careers.

Housing is also the right thing for North Bayshore because it is consistent with the vision established by the community at the beginning of the General Plan process. It creates more of a '24/7' community, which in turn supports retail and attracts the new generation of employees - and therefore employers - to locate in the area.

The City will of course want to address the types of housing in the area, and the North Bayshore Precise Plan is the tool to do so. Single-family homes are too low of density for the area and the wrong model for the area, but moderate density, smaller units with urban amenities and attractive retailers will attract the target population.

For these reasons, Google supports the General Plan's inclusion of housing in North Bayshore. And, we believe that the value of housing will be demonstrated in the upcoming Transportation Plan, while the specific vision for mixed-use and residential development can be refined in the Precise Plan.

The one revision to the Plan as drafted that we have requested is that the Charleston East site be added to the North Bayshore Mixed Use zone. We believe that this site is part of the center of the 'urban village' proposed in North Bayshore, and that its inclusion in the Mixed-Use zone is consistent with that.

Finally, I want to address a major topic on which there has been much debate: the effect on open space of changing development patterns at North Bayshore. There is sometimes a false assumption that density always brings more environmental impacts to an area. In the case of North Bayshore, the opposite is likely to be true. The traditionally very low densities of office park development are directly associated with more commuting by car, large areas in surface parking, and a development pattern that discourages walking, transit and biking.

The moderate densities proposed in the Draft GP help correct this pattern of sprawl. They start to support a walkable, transit-aligned development pattern, and they free up land for public open spaces of all types. The attached graphic shows one vision for how the development allowed under this Draft General Plan update would allow for more parks, fields and active open space, and would allow for expansion and restoration of wildlands in the area.

This vision is defined by a transit-oriented core area, with 'green fingers' of open space

providing both active outdoor parks and extended, restored ecological areas. Particular attention is paid to the connectivity of public open spaces, including an exciting idea of a 'green loop' to link the existing trails along the creeks. It represents a win-win; the increase in density allows the expansion of open space.

We understand that there are specific concerns about the long-term health of the natural areas in Shoreline Park, the Don Edwards S.F. Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and other natural areas. We believe that there are a wide variety of management practices that can ameliorate risks from development in North Bayshore. And we understand that environmentally speaking, the current sprawl-oriented development pattern is clearly unsustainable. We are a willing partner in transforming the area to optimize both a better development pattern and higher-quality open space of all types.

The office park development model has played itself out. Mountain View has offered up a bold vision for what should come next in Silicon Valley, for which your own leadership, City staff, and consultants have been and should be lauded. It provides for reasonable and attainable economic growth in the area - with all the benefits that brings - while creating a place that is more complete and livable than we have now.

Therefore, Google asks that the EPC:

1. recommend adoption of the Draft General Plan Update to the City Council, with the addition of Charleston East to the North Bayshore Mixed Use zone, and;
2. recommend that any refer unresolved questions about housing and transportation - on the part of either Council or the EPC - to the two forthcoming planning processes: the Shoreline Transportation Study and the North Bayshore Precise Plan.

Sincerely,



David Radcliffe
Vice President, Real Estate & Workplace Services
Google Inc.

**The Draft General Plan
is good for Mountain View:**

- captures the community's vision
- plans for business growth
AND enhanced open space
- provides flexibility and tools to
solve problems
- should be *adopted*.

**The Precise Plan &
Transportation Plan
are the tools to refine:**

- when, where and how
mixed uses might be
accommodated;
- best transportation
modes to improve
connections

