

Livable Mountain View Candidate Positions

Alison Hicks

Dear Livable Mountain View Steering Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on livability issues in Mountain View. Here are a few additional comments on your key policy questionnaire.

1. **HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF OUR DOWNTOWN.** I believe that one of the most important elements of planning for people is maintaining and improving our public places. Public places include our tree-lined streets, parks, public squares and walkable business districts with warm welcoming ground floor uses, interesting architecture and attractive streetscaping. These are the places that we get together as a community and, in many cities across the US, we are losing them at an alarming rate. I also believe that historic buildings are a small yet important element of what makes our public places work. These buildings are as important to preserve as our parks and tree-lined streets. Surely, we can preserve this tiny remnant of our history as one step towards maintaining and improving our public places.
2. **LOCAL CONTROL FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT.** I understand that SB827 was an attempt to address the housing crisis in California. I had several problems with that legislation, though. My problem with SB827, with regards to Mountain View, is that our city is taking probably the biggest steps of any Bay Area city to address the housing crisis and we were given no credit for doing so in this legislation.
3. **A CAP ON NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT.** If we want housing to become more affordable then we need to address our job/housing balance. If we continue to add offices as we add housing, we will not address our affordability problem and displacement of long-time residents will continue. This concept should become central to our discussion of affordable housing in Mountain View.
4. **NEW DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRE NEW PARKS.** Mountain View is becoming an urban place. I think it is time to review our policies and make sure that we are not building a concrete jungle in many of our neighborhoods. This should be a discussion of more than just parks in the traditional sense. We need to talk about apartment complexes with interior green space but exteriors that are barren and make the streets around them less walkable. We need to talk about urban green space that addresses the needs of all sectors of our population, not mainly play structures and ball parks (although those are important too), but also linear parks, urban pocket parks, community gardens, streetscapes that encourage walking and more. As our buildings become taller, we need to talk about widening sidewalks and improving streetscaping to keep our streets walkable. We need to step back top stories to let sunlight onto our streets. We need to talk about enhancing, not removing, our urban forestry.
5. **TRANSPARENCY AT ALL LEVELS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.** I would also add improved and city-wide noticing of any developments proposed on publicly-owned property and in the downtown.