

Downtown Offices and First Floor Retail; Castro Street Businesses

Healthy cities need great public places. Castro Street is like our city's living room where Mountain View residents get together with family and friends meet neighbors and celebrate as a community. In the wake of COVID-19, public gathering and dining spaces like Castro Street are more important than ever as we ask what will our city look like when we are past this crisis. Offices on the first floor of Castro Street create dead zones where there is no reason to stop and engage, offer blank lobbies or desks and create dark, blank spaces at night. Dead zones negatively impact neighboring restaurants and retail because pedestrians want spaces that feel safer, are more lively and offer more reasons to visit.

- o If elected to the City Council would you vote to continue to support policies and decisions that restrict the ground floor of Castro Street buildings to restaurant and retail only and not allow offices, office lobbies and office cafeterias?*

Offices do not belong on the ground floor of Castro Street and I will do everything I can to make sure that they are restricted from being there.

- o What would you do to make reopening Castro Street a success?*

Full COVID recovery program at: <http://paulroales.com/formountainview/covid.html>

But in brief: We need the city to be an active participant in ensuring that our local small businesses can survive through this period and can come back to thrive once again.

Including:

Speed up approval processes

Small businesses in our community will likely need to adapt their buildings to new realities after the virus has stopped spreading. Months and months of delays by City Hall will only hurt our community even more.

Temporarily suspend some inspections

Building inspections that did not happen during a period of shutdown will all need to happen around the same time when things fully reopen. Temporarily suspending some inspections will help increase the speed with which we can get back to normal.

Loans

Our city has a large balance sheet and can borrow very cheaply. We should be providing loans to small businesses and individuals that are in need to help them through this exceptional period.

Historic Preservation

Historic buildings act as anchor buildings and create a sense of place around which vibrant restaurant, shopping and entertainment districts thrive have thrived. Cities like Sunnyvale and Santa Clara which have eliminated their historic downtowns are now seeking to recreate them. Mountain View started its historic preservation planning over a decade ago but never completed the process. In particular, the process lacks preservation tools and incentives needed for preservation to succeed in a rapidly growing city, so that we can retain the viability of Castro Street as a walkable urban destination for residents and visitors.

- o If elected to the City Council would you vote to support completing Mountain View's historic preservation process in Council's 2021 Work Plan?*

Yes.

- o Would you actively support strong incentives like transfer of development rights (TDRs), land swaps and revolving loan funds as a part of the process? What additional mechanisms would you support to ensure that we preserve our city's historic buildings and places?*

Yes.

Maintaining historic buildings and places is not cheap but it is critical to having a place that people cherish. Healthy businesses are needed to afford maintenance, but the city must also do what it can to help make sure that sustaining these structures is financially workable.

Transit Center and Plaza

The 100 block of Castro Street with some of our most historic buildings has been the liveliest walkable block of our city for decades. It is a gateway to our city for visitors and residents. While city staff is moving ahead with the infrastructure for a new transit center, Mountain View does not yet have a real DESIGN for the new transit center facilities and massive plaza, which will be used by commuters and the community and complement our Historic Downtown District. Specific funds have not yet been set aside for the design of this important public space.

Our organization, Livable Mountain View, has been advised by city staff that the Council must prioritize and vote for this to be included in the Council's two year Work Plan which will be voted on in 2021. Livable Mountain View is advocating for our city to have a world-class design through an open competitive design and bid process with stakeholders and Council input.

- o If elected to our City Council would you prioritize, and vote for, funding a design competition for the development of our transit center and plaza in the upcoming two year Work Plan?*

Yes. This is going to be the keystone of our community for so many, it needs to be done correctly and in a functional, appealing manner.

Cannabis Stores

As of 2019, there was not a single city in the Greater Bay Area with a cannabis retail storefront in its walkable downtown. Many communities opposed cannabis retail storefronts in their downtowns because such stores would put excessive demands on our limited downtown parking, create an atmosphere less friendly to families, and alter one of the few places teens can explore freely in an urban environment. Many parents do not feel comfortable allowing their children to hang out around cannabis storefronts. Mountain View's Chief of Police has stated publicly that there would be no enforcement of regulations relating to cannabis without a police report of potential violations, that such reports would be of low priority and that they could not be enforced without increased police department staffing.

- o If elected to the City Council would you vote to prohibit cannabis stores in downtown Mountain View if the matter came before the Council?*

Yes. Cannabis retail storefronts should not be in downtown Mountain View.

Office-Housing Balance and Local Control

Mountain View has been a Bay Area leader in linking the approval of new office projects to the development of new housing. For example, the office-housing balance is a central principle in the city's new East Whisman Precise Plan. Furthermore, new residential developments are now required to provide a 15% affordable (subsidized) housing component.

California state legislation such as the former Senate Bill 50 (SB-50) and related bills seek to eliminate local control and block cities like Mountain View from controlling office development (and therefore job growth) by linking it to the creation of housing. Such bills in their various forms mandate upzoning without requiring the construction of affordable housing. They also would end Mountain View's ability to require community benefits such as parks, trees, and bike lanes. These benefits are essential to keeping Mountain View livable as the city's density increases.

- o If elected to the City Council, would you oppose state and local efforts for blanket upzoning?*

I don't think it is productive when local elected officials send official public letters, or make public statements pushing state lawmakers to act one way or another. If the City has a vested public interest in an issue before the state, they should take an official vote on it and put city resources behind it.

That said, blanket applications of rules without consideration of local variation, local needs, and local culture is never ultimately productive.

- o What actions or policies would you support that would directly address the need for affordable housing, and to address displacement and homelessness in Mountain View and the Bay Area as a whole?*

I have an extensive housing plan at: <http://paulroales.com/formountainview/housing.html>

But in brief: We need to build more housing in our community and also protect existing neighborhoods. That sounds like a contradiction. It is not. It is a challenge that we have to take on to make Mountain View a great city for everyone.

How can we do it?

Build new projects in empty spaces, not in neighborhoods.

Make sure construction is done responsibly so that noise, debris and traffic are contained.

Approve projects faster - delays only drive up costs for everyone.

Close down Airbnbs That Violate Rules

Reduce the Administrative Cost

And ultimately have a plan for our community to get to the point where we are building naturally affordable housing, that does not require massive subsidies, complex rules or blanket mandates. Just simply good housing, that is affordable, safe, and part of a rich vibrant community.

Downtown and Moffett Precise Plan Update

The Precise Plans on both sides of our downtown train station have not been updated in decades. Good transit-oriented development prioritizes denser urban development, while preserving the places in our city which our residents cherish, like parks and historic districts. Our outdated and often ignored precise plans leave Mountain View's small historic core threatened, while neglecting the opportunity to make Moffett Boulevard a walkable and attractive transit-oriented avenue with its own amenities, like housing over restaurants and retail.

- o If elected to the City Council would you vote to keep the current Council project to "Review and consider amendments to various aspects of the Downtown Precise Plan, with the work phased to prioritize preserving the character of the downtown core and preventing, to the extent possible, preemption by State legislation," in the Council Work Plan and act to ensure preservation of our Historic Downtown?*

Yes. We need to dedicate resources to keeping these such important plans up to date.

- o Would you vote to support a project in the Council Work Plan to update the Moffett Precise Plan to create a walkable and attractive transit-oriented downtown complete with ground floor retail and restaurants and upper floor housing along Moffett Boulevard?*

Yes. This is my neighborhood, I own a home just off Moffett. The neighborhood badly needs empty lots to be utilized, empty storefronts to be filled, and for services to be within walking distance.

Your Action Plan

We have found that council members who have an action plan are the best prepared to achieve their goals.

- o What will be your top priority as a council member to enhance Mountain View's livability?*

Ensuring our community recovers from COVID is the top priority for our community right now. If we make it through this period but lose wonderful downtown businesses, the quality of life in our community will suffer for a long time to come.

I have developed long and detailed plans on housing, police modernization, social justice, environmental stewardship, traffic, COVID recovery and more. Our city deserves more than just a few vague sentences about issues so important to the quality of life in our community. These plans can be viewed at:

<http://paulroales.com/formountainview/plans.html>

For 35 years my parents operated a small independent retail pharmacy located in a 100 year old building on Main Street in my hometown. I grew up working the cash register in the summers and fondly recall community members coming in and telling stories about the building, and what it was like when they were young. Sometimes it would be a story about a first date at the soda fountain counter. Other times it would be a story about a barber they remember that worked in a little corner store part of the building. It took a lot of resources, love and energy to keep that building running, but it was a source of pride for the community, a touchpoint to the town's common history, and one of many historic buildings on that block that made Main Street feel special.