

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.

- *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? **Yes, if banks qualify as retail. I'm also OK with elevator lobbies.***
- *What would you do to make reopening Castro Street a success? **I believe we should consider permanently closing Castro Street to motor vehicles between California and Evelyn. In considering this, we need to think about long-term locales for festivals and the Farmers Market.***

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.

- *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, but with COVID-19 staff cutbacks, we might have to put it off again.***
- *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. Historic preservation should balance the interests of the public and those of property owners seeking minor improvements in their properties. We should focus on buildings with genuine historic importance.***

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.

- *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? **The key decisions for the Transit Center involve how to manage pedestrian, vehicular, transit, and bicycle access. I'm not sure that a competitive process is necessary to complete the design.***

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.

- *If elected to the City Council would you vote to prohibit cannabis stores in downtown Mountain View if the matter came before the Council? **No. Cannabis retail is legal in California because voters legalized it and consumers want it. There is no evidence that the presence of cannabis stores makes an area unfriendly to families. At a time when other retail is undermined by online competition, cannabis businesses may have the revenue to meet our downtown's high rents and the customers to further activate downtown.***

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.

- *If elected to the City Council, would you oppose state and local efforts for blanket upzoning?*
I led the fights against SB827 and SB50. Mountain View has shown that it's possible to build housing on previously commercial property, protecting neighborhoods and (hopefully, in the future) naturally affordable apartments.
- *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?*
Remove blanket restrictions on vehicle residency until we provide sufficient off-street parking with services, a minimum of restrictions, and a pathway to permanent housing. Build permanent supportive housing as well as inclusionary below-market housing. Deny proposals to demolish existing apartments.

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.

- *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 should consider extending the height restriction to the 300 block of Castro. I believe that converting Castro to a permanent mall, broken up by cross traffic, to be an act of preservation. Parking remains a challenge. We need to provide enough parking to limit commuter parking in adjacent neighborhoods; the city should revamp its residential permit parking program; but in the long run we should design a downtown that relies less on automobile access.**
- *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, depending on pandemic-era staff resources. The planned bike-ped underpass at the tracks creates the opportunity to better tie Moffett to Castro.**

Your Action Plan

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

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

My original plan was to implement the major Precise Plans (El Camino, North Bayshore, and East Whisman) as well as the Terra Bella project to create mixed-use, medium-density neighborhoods complete with parks, schools, trails, retail, habitat, homes, and workplaces. However, as COVID-19 drags on, my first priority may be figuring out a way to retain the residents facing exclusion from Mountain View due to the pandemic and associated economic downturn.