

El Camino Real Specific Plan
Public Comment

May 6, 2021

Chair Planning Commission Lance Saleme
lsaleme@santacalaraca.gov
City of Santa Clara Planning Department
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Re: Request to Modify ECR Specific Plan 3141-3155 ECR: Bayview Development Group

Dear Commissioner Saleme,

Bayview Development Group (BDG) is excited to see the almost 4-year City of Santa Clara Planning Department effort with the El Camino Real Specific Plan (ECRSP) come to fruition. We have been an active participant throughout the entire process and we commend the Planning Staff with their tireless efforts and professionalism. The pending document before your upcoming May 10, 2021 Public Hearing is thoughtful, analytical and a well-done conclusion to the Specific Plan process.

Previously, *Bayview Development Group* presented our *unique situation* as it relates to our active development application for *3141-3155 El Camino Real (aka Bowers Plaza)*, a 2.45-acre property located at the northeast corner of El Camino Real and Calabazas Boulevard.

Bayview Development Group controls the site and began the entitlement process with the City Planning Department in *December 2018*. Our thoughtfully designed 60-unit townhome project proposal is approximately 24 units per acre and it complies with the current General Plan of 20-36 units per acre and at the time, overlapped with a previously proposed ECRSP density of 24-65 units per acre. Despite our early start, we were never deemed a 'pipeline' project and now our only path to complete our pending public review process and gain future approvals is to request the following *Specific Plan modification* to the draft land use designation.

Current Proposed Specific Plan Designations

From – Corridor Mixed Use (Residential Density 45-65 units per acre)



Bayview Development Group Requested Specific Plan Revisions
To – Corridor Residential (Residential Density 16-45 units per acre)



Granting our request would ensure a complimentary density of 24-25 units per acre all the way from the soon to be constructed Wheels and Deals project (approved at 25 units per acre density), across our subject site and to the corner of Calabazas Boulevard which serves as the main entry to the adjoining Briarwood Elementary single-story single-family home neighborhood. In addition, the revision of our site to the ECRSP Corridor Residential (16-45 units per acre) avoids a potential spot zoning of densities from 65 units per acre to 25 units per acre and back to 65 units per acre for our site, directly adjacent to the 4 units per acre of the single family residential neighborhood.

Project History

- Dec-18 – Engaged City Planning Staff with Concept Designs per existing General Plan
- Feb-19 – Submitted Full Preliminary Planning Application per City Design Review Process
- May-19 – Received PCC Staff Comments on Preliminary Application submittal
- Dec-19 – City Approves Adjacent Wheels and Deals site at 25 units per acre
- Oct-20 – Complete Design Application submittal in response to PCC City Comments
- Dec-20 – Conducted Neighborhood Outreach Meeting
- Feb-21 request for revisions for 3141-3155 El Camino Real subject site to match adjacent site
- Mar-21 – Specific Plan Revision Request for 3141-3155 El Camino Real subject site

The above history details *our unique situation* and is the subject of our request. And we respectfully ask your consideration of our request and would like to make ourselves available to answer any questions you would have prior to hearing. Please feel free to reach out to me directly at tomquaglia@att.net or 408-504-9331.

Sincerely,

Tom Quaglia
Project Manager
Bayview Development Group

May 4, 2021

Planning Division - El Camino Real Specific Plan
City Hall
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara 95050

It is very important to prevent the city from doing to our El Camino what they did to our downtown. Those that destroyed our downtown had good intentions and like you, they had the grandest of visions.

From the start the city misrepresented the objective of the El Camino Real Specific Plan by telling us the purpose was "...to implement the City's General Plan goals and policies for the El Camino Real corridor by providing more detailed guidance for future land uses and urban design elements."

The unspoken purpose has been to increase residential density not implement the General Plan.

- When a city planner was asked during a CAC meeting what would happen if the committee decided the density should be reduced, her response was "well that would defeat the purpose." (quickly retracted, oops)
- In one example the Mariani property was **increased over 100%** from Community Mixed Use at 19 to 36 du/ac, in the 2025 - 2035 General Plan, to Corridor Mixed Use with 45 to 65 du/ac. *This is **not** implementing the GP*

Also, this entire process has had the appearance of faux outreach.

Community feedback was gathered using completely unscientific methods.

- The feedback was not directed at people impacted nor limited to one opinion per participant in the 'Pop-ups' or online 'survey'.
- The Community Advisory Committee was weighted with people and groups interested in getting rid of automobiles and promote high density.
- US mail announcements were limited to people within 300 ft of the huge rezoning project to 'save money', reducing exposure to the very people actually impacted.
- This mailed notice is the only place we find this legal disclaimer. *"If you challenge these land use decisions in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at this public hearing or in written correspondence delivered to the City at or prior to the public hearing."*

As is too often the case the general outcome appears to have been determined before the 'investigation' began. And the predetermined outcome is increased density.

Some on the council advocate for thousands of 'micro units' along ECR. No wonder we worry the city would do to our El Camino what it did to our downtown. Again, those that destroyed our downtown had the best intentions and like you, grandiose visions. We see what that got us.

Santa Clara for Smart Growth - Mariani Neighborhood Resident Group
Debbie Sparks, Diane Pizzo, Howard Myers, Linda Zazzara, Rich Bonito

From: Curtis Fisher <65tiger@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2021 9:55 AM
To: Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: Draft El Camino Specific Plan

Hello, I'm submitting my public comments regarding the "Draft El Camino Specific Plan", meeting presentation of September 30, 2020.

Public comment:

After reviewing the General Plan, the draft El Camino Specific Plan meeting presentation I have comments:

Slides 27 and 28 discuss neighborhood transitions strategies. Regarding upper story step backs, these were totally ignored in the Tuscany project. This 4 story monster is next to single story family homes, and is contrary to design recommendations of the City General Plan (and also this Specific Plan). There is little privacy for those of us on Hood Court. This was specifically requested at the design reviews and the final city council meeting. That was a 'beat down' process. Many of us showed up at the design reviews and were told it was going to be big and tall. The developer originally wanted 2-3 story town homes which would have been nice to have next to our single story homes. But the city planners wanted 4 story or higher although nothing was that high on the El Camino Real at that time and told the developer to come back with 4 stories or higher. By the time of the final city council meeting the city council had ALREADY decided their vote. There were only a few of us left after the beat down meetings. Nonetheless, we presented our objections (including requesting the step back) and the city council voted 7-0 to approve the design. And landscape buffers, after many years we have yet to see anything significant.

After this Tuscany disaster and rapid other developments, there was general public revolt when something similar was proposed for Mariani's property. That had the city going back and finally listening to citizens rather than planners and developers.

Regarding slide 37 and "bulb out" designs. These are a total disaster where they have been implemented. I understand their intention but it's implementation is the worst I've ever seen. What they do a good job of is impede traffic. And the bots dots you place there bring nothing but curses from everyone. Nobody likes them, nobody wants them and there are better ways to do this.

I'm glad the 'Bus Only' lanes are no longer proposed. Santa Clara was the ONLY city pushing this at the behest of the previous chief planner. No other city wanted it.

thanks,

Curtis Fisher

1680 Hood Ct

Santa Clara, CA 95051

From: webmanager@santaclaraca.gov <webmanager@santaclaraca.gov>

Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2021 8:21 PM

To: Webmanager <Webmanager@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: Feedback for City of Santa Clara

You have received this feedback from Don Sterk <don@sterk.org> for the following page:

<https://www.santaclaraca.gov/Home/Components/BusinessDirectory/BusinessDirectory/330/3649?fsiteid=1>

I applaud the construction of the separated bike path. I would like to see a diagram of what it would like at bus stops to see how it avoids conflicts between bikes and bus alightment. Needs to include plans for bike (and probably scooter) parking.

From: James Rowen <jcrowenblog@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, January 23, 2021 9:25 AM

To: Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: El Camino Specific Plan

As a favor to Lavelle Souza, an old friend, I am going to be sending some comments on her behalf as she does not use email. These are to be regarded as Specific Plan Comments.

James Rowen

Having been part of a family that was been part of the economy of Santa Clara for over a hundred years, I believe that the proposed Specific Plan for the El Camino Real will cause serious negative impact on the local economy as well as serious negative impact on the character of our community.

The proposals to favor development of multi-story housing with large densities flies in the face of proper consideration of Covid-19 guidelines by increasing the density of residential units that could not be socially distanced, and severely impact traffic and other environmental factors as mass transit, though proposed, is not fiscally feasible.

Moreover, the greatest damage these multi-story projects will inflict is upon the small businesses that are a historic part of the El Camino from Santa Clara to San Francisco. El Camino Real has been home to city halls, universities, hotels, motels, and particularly small businesses.

Understand that small businesses depend on walk in trade and easy access in a user friendly environment, hence the success and prevalence of small businesses along the El Camino, Silicon Valley's principal commercial district. Now as Covid has devastated small businesses especially restaurants, Santa Clara intends to hamstring them further by placing them in glass and steel tombs. One floor traffic is important to walk in traffic.

As the widow of Santa Clara's third Mayor Edd8e Souza, I would like to mention Eddie's comments about the high rises along the el Camino creating a tunnel affect John Vidovich has had success with two story developments on the El Camino such as the Walgreens Store development and restaurants in two story developments. Vidovich stated this

when asked Kathy Watanabe about his formula with business success.

When Lisa Gillmor was interviewed b6 the chair of the chamber Lisa and the chair agreed small business are the back bone of our economy. The city has given grants to small businesses during the pandemic--the backbone of our economy.

The historic and cultural signature of El Camino Real from San Jose to San Francisco will be severely impacted by building multi story buildings in Santa Clara creating a tunnel affect robbing residents of a scenic and significant view of the city within the valley. Three major universities are a part of the El Camino, among the oldest in California. Major restaurants and hundreds of small businesses are part of scenic, one to two story complexes, many designed in the local architectural signature. Hence, no other city is planning massive glass and steel buildings which severely impact scenic areas such as Palo Alto and Sunnyvale.

Transit element impact is enormous. Also we have serious concerns about the Covid guidelines with high density buildings. John Vidovich has successfully constructed two story buildings in Santa Clara with well spaced retail such as Walgreens allowing for walk in traffic. No Covid Guidelines are met with high density buildings. Moreover the traffic cannot be alleviated with VTA plans as the agency must now curtail its transit development. A car is safer for distancing than a bus. The Plan does not address this issue.

A frustrating point to us is the view that Santa Clara should transform the El Camino to a Italian Villiage. Italy has small towns with narrow streets. The El Camino is a 100 year old major boulevard. A regional boulevard has major arteries.

People can hardly drop their kids at school and travel hours on a bus to work, shop, and perhaps back to school. I could foresee middle sized shopping villages located within El Camino, but not as the El Camino. Those exist especially in Palo Alto, but as a part of the main boulevard.

And there is the additional redevelopment of the El Camino Between Colman and Lawrence which includes the possible replacing of existing mom and pop commercial stores for apartment buildings that are from three to four levels tall. It was hoped that commercial (mom and pop stores). would relocate to the first floors of these apartment buildings. So far, the plan has not been successful because the commercial/mom and pop stores do not want to relocate to the first floors of apartment buildings.

However, there is one type of a commercial/apartment building that has successfully attracted a Walgreens store and commercial mom and /pop stores in Santa Clara. The stores are on the first level of the building and the apartments are on the second level. There is plenty of parking for the customers, and the apartment dwellers have parking stalls in a gated parking lot. The complex is owned by John Vidovich who recently had a second project approved by the city and is also located on the El Camino.

Since the commercial mom and pop businesses are considered to be the 'backbone' of our economy , we need to find a way of helping them to thrive in Santa Clara. The El Camino is the best location for them because of the large amount of traffic using the El Camino--north and south--that will continue to increase with an increase of the population in San Jose and in Santa Clara.

Massive increase of population on the El Camino will impact parking negatively as everyone will still possess and need to park cars. The higher the income, the better transportation options other than mass transit will be called for, hence automobiles. This will create more carbon emissions. Families are no longer contained, mutil generation, multi lifestyle families know exist. People no longer work 9 to 5 and do not work at just one job. Large grocery purchases

are a necessity thus eliminating mass transit and bicycle transit options. Higher density will increase covid impact. A building with 500 people cannot be socially distanced while a restaurant with 34 can be.

The Specific Plan is fanciful and already in conflict with 2021.