

# **CRESTVIEW HOTEL AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONVERSION OPPORTUNITY**

## **MARCH 30, 2021 COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING**

### **SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS WITH STAFF RESPONSES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The first community outreach meeting for this affordable housing opportunity was held on March 30, 2020 in a virtual webinar platform.

Members of staff from the City of Mountain View and Santa Clara County were present to describe the opportunity being considered and to respond to input from participating community members. As part of the webinar meeting format, access to instantaneous Spanish and Chinese translation was available to community participants. The meeting was facilitated by Martin Eichner, an independent facilitator often utilized by the City for these community meetings.

The City and County staff participating in the meeting were:

#### City of Mountain View

- Wayne Chen, Assistant Community Development Director
- Nancy Ducos, Community Outreach Coordinator
- Nora Beltran, Spanish Translator
- Ivy Xu, Mandarin Chinese Translator
- Anna Salvador, Associate Planner

#### Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing

- Consuelo Hernandez, OSH Director
- Eloiza Murillo-Garcia, Acting Division Manager
- Andrew Barnes, Senior Housing Development Officer

Santa Clara County Supervisor Joseph Simitian and members of the Mountain City Council also attended.

After a brief staff PowerPoint presentation, the remainder of the meeting was set aside for input from the participating community members and staff responses to that input.

The community input and staff responses are grouped below by subject. The actual raw input has been paraphrased and edited for clarity. Separate comments on the same subject have been combined, instead of presenting them in strict chronological order. Repetitive input has not been separately detailed.

#### **SPECIFIC COMMUNITY INPUT WITH STAFF RESPONSE**

Opportunities for Input from the Neighborhood and the Public – What has been done so far

*Questions:*

- Is this a done deal or will the locals have some influence? The tone of this meeting is that this is going to be done regardless of the concerns of the residents.
- The City of Mountain View has done a poor job thus far of notifying nearby residents, business etc. of the project and associated meetings. What is being done to improve the communications? There was no notice of this meeting from the "interest list" prior to 1 hour before the meeting. Notice prior to the January 26, 2021 city council meeting was sorely lacking and limited.
- Have you talked to the nearby residents?
- Why weren't we notified earlier about this meeting?
- Most nearby residents are not aware of this project.

*Staff Response:*

This project "is not a done deal." This meeting is being held at an unprecedented early stage, in order to make sure that community input will help determine the future of the project. The advantage of holding this meeting at an early stage is the opportunity for community input before decisions are finalized, but the other side of the timing is that some staff answers will be based on possible factors or potential outcomes rather than finalized responses. Going forward, the community will be notified of every opportunity for further input. The County is committed to being open and transparent at every stage, and there will be future opportunities for community input.

Prior to this community meeting, a Crestview website was created and an interest list that allows registrants to receive information and updates about Crestview. Information about the March 30 community meeting was included the Citywide news mailer "The Voice," and posted on NextDoor.

*Question:*

- Why are you blocking us from seeing all the questions/comments ?

*Staff Response:*

The webinar was set up to make visible questions and comments as they were addressed by City and County representatives during the meeting. While the webinar was in progress, we were unable to change this setting. This summary is prepared as an alternative means to provide the relevant information.

*Question:*

- Will you share how many people attended today's meeting?

*Staff Response:*

A total of 168 comments and/or questions were submitted for this meeting. Since many of these were anonymous and other attendees submitted multiple inputs, the exact number of attendees cannot be accurately stated.

*Question:*

- Outreach often draws out residents opposed to this project. How will you seek balanced input from the community?

*Staff Response:*

It is paramount that all community members are heard from, and staff will continue to publicize future opportunities for input.

### Opportunities for Input from the Neighborhood and the Public – Future Opportunities

*Questions:*

- Will you have specific plans addressing the concerns before making a final decision on the project?
- How will the community be involved in the decision-making? Will there be a vote by Mountain View Citizens on this project? Will you be surveying the nearby residents to learn their views?

*Staff Response:*

A survey of the neighbors is not typically included in this process. The opportunity for community members to express their positions is instead provided through the various public hearings held by both the City and the Board of Supervisors. In addition, further input will be possible during future community meetings, study sessions and direct communication through the dedicated Crestview website and email address and other input portals.

*Questions:*

- What if a lot of residents around Cherry Chase Elementary school object to this decision?
- To talk about the RFP process seems to be premature. The local residents are taxpayers. We should know how this will be funded, the scope of the services, the location selection processes, etc, and we should decide whether or not Crestview is the right location and if there is enough funding to proceed.

*Staff Response:*

It is typical and expected that the concept for this opportunity will evolve as it moves forward and is subject to community input and other influences. Input from the meeting tonight, as well as future input, will be carefully reviewed by staff when considering the next steps in this process and will inform future decisions.

Concerns from the neighboring community will continue to be collected and answered at every possible stage, and these concerns will be reflected in decisions about the future of the project.

The community will be advised of developments through the dedicated Crestview website available at [www.mountainview.gov/crestview](http://www.mountainview.gov/crestview). Persons who join the interest list, also on the Crestview website, will be connected to all up-to-date information about the process. Comments and input can be submitted through the dedicated website.

There will not be a direct vote on this project by Mountain View citizens. Instead, as noted, citizens can make their viewpoints heard at the City and County public hearings and other input opportunities. It is expected that this variety of information sharing and resulting input will mitigate the community concerns, if the project moves forward.

- While we appreciate the efforts of the city to provide a forum for discussing the project and hearing the community feedback, it is very disconcerting to hear that there are not any concrete details around the nature of the housing offered or detailed criteria for residency qualification. Telling the community that we will tell you later after we purchase the site sends the wrong message.

*Staff Response:*

The feedback options described herein provide an opportunity for continuing community feedback throughout the planning process. There will be future community meetings and City Council and Board of Supervisors public hearings where there will be further opportunities for community input.

There will be a two-step process before the Board of Supervisors decides whether to purchase this property. Public input will be possible at both steps. The question will first be a public agenda item at a future Board meeting after the purchase price has been determined. Then there will be a subsequent formal public hearing to determine whether to proceed with the purchase.

*Question:*

- How do you plan to educate and involve the nearby Sunnyvale residents?

*Staff Response:*

Input from Sunnyvale community members has already been welcome, but specific plans for Sunnyvale involvement will be addressed and will be included in future community input plans.

Types of Residents

*Question:*

- How many local MV residents will qualify? Will there be priority for MV residents? Santa Clara County residents?

*Staff Response:*

Overall priorities for selecting residents will be established to reflect the needs of the community. These needs are set forth in the City's overall housing plan. Priorities are also based on the City Council concerns about those in the community who are unstably housed or displaced from their prior housing. As for preferences for Mountain View residents versus County residents, the answer to this question is important to the City Council. There is a need to balance local needs with regional needs and also a need to comply with fair housing requirements while attempting to address local needs. The nature of the funding sources also affects these priorities. As the process becomes more definite, these criteria will be defined, but local needs will always be an important consideration.

*Questions:*

- Will there be renters allowed to live at this hotel who are mentally ill or use drugs
- Will marijuana or drug use be allowed at this project?
- Will alcoholics be allowed to live at the hotel? What about pedophiles?

*Staff Response:*

Regarding residents who may be suffering from drug use or mental illness, the goal of the County is to provide housing for the most vulnerable population including those who are extremely low income and those who face disabling conditions or family medical issues. If the project subsequently moves forward, staff will later look at a variety of populations to house, subject to compliance with fair housing principles. The final resident population may include persons with drug or mental health challenges, but services would be available to those residents. Affordable housing is available to those who qualify for it based on income, and that includes families, veterans, and other community members.

Regarding sex offenders, County and the developer would apply the same legally required exclusionary screening criteria that other housing projects apply.

*Questions:*

- During the January 26, 2021 meeting in which the City Council voted in favor of acquiring the hotel they discussed potentially seeking to house persons living in cars currently (due in part to the number of available parking spaces). This evening, I heard a very different characterization of the housing to be offered. Have homeless persons living in cars been removed as a potential target demographic?
- This was initially announced as a homeless shelter. What changed?

*Staff Response:*

This has always been considered as permanent affordable housing for those who would qualify, which could include some residents who currently live in vehicles. Regarding whether the focus for this opportunity remains as expressed to the City Council at the January meeting, which included families living in their vehicles, these families are still potential residents. However, the exact mix has not been determined yet. Community input on priorities as well as funding sources will be important in clarifying the more definite focus for the site's resident population.

*Question:*

- What do you mean when you say “special needs” individuals will be living there?

*Staff Response:*

The priority for those within the definition of special needs is addressed under a broad definition of special needs, such as a disabling condition or a physical disability, identified in the course of community feedback and other studies. Unstable housing refers to families who may be in danger of losing their current housing for reasons such as job loss, but who could get “back on their feet” if affordable housing were available.

The term “special needs” is deliberately used in a very broad sense. For example, the term can include residents who are seniors or who are chronically homeless for over 10 years. The term can also include those who are homeless because they are leaving an institution or have medical issues, or otherwise have a physical or mental disability even if not previously homeless.

*Question:*

- Will all people living at the hotel be employed? Will they be required to be employed?

*Staff Response:*

There may or may not be an employment requirement for potential residents, depending on the determination of the resident mix.

*Questions:*

- How much do you plan to charge tenants? Will you provide financial aid for those who cannot pay?
- Regarding the question about the minimum income and the screening process, I understood that the minimum income will be 30% of the low- income criteria you showed us earlier. Can you please confirm?

*Staff Response:*

The applicable income levels that will be required for residents have not yet been set. However, typically there is no minimal income required. Instead, residents pay 30% of their actual income toward their rent.

*Question:*

- Will there be a maximum allowable tenancy period?

*Staff Response:*

No, but the residents will sign leases.

*Question:*

- Will residents be able to have pets?

*Staff Response:*

As for allowing residents to have pets, there are reasonable accommodation medical reasons for permitting service animals. Whether the facility will be an overall pet-friendly property will be determined at a later stage.

*Question:*

- Is this rent control housing?

*Staff Response:*

The property will not be subject to rent control because it would not be within the jurisdiction of the City's rent stabilization ordinance.

### Process for Screening Applicants

*Questions:*

- What is the screening process?
- Regarding the screening process, you do not have anything in place yet. When do you expect to have a process you can share with us, tenants of the adjacent Crestview Apartment complex?
- Are you going to publish the resident screening criteria once they are finalized? Will the neighboring community have a say about those criteria if we have a disagreement?

*Staff Response:*

Screening will be based on criteria developed with the non-profit property management company that becomes responsible for the property. Staff will share the tenant selection process with the local community and disclose how potential residents are identified.

There will be a marketing plan created at a later stage with the non-profit project developer chosen for the property. The plan will be based on the best methods to provide information to the local community to ensure opportunity for the local community members to apply for residency.

*Question:*

- Will you be performing criminal background checks of potential residents? What about random drug testing of the residents?

*Staff Response:*

Criminal background checks are part of tenant application due diligence. Some funding sources, such as HUD, may specifically require background checks.

There will be no drug testing, any more than any other tenant would be required to undergo drug testing.

*Question:*

- Will local neighbors be able to interview potential residents and conduct background checks?

*Staff Response:*

Members of the neighboring community will not be given the opportunity to interview or specifically screen potential residents. That responsibility is assigned to the property management company that will be part of the developer team.

Support for the Residents Occupying this Housing

*Question:*

- You keep mentioning that this housing is for people who are transitioning. How do you make sure the tenants are progressing to a normal living situation? How do you avoid it becoming a homeless shelter?

*Staff Response:*

We know there is a need to house unsheltered members of the community, but the units provided at this site will be housing, not “shelter.” The future decision-making process will determine how many of these community members with unstable housing will be offered residence in this property versus potential community residents with other types of identified needs. Typically residents in this site will have found it through their enrollment in other housing programs, whether they be shelter, case management, or other services, and thus will be well-suited for permanent housing opportunities.

*Question:*

- Will you be providing low cost or free transit passes to residents there?

*Staff Response:*

The developer will be expected to provide a robust resident services plan, including provision for child and adult transportation options.

Protecting the Neighborhood, Ensuring Building Security

*Comments:*



- This is a prime location, where many children’s facilities are located close by. As a resident in this area, I’m really concerned about my children’s safety when they are in school or walking on the streets. How would you address such concerns; with more police budget?
- There are 4 - 5 daycare centers and schools all for kids under 12 years old, all within 10 minutes walking distance, how do you ensure their safety in the short term and the long term?
- Many people asking questions seem unfamiliar with Mountain View, otherwise they would know that Crestview for decades was a residential hotel affordable to seniors, low income, unhoused, offering basic buffet breakfast and sunset dinner. This is why the owner probably wanted Crestview to continue to offer affordable housing.

*Staff Response:*

Although the specific resident qualifications have yet to be determined, this property will not be a homeless shelter, but rather permanent affordable housing.

In response to the question about special police presence, concerns about safety are typical for these type of projects, but these buildings generally fit into the neighborhood like any other apartment building – there are a number of affordable housing buildings throughout Mountain View and Sunnyvale. They do not generally require specific security measures, but we do try to honor a good neighbor policy, for example by working with nearby neighborhood associations, and holding periodic update meetings with the public. If for whatever reason more security is deemed necessary, that will be discussed in future community meetings.

*Questions:*

- Since the current plan is so vague, how can you guarantee the project will not create a safety risk?
- Will there be security onsite? Will the security be 24/7?
- How do the property managers plan to safeguard the surrounding neighbors?
- Since the current plan is so vague, how can you guarantee the project will not create a safety risk?
- I am a resident in this area, within walking distance from the hotel, who worked really hard before being able to pay for a house here. I am really concerned about the impact of this facility on the value of my house along with the impact on my kids’ safety; they go to school next to the hotel. This is not the right location for a facility like this.

*Staff Response:*

There will be property management personnel onsite to maintain the property and to ensure the safety of the residents. Whether there will be security personnel onsite at this property 24-7, is not yet known, but will be determined as needed. Generally, when a project has a mixed resident population, the County’s approach is to provide robust supportive services for the residents in order to be a good neighbor. Experience borne out of dozens of similar affordable housing developments will help the developer to work with neighbors to assure similar positive outcomes.

## Why This Location; Project Costs; Why Not Consider Alternative Locations?

### *Questions:*

- Did the hotel owner seek buyers other than the City of Mountain View?
- How much will the purchase cost? What will be the cost of on-going maintenance and what funds will be used for on-going costs?

### *Staff Response:*

The purchase price is not yet set. There must first be an appraisal to establish the price, which has not occurred yet.

Part of the on-going expenses will be covered by various funding sources but also by rent paid by the tenants in the property.

### *Questions:*

- How is this process different from that of previous affordable housing projects that have been done with non-profits like Palo Alto Housing & the upcoming project on Terra Bella?
- How will this project differ from the recent affordable housing projects on Evelyn and Bernardo?

### *Staff Response:*

This opportunity came to the City when the current owner of Crestview approached the City to discuss use of this property for affordable housing, which in turn generated discussion about its feasibility.

Basing this project on utilizing an existing building differs from other projects such as the Bernardo and Evelyn affordable housing properties, which involve construction of a new facility. These other projects are based on offering 100% affordable housing. There are also separate "BMR" properties which are new, and which have certain units set aside as affordable units.

### *Question:*

- The Crestview hotel property is not suitable for a homeless facility.

### *Staff Response:*

Although the specific resident qualifications have yet to be determined, this property will not be a homeless shelter. The residents will sign leases. There will be property management personnel onsite to maintain the property and to ensure the safety of the residents, and services as appropriate.

### *Question:*

- This location is more expensive than many other locations. Why not pick the industrial areas where the acquisition cost will be lower and will impact less residents and businesses?

*Staff Response:*

Zoning prevents locating housing projects in areas zoned for industrial use. The City would have the additional burden of converting the zoning for housing use. Most projects are located where the property is already zoned for housing or for mixed use. That being said, this project will not go forward unless it is deemed financially feasible through the course of the due diligence process.

*Questions:*

- Why not consider the northern part of the city such as north of 101? It is more affordable there.
- Shouldn't the unsheltered population be housed in a cheaper area, since the cost of living here is so high?

*Staff Response:*

Right now, the City is in the midst of developing affordable housing sites in other locations, such as the downtown lot 12 parking lot. The City has had excellent positive experience utilizing non-profits such as the former Palo Alto Housing, now Alta Housing, which was chosen as the developer for the Lot 12 project.

Mountain View has successfully developed excellent high-quality affordable housing throughout the City. Each project is different, but in the past, they have included dedicated supportive services and amenities to guarantee the successful participation of residents in the housing, including those with special needs. The same type of planning will be applied to this opportunity.

*Question:*

- Is Mountain View the only city in this area providing these types of homeless services? The Sunnyvale Police Department is already sending their RV dwellers to Mountain View.

*Staff Response:*

Mountain View is not the only city in the County providing housing to these populations. Affordable housing is being developed throughout the entire county, including Los Altos and Palo Alto. In all, seven different cities in the County have 2016 Measure A funded affordable housing projects within their jurisdictions. The County has excellent relationships with various non-profit developers and other members of the development community which results in providing excellent quality housing.

When purchasing an existing property, the County must look at every possible opportunity due to the shortage of affordable housing.

*Question:*

- It seems like the only justification that has been provided on why to acquire this is "Well, the owner approached us." It seems random and thoughtless.

*Staff Response:*

The City does not typically look to purchase properties to use for affordable housing. This specific opportunity for the City presented itself when the Crestview owner raised the possibility with the City. This opportunity aligns with several City priorities, as provided in the El Camino Real precise plan.

*Questions:*

- What about traffic? The local traffic is already very bad during peak non- pandemic hours.
- With such a large number of units on this project, the traffic will be very bad for neighbors.

*Staff Response:*

Concerning the potential impact on traffic, the El Camino Real precise plan already takes into account traffic and parking impacts. If additional traffic studies are desired, they would be conducted as part of future development stages.

*Questions:*

- We have experienced clearly confused and aggressive homeless persons in the area.
- If the project harms our property values, will the city or county compensate us?
- There has been a distinct lack of hotels in the area - leading to very high prices for visitors. Once the economy opens up again, won't this create the need for even more hotel construction? (as we have seen all along El Camino)?

*Staff Response:*

This property will be for sale regardless of who buys it. Given that we know there is a significant need for affordable housing in our community, the City and County will evaluate any opportunity that presents itself to address the needs. Hotel acquisitions are less costly and faster to build than new units. Crestview presents a good opportunity to be considered for housing, especially with its location near services and transit. Unhoused community members need significant outreach and services, which the County and City will provide, separately from the development of permanent affordable housing.

### Timeline for Moving The Housing Opportunity Forward

*Questions:*

- What will be the next steps after this meeting to move the project forward?
- How is this "early" in the process when you have already decided to buy the property?

*Staff Response:*

See prior staff responses to the question about the next steps. As already noted, the purchase price for the property has not yet been determined and the Board of Supervisors will hold two public meetings prior to any decision being made about buying the property, after a purchase price has been determined.

### Configuration of the Building and Grounds

*Questions:*

- What will the total occupancy be?
- What is the target capacity after remodeling?
- What will the estimated total number of units be?
- Will the single rooms be combined to make larger units; will there be kitchens?

*Staff Response:*

Questions such as number and configuration of the final room plan are still open for determination. There are currently 67 rooms, but existing rooms could be combined to create larger suites, if the plan involves a focus on larger families. The hotel removed the kitchenettes that were previously in the units, but the plumbing was left in place, allowing for a decision to restore kitchen facilities, if desired.

Whether rooms will be remodeled for larger families will be explored with the non-profit partner once specific plans are generated with that partner.

*Question:*

- Will there be construction activity outside the building?

*Staff Response:*

The specific construction activity plan will be determined later, at the planning and permitting stage. Amenities, landscaping, and community benefits will also be designed at this stage. Some typical construction activities, such as excavation or trenching, will not be necessary because there is an already existing structure.

*Questions:*

- Can you redo the outside to make the building look more interesting? Maybe some bright colors and/or murals?

- What measures will be taken to make sure that the outside area is clean and well maintained?

*Staff Response:*

Community meetings will help inform appropriate amenities for the community on site. On-site staff will be required to maintain landscaping and general cleanliness.

*Question:*

- Are you going to park inhabited motor homes in the parking lot of the Crestview?

*Staff Response:*

Crestview is intended to be permanent housing, and is not being considered as a safe parking site. The City is already creating safe parking locations for RV dwellers elsewhere. It is too early to address details such as whether RV dwellers will be allowed to use this property for permanent housing, instead of living in their vehicle

### Relationship Between City and County Financing

*Question:*

- What will happen if the County buys the site and Mountain View then doesn't have the budget to pay for its share?

*Staff Response:*

The County and City have experience developing affordable housing and putting together a sustainable funding plan to maintain the project over time. For Crestview, City staff has identified funding sources for the conversion and renovation costs. CDBG, federal block grant funds awarded to the City must be spent, so these funds will be used for part of this cost. Typically, the City has not been funding on-going operations, part of which will be covered by rent payments. Covering these costs will be part of the contractual arrangements with the non-profit developer chosen to build and manage the final version of the project. The County would be responsible for ensuring that there are enough funds available to proceed with the short-term needs and long-term maintenance of the site, if the project proceeds.

### General Messages of Support

- Shout out to Supervisor Simitian – thanks for coming!
- We wish to thank Supervisor Simitian's team for engaging with the community and acting as a conduit to provide feedback to the City of Mountain View around this project and the associated process.
- Shout out to Mountain View City Councilmembers. Who is here? Thanks for coming.
- Thanks for the presentation, love that MV is looking to meet all MV needs!! Please continue working on this site.

- This is a great opportunity to provide much needed housing for our neighbors that are having trouble securing affordable housing. Mountain View has done a good job of looking for and providing housing.
- I admire your patience in dealing with these concerns. Thank you.
- Destination Home is very supportive of Mountain View moving forward with this development to provide much needed supportive housing. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important work and stand ready to assist the county and city of MV as they explore this opportunity further.

### Staff Response

There were no direct staff responses to these messages of support.

### **Meeting Conclusion**

At the conclusion of the meeting, the contact information slide was displayed again, showing the URL for the Crestview website [www.mountainview.gov/crestview](http://www.mountainview.gov/crestview) and the dedicated email address [neighborhoods@mountainview.gov](mailto:neighborhoods@mountainview.gov). Sign-ups for the interest list will be available through this website, which will provide notice of all future meetings and steps in the process. A summary of this meeting, with community input and staff responses, will be posted on this site. The staff presentation is also being posted.

Staff reiterated the two-step public meeting process for the Board of Supervisor review of the property purchase, as described above. The outcome of these steps and all future steps will also be posted on the Crestview website.

Staff thanked everyone who attended and participated and encouraged them to continue their involvement.