



1 Hamilton-FAQ #2

Summary of Questions Received during the March 10, 2022 Community Workshop

During the March 10, 2022 online community workshop, a total of 157 questions were posted in the “Q&A” tab. Staff has consolidated and paraphrased the questions, which are outlined and answered below.

Restrooms

1. Q: The EAH team shared options for relocating the restrooms on the west Hauke Park-side of Hamilton Drive. Why are these options being considered?

A: The options for relocating the public restrooms presented at the March 10 workshop were intended to spur community discussion and feedback. The options identified and presented at the meeting were based on the placement of the public restrooms in a location that would provide ease of access including recreational users, individuals with disabilities and young children. When reviewing possible locations, the project team determined a potential added benefit of providing public restrooms on the same side of the street as Hauke Park to avoid children and other park users from crossing Hamilton Drive to access the restrooms, and is interested in hearing from the community on this idea.

The options presented at the March 10 workshop were preliminary for the purposes of gathering feedback from the community about the potential benefits of relocating the restrooms to the west side of Hamilton Drive. Any option that could impact playing fields will not be considered. The community will have the opportunity to provide further input at the upcoming May 3 Open House. The cost and feasibility of relocating the restrooms depends on further evaluation of ADA access and connections to sewer and water resources.

Parking & Traffic

2. Q: How many parking spaces currently serve Hauke Park, and how many will there be?

A: Currently, there is a total of 67 public parking spaces serving Hauke Park, including: 38 spaces on the existing public parking lot; 11 on-street parking spaces on Hamilton Drive; and approximately 18 informal parking spaces located on the PG&E site.

At the March 10 workshop, the project team indicated the potential to increase public parking, from 67 existing spaces (located at the PG&E lot, across from the PSB Building on the street, and at the existing public parking lot) to somewhere between 84 to 110 public parking spaces. This estimated total includes public parking that would be made available by improving the layout of parking surrounding the Police and Fire Building; adding a few on-street parking spaces; and expanding the PG&E parking site by paving, striping, and adding a double aisle.

3. Q: Where will the residents of proposed housing at 1 Hamilton Drive park their cars?

A: Parking for the proposed residential use will be contained within the northern portion of 1 Hamilton Drive as part of the footprint of the housing site. These residential parking spaces located on the proposed housing site are in addition to the 84-110 public spaces noted above. The actual number of residential spaces will be based on the total number of units (and bedroom mix) that can be accommodated on the property. Establishing the location and placement of the residential building will help planners and community members better understand the approximate unit count and subsequent parking spaces needed.

4. Q: How will the City manage the increase in traffic?

A: The project team does not yet know the impacts on traffic related to housing at the 1 Hamilton site. Traffic studies will be done as part of the environmental review process for the proposed affordable housing development, after preliminary design work and the development of a project description. Should significant impacts to traffic be identified through the environmental review process, mitigation measures will be developed and discussed with the community to minimize or reduce the potential impacts.

5. Q: Is any consideration being given to making Hamilton a two-way street?

A: The City is not actively considering this change at this time. As noted above, traffic will be analyzed and studied as part of the environmental review for any proposed affordable housing project at 1 Hamilton.

6. Q: Will any of the proposed parking impact the parkland at Hauke Park?

A: Community members currently use the PG&E parking site on an informal basis. If the PG&E parking site mentioned above is striped, paved, and reconfigured into a double drive aisle, it would require a few feet of encroachment beyond its current footprint. The area that is envisioned for expansion is an existing gravel and dirt area. There would be no impact on the recreational fields.

If existing on-street parking across from the Public Safety Building is extended, staff estimates an encroachment of one or two feet would be necessary. A survey will be prepared to determine the extent of encroachment. This parking extension would have no impact on the recreational fields.

7. Q: Will changes to public parking impact Fire and Police vehicle access and exit?

A: This would be studied prior to the approval of any modified public parking. Staff has consulted with both department heads on a preliminary basis to discuss possible modifications to parking as it relates to Fire and Police operations. The City will avoid or minimize any impacts on emergency vehicle access.

8. Q: Will bicycle parking be made available for new residents and recreational Hauke Park users?

A: Yes, staff intends to include bicycle parking in the conceptual design for the proposed housing. Bicycle parking for the public will be explored as part of designing the reconfigured parking areas. The final location of any bicycle parking will be determined during the community outreach/public process related to the housing project and parking.

9. Q: Where will the City relocate the electric vehicle charging station?

A: Existing electrical vehicle charging stations will be replaced. Proposed locations for the chargers will be determined as part of the design review process based on utility availability and available space in the reconfigured parking area.

10. Q: When will the City conduct a traffic study? Will it include high usage times during the school year and during soccer season?

A: Traffic studies will be initiated in the upcoming months. Data collection will not take place during summer months to ensure the traffic studies include the academic school year and soccer season, which are peak usage times for the areas surrounding Hauke Park.

11. Q: Will the City make changes to the PG&E parking area to increase safety, and will those changes affect the surrounding green space?

A: The PG&E parking site, if formalized, would require expanding the drive aisle, modifying the driveway entrance and slope, and possibly paving the existing dirt roadway. These changes would encroach a few feet outside of its current footprint but would not impact recreational or field use areas.

Population

12. Q: Will the affordable apartments at Hamilton have a local live and/or work preference?

A: Local preference is yet to be determined. The project team acknowledges that the Mill Valley community and City Council is interested in a local live/work preference for occupancy of the potential Affordable Housing at 1 Hamilton for the local workforce and their families. A preference would provide an advantage for local Mill Valley residents or workers in accessing the Affordable Housing opportunity. The project team plans to initiate research into the feasibility/legality of such a program after initial feasibility is determined. There are a fair number of examples in the surrounding area, including Menlo Park, Livermore, American Canyon and San Mateo where this goal was achieved in compliance with all federal and state laws.

13. Q: What is Supportive Housing, and will the City include it in the development?

A: Supportive Housing is Affordable Housing that provides housing combined with services to help individuals and households maintain stable housing and appropriate care. Supportive Housing serves households unable to function without additional support and typically consists of studio and one-bedroom floor plans. The proposed Affordable Housing at 1 Hamilton is contemplated as Family Housing which may include a special needs set aside which could consist of any number of populations (examples: formally homeless, individuals with intellectual disabilities, or traditional age youth), dependent on community preference and funding sources.

14. Q: Will the project accept residents with Section 8 housing vouchers?

A: It is illegal in the State of California to discriminate against a potential tenant based on their source of income, including Section 8 vouchers.

15. Q: Why is this a rental development and not homeownership?

A: The City is pursuing an affordable rental housing project to help improve and increase the rental housing stock, to respond to the diverse housing needs of families in the community and to provide an opportunity to connect people with services.

Building new affordable units is an important part of the City's housing strategy because housing costs continue to outpace a local household's ability to afford housing in Mill Valley. While the private real estate market does generate some affordable units through policies such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and inclusionary housing, the number of dedicated, deed-restricted affordable units built each year that remain in perpetuity is limited.

In recent years, the City has seen an increase in below market rate ownership units through its inclusionary housing program, which requires those projects with 4 or more units to build and deed

restrict 25% of the units as affordable, below market rate units. However, Mill Valley has not built affordable rental homes in several decades, and the number of rental units available in Mill Valley has also declined over the past decade. Affordable rental housing properties such as the proposed housing concept at 1 Hamilton Drive would provide long-term affordable housing opportunities for the Mill Valley community, especially for low-income families with service workers and other locally employed residents.

Environmental

16. Q: What is CEQA, and at what point in the timeline will it happen?

A: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a California statute passed in 1970 intended to inform government decision-makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to prevent or mitigate significant avoidable environmental damage to the extent feasible. The project team has initiated several technical studies and reports which will be folded into an initial study and environmental analysis which will be made available for public review and input later this year. CEQA analysis requires a conceptual design and project description in order to commence; therefore, the timeline and level of CEQA review will be determined when the project description is finalized.

17. Q: Who oversees the CEQA process?

A: The City of Mill Valley serves as the lead agency for CEQA review and will manage the environmental contract and consultant hired to conduct the work.

18. Q: When will the City make technical studies available to the community?

A: Technical studies will be used to inform the environmental analysis under CEQA described above and will be attached to or made available as part of the environmental review process (see question 16 above for details).

19. Q: How will the City account for the existence of serpentine rock on the potential affordable housing development site?

A: The geotechnical consultants are aware of the potential existence of serpentine rock and will complete testing to determine concentrations. Should there be a determination of an environmental impact, the project team will work with the environmental consultants to determine possible mitigations.

20. Q: How will the project minimize water usage?

A: EAH Housing, as a matter of design practice, uses low flow toilets and faucets, submeters water to ensure residents' accountability for usage, uses drought-tolerant landscaping, and, where possible, uses greywater systems for irrigation. In addition, any new building will be required to meet the City's Tier 1 Green Building standards and any requirements established by Marin Municipal Water District.

Land Use & Density

21. Q: Why the location at 1 Hamilton?

A: The site at 1 Hamilton was selected after an extensive analysis of all City-owned parcels throughout Mill Valley by City staff and the Housing Advisory Committee, followed by a consultant to further evaluate and explore public-owned land. The consultant provided two memos, available online at www.cityofmillvalley.org/HAC, that further evaluated public land and then determined the financial feasibility building on those sites with potential to build on. The 1 Hamilton site was identified as the best-suited site to build affordable housing a on City-owned site. Building on City-owned land provides lower costs to a housing developer and reduces the need for other financial subsidies to build affordable homes. The site at 1 Hamilton, unlike other City-owned parcels, contains a relatively flat portion which contains construction costs; is not affected by floodplains or floodways; is located in walking distance to schools, shops, and public transit; and provides recreational site amenities near Hauke Park. The City, through the Housing Element process, is also identifying other developable privately-owned sites that can accommodate over 900 new housing units at a range of affordability and is working to possibly remove existing barriers to housing for other City-owned sites, such as the Floodway designation for the Miller Avenue Public Parking Lot and the open space easement on the Edgewood Reservoir property.

22. Q: What is the size of the affordable housing parcel?

A: The northern portion of the 1 Hamilton parcel is expected to be approximately 1.6 acres, with the understanding that the City may need to modify the actual size of site based on community input and physical design of the proposed housing.

City Council has identified the northern portion of the 1 Hamilton site as surplus land for the sole purpose of building affordable homes on the site. Once the City and community have developed the conceptual design, the project team can draw the physical boundaries of the housing site. Modifications to the physical boundary would only likely occur to address the boundary between residential and public parking; underlying easements or community interest.

23. Q: How tall will the building be?

A: The projected height is yet to be determined. The project team is working to keep the building at or below the slope of Roque Morales Drive to avoid significant impacts to the views of neighbors above Roque Morales Drive.

24. Q: How many units will be in the affordable housing development?

A: The exact number of homes is not yet determined and will rely on several factors, including financing requirements that may dictate unit mix and/or income levels served, location of the building(s) on site, construction costs and satisfying the City's development standards. The City's consultants have advised that a range of 40 to 50 apartments is necessary to compete for affordable housing financing and to support a full-time property manager.

25. Q: How will the affordable housing development affect my property value?

A: Property values are affected by many factors. Residential property in Mill Valley has appreciated at unprecedented rates in the past several years, including market rate properties located near older affordable rental developments. Moreover, the research overwhelmingly shows that Affordable Housing typically positively impacts property values because it is newly constructed and well-designed.¹

26. Q: Why isn't the project economically feasible below 40 to 50 units?

A: The project is likely not economically feasible below 40 to 50 units because, at a smaller scale, the property would not produce sufficient income to cover operating expenses or allow sufficient debt leverage (a bank loan).

Community Engagement

27. Q: Is the project already approved and moving forward?

A: No, the project has not been approved. As of March 2022, the City Council has approved an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA), which is a contract stating that the City of Mill Valley has agreed to work exclusively with EAH Housing during a set period, through September 2023, to conduct community outreach and technical studies necessary to: 1) develop a conceptual design with the community and 2) further evaluate the feasibility of building affordable homes on the northern portion of the 1 Hamilton site.

¹ See the following studies: https://web.stanford.edu/~diamondr/LIHTC_spillovers.pdf and https://furmancenter.org/files/media/Dont_Put_It_Here.pdf

28. Q: Will the citizens of Mill Valley be able to vote on the project and decide what, if anything, is built?

A: The project will not be voted on directly by Mill Valley residents but rather considered through the community engagement and public review process for the design, entitlements and environmental review of the project. The community may voice their input, including concerns or support on the project, during the community engagement and public review process. The project will require a recommendation by the Planning Commission and final vote by the City Council.

29. Q: What was the purpose of the polling questions, and how will they be used?

A: The project team will use the answers regarding the restroom placement, parking preferences, and the roundabout as a general gauge of public opinion, and a place to start the conversation leading into our next community engagement workshop, which will go into the design elements in more detail.