



February 1, 2021

Chair Cranston and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: EPC Study Session, February 3, Agenda Item 5.1 – Google Middlefield Park Master Plan

Dear Chair Cranston and Members of the EPC:

The LWV is excited to see so much housing being planned for the Google Middlefield Park area. We are pleased to see the phasing so that the jobs/housing linkage is preserved throughout the process. The proposed parkland, pedestrian-bike bridge land dedication and the community benefits package are all praiseworthy.

Our hesitation is with the Alternative Mitigation Plan for affordable housing. We are very concerned about the delay in building the 20% affordable housing component rather than these units being included as below market rate units (BMRs) in the market-rate development. Possibly the City will achieve lower income targeting or other benefits by accepting a land dedication from Google, and the LWV does support housing developments that are 100% affordable. However, the LWV also believes that inclusionary units foster socio-economic and racial integration. For the Google Middlefield Park plan we favor including the units because they will likely be built sooner than those on the dedicated parcel and the need for affordable housing as soon as possible is dire.

As explained above, our strong preference is for the units to be built as part of the market-rate housing, but there are other alternatives that are preferable to Google just donating the land. One option is to ensure that any all-affordable project is phased in concurrently with the market-rate housing. Another option would be to allow Google to dedicate one of the parcels for an all-affordable project but include the other units as BMRs in the market-rate developments. Or instead of Google paying more than is required in community benefits, reduce this financial contribution in exchange for Google constructing the below-market rate (BMR) units as they build the market-rate housing. In any case, we hope staff will do an analysis to ensure that if an Alternative Mitigation Plan is accepted, there is equivalency in value/cost to providing the mandated affordable component as BMRs or as an all-affordable development.

We do support an expedited review process. The length of time that is currently required for developments from inception to completion is one of the reasons that California has fallen so far short in its production of housing.

Thank you for considering our input. (Please submit any questions about this letter to Donna Yobs at dmyobs@yahoo.com)

Lisa McLain, President LWV of Los Altos Mountain View
Donna Yobs, Co-Chair, Housing Committee

cc: Wayne Chen Kimbra McCarthy Stephanie Williams Aarti Shrivastava Lindsay Hagan