



817 Montgomery Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

February 24, 2013

Mountain View City Council
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Honorable Mayor Inks and Members of the City Council:

We would like to comment on the commercial development project at 700 East Middlefield Road that is being proposed by RREEF Real Estate.

First, much of what is proposed is very good. For example, buildings rated for LEED gold or platinum; design intended to provide for bird safety; amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists; plenty of open space; protection of heritage trees; and measures addressing the need for a high proportion of transit-oriented development in our city.

However, what we do not see mentioned or discussed so far is how the city's and area's jobs/housing balance will be affected by the expected increase in the number of jobs as a result of this project. Specifically, an increase in housing availability in our city should *at least* match the number of new jobs expected. Otherwise, we will continue to see the drastic rise in housing costs that both home-buyers and renters have been experiencing. Since this project is being presented as a "highly sustainable office development," not including housing impacts and possible mitigations is a completely unsuitable oversight.

In relation to the fact that the February 12th staff report for the 700 East Middlefield project did not mention housing at all, much less provide any details related to mitigation, please bear in mind that sustainability is not only about environmental sustainability (although this is vitally important), but also quality of life, and social and economic diversity in our city, both of which have been hallmarks of Mountain View since its very beginning. With so much new development and related activities now being proposed and undertaken, this is certainly not the time to forget what the full sustainability profile for our city must entail. If thousands more people are to be priced out of Mountain View residency each year, along with the local stores that need low rents to survive, that is a very bad direction to go in.

As councilmember Bryant observed during the February 12th study session addressing this project proposal, there is no increase in the diversity of uses included in the proposal. Mixed use including housing would be one way to establish diversity. Of course, new housing does not necessarily have to be at the same location as the development, but close to the project site would be ideal (for example, near the LRT stations in the area), and certainly within our city should be expected.

Additionally, the design of the streets in the area is very poor (for example, with poor connectivity to light rail, lack of a street grid, and inadequate availability of services). As a result, workers are dependent on driving in cases where they need to run errands or access services during the day.

The design of the streets in the area is abysmal. There's poor connectivity to light rail and the area lacks a street grid and there are no services. Workers are dependent on driving should they need to access services during the day or wish to run errands.

The bottom line is that a comprehensive North Whisman Precise Plan needs to be developed before this project is approved and further large office projects in this area are considered. Otherwise, planning decisions and approvals will be made by necessity on a case by case basis, which is neither efficient or likely to provide consistent results. This precise plan should take into account not only transportation and community impacts, but also should provide recommendations and requirements to help balance housing offsets due to new projects that increase the number of jobs in our city. Furthermore, robust and complete comprehensive planning for the North Whisman area should not be limited to the Precise Plan alone. As this work is defined and taken up, transportation planners needs to be involved, and the developers should cover the expense. Ultimately, the *true* and *total* cost of the needed infrastructure needs to be identified, and ways found to cover it.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Bruce England
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On behalf of the members of the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning