



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
Mountain View, CA 94041

June 7, 2015

Mountain View City Council
and
City of Mountain View Parks and Recreation Commission
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: Support for an urban or open community garden at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue

Dear Mayor McAlister, City Council members and Parks and Recreation Commission members:

MVCSP would like to express our support for the City implementing one or more shared community gardens in Mountain View, including consideration of current plans for a garden space at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue. We believe that providing these does not supplant traditional community gardens already in place but rather enhances the types that are offered, thus providing the greatest flexibility of use types. Specifically, traditional community gardens provide assigned plots for those who sign up to use them, while shared gardens are ideal for those who do not require dedicated space for them and who might value the social interaction that can be provided by the shared experience and shared projects in the gardening environment. Providing both types gives those in Mountain View both predictability and flexibility depending on their preferences, while accommodating and encouraging the largest number of interested people who might use the spaces. Additionally, gardens of this and other types received strong support at the recent community meetings exploring potential uses of the 771 Rengstorff property.

The Soil&Water community group makes the best case for implementing shared garden spaces in Mountain View, so we will not repeat all of their points here except to say that we agree with and support them all. For some time, Kavita Dave Coombe, who heads Soil&Water, has participated on behalf of her group with MVCSP to keep us informed about their efforts, so we are ideally positioned to speak positively about the work they are doing and the goals that they have developed and are pursuing.

Some important highlights of what shared garden space in Mountain View can accomplish:

- Provide education and recreation resources where our kids can learn about gardening through hands-on activity
- Provide on-site activities including workdays, cooking/nutrition demonstrations, and special events
- Provide ideas for those considering gardening at home (including for small-spaces, balcony, and vertical gardening)
- Teach us all, regardless of age or background, how we can grow our own food and when during the year to grow them

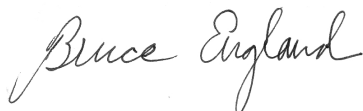
- Increase the amount of space used for plants and reduce the amount of space used for buildings and hardscape
- Provide an important place for social interaction and project sharing
- Demonstrate conservative water use and sustainable agriculture methods
- Reinforce Mountain View's position as an environmental sustainability leader in the region
- Provide a connection to the city's agricultural past
- Provide a valuable selling point for those who might choose to live, work, or do business in our city
- Potentially provide food that can be used for local food banks or local CSAs and farmers markets

If the City should approve placement of one or more shared community gardens in Mountain View, we encourage you to give attention to the following as well:

- For 771 Rengstorff, consider having the kitchen garden managed by the same people who are managing the larger garden
- Investigate using greywater for garden irrigation
- Optimize use of drip irrigation
- Inclusion of beehives
- Provide appropriate amenities such as drinking fountains, restrooms, benches, picnic tables and adequate shaded areas
- Eventual transition of any demonstration gardens to shared community gardens, even if volunteers or City Staff provide necessary oversight
- Adequate accommodations for those walking, biking, or using transit to get to and from the location.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Bruce England

on behalf of the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc:

Dan Rich, City Manager

Randy Tsuda, Director of Community Development

Lorrie Brewer, City Clerk's Office

Parks Division

Bruce Hurlburt, Parks and Open Space Manager

J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services Department Director

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a group of local volunteers—comprised of over 70 members—dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

For more information, see <http://www.mvcsp.org>.

To contact us, send email to mvcsp.info@gmail.com.