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TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

November 14, 2022

Mayor Ramirez and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro St.
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Middlefield Park Master Plan, November 15th, 2022 City Council Meeting: Item 7.3, File No. 201656

Dear Mayor Ramirez, Vice Mayor Hicks, and Mountain View City Council,

On behalf of SV@Home and our members, we write today to provide comments in support of Google's Middlefield Park Master Plan in the East Whisman Precise Plan area.

We appreciate Google's vision for East Whisman. Their proposed Master Plan reflects and fulfills Mountain View's goals for the area: it reimagines the current sprawl-centric office park as a mixed-use, walkable, bikeable hub with new residential development, commercial space, and parks. Middlefield Park is designed in the Master Plan to grow around existing transit and connect to the rest of Mountain View and to Sunnyvale, and will serve as both an anchor and catalyst for other development in the East Whisman area.

The Middlefield Park Master Plan rests on the strengths of the East Whisman Precise Plan. The Jobs-Housing Linkage Strategy remains a ground-breaking policy tool to directly link new office growth with new residential development. This is a Master Plan that reaffirms the value of truly mixed use places – complete communities – where people of all incomes can live, work and play, with open spaces and active uses 18 hours a day. We would like to thank the City Council and staff for all of their work to adopt an East Whisman Precise Plan that enables such innovative development proposals and smart growth.

We are most pleased that the plan enables 20% of new units to be 100% deed-restricted affordable homes. We are supportive of the plan worked out by staff and the Google/Lend Lease team, which we will discuss further below.

Land dedication is an important and effective tool for integrating affordable housing into larger developments or master plans. This approach allows for the inclusion of a greater number of affordable homes and can support deeper levels of affordability – details that are all clearly outlined in the staff memorandum. There are a number of challenges however, most of which are also outlined in the memo:

- The first is the required additional public subsidy. It will always take additional resources to achieve deeper levels of affordability. This is particularly true in the context of a plan that will include 20% of the units as affordable and incorporates significant additional public benefits. In this case the land dedication will enable the full 20% and will come to the City with valuable site improvements;
- The second is ensuring there are clear policies and timelines to facilitate the development of affordable housing sooner rather than allowing the land to sit vacant. In this case, the improved land dedications are in Phase 1 and there is additional support to increase the level of confidence in their development. None of these steps are guarantees, but the additional steps taken by the City Council to prioritize funding to develop on city-owned land will be important; and
- The third is that affordable housing needs to be integrated with the market rate and commercial development in the plan area. Ideally, this includes a mixture of inclusionary units and stand alone 100% affordable projects, but in this case the land dedications will support both the spatial and economic integration of the new community.

Middlefield Park will play a significant role in the growth of Mountain View in the next decade. The commitments to bring the affordable homes forward in Phase I in the Middlefield Master Plan will be essential to meeting the 6th Cycle RHNA obligations outlined in the Housing Element Update. We are confident that city staff and the Google/Lend Lease team have alignment on both vision and implementation strategies. This will take continued commitment from both, including support from the City Council, to be fully realized. This has been a long and complicated planning process, which will continue for years to come, but we are excited to see progress being made as the East Whisman Precise Plan continues to gain momentum.

Sincerely,



Regina Celestin Williams
Executive Director