

From: [Maya Briones](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Holly Pearson](#); [Catherine Martineau](#); [Christie Galitsky](#)
Subject: 555 Middlefield Project
Date: Friday, February 4, 2022 2:23:04 PM
Attachments: [Letter to MV City Council 2-4-22 Canopy.pdf](#)

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Hello,

I work for Canopy, local urban forestry nonprofit that plants and cares for trees in midpeninsula communities. I have three of my colleagues cc'd here: Catherine Martineau, Executive Director, Christy Galitsky, Senior Director of Programs, and Holly Pearson, our Advocacy Committee chair.

Attached is a letter with our comments regarding the 555 Middlefield project. Please share this letter with the city council for the February 8th council meeting.

Thank you!

Best regards,

--

Maya Briones (she/her)

Advocacy Associate

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Working Part-time Remotely M-F

Please note that I work part-time and may not respond to emails immediately.



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February 4, 2022

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500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

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We envision a day when every resident of the Midpeninsula can step outside to walk, play, and thrive under the shade of healthy trees.

RE: 555 Middlefield Project

Dear Mayor Lucas Ramirez and Council Members,

We at Canopy wish to express our thanks for your leadership over the past year through the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the work to improve the quality of life for current and future generations. We're writing today to underscore the importance of a healthy tree canopy as an integral part of the development project at 555 W. Middlefield Road. We'd like to echo the community about the importance of moving forward with targeted investments in community resiliency programs and nature-based solutions. Trees—in particular, mature trees—are critically important.

Tree canopy cover provides a multitude of benefits that support community resiliency, sustainability, and harmony with the natural world around us. Trees are our first line of defense against extreme heat, storms, and air and noise pollution. Their shade and beauty promote cardiovascular and respiratory health through various mechanisms such as increased physical activity, as well as positive mental health outcomes, reducing overall health costs in the community. Trees also bring nature into what would otherwise be a concrete jungle, increasing habitat for wildlife. Finally, trees bring people together. Trees can give a neighborhood a distinct identity and point of pride.

While we understand that development projects often necessitate removal of some trees, we urge you to minimize the number of trees lost. Trees take over a decade to mature - as also indicated in the staff report regarding open space and trees; large, mature trees and a continuous canopy provide the most benefits. Native oaks in particular are especially valuable for climate resilience and carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and neighborhood character. New plantings should be robust, with native species and locally appropriate drought tolerant non-natives.

We urge the City to require the project developer to:

- Allocate a sufficient 10-year budget to hire reputable, experienced tree professionals to care for, maintain and monitor all the trees at the project site, including the replacement, transplanted and existing trees, in order to ensure their long-term health during and after the construction. This budget would be above and beyond the normal landscaping maintenance budget.
- Preserve as many healthy, mature trees as possible.
- For replacement plantings, use native species, including native oaks, and locally appropriate nonnatives that are climate resilient and robust.

- Ensure the long-term viability and health of all replacement plantings and transplants by following the guidelines in the City's new Tree Technical Manual.
- Provide lush greenspaces to enhance the residents' health and increase biodiversity

It is our hope that city staff and designers will consider the urban forest as an integral element of the 555 W. Middlefield Road project, and each new development project, in order to improve the City's livability, quality of life, sustainability and climate resiliency.

Sincerely,,

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