

R3 ZONING COMMENTS

Dear Chairman Bill Cranston and Environmental Planning Commissioners:

As demonstrated by the 555 West Middlefield project a large developer such as Google can afford to provide community benefits because it accrues to the residents of the project as well as to the surrounding community. This includes parks, parking areas, public transportation access, etc. In some cases such as in the Google Shorebird development land is set aside for community schools.

The City is considering changing the R3 Zoning requirements to permit higher density development. R3 Zoning is generally applicable to smaller developments. Smaller developments are assessed public benefit fees instead of the direct community benefits. The fees are inadequate to pay for the public benefits even when collected from multiple developments.

Furthermore, the public benefits are allocated to small, well-defined planning areas that are often too small to generate sufficient in public benefits to make a difference to specific planning area. The results of inadequate public benefits resulting from residential growth is self-evident. Just look at the Monta Loma/Rock/Farley, Moffett/Whisman/San Antonio planning areas. There are few city parks and the only open areas are owned by the Mountain View Whisman School District, which has been taking over what little is left as the grown in residential housing requires the schools to expand capacity.

As it is, the existing infrastructure has insufficient open space, parking, access to transportation, and access to necessary services. What in effect is being proposed is to overlay a higher density of residences over an infrastructure designed for suburban living. The challenge appears to be how to increase the housing density and at the same time enhance the community benefits and in certain areas of Mountain View restore past deficiencies to ensure a healthy, stimulating, equitable, and enjoyable community for all residents.

We need to think this through as community members from a holistic perspective. We can start with being honest about what we have and what we don't have, what has worked and what hasn't worked and understand why, and then envision where we want to go. An important part of this will be to a look at Mountain View from a macroscopic perspective as well as from the perspective of individual communities and neighborhoods. These developments affect not only the local areas but also the surrounding communities.

I urge the Environmental Planning Commission to be creative in addressing these difficult and complex issues. Consider first – What would you want the infrastructure look like if you initially designed communities with R3 Zoning. Then, for where we are today, what needs to happen to get there.

Bill Lambert

Mountain View Resident
Member of the Monta Loma Neighborhood Association
Member of the Preserve Monta Loma Park Group
Secretary, Board of the Day Worker Center of Mountain View
Vice-President, MVWSD Measure T Bond Oversight Committee
Former Trustee, Mountain View Whisman School District, 2012-2016