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October 21, 2016

Randy Tsuda  
Community Development Director  
City of Mountain View  
500 Castro Street  
Mountain View, CA 94039

**Re: Gatekeeper Application Letter;  
987 and 913 Rengstorff Avenue ("Property")**

Dear Mr. Tsuda:

I have been retained by Mario and Liz Ambra ("Owners"), to assist with land use strategy and this Gatekeeper application, in order to successfully pursue family goals for the land. As you and your colleagues are aware, the Ambras have on two prior occasions, sought Gatekeeper approval, to no avail. The Owners have further evaluated their Property and patiently waited to bring this third Gatekeeper request to seek approval for staff to evaluate General Plan and Zoning changes at the Property for a high-density residential project with community benefits.

**Property Background:**

The Property, fronting Rengstorff Avenue between Plymouth and Leghorn Streets, has been in the Ambra family for over 100 years. The former "Ambra Olive Oil" factory which operated between 1928 and 1958 is now occupied by the Owners in an apartment and single-family home. In the 1970's the Ambra family dedicated a portion of their land to the City to widen Rengstorff Avenue leaving approximately 1.7 acres. The site once contained over 2.0 acres giving it greater depth and size.

The Property location is an important gateway entry into Mountain View and a prime location for dense housing, as it is adjacent to Bayshore Freeway, other transit and within walking and biking distance to an array of jobs. Unfortunately, existing heavy industrial (MM) and medium density residential (R3.2) zoning split the Property, impairing the ability to cohesively develop the land and creating a land use conflict (heavy industrial next to residential).

The surrounding land uses are also incompatible with the Property's existing zoning of heavy industrial and lower density residential uses. The adjacent property on Leghorn Street is developed with several residential uses while the adjacent property on Plymouth was recently developed with housing. Modifying the zoning as described in the proposal below will create a significant improvement at this prominent entryway into Mountain View.

**Proposal:**

The Owners are aware that high density housing is a priority of the City. This application seeks to amend the General Plan and Zoning to designate the property as high-density residential (R3-D or above). In conjunction with housing, the Owners will include community benefit(s) in their application to preserve the historic integrity of the "Ambra Oil Factory," and/or incorporate a portion of the factory into the new development, as a way to retain elements of the past. The overall project will create a much improved City entrance.

Lying due south of the North Bayshore, future residents will have access to a vast employment community, suggesting minimal traffic impacts, easy bicycle and pedestrian access, and use of the new Google shuttle. In addition, the proximity to major retail and service uses is ideal for higher density residential homes, as is access to the bus routes located along Rengstorff in front of the property.

Perhaps most critical is the need for logical design and development under a single zone, not one split between housing and heavy industrial uses. This is the right concept at the right time.

Attached is a site plan of the proposal for the Property. The idea is to respect the historic integrity of the Olive Oil buildings, by incorporating aspects of their design into the project, for use in conjunction with new residential buildings, in order to create a "Gateway to Mountain View."

No individuals, except the Owners, will be displaced with this development. The loss of a small industrial parcel will do little to impact industrial uses, but re-zoning to high-density housing will substantially increase housing options in this impacted market.

We seek your support and look forward to working with the City to move this proposal forward.

Sincerely,



Mindie S. Romanowsky

Enclosure

cc: Terry Blount, Acting Zoning Administrator  
Mario Ambra  
Liz Ambra  
Anthony Ho, Architect  
Ken Alsman

901-987 NORTH RENGSTORFF AVENUE

Property Land Use Concept

Proposal to Change Entire 1.7-acre Property to High Density Residential (Integrating with Existing Historic Structures)

