



January 6th, 2005

The Honorable Mayor Matt Neely
And Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94039

Dear Mayor and City Council:

On behalf of Greenbelt Alliance, the Sierra Club and the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, we are writing to express our support for the smart redevelopment of the Mayfield/HP site near San Antonio and Central Expressway to a high-density residential (or residential/mixed-use) community.

The constituencies we represent--business and the environment--are often at odds. However, in the case of the Mayfield site, there is much to agree upon. All three of our organizations understand the negative environmental, economic and social consequences associated with building homes far away from jobs and transit, and the importance of taking advantage of housing opportunity sites in prime transit-accessible locations.

It is our understanding that the City Council is charged with making several decisions with regard to the Mayfield site on January 18th and February 8th. Of utmost importance is which alternatives will be chosen for further study in the environmental impact report. Staff has proposed three alternatives. We strongly encourage you to choose number three, the high-density alternative. There are several reasons why including this alternative is important:

Housing Need: Only 22% of Santa Clara County households can afford a median-priced home, well below the national average of 55%. Additionally, despite Mountain View's best efforts, only 13% of the affordable housing promised in the latest housing element has been built, which makes it difficult for Mountain View's families and workforce to find a place to live.

Site Attributes: This site is adjacent to a Caltrain Station, making it an incredible opportunity of regional significance to showcase transit-oriented development. Academic studies demonstrate that higher-density residential development located near transit can increase transit ridership, reduce the number of cars on the road, and ease the potential traffic impacts of new development. As well, the site is 27 acres, providing enough space to creatively design a new community that meets the need for homes while respecting the integrity of the existing neighborhood.

Scarcity of Land: In Santa Clara County's cities, land is scarce. Coupled with population growth projections of 170,000 more people between 2000 and 2010, twenty-seven acres is a unique and rare opportunity. If we don't capitalize on this kind of prime redevelopment potential near transit, our growth pressures will be manifested in the form of sprawl, traffic congestion and even higher housing prices.

The future of our Valley depends on the collective efforts of individual cities to make the most of this kind of redevelopment opportunity. We strongly encourage you to do the right thing for Mountain View, the County, and the Bay Area, and not to shy away from what may seem to be a controversial vote. Please support the inclusion of alternative three in the EIR.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Tom Steinbach
Executive Director
Greenbelt Alliance



Carl Guardino
President/CEO
SVMG



Melissa Hippard
Chapter Director
Sierra Club, Loma Prieta