September 13, 2019

Honorable Mayor Bain, Vice Mayor Howard, and Council Members
c/o Mark E. Muenzer, Community Development & Transportation Director
City of Redwood City Community Development Department
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Mayor Bain, Vice Mayor Howard, and Council Members,

Lowe is pleased to present to the City of Redwood City a General Plan Amendment Initiation request for the below referenced properties (Site; APN (Acreage)):

- **Sequoia Station**: 052-550-010, -070, -080, -090, -100, -110, -120, -130 (12 AC)
- **Perry Site**: 052-323-010 (2.4 AC)
- **Transit Center**: 052-352-010, 052-354-030 (1.6 AC Peninsula Corridor Jpb plus up to 1 AC of Winklebleck ROW), 052-354-010, -020 (0.4 AC, currently under discussion)

**THE OPPORTUNITY**

Sequoia Station Shopping Center is a 12-acre site in the downtown core of the Downtown Precise Plan, adjacent to the Redwood City Caltrain station, that has significant frontage along El Camino Real. Sequoia Station is comprised of multiple parcels with multiple owners – a condition that has historically made its redevelopment challenging. Lowe has succeeded in creating a once-in-a-generation convergence of interests by the multiple property owners of Sequoia Station (Regency, Safeway, and SamTrans) to make redevelopment of this site a viable option. The opportunity is to turn an outdated, but pivotal transit-oriented development (TOD) site, into a vibrant downtown destination with activated retail, expanded commercial office space, and housing, adjacent to a major transit hub. The reimagined Sequoia Station will connect the community to the existing downtown core, the Caltrain station, and adjacent neighborhoods. It will include improved bike lanes, inviting open spaces, and new pedestrian-friendly retail streets while also providing the space needed to accommodate anticipated future Caltrain station upgrades and additional track right-of-way. The result will be a multi-modal, infill, mixed-use neighborhood connection that helps Redwood City secure its long-term spot as a premiere downtown destination on the Peninsula.

Sequoia Station is within the Downtown Precise Plan, which was adopted in 2011 after many years of consideration and public input. Goals of the DTPP include (DTPP, p.14):

- **Revive Downtown by creating a beautiful and memorable urban district interwoven with the City’s identity**
- **Actively encourage and promote the preservation of Redwood City’s historic resources, and reduce the deferral judgement on how to preserve them as much as possible**
- **Create a network of great public open space**
• Provide the choice of “convenience living”
• Create the entertainment center of the Peninsula
• Create a strong employment district and “vital center”
• Make pedestrians a priority
• Integrate transit and bicycle use
• Provide “just enough” parking and create a “park-once and walk” district

The redevelopment of Sequoia Station will allow the City to achieve these goals on a large, key site in the Downtown Core of the DTPP. The development concept proposed meets the intent of the Downtown Core, which “is intended to be a vibrant mixed-use residential neighborhood and office district” (DTPP, Page 46). As the center, the Downtown Core is “where the majority of ground-level shops are concentrated, and therefore where pedestrian activity is most lively and where the most pedestrian amenities are located” (DTPP, Page 18). Per the DTPP, “the Downtown Core is the most urban part of the Precise Plan Area; its streets will be shared equally by vehicles and pedestrians” (DTPP, Page 18). The redevelopment of Sequoia Station would also serve as a catalyst to the implementation of the 2017 El Camino Real Corridor Plan and would jumpstart the intersection, bicycle and pedestrian improvements envisioned for the area. Moreover, the redevelopment would allow for the connection to transit envisioned under the El Camino Real Corridor Plan, creating a strong link between Downtown Redwood City and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The unparalleled location provides a unique opportunity to focus jobs and housing on transit and accessibility not only on the site but also through potential land dedications to allow for future Caltrain upgrades as envisioned in the CalTrain Business Plan 2040 Service Vision. Sequoia Station’s size, scale and location allows for the strategic placement of density on transit, while allowing for a focus on non-automobile transportation modes and reduced parking ratios because of the site’s adjacency to transit and proximity to Downtown. This combination of attributes also allows for seamless pedestrian connectivity to Downtown.

Sequoia Station ownership is now aligned and positioned for redevelopment. Redevelopment, however, can only occur with a General Plan Amendment because of the existing DTPP development caps that currently make redevelopment infeasible. A General Plan Amendment can lift these caps and provide the opportunity to create the framework for a downtown transit and transportation hub within an employment district. If the General Plan Amendment Initiation request is granted by Council, a development application for Sequoia Station can be submitted. Without a General Plan Amendment, Sequoia Station cannot be redeveloped and will remain in its current state – an outdated, car-centric, neighborhood-serving commercial center.
We believe there is a greater opportunity to create a forward-looking, transit-rich planning area under the Downtown Precise Plan that includes not only Sequoia Station but also key adjacent properties. These key sites include two properties owned by Caltrain/ Joint Powers Authority (the 1.6-acre Transit Center and the 2.4-acre Perry Lot), and two adjacent parcels (0.4 acres) that includes the privately owned A-1 Party Rental store (parcel under discussion). Combined, these parcels create a Transit Sub-Area of the Downtown Precise Plan that warrants comprehensive planning that is uniquely focused on transit-oriented uses. This new Transit Sub-Area will guide development on the parcels within it and will allow individual property owners to proceed at their own pace.
Redwood City Council has the opportunity to initiate a General Plan Amendment to create a Transit Sub-Area under the Downtown Precise Plan. Lowe is prepared to move forward with a site-specific request for Sequoia Station and work with the City on the creation of a broader Transit Sub-Area that includes the other sub-area properties. Lowe has agreed to fund the exploration of such a Transit Sub-Area including the cost of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Consideration and exploration of a Transit Sub-Area would combine the vision of the Downtown Precise Plan and the El Camino Corridor Plan through the creation of transit-oriented development on sites around these local and regional transportation hubs.

PUBLIC INPUT

This General Plan Initiation Request does not include detailed site plans, design or land planning. This is intentional as the General Plan Initiation Request is only the beginning of what would be a thorough development and environmental review process for the Transit Sub-Area and Sequoia Station. Public outreach has been, and will be, a critical component of this process.

In the summer of 2019, Lowe presented to several neighborhood associations, Redwood City business groups, Arts Redwood City, and had numerous individual meetings with community residents and stakeholders. Lowe also hosted a Community Open House which had over 150 attendees. At every meeting or event, Lowe presented the concepts for Sequoia Station and a Transit Sub-Area, asking for input and feedback. This approach reflects the company’s philosophy that public input is invaluable to the success of a project. This open-door and community-driven policy of robust community outreach will continue throughout the entitlement process.

Because this process is just beginning, the plans submitted as part of this request focus on broader land-use policies to be considered, and reflect comments and concerns raised by neighbors not only for the existing Sequoia Station, but also their ideas on community benefits. During the outreach conducted to date, affordable housing has been identified as a critical component to any development plan. For this reason, Lowe has brought on affordable housing developer Eden Housing to work with them on the feasibility of
providing affordable housing that exceeds the 15% Downtown Precise Plan requirement with an aspirational target, ideally, of providing a 100% affordable project on the Sequoia Station property. Long-term environmental sustainability was also identified as a critical project component, and Lowe for that reason has brought on a sustainability consultant to explore how to maximize efficiencies and incorporate sustainable designs into the project. These are a few examples of the key issues identified and reflect the voices of Redwood City. If the General Plan Initiation request moves forward, Lowe will continue to engage with the community and will integrate their thoughts, ideas and concepts into the development proposal.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT INITIATION REQUEST SUMMARY

The Downtown Precise Plan includes development caps that have generally been fully utilized, requiring an amendment to the General Plan. While the caps have been reached, the underlying framework or development remains, and is in fact enhanced by policies and guidance included in the 2017 El Camino Corridor Plan. These two plans provide an excellent framework for future development within a Transit Sub-Area bounded by Sequoia Station, the Caltrain parcels and Broadway.

Development regulations and guidelines within the DTPP and El Camino Corridor Plan would largely remain intact, with changes proposed that are specific to transit-oriented development and other public improvements, including exploration of increased development capacity, additional height on a portion of the properties, and reduced parking ratios to be more in-line with shared uses and transit-oriented developments.

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<th>DTPP Transit Center Sub-Area Development Capacity</th>
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¹All numbers exclude parking
²Transit Improvement (TBD)
³Portion of Perry parcel is in CalTrain Right-of-Way
Proposed Land Uses of Transit Sub-Area

In addition to the above development capacity, the following general land use concepts would be proposed within a Transit Sub-Area:

- Dedication of land for future Caltrain upgrades/infrastructure
- Exploration of future transit facility on Perry Parcel site
- Up to 1,635,000 SF of office within the Transit Sub-Area, including:
  a. 1,400,000 SF of office at Sequoia Station as contemplated in the Downtown Precise Plan, with the opportunity to explore additional height on one block while reducing heights in other areas of the site
  b. 235,000 square feet of office at the Transit Center site (alternative to residential use), with the opportunity to explore additional height
- Up to 175,000 SF of activated ground-floor retail within the Transit Sub-Area, including:
  a. Neighborhood-serving retail with upgraded Safeway and CVS stores and coordination with existing tenants at Sequoia Station
  b. Ground floor retail along Broadway at the Transit Center site
- Up to 440 residential units within the Transit Sub-Area, including:
  a. Approximately 200-225 residential units at Sequoia Station, with a target of providing higher residential affordability than under the Downtown Precise Plan (>15%)
  b. Approximately 200-215 residential units at the Transit Center site with additional height (alternative to office use)
- Improved bikes lanes and new, walkable streets
- Improved connectivity between Sequoia Station and Downtown
- Creation of new community gathering and public open spaces
- Elimination of surface parking and creation of underground and structured parking with reduced parking ratios based on shared use and proximity to transit
- Study potential for additional architectural character types
- Opportunity to pursue additional community benefits (i.e. family entertainment/retail, on-site childcare, artist/community space)

We are very excited to work with the community on this exciting, once-in-a-generation opportunity, and we appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Alan Chamorro
Senior Vice President
415.669.5888 (d)
achamorro@lowe-re.com
November 2, 2019

Mayor Bain, Vice Mayor Howard, and Council Members
The City of Redwood City
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
Via Electronic Transmittal

Mayor Bain, Vice Mayor Howard, and City Council Members,

As a party interested in the future of Downtown Redwood City, we want to express our support of the efforts by staff and the City Council to elevate the conversation regarding land use around the Redwood City Transit Center, the city’s regional transit hub.

Redwood City Moves recently completed a study on the community’s transportation priorities. The study supports the need for thoughtful planning of Active Transportation Corridors, Complete Street Corridors and Placemaking, Network Gap Closure, Connectivity and Safety, Transit Accessibility and Service Enhancement, El Camino Real Corridor Plan Implementation, and Transit Access Improvements. In the report, short and long-term improvements to the Redwood City Transit Center were identified by residents as a favorite “Signature Project.” We believe the study and creation of a Transit Sub-Area as proposed by City staff can be a catalyst to help unlock key transportation improvements in the downtown core.

For over a year, we have been working with the complex ownership structure at Sequoia Station and have been able to coalesce that group behind redevelopment of the site to create a once in generation opportunity. This comes at a time when the City is focusing on environmental and transportation priorities and the future of the Redwood City Transit Center. As staff has alluded to, Sequoia Station is a key part of any Transit Sub Area plan and the re-envisioning of the Redwood City Transit Center. In Exhibit A, we show the approximate right-of-way dedication of the Sequoia Station property that would be required to accommodate Caltrain’s rail improvements.

The impact of the rail expansion to Sequoia Station is significant. We trust City stakeholders will realize the opportunity at hand – to coordinate Sequoia Station’s redevelopment with the expansion of the rail lines, or face an uncertain future for the shopping center. It is a unique moment in time for a vital area of the City, and it is critical that the opportunity for the redevelopment of Sequoia Station coincide with the City’s focus on transit and the Redwood City Transit Center. The future of downtown and regional transit looks very different with – or without – a reimagined Sequoia Station.
We submitted a General Plan Amendment Initiation (GPAI) request in September to request City Council’s permission to begin the study process for the potential redevelopment of Sequoia Station. We appreciate the feedback we have received to date and believe your deliberation on November 4th will help inform us on the direction of the entitlement process for the property. We understand and respect the City’s process regarding the creation of a Transit Sub-Area and proposed redevelopment of Sequoia Station. We understand the extensive and critical workload Staff is navigating, and are committed to supporting the City’s efforts.

We look forward to continuing to engage the community and welcome meetings with any interested resident, business owner, or community group. We appreciate the time and consideration you are taking towards developing a process framework, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue and how it specifically relates to Sequoia Station.

Sincerely,
Lowe

Alan Chamorro
Senior Vice President
Exhibit A - Estimated Land Dedication for Future Rail Improvements*

LEGEND:
- Dedicated Land for Future Rail Improvements
- Property Lines (representing ownership)

* Preliminary, based on consultant studies.
January 21, 2019

Mayor Howard, Vice Mayor Masur, and City Council Members
c/o Mark E. Muenzer, Community Development & Transportation Director
City of Redwood City Community Development Department
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Mayor Howard, Vice Mayor Masur, and City Council Members,

Lowe is respectfully submitting an amended General Plan Amendment Initiation request package for the below referenced properties (Site; APN (Acreage)). This letter outlines the updates to our initial submittal dated September 13th, 2019 (attached).

- **Sequoia Station**: 052-550-010, -070, -080, -090, -100, -110, -120, -130 (12 AC)
- **Perry Site**: 052-323-010 (2.4 AC)
- **Transit Center**: 052-352-010, 052-354-030 (1.6 AC Peninsula Corridor Jpb plus up to 1 AC of Winklebleck ROW), 052-354-010, -020 (0.4 AC)

**THE PROCESS**

Since our submittal of a General Plan Amendment Initiation request on September 13, 2019, the City has embarked on a series of meetings to establish a City-led process for planning a Downtown “Transit Sub-District”. It is our understanding that the City’s Transit Sub-District planning effort intends to explore how to integrate the Caltrain 2040 Business Plan via a modern downtown transit center that will connect and benefit City residents, businesses and patrons. At a November 4, 2019 City Council hearing, Staff recommended that the Transit Sub-District include the parcels listed above, as well as the adjacent track area that includes the existing Caltrain transit facilities. Based on the direction it received at this hearing, City staff is now scheduled to present its recommended process for the Transit Sub-District to City Council on January 27th, 2020. Further to this Transit Sub-District planning effort, City Council was also presented with an update on the previously commissioned Transit Center and Street Car studies on January 13, 2020.

As previously and publicly stated, Lowe is in full support of this City-led process and continues to support the City’s efforts with the understanding that the ultimate functionality of the new Redwood City Transit Sub-District will be informed by community feedback and City Council decisions that are specific to the land uses, densities, and heights of the subject parcels. Our efforts on the parcels included in our GPAI request are intended to complement the City’s Transit Sub-District transportation planning efforts by providing a forum for feedback on specific development parameters on the sites that are under our purview. The effort starts with a General Plan Amendment Initiation Request – a starting point for a collaborative effort between the City, multiple landowners, Caltrain, SamTrans, and Lowe that will enable criteria for environmental review to commence. We recognize that an extensive outreach will continue, and Lowe will be a resource and participant in the City’s process as well as a host at developer-sponsored events.
MODIFICATIONS TO ORIGINAL (09/15/2019) APPLICATION

Most of the modifications in the GPAI request further expand two critical components of the proposal: 1) establishment of a conceptual, setback line for the assumed Caltrain track expansion and 2) additional commitments and specifics regarding the proposed onsite affordable housing program. In addition, and perhaps most importantly because the City is initiating the process for the Transit Sub-District, the application language has been modified to reflect that Lowe will be supporting, not leading, these efforts.

Lowe’s General Plan Initiation Request proposal includes keeping both Safeway and CVS open at Sequoia Station during construction, and relocating them into new, modernized spaces once the first phase of construction is complete. Ultimately, for Caltrain to complete the proposed track expansion, additional land right of way will be needed -- because of recent development on the north side of the tracks, expansion into Sequoia Station, the Transit Center, and the Perry lots is expected. The setback line reflected in the updated application is an approximate area of potential land dedication required to support Caltrain’s 2040 expansion plans. The exact location of this expansion line will be determined during the study process. Expanded tracks without the corresponding redevelopment of Sequoia Station would likely require the demolition of several structures, including the existing Safeway and CVS stores. Due to the current ownership structure/property lines, it will take a significant, collaborative redevelopment effort between the landowners and Lowe to ensure that Safeway and CVS remain open and onsite, which Lowe is prepared to do. A key goal of the proposed redevelopment is the retention of Safeway/CVS at Sequoia Station, along with additional upgraded, modern and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood-serving retail, while also providing right of way land for these much-needed mass transportation improvements.

Since our original submittal, we have also been working to establish more details on the affordable housing proposal for the Sequoia Station property and have partnered with Eden Housing. Based on Eden Housing’s experience with affordable housing underwriting standards, we have come up with the targeted unit mix and affordability levels detailed in the table below. Rather than simply pursuing a market-rate housing program with 20% affordable units (as required by the City’s Affordable Housing Ordinance), and assuming proposed densities as well as currently available tax credits and commercial linkage fees, we expect to deliver a 100% affordable housing project on-site. Implementation of a 100% affordable on-site program would supply an additional 180 desperately needed below market rate housing units than a typical market rate housing project would provide. In total, 223 very-low and low-income units and two moderate rate manager units (225 total) are proposed, including 56 much needed three-bedroom units at the very-low and low-income levels.

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While both office and housing are proposed to be studied for the Transit Center property, if housing were constructed, 20% of the projected 215 total units (43 units) would be provided at below market rate income levels.

We appreciate your consideration of the Sequoia Station + Transit Center + Perry Lot General Plan Amendment Initiation request. We recognize we are at the beginning of a dynamic and thoughtful process and are very excited to work with the community and the City on this exciting, once-in-a-generation opportunity. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Alan Chamorro
Senior Vice President