

September 17, 2009

Mr. Thomas Rogers  
Associate Planner, City of Menlo Park  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

To Whom It May Concern:

I support the idea of the Menlo Gateway Project proposal presented by Bohannon Development Company. I applaud Bohannon Development for the innovative design of this project and for the company's stated willingness to create positive relationships with the community surrounding the proposed project site. I grew up in the Belle Haven community and I have witnessed the transformation of the community from the 80's to today. I am now raising my sons within this community. The Menlo Gateway project can continue to provide mature growth for my community and it can also hinder mature growth for my community if implemented without sincerity and thought for all involved.

I attended the Planning Commission meeting at the City of Menlo Park City Council Chambers on Tuesday September 14, 2009. I was not able to stay until the end but I was there for the first two hours. There is a great deal of support for the project and there is a great deal of non-support. Some of the issues outlined by the non-supporters included parking availability and size of the parking structures, traffic congestion, environmental disruption to the surrounding areas and housing needs. It was also apparent that some of the non-supporters are simply 100% against the entire project. While I do support the idea of the proposed Menlo Gateway project I too share some of the concerns brought forth.

I believe the parking situation will be efficiently analyzed and implemented as the process continues. Traffic congestion is a big concern. Being a long time resident of the Belle Haven community I have seen the change in traffic over the years as more commercial development has occurred in the area especially on the streets of Hamilton and Constitution. Naturally some of this traffic has trickled into the neighborhood over the years. I live on Ivy Drive and based off of the EIR report there is not a significant change in traffic expected for the Ivy Drive/Willow road intersection and there was minimal mention of the significance of traffic flowing from the project site through the neighborhood. The elimination of a more in depth look at this added traffic to the community is disconcerting. People look for short-cuts and with the massive onslaught of consumers that will be heading to and from Menlo Gateway it is a fact that a good portion of those consumers will find "their" shortcut through the Belle Haven community. I would ask the project team to thoroughly evaluate their findings and ensure that every possible measure of keeping the flow of traffic through the neighborhood as minimal as possible is taken. I would also request the addition of no through traffic signs at the intersections of Chilco and Constitution and Chilco and Hamilton. There is a sign on the intersection of Chilco and Hamilton that does not allow left turns during a certain time of day (I believe its 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm) which sends the traffic trying to get to get Willow Road to Ivy Drive. Please keep in mind that we have two elementary schools, a pre-school, and a number of private daycare centers within this area. An additional onslaught of daytime and morning traffic in the area will have an impact on accessibility to and from these locations for parents and children. In addition to the Menlo Gateway project there are a number of other projects that will be occurring within the Belle Haven community within the next few years; water pipe replacements, Kelly Park renovations, building of the long awaited police substation and possible housing projects.

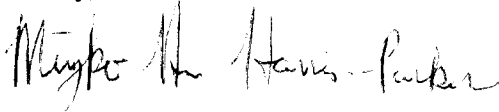
The environmental and housing issues related to this project are definitely the more complex issues to deal with. There is going to be environmental impact and there is no way of escaping that fact. Therefore it is imperative that Bohannon Development provide the highest level of mitigation as

possible. Yes the project is expected to be a success when all is said and done. But let's be real, the money will flow directly to Bohannon Development. This project when approved for rezoning will affect each and every other business and building within the area. Any future commercial renovations will have to meet the same level of innovation as the Menlo Gateway project. The traffic flow will impact all surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. We do not want our community to be lost in the shuffle of commercial expansion. There have been a great many ideas given in regards to mitigation for this project and some others that are not so great. The mitigation efforts need to be sincere and real. Donating money to the local elementary schools (strictly the schools in the Belle Haven community) for classroom upgrades and donating money for the purchase of the MPFD's new truck; these are real mitigation efforts that are needed for the community.

The housing issue is as complex as can be. Housing is not only needed but is also federally mandated. Cities are required to build a certain number of homes within a certain time period but the problems are where to build and that not a whole a lot of people can afford to buy in Menlo Park. The City officials and Bohannon Development will have to work together and come to a solution regarding the housing impact from this project. Single-mindedness from anyone will not help solve the situation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinion/concerns. The Menlo Gateway project is a vast undertaking and there is no doubt in my mind that the Bohannon Group will have success, I just hope that their success is a success for the entire community and not just their bank accounts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miyko A. Harris-Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Miyko A. Harris-Parker  
Resident of the Belle Haven Community  
Menlo Park, CA 94025