



January 15, 2021

Diana O'Dell, Principal Planner
City of Redwood City Community Development Department
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Ms. O'Dell,

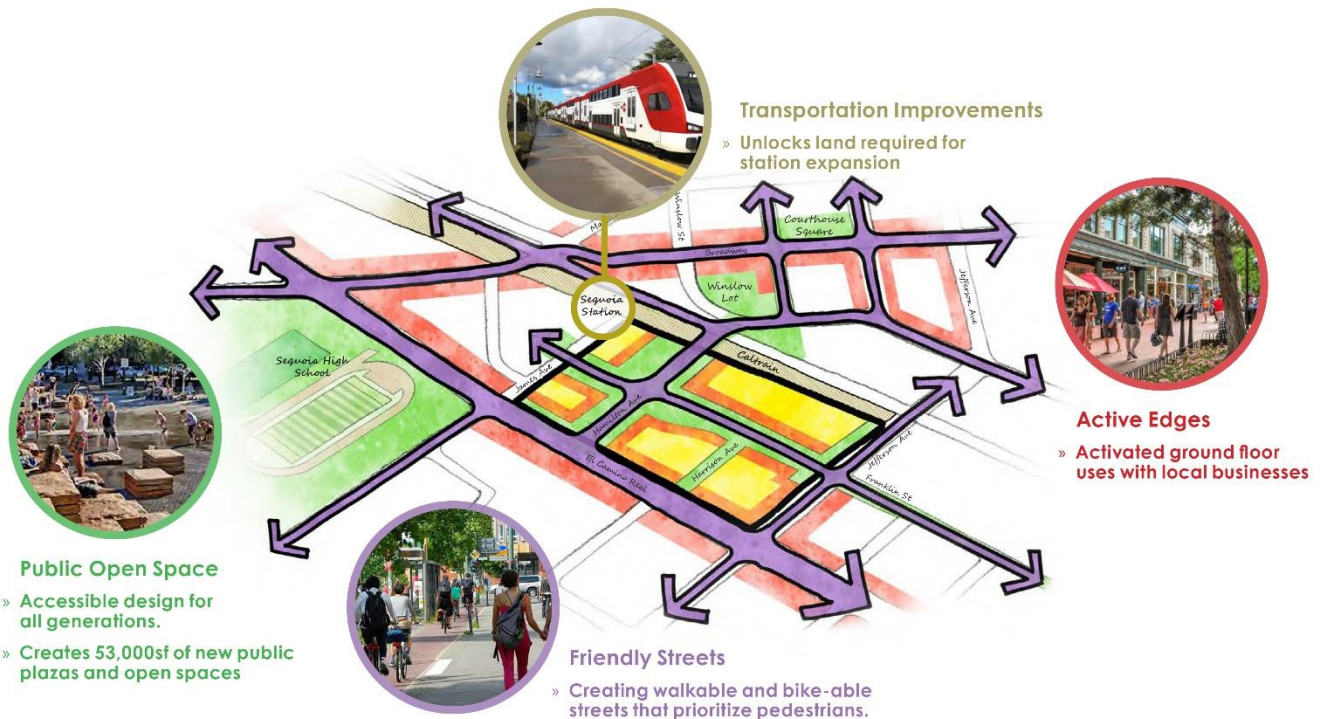
We are pleased to share our updated designs for the redevelopment of Sequoia Station with the community and the City Council on January 25th. At the Council meeting last February, the Council prioritized the Transit District planning effort, which Sequoia Station is a significant portion of. Since that meeting, our team has been working hard to incorporate the comments we have received and also integrate new information the City has been receiving as a part of the Transit District Area Plan outreach.

SEQUOIA STATION -- THE MISSING PUZZLE PIECE CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES

With the redevelopment of the Sequoia Station Shopping Center, Redwood City has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the largest contiguous parcel in the Downtown. Today, Sequoia Station is a large and frequently used neighborhood center that provides critical shopping services to Redwood City residents and access to Caltrain, but it is also outdated and car-centric. There is no easy route to walk or bike to Sequoia Station retailers, the Caltrain Station, or to cross over to the Downtown entertainment district from the west. With redevelopment, Sequoia Station has the opportunity to reinvent this neighborhood retail experience. More importantly, it can provide much needed affordable, missing middle and market rate housing, and connect residents through exemplary public realm amenities and critical transportation improvements.



This is an opportunity to create connections and expand the downtown core through a new, vibrant, porous and walkable development – one that no longer turns its back to downtown, but rather embraces the whole community and provides thoughtful, pleasant connections for all residents. A number of specific community and ground-level improvements will help achieve this new vibrancy, such as new bike and pedestrian pathways along El Camino Real, Jefferson and James, a new, generously sized public plaza that could link into a future linear park that expands towards the Winslow Lot, and a future upgraded Caltrain station. The redevelopment of Sequoia Station can complete the puzzle that connects people and places – neighborhoods to downtown.



THE PROPOSAL

Sequoia Station will conform to the future Transit District, which means that this proposal will evolve during the Transit District planning process. Based on Council and community feedback, we have modified the plan to further focus on Council priorities: housing, transportation, and children and youth, viewed through a lens of equity. Ongoing plan submittals will occur during the planning process, while the City completes environmental (CEQA) studies for the Transit District.

Sequoia Station today is insular and does not support a feeling of community and connectedness. While anyone can visit the center to shop, there are hard lines that separate public from private space and the center’s design does not particularly encourage mingling, lingering, or exploring. Instead, people tend to drive there, complete their shopping in a perfunctory manner and then drive home. Given the size and central location of Sequoia Station, we believe this property’s redesign must encourage accessibility to all and create a central place where residents will want to linger, to explore, and to get to know each other. The public space, plazas and green space proposed is generous and will support the Redwood City community through art events and public functions along with smaller functions – such as a family picnic or meeting a friend for coffee. As well, redesigned and activated neighborhood retail and restaurants will also add to the overall vibrancy of Downtown and will create reasons for residents to explore and connect. These improvements will be provided along with a whole range of other services and benefits that the community needs, such as neighborhood shopping, childcare, family entertainment, transportation improvements, and affordable housing – ensuring that a wide range of Redwood City residents will benefit from the redeveloped center.

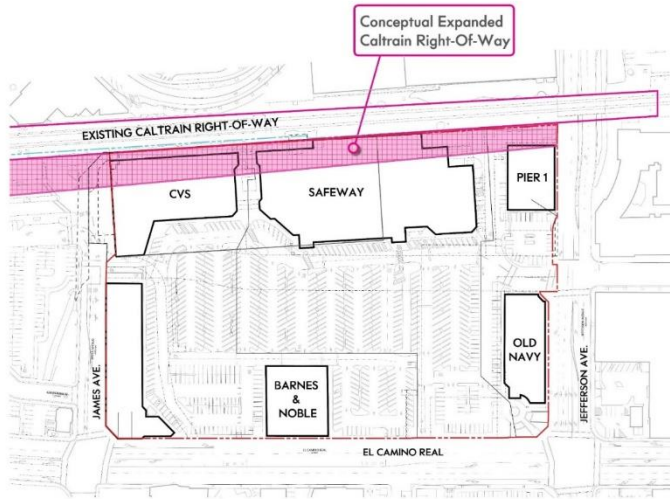
TRANSPORTATION

The redevelopment of Sequoia Station will keep both Safeway and CVS open on-site during construction, and once the first phase of construction is complete, they will be relocated into new, modernized formats. The total retail space will be similar in size to what is currently onsite. However, the relocation of its parking underground



will allow for the new retail streets to support bicycle and pedestrian connections to Caltrain, Downtown, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Another key aspect of this plan is to move the Caltrain property line for additional track right-of-way (ROW). This critical part of Caltrain’s 2040 expansion plans will allow Caltrain to have four tracks (instead of two) and a new elevated train station in Downtown Redwood City. The redevelopment of Sequoia Station will create this nearly one-acre ROW expansion, and is required to accommodate Caltrain’s future service plans. The exact location of this new property line will be determined after further study by Caltrain.



Expanded tracks without the redevelopment of Sequoia Station would likely require a land taking (e.g. eminent domain by the transit agency) at significant cost to the community, and would require the demolition of Safeway and CVS.

A major benefit to the proposed redevelopment is our ability to keep Safeway and CVS at Sequoia Station, creating modern and pedestrian friendly neighborhood serving retail, while also providing right-of-way land for these

critical transportation improvement.

Focusing this design on the support of mass transit, rather than cars, is a major objective of transit-oriented development. We also believe the current parking standards should be reduced due to the proximity of the Caltrain station and this desire to support ridership. This proposal includes the following parking ratios:

Proposed Reduced Parking Ratio Details*

Program:	Parking Ratio Per DTPP:	Parking Ratio Proposed:
Office	3 spaces per 1000 GSF	1.5 spaces per 1000 GSF
Retail / Public Amenity	3 spaces per 1000 GSF	3 spaces per 1000 GSF
Residential (Market Rate)		
Studio	0.75 spaces per residence	0.50 spaces per residence
1 BR	1.00 spaces per residence	0.75 spaces per residence
2 BR	1.50 spaces per residence	1.00 spacer per residence
3 BR	1.50 spaces per residence	1.50 spaces per residence
Residential (Affordable)	0.50 spaces per residence	0.25 spaces per residence

Total Estimated Parking Spaces Proposed for Office, Retail, and Residential Uses per current plan: Approximately 2800

*Note that if Caltrain requires additional parking spaces, these will be explored both on- and off-site

HOUSING

Lowe and Eden Housing have created a partnership to provide as much on-site affordable housing as possible at the deepest levels of affordability, a key priority for the City. Since Lowe’s original proposal in 2019, and responding the community feedback, the plan has been modified to create up to almost three times the housing using space previously proposed as office. Addressing this community need has decreased the office proposed by over 125,000 square feet.



Rather than simply pursuing a market-rate housing program with 20% affordable units (as required by the City’s Affordable Housing Ordinance), two housing programs are proposed. The combined program will maximize the number of affordable homes we can provide. One block will be provided to Eden Housing for approximately 200 to 240 homes in an all affordable building, and one block will include market rate housing with approximately 275-400 homes. As an additional benefit, Lowe will voluntarily subsidize 5% of the market rate units for the often-overlooked “missing middle” renters who have incomes of 120% - 200% of AMI and typically cannot afford to live in newer, market rate housing.

The plan shown below shows the housing proposed on Sequoia Station; however, when taken together with the development potential of the adjacent Caltrain property,¹ the Transit District could provide up to 900 housing units (depending on the number of bedrooms).

The table below shows an approximate targeted unit mix and its affordability levels at Sequoia Station for two different development options.

Option A (Lower Density): Approximately 500 Homes Program

45% Affordable, 3% Missing Middle, 52% Market Rate

	<u>Very Low (Eden)</u>	<u>Low (Eden)</u>	<u>Moderate (Eden)</u>	<u>Missing Middle (Lowe)</u>	<u>Market Rate (Lowe)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Studio	37	30	0	TBD	TBD	
1 BR	25	20	0	TBD	TBD	
2 BR	31	24	1	TBD	TBD	
3 BR	31	25	1	TBD	TBD	
Totals	124	99	2	14	261	500

Option B (Higher Density): Approximately 625 Homes Program

36% Affordable, 3% Missing-Middle, 61% Market Rate

	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Missing Middle</u>	<u>Market Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
Studio	37	30	0	TBD	TBD	
1 BR	25	20	0	TBD	TBD	
2 BR	31	24	1	TBD	TBD	
3 BR	31	25	1	TBD	TBD	
Totals	124	99	2	20	380	625

¹ Preliminary studies indicate the current Transit Center and Party Rental properties combined can accommodate approximately 225-250 homes. In 2019 Caltrain’s Board determined that if housing were to be constructed on Caltrain-owned properties, 30% would be required to be affordable. It should be noted that the redevelopment Sequoia Station and the subsequent relocation of the Transit Center (part of the new train station design) is required to free up their property in the Transit Center site for redevelopment.



Proposed Residential Program Details:

Redwood City’s Largest Affordable Housing Project: Eden Housing is proposing a 100% affordable housing project which we anticipate will include between 200 to 240 homes. Implementation of a 100% affordable project on-site will supply a far greater number of below market rate homes than a typical market rate housing project that only includes the required 20% affordability. Using an estimated 225-home building, the program will include up to 223 very-low and low-income homes and 2 moderate rate manager homes (225 total); 50% of which are much-needed, two- and three-bedroom family units (56 three-bedroom units and 56 two-bedroom units at the very-low and low-income levels).

Significant Additional On-Site Housing: Lowe is proposing a mixed-income/market rate residential building in place of one of the previously proposed office blocks and proposes to study both a 12-story ~400 home option, and an 8-story ~275-300 home option. The 12-story housing option is on a smaller footprint and has the added benefit of creating a significantly larger outdoor public plaza. The 8-story option reduces height but has a larger footprint and fewer units. Lowe is voluntarily offering to set aside 5% of these units for Missing Middle renters.

Transit District Plan - Total Potential: Although not a part of Lowe’s proposal, the adjacent Caltrain Transit Center and parking lot, and the A-1 Party Rental parcels are also part of the Transit District. If these sites are determined to be housing sites, they could provide hundreds more homes within the Transit District.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

On-site childcare is a key part of the Sequoia Station proposal and Lowe is targeting approximately 10,000 square feet along with a secure outdoor play area. There is a deficit of available childcare in Redwood City and San Mateo County, and there are limited opportunities to locate childcare close to Downtown and to transit. We believe childcare should be a part of the Sequoia Station redevelopment plan. It is estimated that a 10,000 square foot childcare will serve between 100 – 130 children, with the final number to be determined during the design phase.

As a part of the neighborhood retail redevelopment, we will create family-friendly dining and large, safe, and playful outdoor areas. The new car-free plaza is approximately 31,000 square feet (larger than Courthouse Square) and will provide the opportunity to create amazing outdoor community spaces. Although we are still in the early stages of our design, we are also planning for a family-oriented retail tenant that will front the plaza to directly address the need for family and youth activities. With this family friendly space, we are envisioning activities such as bocce, billiards and bowling, shuffleboard, fire pits and a sandbox, a water feature, and a play structure – all around indoor and outdoor dining and hopefully with a brew pub. We are excited to work with the community to further imagine this exciting space.

ECONOMIC VITALITY ALIGNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Employment centers adjacent to mass-transit is critical environmentally - to get commuters out of cars, to support Caltrain’s long-term ridership goals, and to support Redwood City’s climate and sustainability goals. Expanding Redwood City’s office base, on transit, is where next generation, environmentally focused office and life science tenants want to be located. Office/life science uses on transit and in Downtown will encourage mass transit use and will ensure Redwood City’s economic viability for generations to come.

Four buildings on four blocks, totaling approximately 1.25 million square feet of LEED-Gold (targeted) office/life-science space is necessary to meet the economic requirements for this development (e.g. to attract debt and equity capital) and it is what unlocks the opportunity to provide land necessary for Caltrain’s expansion,

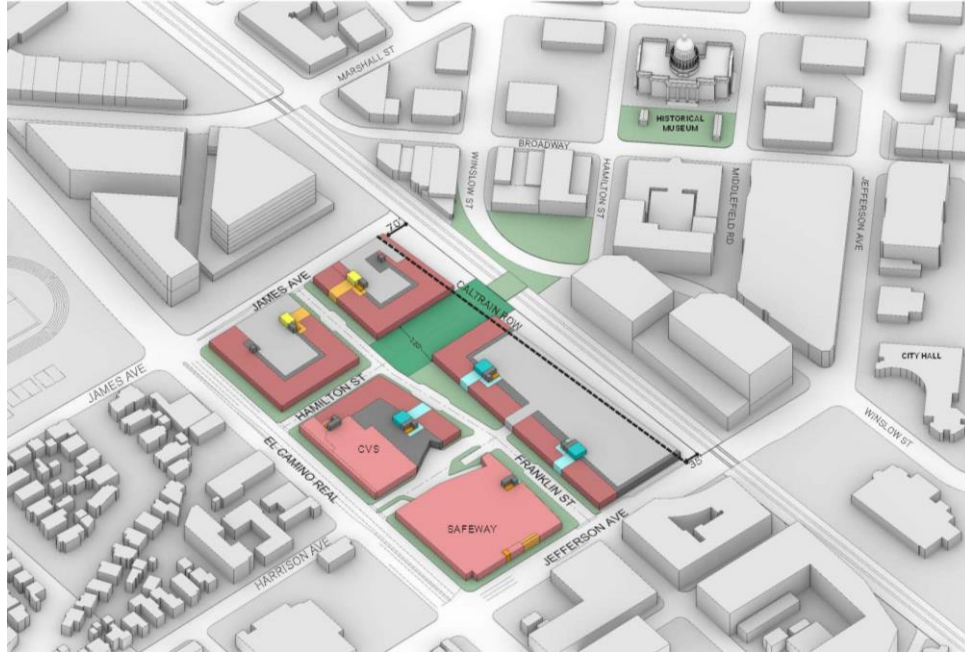


affordable housing, and the other community benefits.

Retail is going thru a major transformation, largely due to on-line commerce. This demise has significantly accelerated because of COVID-19. Modern retail spaces are required for modern tenants, and restaurants need outdoor spaces to survive. Reimagining the tired retail at Sequoia Station and converting the property into next-generation neighborhood serving retail is critical to Redwood City's long-term economic viability and its tax base. Taken together, Sequoia Station can become the premier downtown mixed-use transit-oriented development Redwood City deserves.

BLOCK BY BLOCK BREAKDOWN

Ground Plane:



Above Ground Plane:





Block A:

- Approximately 275 - 400 units of market rate housing, including 15-20 Missing Middle homes
- ~25,000 SF of family entertainment retail/ Logger Jam Brewery fronting Downtown and the plaza
- ~31,000 SF public realm/plaza
- Dedicated land for Caltrain right-of-way
- 8 or 12-story options with varied heights from 95' (8-story) to 136' (12-story) (to conform to DTPP maximum height of 136')
- Secure indoor public bike storage barn
- Safe pedestrian and bike connections to Downtown and Caltrain

Block B:

- ~335,000 SF of office / life science over retail
- ~25,000 SF of updated and activated neighborhood retail with outdoor dining and safe underground parking
- Public plaza/public realm
- Dedicated land for Caltrain right-of-way
- Non-profit/community space
- 9-story, with varied heights from 120'-136' (to conform to maximum DTPP maximum height of 136')
- Rotating and permanent community art walk

Block C:

- ~360,000 SF of office / life science over retail
- Childcare center (indoor and outdoor)
- Updated neighborhood retail with safe underground parking
- Community art walk
- Dedicated land for Caltrain right-of-way
- 9-story, with varied heights from 120' - 136' (to conform to DTPP maximum height of 136')

Block D:

- Approximately 200-240 affordable homes, including approximately 113 two- and three-bedrooms, 124 homes at 30% - 50% AMI, 99 homes at 50% - 80% AMI, 2 homes at 80%-130% AMI
- Updated and activated neighborhood serving retail
- ~18,000 SF open space plaza with outdoor dining
- El Camino Real Plan bike and ped connections
- 6-7 story, with varied heights from 82' - 94' (to conform to DTPP maximum height of 114')
- Safe pedestrian and bike connections to neighborhoods
- Rotating and permanent community art walk

Block E:

- ~270,000 SF of office / life science over retail
- Non-profit office/retail space
- ~33,000 SF of updated and activated neighborhood retail with a new CVS and safe underground parking
- El Camino Real bike and ped connections
- 8-story with varied heights from 100' – 114' and up to a 4-story zone of 48' on El Camino Real frontage (to conform to DTPP maximum height of 114')

Block F:

- ~285,000 SF square feet of office / life science space
- ~63,000 SF of updated retail
- New Safeway with safe underground parking
- El Camino Real Plan bike and ped connections
- 8-story, with varied heights from 100' - 114' and up to a 4-story zone of 48' on El Camino Real frontage (to conform to DTPP maximum height of 114')



DOWNTOWN PRECISE PLAN CONFORMANCE

While the Transit District Area Planning process is underway, the proposal has taken many cues not only from the public input received to date, but also from the existing policy documents that help inform previous visions for the property. With few exceptions, the proposal will conform to the Downtown Precise Plan. Proposed exceptions include a reduced parking ratios for the residential and office land uses because of the mixed use and transit-first design. Also proposed is the elimination of the automobile through-street at the eastern portion of Hamilton for the benefit of a public plaza and to provide for a more pedestrian and bike-centric design for the western portion of Hamilton. Similarly, for the road between Blocks B and C (largely due to the location of the existing BOX buildings eliminating a through-street option). In addition, while the project can conform to the DTPP architectural styles and setbacks noted for the Downtown Core, it is suggested that more flexibility be considered to promote a variety of architectural styles, along with options and setbacks that promote bicycle, pedestrian, and sustainability features (such as solar). Specific architectural deviations from the DTPP will be noted and discussed during the application process, and if determined to be undesirable, can be modified to accommodate the DTPP guidelines. Below is a table that reflects the proposed overall conformance with the DTPP:

DTPP Principles	Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D	Block E	Block F
Uses (2.2)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Streets (2.3)*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Frontage (2.4)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building Placement and Landscaping (2.5)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parking - Retail (2.6)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parking - Office and Residential (2.6)**	○	○	○	○	○	○
Maximum Heights (2.7)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facade Composition (2.8)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Architecture Character (2.9)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signage (2.10)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complete Streets (3.2.2)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transit (3.2.3)**	✓	○	○	✓	✓	✓

GENERAL NOTES

* While DTPP compliance can be achieved, the proposed setbacks and stepbacks are further back than envisioned in the DTPP, in response to public comments and to improve street level daylight. The team also proposes to work with the City to consider architectural character types that are complimentary to the permitted architectural character types.

** Reduced parking ratios for Commercial/Residential modified vehicular street at Block B to Pedestrian eliminated vehicular street at Block C.

¹ While DTPP compliance can be achieved, the design proposes a public plaza instead of a street at Hamilton between Franklin and the Caltrain pedestrian crossing (Blocks A & B).

² The proposal dedicates land to Caltrain right-of-way, in lieu of a new public street (Blocks A, B & C).

³ Proposed Modifications to Harrison Avenue plan: The Eastern portion's configuration and terminus deviates from the DTPP (Blocks B & C). The Western portion allows covered service/emergency vehicle access only and concentrates pedestrian access to Hamilton (Blocks E & F).

OVERALL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



In summary, the Sequoia Station redevelopment proposes to include the following:

- Dedicated land along the train tracks for Caltrain’s 2040 Business Plan upgrades, track infrastructure, and a future Downtown Redwood City Caltrain station
- Next-generation, activated ground-floor retail including:
 - a. Youth and family-friendly retail and dining, such as bowling, billiards and bocce
 - b. Upgraded Safeway and CVS stores
 - c. Modern, next-generation neighborhood serving retail
 - d. Non-profit office and artist spaces
 - e. Restaurants with large outdoor dining areas
- Up to 640 residential units on-site, including:
 - a. Approximately 200 - 240 very-low, low, and moderate-income residential homes
 - b. Approximately 275-400 market rate and missing middle residential homes
- Four office/life science blocks above retail – transit served with reduced parking ratios
- Approximately 10K SF on-site childcare facilities
- Two large community, family gathering and public open spaces, including a car-free plaza which will connect Downtown with the western neighborhoods and a future train station
- Improved bikes lanes and an indoor public bike storage barn. New complete and walkable streets, including on El Camino Real
- Critical connectivity between Sequoia Station, nearby neighborhoods and the Downtown Entertainment District
- Elimination of car-centric surface parking and the creation of safe, underground and structured parking and reduced parking ratios to “right size” parking needs adjacent to transit



- Transit oriented designs to help Redwood City meet its Climate and sustainability goals

We are excited to see this process move forward, and we support the continued efforts of the Transit District. Now is the time to move this project forward and start the environmental (CEQA) studies - while property ownership, Caltrain, the City, and the developers are aligned and able to collaborate and implement the community's vision for this missing piece of the puzzle.

The redevelopment of Sequoia Station is Generational Opportunity - Connecting People, Activating Places and Thinking Beyond Buildings. We appreciate your consideration and we welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Lowe

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Vice President of Real Estate Development