



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022**

May 15, 2008

Mayor Val Carpenter and Members of the City Council
City of Los Altos
City Hall
One North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

The League of Women Voters of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area recommends that the City consider including affordable housing as part of the new Civic Center plans. We realize that there are many demands for a wide variety of facilities to be included at this site. Nonetheless, the area is large, and if underground parking and buildings with more than one story are included, there can be a great expansion of facilities at this location.

We support affordable housing in this location for several reasons. First, the site is ideal, whether for families or seniors, as the residents will be able to walk to many important services, including grocery stores, the library, and other shopping. The second reason is that Los Altos has not kept up with providing its "fair share" of affordable housing in the past. The LWV supports regional fair share housing plans as a way of providing for balanced and equitable housing throughout the Bay Area.

Los Altos will very shortly be preparing a new Housing Element. This new Housing Element will require that Los Altos designate sufficient sites where affordable housing can be located within the City to accommodate its "fair share" according to the latest Regional Housing Needs Allocation. New Housing Element requirements provide that these sites must be more specifically described than in the past, including densities, constraints on building on these sites and more. In addition, Los Altos' allocation of very-low-income units is 98 for the years 2007-14, compared to 38 for the prior seven years. Thus, it will be much more difficult than in the past to have a Housing Element certified by the State, and this has always been the goal of Los Altos.

Therefore, we believe that it is perfect timing for the City to consider the Civic Center as a possible site for affordable housing as it will be going through the Housing Element process at the same time. If the City makes land available for affordable housing, it is possible a nonprofit will be able to finance an affordable housing development. Land is not only expensive, but it is often the hardest component to find for building affordable housing. This is a unique opportunity for the City if it wants to provide much-needed affordable housing and attempt to do its "fair share".

Sincerely,

Coeta Chambers, President, League of Women Voters of Los Altos-Mountain View Area

Susan Russell, Co-Chair, Affordable Housing Committee
Cc: James Walgren
Planning Commission