



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

March 23, 2014

Mayor Clark and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: City Council Meeting, March 25th, Agenda Item 7.1 – Potential Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance Amendments

Dear Mayor Clark and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters supports policies that encourage government as well as the private sector to provide adequate housing for all. That said, it is difficult to weigh in on the exact amount of relocation assistance that is appropriate in an ordinance.

However, based upon Council intent when the original ordinance was adopted in 2010, we commend the staff for proposing a very reasonable set of amendments. Once again, the staff report is very competent and seems to cover all the relevant issues.

The most important issue is probably the amount of the assistance. We agree that tying the benefits to the City's median rent makes much sense. First, this makes it more likely that displaced tenants will be able to relocate in Mountain View or nearby. In addition, it means that because the assistance is not tied to a specific number, the actual amount will fluctuate as rents in the area increase (or perhaps sometime decrease). Thus, the Council won't have to repeatedly revisit this issue unless there is a desire to change the policy.

The timing of the payment also is an important change. It is absolutely true that the tenant should have the funds available over a longer period of time in order to be able to grab a vacant unit that is affordable at any time during the process. This change creates no additional burden to the landlord but could be very helpful to the tenant.

Similarly, having the City hire the relocation consultant would eliminate many concerns we have heard from displaced tenants, suspicious of being helped by someone hired by the landlord. Once again, this change creates no additional burden to the landlord and follows the practice that most cities use when environmental and other consultants are hired for a development project. Thus, we also agree with the staff's recommendation that the developer would pay for the relocation consultant, as is true under the present ordinance.

The one issue where we think Council may want to deviate from the staff recommendations is the issue of income limits. We definitely support raising the income limits to 80% of area median income (AMI). However, we note that none of the cities in the attached table limit relocation benefits on account of income. Also, Table 3 on page 6 of the staff report shows that there is still a large gap

between the rents a household at 80% AMI can afford and the market rate median rent. This gap is larger as the apartment size increases. Thus, we would suggest not having income limits, but perhaps providing more assistance to tenants earning less than 80% AMI. Another alternative might be to cap the benefits by providing them to those up to moderate income, but not above.

Thank you for considering our input.

Donna Yobs
Co-Chair, Housing Committee
LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area
cc. Dan Rich
Randy Tsuda
Linda Lauzze