



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

November 15, 2014

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

Re: City Council Meeting, November 17
Agenda Item 6.1 - El Camino Real Precise Plan

Dear Mayor Clark and Members of the City Council:

The LWV would like to comment again on the El Camino Real Precise Plan (ECR PP). As noted earlier, we are pleased to see that the vision for the El Camino Real corridor includes new housing for a range of incomes and life stages. We are pleased to see that the ECR PP specifically refers to the City's inclusionary ordinance; we understand that the current percentage of 10% below-market rate units may change over time, so it is appropriate to reference current City policy in terms of minimum requirements for affordable housing within the PP area.

However, we would strongly urge you to set a significantly higher goal for the El Camino corridor than current City policy. We prefer **15** or **20%**, as the need is so great and the El Camino Real area is ideal for such housing. There is such potential for new housing in that area, along with a strong possibility that older affordable housing units will be replaced by expensive market-rate units if protections for this existing affordable housing are not included in the ECR PP.

As we have stated earlier, a number of strategies and policies could be included in the ECR PP to ensure that affordable housing actually would be built. Earlier we suggested Affordable Housing Overlay Zones, such as Menlo Park, for example, has adopted. Key features of Menlo Park's overlay zone include varying percentage of affordable units required with depth of affordability and density bonuses and other incentives for those who meet the requirements. We would like to see these included in the ECR PP itself, in order to avert potential legal obstacles to our vision of reasonable affordable housing requirements. Building in triggers where office entitlements are contingent upon housing being built and market-rate housing entitlements are contingent upon affordable housing being built is another program that would ensure that affordable housing is built.

In addition, we would like the ECR PP to include methods for preserving some of the existing housing affordable now to lower-income households. Because the El Camino Corridor is a Priority Development Area, there is likely to be much new growth along El Camino, along with an opportunity for existing market-rate landlords to increase their rents. We would like the ECR PP to include some language such as the following because of our concern about displacement of lower-income tenants within the ECR PP area:

Evaluate potential displacement of existing lower income residents and adopt measures to address the risk of displacement of existing residents. Displacement might be direct, caused by the redevelopment of sites with existing residential properties, or indirect, caused by increased market rents as an area becomes more desirable. Implement programs as appropriate to address displacement. Monitor these programs annually for their effectiveness.

We also want you to consider stronger implementation of mode share targets that will ensure that biking and walking are encouraged. A key value of having mixed uses along the El Camino corridor is that services and shopping are accessible to residents without driving. With public transit, safe and convenient walking, and bike routes this should help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make residents' lives healthier by encouraging them to walk or bike. This is especially important for our growing senior population who may not want or be able to drive, for lower-income households who may not be able to afford a car, and for children. We won't repeat the suggestions made in the October 24th letter from Greenbelt Alliance and others in that coalition, but generally support their recommendations for strengthening bike and walking plans and policies.

Thank you for considering our input.

LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area Housing Committee

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