



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

August 26, 2014

Chairman Cox and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: Environmental Planning Commission Meeting, August 28
Agenda Item 5.1 - Review of El Camino Real Precise Plan

Dear Chairman Cox and Members of the EPC:

The LWV would like to offer some initial comments on the public Draft of the El Camino Real Precise Plan (ECR PP). 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 also note that Table 14 states that the Plan Priority for desired community benefits is affordable housing. However, this priority is not mentioned on page 4 of the staff report's discussion of community benefits, which we find disappointing.

We are also concerned that many developers may not opt for the higher FAR's allowed in Tier 1 and Tier 2, as the "base" FAR's and building heights are fairly high. As a result, the affordable housing shown in Table 14 (and stated as a major feature of the vision for the El Camino Real corridor) might not be much of a reality.

We would prefer to see stronger teeth in strategies for ensuring that affordable housing will be built as the El Camino corridor is revitalized. In terms of prioritizing affordable housing, we compare the ECR PP to the Diridon Station Area Plan recently unanimously approved by the San Jose City Council; the latter **requires** that at least 15% of all new housing in the area be affordable.

There are a number of strategies and policies that could be included in the ECR PP to ensure that affordable housing actually would be built. It is critical to include these in the ECR PP itself in order to avert potential legal obstacles to our vision of reasonable affordable housing requirements.

For example, in the draft San Antonio Precise Plan, in an effort to ensure that a certain amount of housing is built, there is a requirement that 620 housing units must be constructed in Phase 1 before any new office space is allowed in Phase 2. Making further office entitlements contingent upon the housing being built should be an effective mechanism for guaranteeing that the housing the City desires in the San Antonio area is actually built.

Similar contingencies or triggers could be included in the ECR PP. Various levels of affordability could be built into the strategies. For example, one requirement might be that a certain percentage of units affordable to those at less than 50% area median income would have to be built as part of the first 200 new housing units, before additional market-rate units can be entitled. These policies would

have to be refined, but having this type of policy would ensure that various levels of lower-income units are provided. If such specific requirements/strategies are not included in the ECR PP, we are concerned that despite the lofty goal of providing housing for all income levels, very little that is affordable to those at lower-income levels will actually be built.

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
Eric Anderson
Martin Alkire
Linda Lauzze
Jannie Quinn
ECRPrecisePlan@mountainview.gov

Dear Chairman Cox and Members of the EPC:

The LWV would like to offer some initial comments on the public Draft of the El Camino Real Precise Plan (ECR PP). 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 also note that Table 14 states that the Plan Priority for desired community benefits is affordable housing. However, this priority is not mentioned on page 4 of the staff report's discussion of community benefits, which we find disappointing.

We are also concerned that many developers may not opt for the higher FAR's allowed in Tier 1 and Tier 2, as the "base" FAR's and building heights are fairly high. As a result, the affordable housing shown in Table 14 (and stated as a major feature of the vision for the El Camino Real corridor) might not be much of a reality.

We would prefer to see stronger teeth in strategies for ensuring that affordable housing will be built as the El Camino corridor is revitalized. In terms of prioritizing affordable housing, we compare the ECR PP to the Diridon Station Area Plan recently unanimously approved by the San Jose City Council; the latter **requires** that at least 15% of all new housing in the area be affordable.

There are a number of strategies and policies that could be included in the ECR PP to ensure that affordable housing actually would be built. It is critical to include these in the ECR PP itself in order to avert potential legal obstacles to our vision of reasonable affordable housing requirements.

For example, in the draft San Antonio Precise Plan, in an effort to ensure that a certain amount of housing is built, there is a requirement that 620 housing units must be constructed in Phase 1 before any new office space is allowed in Phase 2. Making further office entitlements contingent upon the

housing being built should be an effective mechanism for guaranteeing that the housing the City desires in the San Antonio area is actually built.

Similar contingencies or triggers could be included in the ECR PP. Various levels of affordability could be built into the strategies. For example, one requirement might be that a certain percentage of units affordable to those at less than 50% area median income would have to be built as part of the first 200 new housing units, before additional market-rate units can be entitled. These policies would have to be refined, but having this type of policy would ensure that various levels of lower-income units are provided. If such specific requirements/strategies are not included in the ECR PP, we are concerned that despite the lofty goal of providing housing for all income levels, very little that is affordable to those at lower-income levels will actually be built.

Thank you for considering our input.

Donna Yobs
Co-Chair, Housing Committee
LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area