



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

February 2, 2015

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

Re: Council Meeting, February 3, 2015 – North Bayshore Precise Plan and Residential Uses

Dear Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council:

The LWV would like to comment on the issue of residential uses in North Bayshore. From the outset, we have supported the concept of additional housing in North Bayshore, especially since the General Plan alternative which included new housing was determined to be the environmentally superior alternative. At that time, 1,100 additional housing units were proposed, but there was never any particular rationale for that number of units.

Because the LWV supports efforts to improve the jobs/housing imbalance and also efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, along with well-thought out planning processes, we recommend that the Council seriously study amending the Precise Plan and/or the General Plan to allow new housing in this area.

We also recommend that the Council appoint an advisory committee or task force composed of the many stakeholders in North Bayshore to discuss some of the key issues, including where the housing is best situated, what densities/heights are appropriate, where/how to develop a true “neighborhood” or “urban village”, where services for the residents (and office workers) are available. Having a robust, open and comprehensive discussion early in the process will help to expedite the process of reconsideration of new housing in the area.

Below, we state our answers to the questions posed in the staff report, as these will frame the Council discussion.

Key Question No. 1: We recommend Option 1, studying new residential uses in North Bayshore. Although we support studying new residential uses in other areas of the City, including East Whisman, the immediate focus must be on North Bayshore.

Key Question No. 2: We think the Council should study residential uses as a permitted use. With regard to the potential challenge that land values are so high that rents/sales prices will be high, we would hope the Council will find ways to include affordable housing in the area.

Key Question No. 3: Of, course the City should study more than 1,100 new units. The study should be **open-ended**, considering how many units can be built in appropriate locations, how many units might be required to support additional basic services in the area, how different numbers of new units impact greenhouse gas emissions/VMT and all other relevant issues.

Key Question No 4: Once again, the study should be open-ended. Housing in all areas should be studied before deciding that only the North Shoreline Boulevard Core Area should have housing.

Key Question No. 5: We do not think there should be “residential only” areas. Part of the concept of an urban village or neighborhood is that retail, medical, and other services are in close proximity, as well as office/commercial uses. We are strong supporters of mixed use, and note that many of the most popular cities to live in (San Francisco, Paris) are successful because there are true urban villages rather than residential only sections. Walkable neighborhoods are not only healthy for those who may work in the neighborhood, but for seniors who can walk to what they need.

Key Question No. 6: We hope that the Council will move quickly on re-evaluating the issue of new housing in North Bayshore, thereby eliminating the need for a moratorium. We understand that the current schedule sets February 27th as a deadline for “Bonus FAR” applications. However, if the Council is considering land use changes for the entire area, we would expect that none of these applications would be approved until after the Council has made its decision on whether to revise the Precise Plan. Of course, we would not want office development to be approved for sites that the Council decides are best used for a more residential neighborhood or mixed use. But we would assume that a parallel process on reviewing development proposals while reconsidering new housing in North Bayshore would be possible. If this is not possible, then we would favor a moratorium to ensure that the most appropriate sites for housing are not made unavailable due to office development having been approved while housing was being studied.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

Cc: Dan Rich
Melissa Stevenson Diaz
Randy Tsuda
Martin Alkire
Terry Blount