



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

April 12, 2015

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

Re: Council Meeting, April 14, 2015 – Study Session re Goal-Setting

Dear Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council:

The LWV would like to comment on the work plan items associated with the Council's theme-based major goal of improving the quantity, diversity, and affordability of housing.

We agree that the top priorities should be studying additional residential uses in North Bayshore and East Whisman.

We would also like to support several of the proposals contributed by the Human Relations Commission (HRC). We have been recommending consideration of an increase in all housing impact fees for a long time, believing that the fees are far lower than what should be assessed to alleviate the need for affordable housing caused by new jobs and new market-rate housing. We acknowledge that some fees were recently increased, but nonetheless, even the recently adopted fees are far lower than what the nexus and feasibility studies showed were justified. Fully as important, the dramatic increase in market-rate rents and the increased cost of land and construction make the four-year-old nexus study numbers outdated.

We would like the Council to review the possibility of increasing fees for hotel, entertainment and retail development, as these projects, in comparison to most other development, employ so many low-wage earners, thereby creating an immediate need for low-income housing, and these fees have not been increased in many years. A few years ago, it seemed the Council wanted to encourage hotel development, so didn't want to increase these fees, but with the number of hotel proposals recently, it would seem Council should review this policy decision.

We also commend the HRC's suggestion to study development of micro-housing units. This type of housing might also satisfy the Downtown Committee's desire for a variety of housing types. It might be an option for housing in North Bayshore. As part of considering micro-housing units, the Council should look at the fee structure (parks, etc.) to be sure that fees are reasonable for very small units.

We think that studying implementation of a no-net loss/minimum density residential development policy is worthwhile. It is disheartening to see older developments being torn down and replaced with fewer units when there is such a need for more housing in Mtn. View.

Earlier we suggested affordable housing overlay zones; we believe the City could implement this policy, especially in areas not encompassed by Precise Plans. We also believe that affordable housing should be prioritized as one of the most important community benefits, so that other types of benefits, some of which mainly benefit the project itself rather than the City, cannot be approved as the community benefits required when additional FAR or zoning changes are requested.

We understand that loosening of standards for second units is to be studied, as part of the Housing Element process, but we urge that this be done quickly, as this is another possible way to incent the building of affordable units. It didn't appear on the staff report's list.

We think looking at an employee tax is a project that should be seriously considered, rather than being dismissed as not directly related to goal, as the staff report states. We think everyone understands that the increasing jobs/housing imbalance in Mtn. View is seriously exacerbating the issue of housing affordability. A business employee tax is one way to help to address this issue.

Finally, we think that unbundling of parking should get more attention than it has in the past; we see it mentioned by the HRC with regard to rent protections for tenants, but we would like to see the Council adopt a stronger policy regarding unbundling of parking. Unbundling parking from basic rent allows greater densities, encourages use of public transit, and residents without cars don't subsidize car-owners.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

Cc: Dan Rich  
Kimbra McCarthy  
Randy Tsuda  
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