



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

2/27/07

Mayor Laura Macias and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters of Los Altos/Mountain View Area welcomes the opportunity to comment on Agenda Item 7.1 on the City Council Agenda for February 27<sup>th</sup>. We strongly support the staff recommendation to add a senior planning staff person, knowledgeable about and devoted to affordable housing. This was one of the strong recommendations of the Affordable Housing Strategy sessions; the League had representatives on the study committee and has supported this use of affordable housing funds consistently since then.

We believe that additional staff will allow the Council to adopt and implement a long-term affordable housing strategy and avoid having a piecemeal or reactive approach.

This strategy should consider smart growth and green building design as part of affordable housing policies.

It is clear that the present staff do not have sufficient time to work with nonprofits on new affordable housing projects, while keeping up with all the other work required related to the City's affordable housing efforts. The New Central Park and Evelyn Avenue developments will need significant staff time to keep them proceeding efficiently. In addition, other potential projects by nonprofits are being discussed. We are concerned that the current staffing level means that affordable housing projects may proceed more slowly because staff is so busy, as well as preventing the City from proceeding with more than one project at a time. As the staff report points out, the BMR program will need additional staff time with so many housing units in the pipeline and the Housing Element will need to be updated shortly.

The affordable housing funds have been accumulating. Hiring a senior affordable housing staff person is a very wise use of the funds, as the City needs additional staff to ensure that affordable housing units will actually be created with the funds that have been collected. If several new affordable housing projects become reality, the Council may need to look at hiring additional experienced affordable housing staff, as, we believe, the Mountain View staff levels are lower than in similar neighboring cities with active affordable housing programs.

Sincerely yours,

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