



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

3/20/07

Mayor Laura Macias and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area supports the plans proposed by Regis Homes for the South Whisman area. This area has been determined by City Council to be appropriate for conversion to residential uses and we agree. Regis Homes has been working with the City on a Precise Plan for this area for almost two years and the result is a plan that builds on the City's leadership in "smart growth" and transit-oriented developments, including the nearby Whisman Station and The Crossings.

This area is well suited for residential uses because it is close to the Whisman VTA Station. The plan creates a sustainable neighborhood, as neighborhood retail will be included so that residents can walk for some services. In addition, including a large public park will provide much-needed soccer fields and open space for these new homes as well as those close by in Whisman Station.

We especially want to commend Regis Homes for proposing to build below market rate (BMR) units on site. Not only does this developer propose building the required rental BMR units, but a significant additional number of BMR units. Approximately ten percent of the total units are proposed to be BMR's. We have spoken out many times in favor of building BMR units, rather than collecting in-lieu fees. This is particularly true because the in-lieu fees in Mtn. View are relatively low in relation to those of nearby communities.

Recently, the number of rental units in Mtn. View has been decreasing, as was shown by the condo conversion ordinance staff reports. Rentals are typically far more affordable for lower income families than ownership units. Therefore, we would be pleased to see any rental units being built, but especially these that almost all are planned to be affordable to very low income families. Regis Homes plans to target 90% of these BMR units to very low income families, and the remaining 10% to families with incomes of 60% or less of area median income. The Mtn. View BMR ordinance would allow them to target families earning up to 80%. Thus, we commend Regis Homes for targeting at these lower levels as these households are most in need.

In addition to providing rental units, Regis Homes is offering a variety of sizes and types of ownership units. These will offer a range of housing opportunities at various income levels. After such a long planning process and in light of the fact that so many BMR units are being proposed, we urge the Council to fast-track the EIR and writing the Precise Plan for this area.

Sincerely,

Donna Yobs
1157 Karen Way, Mountain View, CA 94040
Co-chair, Housing Committee
League of Women Voters of Los Altos/Mountain View Area

cc: Kevin Duggan and Elaine Costello