



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

February 2, 2016

Chair Capriles and Members of the EPC
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Study Session, February 3, 2016 – North Bayshore Precise Plan Residential Uses

Dear Chair Capriles and Members of the EPC:

The LWV supports actions that cope with the jobs/housing imbalance, as well as actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that many of the policies discussed in the staff report for the Study Session should help alleviate these problems.

We strongly support the various policies designed to encourage building of affordable housing. However, we would like the City to take a bolder approach towards inclusion of affordable housing, increasing the percentage of below-market-rate (BMRs) units over what the current City ordinance requires for the base FAR and Height Requirements, as described on page 9 of the staff report, with a higher percentage and/or deeper targeting for Tier I and Tier II categories. Additionally, we suggest that affordable housing should be considered as one of the top requirements for consideration of development in N. Bayshore, rather than just one of many requirements.

Compliance with the current City ordinance would simply mean that 10% of rental units would be targeted to those at 65% area median income (AMI) levels. Most cities with inclusionary zoning target the below-market-rate (BMR) rentals to those at less than 50% AMI. Those with incomes from 30%-50% AMI are the households with the most difficulty finding homes in the current marketplace. Therefore, we would like to see the affordable housing targeted to a variety of lower-income households, but including those as low as 30% AMI.

We commend Sobrato for setting a good example by proposing more affordable units than the current City standard of 10%. Since the N. Bayshore Precise Plan is an entirely new plan, the City is able to take an aggressive and positive step towards alleviating the affordable housing crisis by requiring that residential development include a minimum of 20% affordable units. These units could be built on dedicated land or as BMRs. San Francisco has taken this approach recently in certain areas, as have other cities like Seattle and New York City.

Similarly, compliance with the City's ordinance regarding condo BMRs means that developers would simply pay in-lieu fees which are astonishingly low. Either these fees should be increased or the developer should be required to provide land where affordable housing could be built or ownership BMRs should be required.

We would like to see some discussion of providing a variety of types of units. Stacked flats, for example, are ideal both for seniors downsizing and for employees of the offices in N. Bayshore, and smaller units should also be more affordable than the larger units being provided currently by the market. However, a mix of unit types is more likely to create true neighborhoods.

We also commend staff's suggested incentives to encourage housing, such as Bonus FAR for projects removing office square footage and adding residential units, along with residential incentives, such as transfer of development rights.

We understand that housing development, like office development, should not exacerbate the traffic problems in N. Bayshore. With this in mind, we suggest that unbundling parking should possibly be required as part of the Precise Plan and that maximum parking requirements and shared parking, as suggested by staff on pages 11-12 of the staff report, should be evaluated.

Thank you for considering our input.

Max Beckman-Harned
on behalf of the Housing Committee of the
LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area

Cc: Dan Rich
Randy Tsuda
Martin Alkire
Terry Blount