



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

February 28, 2016

Mayor Showalter and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Study Session, March 1, 2016 – North Bayshore Precise Plan Residential Uses

Dear Mayor Showalter and Members of the City Council:

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 relatively dense housing in North Bayshore. We would like the City to take a bold approach, as suggested by the EPC, towards inclusion of affordable housing. We encourage the Council to require 25% of new residential units to be affordable under Tier I, and 30% under Tier II. We note the staff report's comments on page 8 that staff and the consultant team will be further analyzing such percentages in order to ensure that they do not act as disincentives on residential development, so our comments are subject to this further analysis.

Secondly, as many on the EPC commented, we think that affordable housing should be the primary community benefit to be considered when projects are given additional FAR. We believe, as many EPC members stated, that the highest level of green building is already expected in Mountain View, so that this should not be a community benefit in terms of allowing additional FAR. Similarly, the transportation infrastructure improvements for the area are already planned for and should not be a community benefit that leads to extra FAR.

In fact, we think that the housing crisis is so extreme in Mountain View, and also the jobs/housing imbalance, that all community benefits should be related to helping to solve this crisis.

We support high density/high FAR in North Bayshore. We believe that more housing will help contribute to a strong neighborhood. We also believe that there should be a variety of unit sizes and types, again, in order to help build a strong neighborhood. 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. In all cases, a mix of unit types is more likely to create true neighborhoods.

We would like to see the mix of affordable housing units spread across a wide spectrum of those who are underserved by the market according to the City's RHNA numbers. We especially would like to see some units provided for those at extremely low incomes (30% area median income) as we see these households being displaced in the last few years or, if not displaced, having to deal with enormous rent increases forcing them to double up with other families or face other difficult options. However, we also recognize that those at 80% of area median income, as well, are having a very difficult time finding housing in the current market in Mountain View.

We 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. Allowing transfer of demolished office building square footage to be rebuilt elsewhere in North Bayshore when these buildings are replaced with new residential projects should incentivize residential development.

We agree that housing development, like office development, should not exacerbate the traffic problems in North 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, should be evaluated.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

Cc: Dan Rich
Randy Tsuda
Martin Alkire
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