



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area**

March 12, 2017

Chair Scarborough and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: Environmental Planning Commission Meeting, March 15, Agenda Item 5.1 – 555 W. Middlefield Road
Residential Development

Dear Chairman Scarborough and Members of the EPC:

The LWV supports affordable housing for all Californians. We also support below-market rate units (BMRs), also called inclusionary zoning, as we believe that dispersal of affordable housing is healthy for the community. Therefore, we were pleased to see the Council require that a minimum of 10% of the total number of new units in this development be built as BMRs as part of the Gatekeeper approval.

We would urge that in addition to the 10% of the units required at the Gatekeeper approval, additional BMRs be included as the public/community benefit required of Avalon Bay. We do **not** agree with staff that 2.25% (difference between the 7.75% typically expected as equivalent to in-lieu fees and 10%) should be applied towards community benefits because the developer was **directed** by Council to build 10% BMRs at Gatekeeper, a very reasonable requirement since the developer is requesting a General Plan Amendment.

With respect to the developer's request to build the BMRs at the moderate-income level, we would defer to staff as to the need for this income level. We are concerned that households in the 80-120% area median income (AMI) range are having great difficulty finding housing in the current market. However, if the developer is allowed to build all the units as moderate-income rentals, we believe that the percentage should be substantially higher than 10%. Building the units at moderate-income levels, as staff points out, is not consistent with Council direction or with the applicable ordinance requirements.

The required number of BMRs at different rents should be cost-neutral; i.e. the result should be financially equivalent to the cost to the developer of building 10% of the units targeted to low-income levels. This was the condition the Council approved at Gatekeeper. Another option would be to keep the total number of units at 10%, but require some to be built as very low-income units to offset those built as moderate-income units. Again, the result should be cost-neutral.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

cc: Terry Blount Wayne Chen Diana Pancholi
 Rebecca Shapiro Dan Rich Randy Tsuda