



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

December 3, 2017

Mayor Ken Rosenberg and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: Council Study Session - Dec.5th Agenda Item 3.1 – 1696-1758 Villa Street

Dear Mayor Rosenberg and Members of the City Council:

The LWV supports affordable housing for all Californians, including a variety of strategies to achieve this goal, including support of below-market-rate units (BMRs). We believe that BMRs built as part of larger developments, thus dispersing "affordable" units throughout the community, has had a history of socioeconomic and political success in California.

We recall that Prometheus is the developer who took immediate advantage of the Palmer decision in 2009 to reduce its BMR commitment in the Madera complex, an action the LWV found to be disappointing. Now, with the passage of AB 1505, and in light of earlier Council direction, Prometheus may be asked to produce 15% BMRs. Prometheus may be unhappy about this turn of events, but this should not mean they shouldn't be asked to follow the law in place at the time their project is entitled.

We would prefer the affordable units to be built on-site by Prometheus, despite the few advantages of the option of pre-funding for affordable housing described in the staff report. We believe that the City has sufficient affordable housing funds, with more coming in due to office development, to keep up with requests from housing developers who want to build all-affordable developments, which we whole-heartedly support. Because it seems to be so difficult for developers to acquire sites for all-affordable housing projects, and given the long entitlement process, we prefer to see the BMR units as part of this Villa Street project.

According to the staff report, one advantage of Prometheus providing funds so that a nonprofit can build affordable units is that the City could require the units to be affordable longer than 55 years. Is this not legally possible for BMR units built on-site by Prometheus? Couldn't the 1999 BMR ordinance be amended to provide for longer affordability, since Council is discussing revising this ordinance in early 2018?

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

cc: Wayne Chen Dan Rich Randy Tsuda Eric Anderson