



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

May 5, 2018

Mayor Jean Mordo and Members of the City Council
City of Los Altos
1 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: City Council Meeting - May 8th

Agenda Item #7 - Affordable Housing Impact Fees

Dear Mayor Mordo and Members of the City Council:

The LWV supports affordable housing and incentives for development of affordable housing. We also support inclusionary zoning, which means including below-market-rate units (BMRs) within both rental and for-sale complexes. The League believes in dispersing BMRs within a larger complex since this has been shown to be a socioeconomic and political success in California.

We urge the Council to adopt affordable housing impact fees for the reasons stated in the staff report. We believe that the non-residential affordable housing linkage fee is especially important as the City currently has no commercial/office impact fees, and inclusionary zoning does not apply to non-residential development. These fees will provide funds for affordable housing and will also level the playing field between Los Altos and neighboring cities which assess similar fees. We urge the Council to consider using City-owned land for an all-affordable housing development and these fees would be helpful in financing such a project.

With regard to the fees on ownership and rental developments, we believe the Council should allow payment of these fees in lieu of building BMR units on site. However, our preference, -especially with rental units- is that the developer build the units, rather than pay the fees, as this will add immediately to our affordable housing stock. With that in mind, we would like the Council to consider tying the impact fees to the inclusionary zoning requirements. Mountain View and San Jose, for example, offer developers incentives to build rental BMRs rather than pay impact fees. These cities do this by making the fees more onerous than the cost of building the units on site.

We also urge more nuanced policy discussions with regard to the advantage of ownership BMRs versus assessment of impact fees. BMR condos, for example, are a good fit for teachers, nurses, and City employees who are currently having a hard time living in Los Altos. Council consideration of impact fees a year ago also included the possibility of assessing fees on even smaller developments, such as teardowns and additions. We hope the Council will review these various options carefully, and then make a prompt decision on impact fees.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sue Russell
Co-Chair, Housing Committee
LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area

Cc: Chris Jordan Jon Biggs Jon Maginot