



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

May 13, 2019

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

Re: EPC Public Hearing, May 15, Agenda Item 5.1 – 1720 Villa Street

Dear Chair Baird and Members of the EPC:

The LWV urges the EPC to recommend to Council that Prometheus build 15% of this new rental complex as below-market-rate units (BMRs). We have long recommended that BMRs be included as part of market-rate developments as such inclusionary policies create a socio-economic diversity, which has proven over many years to be a healthy way for lower-income households to improve their lives.

Building the units on-site also means that the units typically are delivered sooner than when the fees are collected and saved until a nonprofit has found a site and requests the fees in order to proceed with an all-affordable development.

Villa Street is a great location for affordable housing due to the already existing socioeconomic diversity of the neighborhood and its close proximity to public transit, schools, downtown, and community resources such as the community center and teen center.

The Staff Report is crystal clear that Council direction from the beginning discussion of this project was that the developer should provide 15% of the units on-site. On March 21, 2017, shortly after the original proposal was submitted, Council directed that “Affordable housing should be 15%.” This direction was repeated on December 12, 2017. Therefore, this requirement comes as no surprise to Prometheus.

It is especially disturbing to see that Prometheus not only proposes paying an in-lieu fee rather than building the units, but the in-lieu fee proposed is significantly lower than the in-lieu fee for the recent “Flower Mart” project, and far below the in-lieu fee suggested in the Phase 2 BMR modifications.

However, even if Prometheus were to offer to raise the fee, we recommend that the BMR units be built on-site. By the time of this Public Hearing, Council will have discussed the Phase 2 BMR modifications; the Staff Report on this issue strongly recommends on-site units versus fees, with fees being allowed only in unusual circumstances, and when allowed, the fees being more onerous than the cost of building the units. We realize that the Phase 2 BMR modifications are not in effect yet, but nonetheless, the Staff Report is clear that its recommendations incorporate Council direction over the last few years.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

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