



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

June 2, 2019

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

Re: Council Meeting, June 4, Agenda Item 6.2 – 1720 Villa Street

Dear Mayor Matchak and Members of the City Council:

The LWV supports the Prometheus development of 226 rental units at 1720 Villa Street. We also think that the alternative mitigation proposal for preserving units at 660 Mariposa may be an appealing alternative. However, the LWV believes strongly in transparency in government and the lack of transparency in Prometheus's plan for 660 Mariposa is disturbing.

We completely agree with Staff that without a clearly defined proposal for this alternative, it should not be approved at this meeting. It would be poor governance for the Council to approve such an alternative without having Staff fully and carefully evaluate the benefits of such an alternative. We encourage Council to defer approval of the Villa development and to direct Staff to work with Prometheus to define and evaluate whether an option at the Mariposa site would benefit the City more than providing 33 BMR units at 1720 Villa. Should the Council want to give directions or provide parameters to Prometheus as to what they would like to see at 660 Mariposa, this would be appropriate.

In the event that Council does not want to defer approval of the 1720 Villa project, we urge the Council to require Prometheus to 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.

The Staff Report is crystal clear that Council direction from the beginning discussion of this project was that the developer should provide BMR 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. Providing fees instead of units should not be an option.

We, of course, favor options that prevent displacement, which perhaps Prometheus's alternative does. But right now, it is not clear how much displacement Prometheus's proposal would prevent. Many questions need to be answered: What would the rent levels be? How many current tenants in the Mariposa development would qualify for the new rents? What would the relocation policy be during the time of the rehab? How long is the rehab expected to take? Would Prometheus consider placing the Mariposa tenants in some of their other Mountain View apartments during the period of rehab so that they don't have to leave Mountain View? What would the relocation policy be for those tenants who don't income-qualify? Would the permanent affordable housing complex be sold to a nonprofit? What would be the sales price of the complex? Would the nonprofit be able to use tax credits to rehab 660 Mariposa? If not, how would the improvements would be financed? These are very old apartments; how much rehab is necessary to make them code-compliant?

We are very concerned that current tenants at 660 Mariposa have not received notice of this potential alternative mitigation, other than very recently through community members. It is critical that their input be considered. They need to be informed about the Prometheus proposal in sufficient detail for them to speak to Council/Staff about their support and/or their concerns.

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

cc: Wayne Chen  
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