



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

December 8, 2019

Mayor Jan Pepper and Members of the City Council
City of Los Altos
One North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: City Council Meeting Dec. 10th, Agenda Item # 9 – 5150 El Camino Real Development

Dear Mayor Pepper and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area once again writes to support the proposed development at 5150 El Camino Real. We are pleased to see the 28 below-market-rate units (BMRs). These BMRs, along with the market-rate units, will give an enormous boost to the RHNA allocation of Los Altos across all incomes. The BMR housing will serve local lower-wage earners as well as teachers and City employees. Almost 90% of the units are one and two-bedrooms, a housing type not typically being built in Los Altos and which are more “affordable by design” than larger units, thereby serving market-rate buyers who can’t afford many of the larger units recently approved.

We are pleased to see that the developer has provided rear and side setbacks that are greater than what is required. The developer has also accommodated the neighbors in the rear by orienting the balconies towards the interior of the project, offering robust landscaping, and lowering the roof line of some of the buildings. We are also pleased to see the play areas revised since the Oct. 22nd Council meeting.

Regarding the parking requirement and the calculation of the required number of BMRs, we will defer to Staff. However, based upon the developer’s remarks at the Oct. 22nd meeting we are disappointed not to see more parking spaces and more BMRs. We hope there is still an opportunity for the Council to shift some of the very low-income units to be moderate-income, with perhaps a few lower-income units, as we believe that ownership BMRs are best targeted to moderate-income households. This shift could be made at the discretion of the Council once it is established that the developer has met the necessary threshold of both State Density Bonus Law and the City’s inclusionary ordinance. There would be more moderate-income BMRs, of course, in order to be equivalent to what the developer was providing in very low-income BMRs.

As stated in our earlier letter we do recommend that the BMR mix be slightly adjusted to better reflect the overall bedroom mix by providing 1 two-bedroom townhome and 2 three-bedroom townhomes instead of vice versa, if there are no other changes. We also expect from the Staff Report that the BMRs will be affordable in perpetuity.

Sue Russell
Co-Chair, Housing Committee, LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
Cc: Chris Jordan Jon Biggs Sean Gallegos