



February 20, 2020

Mayor Fligor and Members of the City Council  
City Hall  
1 North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: Council Meeting February 23 Item #6 – 140 Lyell Street

As we have written earlier, the League of Women Voters supports urban infill projects such as the 140 Lyell Street subdivision. And we are always pleased to see another below-market-rate unit (BMR) added to Los Altos' housing stock.

The incentives and concessions requested seem reasonable. We agree with Staff that new developments such as this which build to maximum allowable density will help Los Altos meet its RHNA housing goals. We also note that the developer has reduced the height in consideration of comments by some neighbors, but that, in general, this development conforms to all zoning requirements.

Our only concern is with the BMR unit. Per density bonus law, the unit should be **very-low-income**. We have encouraged BMR ownership units to be targeted to moderate or low-income households rather than very low-income with the fear that **very** low-income households might struggle to maintain their units. However, we defer to the experience of Alta Housing, which has now managed the BMR program for Los Altos and other cities where there have recently been a number of very low-income ownership units. If the recommendation of Alta is to make this a **low-income** unit, we believe that the difference in the sales price between a very low-income unit and a low-income unit should be paid to the City in an affordable housing fund, as otherwise this is a windfall to the developer. These funds could be used, for example, to help fund the 330 Distel Circle project. (Please contact Sue Russell at [susan.russell75@gmail.com](mailto:susan.russell75@gmail.com) if you have questions.)

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