



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022

November 13, 2014

Chairman Cox and Members of the Environmental Planning Commission
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View 94041

Re: Environmental Planning Commission Meeting, November 13
Agenda Item 5.1 - El Camino Real Precise Plan

Dear Chairman Cox and Members of the EPC:

The LWV would like to comment on the El Camino Real Precise Plan (ECR PP). As noted earlier, we are pleased to see that the vision for the El Camino Real corridor includes new housing for a range of incomes and life stages. We are pleased to see that the PP specifically refers to the City's inclusionary ordinance; we understand that the current percentage of 10% below-market rate units may change over time, so it is appropriate to reference current City policy in terms of requirements for affordable housing within the PP area.

However, we would strongly urge you to set a significantly higher **goal** for the El Camino corridor than whatever current City policy might be. We prefer 15 or 20%, as the need is so great and the El Camino Real area is ideal for such housing. There is such potential for new housing in that area, along with a strong possibility that older affordable housing units will be replaced by expensive market-rate units, if protections for this existing affordable housing are not included in the PP.

As we have stated earlier, a number of strategies and policies could be included in the ECR PP to ensure that affordable housing actually would be built. Earlier we suggested Affordable Housing Overlay Zones, such as Menlo Park, for example, has adopted. Key features of Menlo Park's overlay zone include varying percentage of affordable units required with depth of affordability and density bonuses and other incentives for those who meet the requirements. We would like to see these included in the ECR PP itself, in order to avert potential legal obstacles to our vision of reasonable affordable housing requirements. Building in triggers where office entitlements are contingent upon housing being built and market-rate housing entitlements are contingent upon affordable housing being built is another program that would ensure that affordable housing is built.

In addition, we would like the PP to include methods for preserving some of the existing housing affordable now to lower-income households. Because the El Camino Corridor is a Priority Development Area, there is likely to be much new growth along El Camino, along with an opportunity for existing market-rate landlords to increase their rents. We would like the PP to include some language such as the following because of our concern about displacement of lower-income tenants within the PP area:

“Evaluate potential displacement of existing lower income residents and adopt measures to address the risk of displacement of existing residents. Displacement might be direct, caused by the redevelopment of sites with existing residential properties, or indirect, caused by increased market rents as an area becomes more desirable. Implement programs as appropriate to address displacement. Monitor these programs annually for their effectiveness.”

Thank you for considering our input.

LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area Housing Committee

Cc: Dan Rich

Randy Tsuda

Eric Anderson

Martin Alkire

Linda Lauzze

Jannie Quinn

ECRPrecisePlan@mountainview.gov