



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

December 6, 2015

Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council  
City of Mountain View  
500 Castro Street  
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Council Meeting December 8th, Agenda Item # 7.1 – Gatekeeper Requests

Dear Mayor McAlister and Members of the City Council:

The LWV supports actions that provide affordable housing for all Californians. Therefore, we strongly endorse some of the potential criteria staff has suggested for determining which developments should receive Gatekeeper status. The number of affordable units provided by a market-rate residential development should be a top consideration. The amount of tenant displacement should be an important criterion, due to the vast amount of displacement currently occurring due to redevelopment in Mountain View. Thirdly, the number of net new units is important because increasing the supply of housing should gradually help with the serious jobs/housing imbalance existing presently.

With these factors in mind, we encourage proceeding with Gatekeeper Request #1, the Mountain View Academy development, as there will be no displacement and the units are intended to be somewhat affordable. We strongly endorse staff's suggestion that a mechanism be put in place to insure that these new units are affordable long-term.

Secondly, we think that Gatekeeper Request #2, 500 Moffett Blvd., should be granted Gatekeeper status, as the project would add such a significant number of housing units. We are concerned with the displacement and wonder if the project could be phased so as to avoid some displacement, assuming some of the current tenants might want to live in the new development. We also hope that the Council will direct the developer to provide a variety of sizes/types of units in a complex this large so that diverse types of households will be able to live in this new community.

Most important, the Shenandoah Square developer has apparently not addressed in any way the number of affordable units and what income levels would be targeted. There is a vague reference to "potential inclusion of affordable and/or workforce housing units" in the developer's letter to the City. In a situation such as the Shenandoah Square site, where the developer is requesting a General Plan Amendment, a Precise Plan, and Annexation to the City, we believe the Council is in a position to take a bold position and require at least 20% of the units to be affordable. The exact percentage of affordable units should vary depending upon the income level targeted; that is, a higher percentage of below-market-rate units should be required if the units are targeted only as low as 65% area median income. This should be done now, at the Gatekeeper stage.

Finally, with regard to Gatekeeper Request #3, we have grave concerns about the displacement of so many current tenants. We hope the Council will look carefully at the possibility of phasing any new development so that those tenants who want to move into new units might be able to remain in the current project until the new development is available. If some of the current tenants are low-income, they could be given preference for the affordable units in the new project.

This developer, like the Shenandoah Square developer, is requesting a General Plan Amendment. Such a request always allows the City to ask for more in the way of community benefits. We suggest that if the project is allowed to proceed, this developer should also be asked to provide 20% below-market-rate units. We think that the developer is asking for even higher density than was earlier approved, so just as is the case with the State Density Bonus Law, the City should receive more affordable units as a quid pro quo for this additional density. Also, we think it is reasonable that since so much displacement will occur, the City should require more affordable units as a community benefit.

We also want to point out that although the relocation benefits being offered by the developer appear to be generous, the current relocation benefits required by the City are three times the average rent in Mountain View, with more assistance for special circumstances. By the time these tenants are relocated, with the rapidly escalating rents in the City, \$10,000 will probably not be equivalent to the City's requirement for any tenants who qualify under the current tenant relocation assistance ordinance.

Thank you for considering our input.

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

Cc: Dan Rich  
Randy Tsuda  
Jannie Quinn  
Terry Blount