



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

February 13, 2012

Mayor Mike Kasperzak and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro St., P.O. Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039

Re: General Plan Update – Study Session, February 14, 2012 – Agenda Item 3.1

The LWV of the Los Altos/Mountain View Area would like to comment on some of the issues raised by staff regarding the General Plan Update to be discussed in the Study Session.

First, we support the emphasis on increased intensities and a greater mix of land uses in the key change areas. We especially support the emphasis on more housing in these areas. Also, we think it is critical that housing affordable to lower-income workers be provided close to their jobs as well as other services. The General Plan should address these issues. Achieving “complete” neighborhoods is a worthwhile goal, both for greenhouse gas (“GHG”) reduction, as well as for building an environmentally and economically sustainable Mountain View. Although the General Plan supports infill development, it does not speak adequately to the need for diverse levels and types of housing near jobs and services.

Also, with regard to affordable housing, we understand that the Housing Element is one part of the General Plan. However, the Housing Element recently adopted includes numerous sites as possible locations for affordable housing which are already being proposed as high-income housing developments. With this in mind, we think the General Plan should give more attention to the issue of how to provide affordable housing, so that the current jobs/housing imbalance is improved rather than worsened. Based on the current trend, as the City encourages more and more office development and the best multi-family development sites are being bought up rapidly by market-rate developers, it would be prudent for the City to plan on revisiting the jobs/housing imbalance periodically, perhaps at intervals less than five years. Clearly we must prioritize finding new ways to encourage affordable housing development, as well as other types of housing development.

The staff report on the Sustainable Communities Strategy, to be discussed in the regular Council session February 14th, continues this theme when it describes how very serious the jobs/housing imbalance will be in the near future, based on the City’s projections in the General Plan. Without more emphasis on housing development of all types, the City will be drastically exacerbating its jobs/housing imbalance as well as exacerbating issues related to GHG emissions. We encourage the City to include as much of the higher density alternative - the environmentally superior alternative - as would be possible without requiring a new environmental impact review in order to provide its fair share of the new housing required by these new workers.

Regarding housing in the N. Bayshore area, we support housing north of Route 101 only if far more detailed attention is given to mitigation measures related to sea level rise and flooding risks. In addition, the General Plan does not deal adequately with the issue of transportation between the N. Bayshore area and the rest of Mountain View. Including housing in the N. Bayshore along with office development would make transit and retail services more feasible there, thus making a more complete neighborhood.

The discussion of El Camino Real as well as the discussion of “Mobility” reference Bus Rapid Transit. We urge you to consider the connection between reliable public transit and the goals of the new General Plan for development of El Camino Real and for greenhouse gas reductions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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