



3921 E. BAYSHORE ROAD, PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94303 - (650) 903-0600 - www.lwvpaloalto.org

November 26, 2018

Palo Alto City Council
250 Hamilton Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Mayor Kniss and City Council Members,

Re: November 26, 2018, Agenda Item No. 12: Ordinance amending Title 18 sections related to housing

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto supports efforts to increase the number and density of multiple-family units, particularly for those with lower incomes, especially located near transit centers and along transportation corridors. Our support for specific items in the Housing Work Plan is outlined in two letters we submitted to the Planning and Transportation Commission on August 28 and September 26, 2018, attached.

The proposed ordinance before you tonight goes a long way toward reaching these goals by creating realistic incentives to increase the housing stock. We urge you to approve this ordinance with the following very important exception.

Reject the requirement that 100% affordable housing projects on or near El Camino Real and in the Ground Floor and Retail combining districts be subject to the retail preservation ordinance. The requirement to preserve retail creates a serious financial and practical barrier to the production of affordable housing. It jeopardizes funding for the affordable portion; creates a need for additional retail parking resulting in less parking for the residential tenants; and may, in fact, make a 100% affordable housing project infeasible. It makes little sense to impose this disincentive to affordable housing on a transit rich corridor such as El Camino Real. This flies in the face of the Council's commitment to provide more opportunities for affordable housing particularly along transit corridors. We urge you to summarily reject that portion of the ordinance.

With regard to the additional considerations on page 25 of the staff report, we ask that you not reinstate a requirement for guest parking stalls for the reasons stated in the report.

And finally, but very importantly, we encourage you to request that the Planning Department return to Council with an ordinance to increase density and heights for 100% affordable housing projects in Downtown and California Avenue areas as described on page 25 of the staff report.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aisha Piracha-Zakariya".

Aisha Piracha-Zakariya
President, League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

Enclosures: August 29 and September 26 letters to Planning and Transportation Commission.