



June 15, 2022

Chair Doran and Members of the Planning Commission
City of Los Altos
1 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: Agenda Item #3 – 5150 El Camino Real Development, Planning Commission meeting June 16th

Dear Chair Doran and Members of the Planning Commission:

The LWV supports inclusionary zoning as a method to increase the supply of safe, decent, adequate housing for all Californians. We have consistently commended Los Altos for its below-market-rate (BMR) program as it has been the main way that Los Altos has been providing affordable housing.

One of the basic tenets of BMR programs is that the affordable units are **dispersed throughout the housing development** and are not able to be distinguished from the market-rate units. Therefore, we are concerned that the new proposal for 5150 El Camino Real does not include any BMR units in the ownership component.

The calculations for the density bonus/BMR units are a bit difficult to follow now that the developer wants to split the project into two lots. Our recommendation is that the developer provide a total of 29 BMRs, as the Staff Report suggests; this is fairly consistent with the Dutchints proposal approved earlier. However, a proportion of these BMRs should be in the townhouse component. The closest ratio would appear to be dispersing 25 BMRs throughout the rental portion at low-income (LI) levels and 4 units within the ownership project. To be consistent with the Los Altos inclusionary ordinance, the majority of these ownership units (3) should be moderate income and one should be (LI).

However, to be consistent with the Staff Report recommendation and the benefits of State Density Bonus Law perhaps all the BMR ownership units, like the rental BMRs, should be LI. Another option would be to allow Prometheus to provide all the BMRs as rentals, since Los Altos has fewer rental BMRs compared to ownership and rental BMRs are typically more manageable than ownership. If the City opts to go this route, we recommend that some of the BMRs be very low-income (VLI) units and ask Staff to determine what percentage of LI and VLI would be equivalent to the cost to the developer of providing the ownership BMRs.

We appreciate Staff and the Planning Commission paying close attention to appropriate implementation of the BMR ordinance as well as density bonus law. We are also pleased to see that most of the units will be rental as Los Altos has been building very few rental units; rentals are more affordable to those with lower incomes, and we support providing a range of housing types.

(Please send any questions about this email to Sue Russell at susan.russell75@gmail.com.)

Karin Bricker, President LWV of Los Altos/Mountain View Area

Cc: Gabe Engeland. Nick Zornes Sean Gallegos Angel Rodriguez