



October 11, 2022

To Menlo Park Community

RE: Measure V – Menlo Park

The League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County opposes Menlo Park Measure “V”.

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to make democracy work and to support effective representative democracy. In eliminating a function of elected City Council representatives to make zoning changes and instead put zoning changes to a public vote, Measure V reduces the effectiveness of city government.

Our League has adopted a full range of housing positions which are attached to this letter. We oppose Measure “V” for the following specific reasons, which are based on those positions.

1. Election requirements are a barrier to new housing and thereby can increase the cost and uncertainty of housing proposals. Our League believes Menlo Park needs new housing and, therefore, needs to avoid barriers and added costs to housing production.
2. The Measure does nothing to moderate or otherwise affect the demand for housing. Our League believes there needs to be a balance between job generating land uses and housing supply. This Measure does not provide any means or measures that result in a balance. Our League believes the City of Menlo Park can do better to balance both and believes that there are options to minimize potential negative impacts while meeting housing demand throughout the city.
3. The State and pro-housing groups have acted to not only eliminate barriers to housing construction but also to limit local discretionary decision making. The proposed Measure risks such future nullification.

We understand that Measure “V” came to be out of frustration with the consideration of one housing project. We believe Measure “V” is not the solution to this frustration. We support higher densities along major transportation routes and believe development should be guided by an adopted General Plan and supporting zoning rules that are regularly reviewed for consistency. We believe Menlo Park could do better with its General Plan and Zoning regulations.

We encourage robust public engagement regarding potential zoning changes as well as related development regulations and design standards that minimize impacts on adjacent uses.



**League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County**

*Serving Atherton, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Redwood City and Woodside*

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Our League would welcome forums to examine the entire city job production capacity and housing options to create a balance as well as to identify development regulations and design standards that minimize impacts. We would join with the City, other community organizations and neighborhood groups in support of such forums.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Connie Guerrero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

Connie Guerrero, President

League of Women Voters, South San Mateo County

*Liga de Mujeres Votantes del sur del Condado de San Mateo*

**Your Vote is Your Voice! -- ¡Tu Voto es tu Voz!**

attachment

*The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose candidates or political parties.*

## **ATTACHMENT**

# HOUSING POSITION

(adopted June 2020)

## League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County

*The League of Women Voters South San Mateo County supports city housing policies that identify local and regional housing needs, advocate for affordable housing and provide for housing production, including low- and moderate-income housing. Consideration should be given to environmental quality, safety, design standards, jobs/housing balance, traffic patterns and infrastructure.*

### **I. We support a variety of means to increase the housing supply, especially for moderate- and low-income persons.**

A. Promote infilling to use existing infrastructure and protect open space while minimizing exposure to environmental risks by:

1. identifying empty space within developed areas
2. increasing density near transportation corridors

B. Promote mixed use development by:

1. combining residential/commercial use in commercially zoned areas
2. encouraging adaptive reuse, building conversions and air rights dedication, enabling building over existing use

C. Promote housing diversification by:

1. development of family rental housing
2. development of second units on single family properties
3. utilizing manufactured housing
4. facilitating shared ownership
5. building smaller units with fewer amenities
6. shared housing programs

D. Encourage zoning which allows such uses as foster homes and halfway houses.

### **II. We support a variety of monetary and non-monetary measures by jurisdictions to develop below market rate housing. Cooperative efforts are encouraged between private and public sectors to provide needed housing through a combination of the following practices:**

A. Provide local sources of support for affordable housing through:

1. inclusionary zoning ordinances
2. in lieu fees
3. commercial linkage fees
4. contributions to housing trust funds

B. Provide incentives to developers through:

1. tax exempt financing
2. land banking and set asides for capital improvement/basic infrastructure

## LWVSSMC Housing Position, cont.

3. encouraging priority processing for affordable housing developments
4. assisting developers with site and subsidy information

C. Provide assistance to buyer by equity sharing and other home assistance programs (local, state or federal).

D. Re-zone for development to meet housing needs.

E. Bonus density incentives

**III. We support the county-wide programs of the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust (“HEART”) of San Mateo County as well as full implementation of its Joint Powers Authority (“JPA”) established by the County and cities within the County, known as its Member Agencies. Additionally, we support:**

A. Membership in HEART of the County and all cities within San Mateo County.

B. Loans to HEART from Member Agencies for regional housing projects from their funds that are dedicated to low-and moderate-income housing and are currently unused.

**IV. We support the timely implementation by the county and cities within San Mateo County of plans to improve the availability of housing, including:**

- A. An adopted Housing Element and General Plan that are in compliance with state requirements and regional housing allocations and are supported by Zoning Ordinance rules.
- B. Plans that address state and county legislation regarding housing.
- C. Active use of jurisdiction funds that are dedicated for low- and middle-income housing, either by the jurisdiction or through HEART.

**V. We support stabilization and preservation of low- and moderate-income housing through the following measures:**

- A. Strict code enforcement to prevent deterioration and correction of code violations
- B. Utilization of public rehabilitation funds including home repair programs for low income households
- C. Preservation of below market rate housing through long term deed restrictions
- D. Attempts should be made either to prevent demolition of moderate- and low- income housing or replace it with comparable housing.
- E. Ensure when condominium conversions are permitted the following restrictions apply:

1. vacancy rate of rental units in the community is at least 5
2. tenants offered first right of refusal
3. long term affordability assured through deed restrictions in below market rate units

**VI. We encourage public education and public participation in order to further the housing objectives**

# **LAND USE POSITION**

## **League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County**

**We support land use policies which provide a quality human environment for residents of San Mateo County, including a balanced consideration of social, environmental, and economic concerns.**

We support measures which direct growth, which control the effects of transportation facilities, which maintain, preserve and protect unique natural resources, which control the use of hazardous areas, and which meet the housing and social needs of all citizens.

We support full utilization of a general plan which meets these criteria and which conforms to the adopted Bay Area regional plans and to state requirements.

**We support of substantial citizen participation in land use policy making.**

### **I. Policy:**

- Growth should be kept within the limits of the resources.
- Communities, in order to be well balanced, should be encouraged to include a broad range of ages, incomes, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Economic development should provide jobs needed by county residents and should upgrade and revitalize existing areas
- Transportation and other facilities should fit within the established land use plan with higher densities kept along major transportation routes
- Local governments should assume responsibility for evaluating geological and environmental hazards, for informing the public of such hazards, and for providing protection
- Areas of unique natural resources should be maintained in uses which would preserve them
- Open space has a value of its own and should not be viewed as a holding zone for future development
- Appropriate uses of open space areas are agriculture, forestry, limited recreational uses, and low-density clustered housing, provided these uses are carefully controlled and preserve the scenic beauty
- Tax relief should be provided for property owners in open space areas

### **II. Planning:**

- Full and consistent use should be made of the adopted plan
- The plan should be fully implemented by keeping zoning in conformity with the plan, by utilizing a long-range capital improvement program, and by other means to carry out its policies
- Procedures for regular and orderly review of the plan should be established
- Coordination of interjurisdictional planning efforts, especially for unincorporated areas, should be encouraged
- Implementation of the plan requires full funding and support of the planning function

### **III. Citizen Participation:**

- Information on policies and plans should be made available to the public
- Opportunities for citizen participation should be encouraged within the policy-making structure.

## **ANNEXATION OF DEVELOPED UNINCORPORATED AREAS**

We support the annexation of developed unincorporated areas to cities in whose sphere of influence they lie, when the following criteria are present:

1. Data indicate that overall, annexation will result in more efficient and cost-effective services.
2. Evidence indicates that the quality of services in the annexing city will not suffer substantially as a result of annexation.
3. Adequate procedures are followed to insure public notice and public participation.
4. Owners of annexed property are protected from an unreasonable burden in meeting city ordinances; where appropriate, an ordinance, including pre-zoning, covenants protecting deeds and "grandfather clauses," is negotiated between County and city, with community participation in the decision-making process, and with consideration for the character of the area to be annexed.
5. The County bears a reasonable share of the costs involved in agreed upon improvements before or upon annexation.