

THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
75 Years in PALO ALTO



3921 E. Bayshore Rd., SUITE 209 • PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94303 • 650/903-0600 • www.lwvpaloalto.org

April 4, 2014

Planning and Transportation Commission
250 Hamilton Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94301

RE: Floor area ratio; Amend Chapter 18.16 of the Palo Alto Municipal, code table 4 footnote #9 to reduce the allowable Floor Area Ratio on CN zoned sites where dwelling units are permitted @ 20 units per acre.

Dear Chairman Michael and Commissioners,

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto believes increasing the density of housing along the El Camino transit corridor is wise to increase our supply of housing and ultimately improve the environment by encouraging the use of mass transit. Thus, we were glad to see the increased density for the housing inventory sites identified in the Housing Element 2007-2014 approved by City Council last January.

However, the League does not support the current proposal to reduce the FAR for the residential units in the designated CN sites along El Camino from 0.5 to 0.4 per acre. By increasing the density to 20 units per acre while not changing the FAR, the size of potential units has already been reduced. As there is no minimum density requirement, a market rate developer can put in as few units as the market will allow, but a non-profit affordable housing developer is required by funding mechanisms, such as tax credit requirements, to build for a greater density. In addition, affordable housing developers are often required to provide other amenities such as community rooms to create a welcoming environment for residents. This eats into the available square footage available for the unit itself. Furthermore this change would limit the types of housing that could be built.

The LWV of Palo Alto believes that placing denser housing along transportation corridors is good for the environment and our transportation systems as well as for the people who reside in those residences. However, please do not create further barriers to the development of affordable housing along this corridor. Please do not reduce the FAR for residential units where dwelling units are permitted at 20 units per acre.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Alice Thornton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Alice Thornton, President
League of Women Voters of Palo Alto