



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
c/o Aaron Grossman
817 Montgomery Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

March 18, 2024

City of Mountain View City Council
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: Displacement Response Strategies

Dear Mayor Showalter and City Council members:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) appreciates the opportunity to comment on this agenda item you will be discussing at your meeting on March 19, 2024.

MVCSP has comments on four elements of the displacement response strategy being discussed at the Council Study session.

Acquisition/Preservation Program

We would like to thank staff for providing an excellent staff report on specific acquisition and preservation strategies designed to address the tenant displacement issues associated with the demolition and redevelopment of CSFRA apartment complexes. The staff report's stated goal of having "a mission-oriented organization, such as nonprofit developers, community land trusts (CLT), and/or tenant-based groups, acquire CSFRA units and convert them into affordable housing with deed-restrictions to preserve the long-term affordability of the units" is an endeavor that MVCSP fully supports and endorses. Providing \$4 million of City funds as a catalyst to invest \$20 million in the first phase of a City-sponsored acquisition/preservation is an excellent City investment, and we fully support it.

While the staff report is very clear that "Staff is not recommending that the City be the acquirer, owner, or operator of CSFRA properties," the recommendation does not make it explicitly clear that it will be the nonprofit developers and not the City who will be utilizing a portion of the \$4 million to catalyze a complete funding package to acquire, renovate, and operate the acquired apartment complex. In the next

phase of the program development, it will be important to flesh out the institutional requirements to make sure the money flows to specific projects spearheaded by nonprofit organizations who have organizational, management, and financial capacity to attract the necessary financing package and successfully execute a specific acquisition and preservation project in a timely manner. We support the idea of a financial intermediary, such as a community foundation, or other organization, that has experience managing funds, the ability to further fundraise, and the expertise in distributing funds to other organizations. This non-profit organization should have the institutional expertise to be able to take advantage of San Francisco Housing Accelerator Funds, foundation funds, and other fund sources, and other funding vehicles, such as donor advised fund (DAF) resources.

We would like the City to allocate funds to a variety of housing types, including community-controlled housing and opportunity to purchase programs, and consider housing for specific subgroups, such as single parent families, college students, seniors, and workforce-specific housing. Mountain View has a significant opportunity to be a model for other jurisdictions with this approach.

Community Ownership Action Plan

The \$4 million of City Housing funds to catalyze \$20 million in acquisition/funds is the first phase of a program that will lead eventually to a total of \$50 million investment in an acquisition/preservation by 2028, a commitment of the Housing Element. The phasing plan is not explicitly included in the consultant scope of work of the Community Ownership Action Plan, and we would like to request that it be included.

MVCSP fully supports the Community Ownership Action Plan scope of work listed in the staff report. A robust community engagement effort will be an important element of this work effort. We want to make sure that the recommended consultant budget of \$125,000 is sufficient to meet this program objective. We are concerned that this is not enough to include a robust community engagement process, which we believe is critical to the success of this program.

Opportunity to Purchase Act (OPA) policies

MVCSP fully supports the staff recommendation to fully evaluate and propose implementation policies for OPA and the variations as part of the Community Ownership Action Plan process. In particular, we feel that requiring property owners to provide notices to qualified organizations or tenant groups before they sell their building is an important prerequisite of the acquisition/preservation program.

Displaced-Resident Preferences

MVCSP strongly supports the staff recommendation to formalize the City's live/work policy—and including a preference for displaced tenants—in an ordinance pursuant to SB 649 as it formally aligns the City's local preference policy with the legislation's goals, so that displaced tenants have the ability to find temporary housing in Mountain View, as they wait for new housing, also in Mountain View. As stated well in the staff report “this would allow the City to require projects using tax credits, tax-exempt bond financing, and/or other state and federal sources to implement the preference without violating the general fair-housing requirement that such financing be used for housing that is available to the general public.” Importantly for climate action objectives, it would help to prevent or at least reduce expensive long commutes of displaced tenants who work in Mountain

View. Long commutes are also an equity issue, costing significant commuting costs to those often least able to afford it, and also create a range of health and social issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Cliff Chambers
for the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc:
Wayne Chen, Housing Director
Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager
Heather Glaser, City Clerk

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a local volunteer-based organization dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

For more information, see <http://www.mvcsp.org>.

To contact us, send email to mvcsp.info@gmail.com.