

From: [Emily Ramos](#)
To: [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Showalter, Pat](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Ramirez, Lucas](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#); [City Council](#); [Mathew Reed](#)
Subject: RE: Residential Development at 1919-1945 Gamel Way, 574 Escuela Avenue, and 1970 Latham Street
Date: Tuesday, September 28, 2021 1:13:00 PM
Attachments: [SVH Gamel Way MV 9 28 21.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Kamei, Vice Mayor Ramirez, and Councilmembers Abe-Koga, Matichak, Hicks, Lieber, and Showalter,

On behalf of SV@Home and our members, we write to you today to support the redevelopment proposal at 1919-1945 Gamel Way, 574 Escuela Avenue, and 1970 Latham Street, which would entail the demolition of an existing naturally affordable 29-unit apartment building and the construction of 121 for-sale condos. This city has faced many projects that demolished rent-controlled units and replaced them with net-loss or affordability-loss projects in the last few years. However, this project uses many tools that provide the opportunity for a far better outcome.

We applaud the city council using the street sale of Gamel Way as leverage to focus on the needs of the tenants threatened with displacement.

We support the relocation packages that gives tenants a number of choices in this circumstance including: the opportunity to purchase one of the new units at a rate affordable to them, or the right to receive a 42 month rental subsidy plus \$5,000 in relocation payments, with the subsidy being the difference between a tenant's current monthly rent and the comparable market rent. We believe these options align with the requirements under SB330. We appreciate the foresight in allowing tenants to occupy their current rental unit until 6 months prior to construction and if they choose to return to their new ownership unit, they will be provided an interim unit during construction.

Providing the rare opportunity of below market rate homeownership has allowed us to see the barriers that exist when transitioning a renter to a homeowner. Low income renters may face challenges in securing a home loan including, saving for a down payment, verifying consistent employment, and addressing a poor credit score. These challenges may also have been amplified during the pandemic. There are additional challenges posed by potential future increases in HOA fees, which may push the units out of the range of affordability. In the long term, the council should explore funding sources to bridge these issues, but the challenges may limit the number of tenants able to purchase a BMR unit through this development.

Therefore, in addition to the two current relocation package options, we would like to commend the developer for agreeing to provide a third option: Placing a tenant in a nearby rent controlled unit at a similar rental rate at the landlord's other local properties. This also helps tenants who may have trouble qualifying for an apartment due to inconsistent income resulting from COVID – 19 impacts. It is unknown which option would be best for each tenant's unique situation, but this would provide

them with a choice to stay as a renter at a stabilized, affordable rate.

Mountain View once again shows that it is a leader in tackling the region's housing crisis by acknowledging that the crisis of housing insecurity, rent burden, and displacement will not be addressed by simply replacing existing homes with new expensive homes, but by following the 3 "P"s: produce more homes by increasing density, preserve affordable housing by requiring a one for one replacement of affordability, and protect tenants by providing a first right of return and strong relocation assistance options.

These kinds of solutions show how the city can invest in our existing communities without gentrifying them. It shows a path forward now that SB330 will apply to future projects. Developments like these should serve as a model for the upcoming council housing initiatives: R3 District Zoning Update and Housing Displacement Response Strategies.

We share our support for this project in solidarity with the current residents of Gamel Way. Thank you for your time and work in keeping Mountain View inclusive and diverse.

Sincerely,
Mathew Reed
Policy Director

Emily Ann Ramos
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Transmitted via email

September 28, 2021

Honorable Mayor Ellen Kamei and Members of the City Council
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

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Re: 7.1 – Residential Development at 1919-1945 Gamel Way, 574 Escuela Avenue, and 1970 Latham Street
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Mathew Reed
Policy Director

