



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
c/o Aaron Grossman



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.

McGill, Pam

From: Leo Goldberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 2:31 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Comment on March 19 Study Session
Attachments: MV Displacement Response Strategy Letter.pdf

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.

To Whom it May Concern,

I've attached a comment letter on the March 19 study session on displacement response strategy. We focus on the recommendation to create an acquisition and preservation pooled fund, an area the CA CLT Network has considerable experience with at the local and state level.

Thank you for prioritizing funding for affordable housing preservation and community ownership and for considering our comments.

Respectfully,
Leo

Leo Goldberg (he/him)
CA Community Land Trust Network
cacltnetwork.org
[REDACTED]



March 18, 2024

Re: March 19, 2024 Study Session on Displacement Response Strategy

Dear Mountain View City Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of the California Community Land Trust Network to provide comment on the March 19, 2024 study session on displacement response strategy and specifically on the recommendation to create an acquisition and preservation pooled fund.

The California Community Land Trust Network (CACLTN) is a membership organization representing the Community Land Trusts (CLTs) of California. We have 52 nonprofit organization members spanning the state from San Diego to Humboldt. CACLTN seeks to strengthen housing stability, ownership, and economic empowerment in California's low-income and BIPOC communities by taking land and housing from the speculative market and placing them into permanent affordability through community ownership. In addition to an active program of capacity building for emerging CLTs, CACLTN coordinates policy advocacy related to community ownership and permanently affordable housing.

To a large degree, CACLTN and its members are focused on strategies that seek to stabilize the housing of at-risk populations, most commonly low-income and/or BIPOC, by removing properties from the market and establishing pathways to ownership for the residents. CLTs around the state are working to acquire buildings, from single family homes to multifamily complexes, in order to transform them into permanently affordable community assets that will not only provide affordable housing to the immediate residents but also to generations of future occupants.

This work is especially critical in the high-cost areas of the Bay Area like Mountain View where soaring housing expenses are pricing out middle-income workers not to mention service workers and the low-income. The result has been stark increases in the unhoused population while more and more people commute hours to work in our communities. For this reason, we are honored to support the work of Fondo de Solidaridad | Mountain View CLT who are positioned to be leaders in making Mountain View a more racially and economically inclusive community.

We solute the City Council Staff recommendation to dedicate \$4 million towards acquisition and preservation via a community ownership housing model. Our experience is that local preservation source are critical for this form of housing work where there are scant city and state resources. Indeed, the most successful preservation efforts in the state have taken place when cities dedicate funds specifically for this purpose (for example, the

Los Angeles County CLT Pilot Program and San Francisco Small Sites Program). We'd also like to suggest additions and alternatives to the city staff recommendations that may enhance the community's ability to achieve goals around anti-displacement and community ownership:

- We suggest restructuring the \$4 million for acquisition such that it can be deployed quickly rather than providing the base for a \$20 million fund. CLTs and other organizations that utilize the funds will be able to leverage them in the context of specific projects. Providing them with faster access to the funds will be key in making this investment as impactful as possible.
- Furthermore, we recommend the deployment of these funds through a pilot program to demonstrate the efficacy of the approach. Fondo de Solidaridad | Mountain View CLT is ready to have an impact by assisting at-risk tenants as demonstrated by their track record of distributing flexible financial assistance to 700+ low-income families in the community.
- Ensure a simple and accessible process for getting these funds, especially for community-based groups led by working class people like community land trusts, tenants buying buildings, mobile home park residents buying their mobile home park, etc. Unfortunately, CACLTN has seen well-intentioned city and state programs that underperform because of cumbersome processes to access funds. Housing preservation requires speed because in most cases property sellers are looking to complete transactions quickly and will happily accept a cash offer that can close in a matter of days. Municipal programs that require closing times of several months simply don't work. Furthermore, we've seen plodding processes to vet the eligibility of community-based affordable housing providers like CLTs. Too often, excessive requirements of documentation serve to weed out organizations rooted in BIPOC and low-income communities while benefitting well-resourced, often white-led developers with few ties to the community.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Sincerely,
Leo Goldberg



Co-Director for Policy and Capacity-Building
California Community Land Trust Network

