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August 27, 2018

Honorable Mayor Kniss and Members of the City Council
City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Mayor Kniss, Vice Mayor Filseth, and Councilmembers DuBois, Fine, Holman, Kou, Scharff, Tanaka, and Wolbach:

Re: Agenda Item 8: Consideration and Adoption of an Ordinance and Emergency Ordinance

We write today to urge the City Council's support for the staff recommendation to **adopt an urgency ordinance** that covers evictions and tenant relocation assistance. In addition to taking swift action to adopt an urgency ordinance this evening, we respectfully request that the Council set the stage future conversations around the following potential strategies:

- **Incorporate a grace period.** The ordinance should include a meaningful grace period prior to residents' being evicted to provide families ample opportunities to find commensurate housing in a severely constrained housing rental market.
- **Project size threshold.** We urge the Council to consider expanding applicability of the ordinance to residential developments of 10 units or more – a threshold reflected in ordinances in neighboring jurisdictions.
- **Conversion ordinance.** We urge the Council to consider adopting a conversion ordinance to define a process and expectations prior to the conversion of multi-family residences from rental to ownership or from residential to non-residential uses.

SV@Home is a nonprofit housing policy and advocacy organization dedicated to creating affordable housing opportunities in the high-cost Silicon Valley. We know that as a region we are not producing enough new homes to meet demand, and that the resulting undersupply of housing is responsible for rising rents, displacement, and gentrification. But we also know that even as we add units, we are losing them. Two steps forward, one step backwards.

The urgency ordinance was precipitated by the proposed conversion of the President Hotel Apartments from residential use to a luxury boutique hotel, an action that will eliminate 75 naturally affordable homes in the heart of Palo Alto. The increased relocation payments proposed in the ordinance are a step up from the current situation faced by the tenants. As we have heard directly from those impacted, this conversion

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August 27, 2018

Re: Ordinance and Emergency Ordinance for Relocation Assistance for No-Fault Evictions

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will cause major hardship as they seek to find affordable options in one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation.

This is just the latest proposal to cause displacement. Palo Alto recently took action to avoid the potential loss of the Buena Vista Mobilehome Park, which is home to 400 residents. Having policies in place to protect residents from displacement and to adequately compensate those who eventually are displaced is critically important. Palo Alto does not have a significant source of affordable housing. Every affordable and naturally affordable home should be protected.

We urge you to act tonight to preserve and protect vulnerable rental households and communities and we look forward to working with you in the coming days and weeks to strengthen and improve tenant protections in the City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Pilar Lorenzana
Deputy Director