

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

March 19, 2019

Honorable Mayor Matichak and Members of the City Council
 City of Mountain View
 500 Castro Street
 Mountain View 94041

Dear Mayor Matichak, Vice Mayor Abe-Koga, and Councilmembers Clark, Hicks, Kamei, McAlister, and Ramirez:

RE: Item 7.1 - Update on Initiatives to Assist Homeless and Unstably Housed Residents, and Consideration of Parking Enforcement Strategies

On behalf of SV@Home and our members, we write today regarding the City of Mountain View's initiatives to support members of the community who are experiencing homelessness or are unstably housed. We would like to thank city staff, community organizations including the Community Services Association of Mountain View, and the faith community for the many efforts outlined in the staff report to implement the City Council's Homelessness Initiatives Work Plan. As an organization that advocates for housing for all, we thank the Council for your leadership in setting these policies and programs which help our most vulnerable neighbors.

The fact that there are so many members of our community experiencing homelessness, whether they are living on the streets or in a vehicle, is a direct result of our regional housing affordability crisis. Even as cities such as Mountain View have taken action to produce more affordable housing opportunities and actually place people experiencing homelessness in permanent homes, the number of people experiencing homelessness has only continued to rise. This is directly linked to increases in housing costs and scarcity of both deed-restricted and naturally affordable homes. Despite this, the City of Mountain View should be proud that the resources you have committed to building affordable housing and assisting our neighbors experiencing homelessness have helped many people stay permanently housed.

Permanent housing is the only long-term solution that will get our neighbors off the streets and into a more stable environment. The staff report makes clear that creating permanent housing solutions is an overarching goal to the City's strategy, and we applaud that goal. At the same time, we recognize that we are not building permanent housing, including permanent supportive housing, at a rate commensurate with the need, which reflects both the need for more time and more funds to bring permanent solutions online. In the meantime, while still keeping the permanent housing goal at the center of our policies, we believe cities must take action to assist those who need help today. Mountain View has been implementing many policies to do just that, from

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the safe parking program to emergency funds for families teetering on the brink of homelessness.

With all of this mind, we urge the City Council to continue to support the action items included in the Homeless Initiatives Work Plan and also authorize the expansion of the City’s Safe Parking program to create additional safe parking areas, such as the proposal to make use of the Shoreline parking lots.

For many people living in RVs or other vehicles, their car is what enables them to continue to participate in the community and maintain a job. Making safe parking more difficult will only increase their instability and could push them into living on the streets.

We recognize that there are no overnight solutions, and that homelessness is having a wider effect on the entire community. That’s why we are heartened to see that Mountain View residents overwhelmingly support permanent housing solutions for their neighbors experiencing homelessness. The City should remain committed to ensuring quality of life for everyone, regardless of whether they are living on the street, in an RV, or in a permanent home.

We also know that this challenge is not Mountain View’s alone, and additional regional solutions must be identified to ensure cities are working together to end homelessness. We are committed to working with Mountain View, the County, and other cities in Silicon Valley to implement the most effective strategies to help our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness find a stable home.

Sincerely,



David K Meyer
Director of Strategic Initiatives