

Your Name

IdaRose Sylvester

Your Website and Social Media Presence:

www.idarosesylvester.com FB: idarose / FB: idaroseformvcc / IG: @idarosefomountainview / LinkedIn @idarosesylvester

Policy Questions

Please answer the five policy questions below.

Rent Control History and Vehicle Resident History tables are available [here](#) for your reference.

1) Rent Control

Please share your public and private positions on the rent control measures proposed or adopted in Mountain View since 2015 ([see here](#)).

Are you satisfied with current Mountain View rent control policies?

"I strongly supported the original efforts to establish rent control. I have been a proponent ever since, supporting Measure V and explaining to people what Measures W and D really meant. I spend a fair amount of time to this day explaining how housing is a human right, and that rent control is one way to make amends for and to end systemic racism and socioeconomic discrimination that still shows up in housing policy. I led a two+ year effort on this topic, with the Human Relations Commission, the Mountain View Historical Association, and Stanford. That information can be found here <https://tinyurl.com/MVhistoryofhousing>.

I want Mountain View to enact stronger rent control policies. We need to amend the MHRSO (Mobile Home Rent Stabilization Ordinance) annual allowable rent increases to the lesser of 60% of CPI or 3%. This is an easy argument, since owners pay more expenses than apartment renters, and because mobile home parks are some of the last naturally affordable housing.

If Proposition 33 passes, we will have the opportunity for more robust rent control, starting with including more housing types, and getting out from under the antiquated 1995 cutoff. Costa-Hawkins seems like it was meant as a short term compromise to solve a problem that has only increased.

As a Mountain View mediator (via Project Sentinel), many of my cases involve tenants and landlords. I have certainly heard of landlords abusing and/or “not knowing about” CSFRA when buying a building, and my sense is we need to do more to ensure compliance, especially upon ownership change.”

2) Vehicle Residents

Street parking of RVs is currently permitted on some streets following settlement of a lawsuit against the City. When the Measure C settlement ends, how would you support the residents who are currently living in the three miles which the city must allow? [RV parking ordinance history here.](#)

I will advocate for an ordinance that provides at least the same amount of street parking for vehicle residents that we have today so RV dwellers are not displaced and that we do not go through this dance over and over. We should start from a fresh perspective and ask what streets would work best for street parking, without starting with prohibitions, leading to likely better outcomes. We also need more safe parking, and maybe some creative off street parking at, for example, unused office buildings. Having personally advocated for this with a Mountain View ad hoc group I mentioned in question #3, I appreciate this isn't as easy as it should be.

I was a strong advocate against Measure C, obviously for humanitarian reasons, but also its obvious “soft ban” pitched as a safety law, and the ridiculous sum of money spent to put signs up. It was a blight on the name of good policy making.

3) Safe Parking

Do we need to continue to provide Safe Parking Lots for RVs?
Would you support providing electricity access to RVs at the Shoreline lot so that there would be less need for generator or natural gas use?

Yes. I support continuing to provide Safe Parking Lots, as long as our neighbors need to live in RVs (and other vehicles). Safe Parking Lots build community, enhance safety of residents, and allow for services like utilities and sanitation to be provided. I worry about losing the VTA and Terra Bella lots, and have spent much effort in the past looking for solutions. I was part of a large coalition (Human Relations Commission, faith groups, nonprofits,

concerned residents, and more) that tried to identify and secure properties. We need to be acting fast to ensure more space, and I worry about the pace we are going.

Providing electricity access will minimize greenhouse gas emissions, reduce exposure to noise pollution and inhaling airborne particulates and dangerous chemicals created by burning gas, and keep residents safer without the fire hazard, while allowing RV dwellers to live comfortably. Other basic utilities, like water, garbage pickup, and WiFi should be provided. Other services, like a visiting mobile library, would be great for children, and the ability to garden would be a positive way to aid food security and build community. There are many small ideas that enhance community that simply are not allowed today.

On the Human Relations Commission, I did a powerful storytelling project on vehicle residents in safe parking lots, and these stories directly led to County funding. Our neighbors told stories about why they want to live here, including access to great schools, employment opportunities, family networks, doctors, and more, and why safe parking works. The stories have unfortunately been removed from the city website (and had been heavily edited and redacted), but you can find them here <https://tinyurl.com/idarosesafeparking>. We need to keep creating and sharing stories like this.

4) Displacement

What policies do you favor to help mitigate or prevent displacement?

What balance are you looking for when it comes to redevelopment and its impact on existing residents?

A whole variety of measures work together to mitigate and prevent displacement.

Rent stabilization is one of our strongest tools to protect against displacement, along with just cause eviction policies. Building enough housing, especially affordable, is great, but as discussed throughout this document, challenging economically to do quickly.

Universal Basic Income expansion and workforce development provide economic security which can prevent displacement.

Ensuring the successful implementation of Mountain View's acquisition/preservation program, including supporting strong partnership with housing accelerators and nonprofits, and encouraging local community and tenant ownership, is a powerful strategy that prevents displacement and enhances equity in our community. There are moving parts here, much fundraising, relationships, and unknowns, but I want to ensure we do this.

Of course, building more truly affordable housing helps to stop displacement.

When it comes to redevelopment versus preventing displacement, I want to make sure adequate just cause eviction and tenant support is given, and right to return is clear, noticed properly and tracked. I would like to see enough notice (a pre-warning) so that landlords can give tenant or tenant groups a chance to secure funds and have the first chance to buy the property. Beyond that, we have many seismically unsound buildings with soft stories, and many that are energy inefficient (more money, potentially less safe), and have other hazards, and many of them are CSFRA units. I want to keep tenant health and safety in mind when evaluating redevelopment. Many units can be retrofitted to be safe, sometimes without displacement, or done so with short periods of displacement.

5) Affordability of new and/or existing housing.

What are your suggestions to increase the affordability of new or existing housing?

Many ideas will need to be implemented together, there is no one solution, which means we need to work on ideas in tandem, not one at a time, to make a dent. Some ideas include:

We need to increase our housing stock! We must find ways to increase the number of and diversity of housing units, such as through zoning changes (R3 for example) and collaborative funding, to meet the needs of our entire community, including truly affordable housing, supportive housing, housing for the missing middle, and housing for teachers, seniors, single parent families, and others. Funding is a significant concern, and the BAHFA bond being pulled from the ballot does not help, but collaboration, with agencies, other government jurisdictions, nonprofits and other players, needs to be aggressively pursued and managed, something Council can do. From a

supply perspective, there are many ideas to expand housing stock that don't require new development. We need to be creative, nimble, and willing to try new things. Cooperative and communal housing are seldom talked about in Mountain View, but could provide options for many. Another idea is to have an incentive program for people to rent out rooms in their home, and get a cash subsidy or tax break. Another is to have a fund (jurisdiction level tbd) families can use to get low cost loans for rental deposits (and first and last month rent) or down payments for first time buyers. Rent control expansion is another strategy.

Ensuring the successful implementation of Mountain View's acquisition/preservation program, including supporting strong partnership with housing accelerators and nonprofits, and encouraging local community and tenant ownership is another way to protect housing stock.

We also need to make sure new or redevelopments must include the number of affordable units being lost plus ensure a minimum number of affordable units in total. And it is critical for the city to find a way to create incentives for developers to build affordable units. Streamlined project approvals and permitting, lower application fees, tax incentives, can all help.

Tangentially, I would like a registry (or at least a regular study) of rental vacancies, especially of the luxury apartments we've approved, and I'd like to see developers "show their math" when they say a project with affordable units does not pencil out.