



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Milpitas City Council Implements Several Policies to Protect Renters**

*Rent Review Program and Tenant Protections; Just Cause Eviction Protection; and Pilot Rent Relief Program unanimously approved, effective immediately*

**Milpitas, Calif.** – At the October 15 City Council meeting, the Milpitas City Council approved several programs in response to community demand for assistance in protecting tenants from unreasonable rent increases and evictions, and to provide a mechanism to prohibit income discrimination and landlord retaliation. The Council unanimously created a rent review program; enhanced tenant protections, including just cause eviction protections; and a pilot rent relief program. All three actions were done so in an effort to encourage community stability, avoid displacement and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of renters in Milpitas.

“This is a historical night for the Milpitas City Council as we continue to put Milpitas families first and demonstrate that we are committed to taking care of those most vulnerable,” said Mayor Rich Tran. “Our children are our future and we need to ensure that we are doing whatever we can to keep a roof over their heads so they can excel at school and one day be Mayor or a Councilmember right here in Milpitas.”

After the Council established the Housing Subcommittee in May 2019, the Subcommittee and staff had been hard at work, drafting a rent review ordinance and a pilot rent relief program. As the work was being wrapped up, the state legislature also passed Assembly Bill 1482, known as the Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which was signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 8, 2019. AB 1482 sets a cap on rent increases that would allow a landlord to raise the rents by 5% per year plus the percentage change in the cost of living, or 10%, whichever is lower, and also provides just cause eviction protection for tenants; however, applicable exemptions caused concern for the Milpitas City Council. In response, Council approved its own rent review program and tenant protections and just cause eviction protections that will provide further assistance to the tenant community by including those residing in subsidized housing units. The rent review program also provides a process for non-binding mediation between landlords and tenant regarding proposed rent increases, and a process for a hearing regarding any rent increases. It's intended to permit landlords a fair and reasonable return on their property, while at the same time protecting tenants from arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable rent increases without concern for retribution from landlords.

“Since the creation of the Housing Subcommittee in May of this year, we have diligently been exploring opportunities to protect renters and landlords. We have spent countless hours researching and examining ways in which we, as a City Council, could implement fair programs for our residents, which could serve as a model for cities throughout the region,” said Councilmember Carmen Montano, co-chair of the Council Housing Subcommittee. “I am extremely proud to be a member of this City Council and will continue to unwaveringly support affordable housing solutions.”

At the same meeting, the Council also created a first-of-its kind pilot rent relief program to provide various forms of financial assistance to Milpitas residents and families, with a focus on students attending schools within the Milpitas Unified School District, especially those that may be experiencing homelessness. Other eligible recipients include: low-to-moderate income individuals and families with dependent children under the age of 18; seniors who are age 55 and older; disabled individuals; victims of domestic violence; emancipated foster youth; and Section 8, Below Market Rentals and other housing opportunities providing a subsidy. The program will be administered by Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, an experienced service provider whom can begin serving residents immediately and it's expected at least 20-30 families will be served during the one-year pilot program. Staff will be working with SVILC to collect the data necessary to evaluate the program, with monthly reports and updates to be presented at Housing Subcommittee meetings.

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**About the City of Milpitas**

Located at the southern end of San Francisco Bay, Milpitas is a progressive community that is an integral part of Silicon Valley. A full-service city with water utility, sewer utility, police and fire services, Milpitas celebrates an incredibly diverse population of nearly 80,000, the highest population of ethnicities in all of Santa Clara County. The City has seen a significant rise in development activity and expects the Milpitas BART station and transit center to open in December 2019, which will serve as a key local and regional connection to the high-tech, job-rich northwestern areas of Santa Clara County. Under a Council-Manager form of government, the City Council has established the following seven priority areas: public safety, environment, transportation and transit, economic development and job growth, neighborhoods and housing, community wellness and open space, and governance and administration.