

**Statement Re: Buena Vista Mobile Home Park  
Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian**

What a great, great day.

From the beginning of this effort we've had three goals:

- To preserve 117 units of desperately needed affordable housing;
- To prevent the eviction of 400 low income residents, folks who truly have nowhere else to go; and,
- To ensure that the current property owner receives full and fair market value for the property.

With today's announcement by the Housing Authority that they have reached agreement to purchase the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park and avoid the closure of the Park, we can celebrate the realization of all three goals.

All of this has been made possible only with the help of a lot of good people who deserve our thanks. Since my office and I began our efforts two and a half years ago to save the Buena Vista we have been fortunate enough to have the support of a great many allies and friends of Buena Vista.

Thanks certainly go to:

- My colleagues at the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, who were willing to take the lead in our effort to acquire and improve the Buena Vista;
- The City of Palo Alto, whose City Council unanimously agreed to match the County's funding commitment;
- Our indispensable third partner in the effort to acquire and improve the Buena Vista, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara;
- Caritas, the California-based nonprofit, experienced and skilled at preserving affordable mobile home communities, who reached out to us in the early days of our effort, and who is now under contract to actively manage the new Buena Vista;

- Our Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, State Senator Jerry Hill and former State Assemblyman Rich Gordon, all of whom lent their support, and helped with the search for funding;
- Two dozen former Mayors and City Councilmembers who spoke out in support of the effort to save the Buena Vista;
- Eighteen local school board members (past and present) who likewise expressed their support;
- More than 500 Community members who rallied at Palo Alto City Hall to show their support for their Buena Vista neighbors;
- Our local news media, including the Mercury News, the Palo Alto Weekly, and the Daily Post, all of which lent their editorial support;
- The Palo Alto Council of PTAs, and the regional association of PTAs – the 6<sup>th</sup> District PTA;
- The many non-profits who stepped forward to offer support, including the Asian Law Alliance, Neighborhood Housing Services, the Housing Trust Silicon Valley, Working Partnerships, TransForm, the League of Women Voters Palo Alto and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, among others;
- Palo Alto Forward and Palo Altans for Sensible Zoning (two local political/policy groups who often have competing land use visions), both of whom expressed support for the effort;
- The aptly named Friends of Buena Vista; and, of course,
- The residents themselves, represented by the Buena Vista Residents Association.

So many good folks came together to prevent the loss of 117 units of desperately needed affordable housing; to prevent the eviction of more than 400 of our neighbors; and to make sure the current owner of the property receives full and fair market value.

At one level this was a test—a test of whether or not our region remains a place of inclusivity and opportunity. In this instance, at least, I'm gratified to say we passed the test.

On a very practical level, this has also been an effort that benefits us all. The people who live at the Buena Vista are mostly working class folks filling the jobs that make our community run. They're working at local businesses, nonprofits, colleges and universities. They're essential to our continued economic vitality. We need them in the workforce.

And if they're forced out of the region, commuting from God knows where, that has traffic congestion implications for all of us as well.

Two and a half years ago, when my office and I first began our effort to save the Buena Vista, I noted that the conversation about the Buena Vista up until that time had been almost exclusively about closure approval and compensation for tenants about to be evicted; and that I was hoping to start a new conversation about what it would take to keep the Park open for the foreseeable future.

I also indicated that it was my hope that some significant County funding might prompt others to step up and ask how they could be part of the solution. And finally, I expressed doubt that any single agency or entity could pull this off alone. But I also noted that maybe if everybody took a piece of the problem we might find a solution.

And that's exactly what happened.

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Simitian:Buena Vista Timeline: