



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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August 26, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Senator, 26th District
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Ten reasons to OPPOSE SB 1120

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), I am writing to express our opposition to SB 1120. The bill is fundamentally flawed and will require a proposed housing development containing two residential units be considered ministerially without discretionary review or hearing, in zones where uses are limited to single-family residential development and if the proposal meets certain requirements.

The SBCCOG is opposed to SB1120 for the following ten reasons:

- Housing is not a commodity and so more supply does not mean lower price as it might with a barrel of oil. Housing prices are based on more complex dynamics. Location (which can vary from one block to the next) and characteristics (total square feet, number of bedrooms, layout of rooms, number of bathrooms, units per buildings, direct entrance from outside, and more). If demand is for single family housing, turning those parcels into duplexes or fourplexes will exacerbate the problem.
- Redevelopment of obsolete arterial strips is a much more productive strategy than adding density to single family neighborhoods. Disappearing retail poses a problem and single-family neighborhoods do not.
- Single family neighborhoods are typically auto-dependent. Adding density will add car trips which will create congestion to the streets, carbon to the atmosphere, and pollutants to the air. Addressing housing needs in this way will harm other important state issues, especially climate change
- Single family zoning has already been over-turned by ADU legislation and no government agency from HCD to OPR is studying its impact. Zillow data on pricing does not begin to constitute the needed evaluation which should include the volume of housing produced by jurisdiction, who is occupying the ADU (a family member or unaffiliated person), impact on municipal costs, impact on parking, and so forth.
- SB 1120 ignores that housing unaffordability begins as an income problem. Legislative action should focus on improving income distribution before changing policy on housing supply.
- COVID-19 has demonstrated that consumers need and want more interior space and a backyard in order to cope with long periods of quarantine. SB 1120 moves housing supply in the wrong direction.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACTION

Carson El Segundo Gardena Hawthorne Hermosa Beach Inglewood Lawndale Lomita
Manhattan Beach Palos Verdes Estates Rancho Palos Verdes Redondo Beach Rolling Hills
Rolling Hills Estates Torrance Los Angeles District #15 Los Angeles County

- Affordable housing can best be built on affordable land – COVID-19 adaptations have shown that proximity to many job sites, medical facilities and schools may no longer be necessary. Location for housing can be more flexible than before the virus.
- SB 1120 may well result in a number of unintended consequences. For example street parking will become scarce as it is in most apartment neighborhoods. Distressed sales due to COVID-19 impacts could lead to rapid turnover as corporate speculators swoop in and profit from changing the character of neighborhoods.
- The racist origins of single-family zoning are lamentable but no longer relevant. The opposite will be true in many cases as minority communities saved in order to satisfy their aspirations of living in a single-family neighborhood. SB 1120 will take that away from them. There are many racially mixed and entirely minority owned single family neighborhoods throughout the state. In LA County, Ladera Heights, Leimert Park, Baldwin Hills, View Park, and many neighborhoods in South Central are examples and there are many others.
- SB 1120 is premature and should be shelved until 2021, if not outright defeated. Besides the reasons stated above, COVID-19 is causing havoc to the job markets and housing markets throughout the state, time is needed to reassess the “housing crisis” (shortages and prices).

For these reasons, the SBCCOG opposes SB 1120. Should you have any questions, please contact SBCCOG Executive Director, Jacki Bacharach, at (310) 371-7222.

Sincerely,



Olivia Valentine, SBCCOG Chair
Councilmember, City of Hawthorne