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| Los Angeles
★ City Councilmember
| 4th District

SUMMARY AND POSITION ON SB 9 AND SB 10 MAY 19, 2021

In the City of Los Angeles, like many cities nationwide, neighborhoods are marked by a legacy of targeted investment and disinvestment, and have been shaped by discriminatory zoning regulations and land use practices that continue to have consequences today. That is why our Council Office is committed to a housing agenda that protects and expands the supply of rent-stabilized and covenanted affordable housing, actively promotes racial and economic desegregation, and strengthens tenant protections.

We believe that efforts to advance inclusivity and expand housing opportunities in neighborhoods must be balanced against the risk of displacement such efforts currently pose to existing working-class renter households, and that a targeted approach is needed that centers racial equity at the root of housing justice so that everyone, especially low-income communities and communities of color, have fair and full access to neighborhood amenities, public safety, and wealth creation.

We reviewed SB9 and SB10 with these priorities in mind. We also met with various stakeholders to listen to their concerns and priorities. Below you will find a summary of both bills, as well as the position of our office.

Housing Development - Approvals (SB 9)

This bill would require cities to allow for the ministerial consideration of duplexes and lot splitting in residential zones. It contains a number of protections and exemptions, including prohibitions on the demolition of affordable housing, more than 25% of an existing structure's exterior walls, and any development within historic districts, and it exempts such projects from the environmental review process known as CEQA (Source: California Legislative Information)

Our office supports efforts to allow for modest density increases and increased rental opportunities in historically exclusionary, high-resource neighborhoods, though we believe high fire-risk hillsides should be explicitly exempted. Smaller units on smaller lots would present modestly more affordable options for renters than a single-family home of two to four times the square footage, but there are no provisions in this bill that mandate new units be set aside as affordable for renters with incomes at or below the Area Median Income, nor is there a mechanism to exempt neighborhoods experiencing high displacement pressures.

Position: Oppose

Housing Development - Density (SB 10)

This bill would allow local governments to adopt an ordinance to zone any parcel for up to 10 units of residential density per parcel, at a height specified in the ordinance, if the parcel is located in a transit-rich area, a jobs-rich area, or an urban infill site. It would also require the Department of Housing and Community Development, in consultation with the Office of Planning and Research, to determine jobs-rich areas and publish a map of those areas every 5 years, commencing January 1, 2023, based on specified criteria (Source: California Legislative Information).

Our office supports efforts to increase density in transit-rich and jobs-rich parts of our city, but doesn't support a law zoning all parcels for up to 10 units for Los Angeles. This state bill does not require that cities do anything, however -- it just gives them the option. While we don't support this move for Los Angeles, we don't believe other cities in California should be precluded from considering it.

Position: Support