

## DRAFT

### **Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council** **Position Paper on Inclusionary Zoning**

The NWSPNC compliments both Council members Garcetti and Reyes and the authors of “Housing for All: Fair Share Program” for their mandatory and voluntary Inclusionary Zoning proposals, respectively. We agree that the provision of affordable housing, particularly for moderate-income levels, is of vital concern for the City of Los Angeles and the community of San Pedro. Nevertheless, the NWSPNC cannot support either proposal in their current form. We base our assessment, in part, on the potential impact that they would have on proposed developments for the Northwest San Pedro area. The NWSPNC encourages all parties to the current debate to continue their efforts to work out their differences in a way that combines the best of both proposals.

The NWSPNC also encourages both the Mayor and the City Council, as a first step, to establish a blue ribbon task force to recommend the fundamental reform initiatives and long range planning initiatives needed to make Los Angeles more attractive to builders and to provide more affordable housing for all the citizens of Los Angeles. This, we know, will require increased density in some areas, and mixed-use development, but clearly defined, coordinated development plans, with community input, would go a long way in allaying the legitimate concerns local communities have about Inclusionary Zoning.

The NWSPNC’s concerns and questions about the two plans include:

#### **A. Garcetti/Reyes proposal:**

##### **1. One size fits all**

The proposal does not take into account local issues that vary among the communities that comprise the City of Los Angeles. It proposes an incentive formula that may work well in some areas, but precludes affordable housing from being built in other areas. For example, the proposal provides for increased housing density when a developer is required to provide low or moderate priced housing without regard to existing constraints in local community plans. In general, we do not believe that such incentives should be granted automatically (by right). For example, at the sites in our neighborhood where new housing developments will be built or are possible, automobile traffic will increase considerably along two major north/south thoroughfares that are already heavily trafficked. The impact of additional affordable units must be carefully considered and approved, with community input, and with reference to the limits in existing community plans. Any relief from these limits should only be granted after community concurrence is obtained.

Similarly, the plan suggests a reduction in the number of on-site parking spaces required when a developer provides additional affordable housing units. Again, while this may make sense along transit routes, it does not make sense in our mass transit deprived San Pedro community. Much of our community has narrow streets, and neighborhoods that lack adequate off-street parking. In some areas,

## **DRAFT**

local residents are forced at times to park a block away from their residence. The proposed reduction in the number of parking spaces that a contractor would otherwise be required to provide would cause additional parking on adjacent local streets, adding to the existing traffic and parking problem in established neighborhoods.

### **2. Definition of Affordable Housing**

The median income figures used as a basis for making affordability calculations should not be based on citywide averages but on council district or even local residential neighborhood averages. This would make affordable housing units available to more people with incomes higher than the citywide averages, and may allow developers to make a business case for more onsite housing units instead of paying in lieu fees or building units in other parts of the planning district where higher density housing may already exist.

### **3. Deciding who gets to rent or buy below market units**

There are no established criteria for deciding who rents or buys below market value units, or procedures for establishing rental and purchase prices for affordable units.

### **4. Mandatory element**

Given the proximity of Los Angeles to many other cities in the region, we are concerned that under a mandatory plan many developers would choose to develop housing in these other communities that did not have a mandatory ordinance instead of Los Angeles. This could have the undesired consequence of reducing the total amount of new housing constructed within the City of Los Angeles.

### **5. Impact on Local Community Plans**

Builders should be granted only these incentives consistent with a local community's development plan or exceptions approved by the community. Local community plans should be updated with community input to determine the potential for additional affordable housing opportunities, local community master plans developed accordingly, and related zoning and building guidelines implemented in accordance with those master plans.

### **6. Other Process and Implementation Concerns**

We have a number of general concerns about how the process will work and how the policy will be implemented. These concerns deal with how the city housing and planning bureaucracy would consistently enforce an inclusionary zoning measure without detailed implementation guidance, the complicated relationship any inclusionary zoning measure should have with respect to existing local, state and federal housing laws, regulations and plans, and how either mandatory or voluntary inclusionary zoning plans would be implemented to not provide a windfall for builders, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, curb the development of affordable housing.

**B. Housing for All proposal:**

Some of the NWSPNC’s concerns expressed about the mandatory proposal also apply to the “Housing for All: Fair Share Program” plan. In addition, we have some specific concerns with the voluntary inclusionary zoning plan as proposed:

**1. Spread evenly across Council Districts**

While we understand the need to spread out housing in all communities, the concept of putting a requirement for an equal number of new affordable housing units in each Council district does not make sense. The distribution of new housing should be primarily dependent upon the availability of land and other market place considerations. Several Council Districts currently bear a disproportionate burden of lower-cost housing. Some of these same areas have a small amount of land available and the least ability to absorb the impacts of increased density on schools and transportation.

**2. The incentive package**

The incentives for builders in the Housing for All: Fair Share Program plan are far too generous in relation to the additional affordable housing units that would be built.

**C. Other ideas the NWSPNC likes**

We also believe that some ideas contained in both proposals would make a positive contribution to increasing the stock of availability housing. These ideas include the:

- creation of “Overlay Zones” for additional affordable housing development
- sharing property tax increments with affected neighborhood
- streamlining the City’s application/approval process to provide a greater degree of predictability, and
- requiring that affordable units remain designated as such for significant periods of time, but perhaps not in perpetuity