



CITY OF LONG BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

333 WEST OCEAN BOULEVARD • LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802 • (562) 570-6711 • FAX (562) 570-6583

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

June 12, 2019

The Honorable Richard Bloom
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to Assembly Bill 1279 (Bloom): Planning and Zoning: Housing Development: High-Resource Areas

Dear Assemblymember Bloom:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write to oppose Assembly Bill 1279 (Bloom). On May 7, 2019, the Long Beach City Council voted unanimously to oppose SB 1279. This bill proposes to require local governments to approve affordable housing on a by-right basis, inclusive of fourplex units in single-family residential zones. While Long Beach understands the need to address the housing crisis in California, we believe cities understand their unique infrastructure best to facilitate the implementation of affordable housing. Moreover, cities that do responsibly work with developers and community groups to increase housing supply should be exempted from the bill.

Long Beach allows projects under certain sizes and thresholds to be built by-right, or with limited staff-level design review. The City strongly supports streamlined development through specific plans and program-level Environmental Impact Reports (PEIRs) to streamline future development, as has been successful in Long Beach's Downtown Plan, Midtown Plan along the Metro Blue Line, and recently adopted Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP). This same PEIR approach is being used for the Long Beach General Plan Land Use Element Update, which will allow streamlining of future projects citywide, if they meet planning and zoning requirements. Long Beach also zones for multi-family housing, in some cases, adjacent to single-family residential zones. Land use decisions are carefully researched and thought out by professional staff before recommendation to the City Council for consideration. This approach enables the City to effectively ensure building safety, consider the capacity for public infrastructure to support additional demand for services, and balance land uses to support a healthy community.

The City has cultivated a unique and diverse urban fabric, due, in part, to our careful, yet expeditious planning process as well as experienced City staff who evaluate residential and commercial development applications on a case by case basis, and manage compliance based on locally established zoning ordinances and planning overlay documents. Required use by-right approvals, as proposed by AB 1279, may expedite planning approval, but does nothing to guarantee that projects will be built.

Given these reasons, the City of Long Beach respectfully opposes AB 1279 (Bloom).

Sincerely,

Patrick H. West
CITY MANAGER

cc: The Honorable Speaker Anthony Rendon, State Assembly
The Honorable Tom Umberg, State Senate, 34th District
The Honorable Steven Bradford, State Senate, 35th District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 64th District
The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, State Assembly, 70th District