

CORRESPONDENCE

Martinez, Ruben

From:
Sent: Tuesday, December 07, 2021 10:32 AM
To: Gordo, Victor; Madison, Steve; Rivas, Jessica; Masuda, Gene; Williams, Felicia; Hampton, Tyron; Kennedy, John J.; PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Impact of unaffordable housing on health and safety

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Dear Mayor and City Council members,

I was puzzled that the Council passed an "emergency" measure regarding SB 9 without providing any compelling evidence that SB 9 will negatively affect the health and safety of residents of our city. On the hand, we have ample evidence that a lack of affordable housing is having a deleterious impact on the health and safety of Pasadenans, particularly people of color and others living in poverty.

For this reason, I urge the Council to prioritize policies that will create, not thwart, more affordable housing, such as rezoning religious property for affordable housing. As this study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation indicates, lack of affordable housing is a real health and safety issue. 700 students in the PUSD are considered homeless, 19% of PCC students experience homelessness, and over 500 were counted as homeless during the 2020 count. This is a real emergency that needs to be addressed immediately.

Housing Affordability and Health

Housing is commonly considered to be "affordable" when a family spends less than 30 percent of its income to rent or buy a residence. The shortage of affordable housing limits families' and individuals' choices about where they live, often relegating lower-income families to substandard housing in unsafe, overcrowded neighborhoods with higher rates of poverty and fewer resources for health promotion (e.g., parks, bike paths, recreation centers and activities).

The lack of affordable housing affects families' ability to meet other essential expenses, placing many under tremendous financial strain. High housing-related costs place a particular economic burden on low-income families, forcing trade-offs between food, heating and other basic needs. One study found that low-income people with difficulty paying rent, mortgage or utility bills were less likely to have a usual source of medical care and more likely to postpone treatment and use the emergency room for treatment. Another study showed that children in areas with higher rates of unaffordable housing tended to have worse health, more behavioral problems and lower school performance.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2011/05/housing-and-health.html>

Respectfully yours,

Anthony Manousos

-----Original Message-----

From:
To: vgordo@cityofpasadena.net <vgordo@cityofpasadena.net>; smadison@cityofpasadena.net <smadison@cityofpasadena.net>; jerivas@cityofpasadena.net <jerivas@cityofpasadena.net>; gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net <gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net>; fwilliams@cityofpasadena.net <fwilliams@cityofpasadena.net>; thampton@cityofpasadena.net <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; johnjkennedy@cityofpasadena.net <johnjkennedy@cityofpasadena.net>; correspondence@cityofpasadena.net <correspondence@cityofpasadena.net>
Sent: Mon, Dec 6, 2021 10:26 am
Subject: We need a thoughtful response to SB 9: Item # 14 on agenda

Dear Mayor and City Council members.

After reading the City staff response to SB 9 and the "emergency" ordinance that is being proposed, I feel compelled to write you again to say that fears about SB 9 are greatly exaggerated, just like fears that the Council once had about ADUs.

The Turner study says that SB 9 would enable development of duplexes on only 5.4 % of parcels in the state, and most of these would not be developed because of cost and other factors. The impact on Pasadena would be very limited, just like the impact of ADUs.

It is worth noting that most of your constituents probably support SB 9. According to a recent LA Times poll, three quarter of renters and a plurality of homeowners support SB 9. See <https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2021-12-02/facing-housing-crisis-l-a-voters-back-duplexes-in-single-family-neighborhoods>

Unfortunately, elected officials are listening to the vocal minority, the wealthy elite who fear change, not to those who see the value of creating more affordable homes to address the housing crisis in our state and city.

SB 9 will not destroy single family neighborhoods, as critics allege. It simply allows for more single-family homes in these neighborhoods.

The cost of smaller homes on smaller lots will no doubt be less than the current cost of big homes in big lots. This will benefit the "missing middle" who are seeking housing they can afford. It could also help families and people of color, most of whom cannot afford million dollar homes in Pasadena.

Some have proposed turning most of Pasadena into historic districts to thwart SB 9, but this is an overreaction that could have harmful consequences. I love the historical character of our city and want to see it preserved, but I don't see any evidence that SB 9 poses a significant threat requiring draconian action. Many Pasadenans (myself included) are likely to resent having their homes turned into historical sites and lose the right to build a duplex, or even make changes on their homes. Requests for historical status have always come from the "bottom up," not imposed from "top down."

The Council is also considering other ways to thwart implementation of SB 9, such as requiring that they be "affordable." While we at MHCH support affordable housing, we are concerned that requiring that homes built under SB 9 be "affordable" may be a "poison bill" to make them economically unfeasible.

I am also concerned about requiring two mature trees on a lot where a duplex is built. While I love our city's tree canopy, I don't see why this requirement is being imposed on homeowners who want to split their lots. It seems like a way to cast shade on this law, not to benefit the environment.

I do support the idea of making sure that homeowners who split their lots comply with the state's requirement and live in their homes for three years. Enforcing this law, perhaps with a fee or fine, could deter investors from taking advantage of SB 9. Currently investors are buying up homes and converting them to rentals or jacking up prices. This is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed (not SB 9) and I feel that this city needs to consider a "flipping fee" to deter this kind of predatory activity. This fee should go into our city's affordable housing fund.

Instead of trying to thwart SB 9, the Council needs to pass design standards to insure that any homes built under SB 9 are consistent with the character of the neighborhood. It is also a good idea to read the Turner study (summarized below) and not be swayed by irrational fears.

I'd like to conclude by saying that as a person of faith, I believe in the Golden Rule: "treat others as you wish to be treated." Because I am blessed with owning a home here in Pasadena, I want to do everything possible to ensure that others have that blessing. I am also aware that I have benefited from policies that have inhibited the production of homes and thereby raised prices beyond what people can afford. The home that Jill bought for \$140,000 in the 1990s is now worth over \$850,00. Jesus says; "To whom much is given, much will be required" (**Luke 12:48**). This means we are held responsible for what we have. If we have been blessed with homes that have increased wildly in value, it is expected that we do what we can to benefit others. I hope you will take this teaching to heart as you consider how to respond to SB 9.

Respectfully, Anthony Manousos

HOW WOULD SB 9 AFFECT HOUSING?

Few neutral studies on the potential impacts of SB 9 — and practically none on SB 10 — are available, but commentators and news publications often cite a July report from the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley. It noted that the bill could allow property owners access to financing options as they construct additional units, but ultimately expressed doubt that its provisions would result in effects as sweeping as proponents hope and critics fear.

The main issue, according to the center, is that renting or selling a home developed under SB 9 would not be financially viable for many property owners. The report said SB 9 could enable the development of units on 410,000 of California's single-family parcels, just 5.4% of such parcels in the state.

Out of those 410,000, the report's authors estimated, the legislation would make new development financially feasible on just 110,000 parcels (for the remaining parcels, some development is already feasible, but the report authors said SB 9 would allow for even more units).

The center, which collaborated with MapCraft Labs, estimated that out of the 18,300 single-family parcels in Burbank, about 15,500 would be eligible under SB 9. However, the organization noted that the bill would increase the number of market-feasible units by roughly 800 parcels, for a total of an estimated 1,300 newly feasible units.

In total, the report noted, SB 9 could allow for the creation of more than 714,000 new homes — primarily duplexes — in California that would not otherwise be market feasible. However, it pointed out that many property owners may not want to pursue the options offered by the bill. "But despite the concerns of some of its detractors, SB 9 will not lead to the overnight transformation of residential neighborhoods," the authors added. "Differential owner preferences and limited applicability means that only a share of that potential is likely to be developed, particularly in the near term as awareness and capacity expands. "As such, while important, the new units unlocked by SB 9 would represent a fraction of the overall supply needed to fully address the state's housing shortage."

Respectfully,

Anthony Manousos