



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

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Mayor

Will O'Neill

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July 10, 2020

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 899 (Wiener) – Notice of Opposition

Planning and zoning: housing development: higher education institutions and religious institutions.

The City is writing to respectfully oppose SB 899 as proposed because of its potential result of incompatible densities and its scant parking requirement. Undeniable is the important community role religious and nonprofit institutions play in creating safe and supportive environments for families and residents. Under SB 899, religious institutions and nonprofits colleges would be able to amplify this good in reactivating their underutilized land into crucial affordable housing--by right. Although the City respects the bill could be a powerful mechanism to promote affordable housing, the bulky density allowance and too-relaxed parking stated in the current proposal is unfortunately unsupportable.

SB 899 would create out-of-place density in neighborhoods. Among other housing bills moving through the legislature as of late, SB 899 promotes a forced destabilization of single-family neighborhoods and dismisses purpose of purchase. Many qualifying institutions in the City are located near or within centers of single-family neighborhoods. In allowing up to 30 du/ac for residential sites by-right, entire neighborhoods could be upended of their identity and result in diminished livability for families. Compounding this,

a variety of environmental exemptions apply under SB 899, meaning zero mitigation would be required--even in cases of adverse impacts to traffic, noise, and utilities. In the familiar vein of other current bills, SB 899 fails to accommodate local jurisdictions with the flexibility to do their part in providing housing. Forced by-right density challenges the existence of single-family neighborhoods across California and defies policies and procedures with which a jurisdiction is tasked to champion.

SB 899's permissive parking requirement is damaging to neighborhoods. Conservatively speaking, SB 899 would waive at least 60-percent of parking spaces for a given development. Whereas the City's parking code requires multifamily units above four units to have 2.5 spaces, SB 899 only necessitate one and actually requires no parking in specified circumstances. Using the 40 du/ac by-right allowance of commercial sites, SB 899 requires 40 spaces, which is 60 spaces shy of usual code standards. This unparked density would be a troubling issue playing out destructively for neighborhoods.

In considering the above, the City cannot support SB 899 in its current form.

Sincerely,



Will O'Neil
Mayor
Newport Beach

cc. Senate Housing Committee
Senator John Moorlach
Assemblywoman Cottie Petri-Norris
Newport Beach City Council
Grace Leung, City Manager
League of California Cities (Via email: cityletters@cacities.org)