



March 22, 2018

From: Abundant Housing LA

To: Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

Re: Support for SB 827, opposition to motion 18-0002-S13

Abundant Housing LA writes to request that you rescind or defeat resolution 18-0002-S13 to oppose SB 827. With recent amendments, SB 827 is a great bill that will help add more homes of all types near transit and that strengthens tenant rights through a right to remain for people living in existing housing.

Abundant Housing LA is a volunteer pro-housing organization. Our 1500 members support more homes of all types in Los Angeles. We support local pro-housing policies and plans like the permanent supportive housing ordinance and TOC guidelines. But even with these good local laws, production of housing in the City of Los Angeles is far too low to meet our needs. Therefore we also favor state level reform to allow more homes. For instance, we were strong supporters of state laws that made it easier to build ADUs, and believe that these preemptions of local barriers have improved Los Angeles.

SB 827, proposed by state senator Scott Wiener, would enact statewide zoning standards within ½-mile of Major Transit Stops and ¼-mile of High Quality Transit Corridors, eliminating density restrictions and parking requirements as well as establishing new height minimums between 45 and 85 feet in these areas. The Bill also protects rent stabilized housing and gives tenants a new right to remain and to receive relocation assistance that is stronger than existing City of Los Angeles RSO protections. SB 827 also defers to local demolition controls and to inclusionary zoning requirements like JJJ and TOC.

It is true that SB 827 will put modest limits on local control of zoning by implementing a new density bonus program linked to transit adjacency. Solving our severe housing crisis and helping struggling families stay in LA is more important than the procedural details of zoning. We know that you are public servants because you want to help people's lives. SB 827 will do great amounts of good in exchange for a small reduction in local authority.

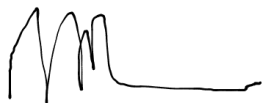
We support SB 827 for the following reasons:

1. **It's the first and only proposal that would address our housing shortage on the necessary scale.** In LA County alone, we've accrued a housing deficit of over 1 million homes, causing prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushing many Angelenos onto the streets or out of the state. The City has taken steps in recent years to begin updating plans, but no proposals — approved or pending — would put more than a dent in this backlog or adequately prepare us for decades of continued growth. SB 827 would.
2. **It would strengthen tenant rights and benefits.** SB 827 requires cities to affirmatively pass an ordinance before SB 827 bonuses can be used on any rent stabilized apartments. It also gives tenants in any housing demolished using SB 827 a **right to remain** that includes an obligation for the developer to pay to house tenants during construction and gives tenants a right to come back into a new unit at the same rent as they paid in the former unit.
3. **It would reduce housing shortages, rent increases, displacement, homelessness and Angelenos being forced to leave the region.** In the mid to long term, allowing more homes of all types in Los Angeles is the key to reducing negative impacts from the housing crisis. Shortages allow owners to raise rents; they put old and new residents in competition for housing; and prevent many people who might want to live in our great city from pursuing their dreams. While encouraging more homes is not sufficient to solve all of our housing challenges, it is an absolutely necessary precondition for an LA with homes for all.
4. **It would reverse decades of exclusion from affluent, low-density neighborhoods.** Historians have drawn a direct line between the advent of single family zoning and racist efforts to exclude people of color from specific communities. Current residents of single family zones are not responsible for this history, but we are all answerable to its ongoing legacy of segregation, the racial wealth gap, and more. SB 827 would not eliminate single family zoning altogether, but it does make clear that single family homes should not be the only permissible use in areas of significant investment in public transit, and argues that we must open such areas to residents of all incomes and backgrounds.
5. **It's aligned with policy goals which focus new housing near transit.** Both locally and at the state level we have approved numerous ordinances and bills to encourage housing near transit. We do so out of a recognition that transit-oriented housing is environmentally sustainable and contributes least to traffic congestion, among other benefits. Locally we have also seen reductions in ridership partly because the land use near stations and lines does not allow enough people to live and work close-by. Unfortunately, efforts to turn this policy into practice — like the Expo and Purple Line transit neighborhood plans — have failed to live up to their promise, proposing to add perhaps 5,000 or 10,000 new homes over 20 years next to some of the most transit-accessible and job-rich locations in Southern California. SB 827 would achieve what our local plans have not.

6. **It would create many more resources for affordable housing.** SB 827 would lead to significantly more housing development in Los Angeles and across the state, providing an immediate boost to property and sales tax revenues. It would also generate much greater linkage fee revenues, helping to directly subsidize the creation and preservation of housing for low and moderate income households. Further, the bill does not override local inclusionary requirements, demolition protections, or anti-displacement provisions that the City may wish to enact locally. While we have not calculated the economic impacts yet, SB 827 would also generate many jobs directly in construction and design and indirectly by allowing more people to live and work in Los Angeles.
7. **It would force free-loading cities to allow their fair share of housing.** While housing production in Los Angeles is at historic lows compared to previous decades, we've done more than many. Other cities like Beverly Hills and Hermosa Beach build almost no new housing whatsoever, worsening the housing crisis for the entire region and shunting more of the responsibility onto cities like ours. SB 827 would upend this dynamic and create a level playing field, requiring all cities with quality transit to contribute their fair share toward resolving our housing crisis.
8. **It would dramatically reduce our contribution to global carbon emissions.** Transportation is now the single-largest contributor to carbon emissions in California, and most of that is from passenger vehicles. We have to change how we get around, and we won't succeed without changing how our neighborhoods are built. SB 827 would allow more housing where people can walk, bicycle, and use transit for many of their daily trips — and we could stop forcing Angelenos to move to sprawling communities in Arizona, Nevada, and Texas where per-capita emissions are much greater. Ask any climate expert: If we're serious about reducing per-capita emissions in California, there's nothing more effective than land use reform.

SB 827 holds great promise for Los Angeles and for cities across California, and we believe that combined with good local policy, it will help address our housing crisis and give more people more choices on where to live in the city without leaving our most vulnerable residents behind.

We can afford to do no less.



Mark Vallianatos,
Policy Director, Abundant Housing LA