



Bill Brand
Mayor

415 Diamond Street, P.O. BOX 270
Redondo Beach, California 90277-0270
www.redondo.org

tel 310 372-1171
ext. 2260
fax 310 374-2039

February 12, 2019

Honorable Scott Wiener
Chairman, Senate Housing Committee
State of California, District 11
State Capitol, Room 4066
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

RE: CITY OF REDONDO BEACH **OPPOSES** SB 50

Dear Senator Wiener:

On February 12, 2019, during our regularly scheduled meeting, the Redondo Beach City Council and I received a report on Senate Bill 50. We unanimously authorized this letter expressing our opposition to SB 50.

Opposition to SB 50

As you are aware, Senate Bill 50 is intended to establish additional incentives for the development of affordable housing above those within existing Density Bonus Law. This bill would require that an eligible residential development, as defined, receive waivers from maximum controls on density, automobile parking requirements greater than 0.5 parking spots per unit, up to 3 additional incentives or concessions under the Density Bonus Law, and specified additional waivers if the residential development is located within a 'jobs-rich housing' area or a 1/2-mile or 1/4-mile radius of a major transit stop, as defined, further exempting developments from most height, intensity, and any parking requirements. Additionally an eligible project pursuant to this proposed legislation and Section 65913.4 may qualify for a ministerial approval. To a large extent, this proposed legislation preempts home rule that allows cities to establish and implement local zoning controls that protect the shape, form, and character of the community. Existing State law leaves zoning decisions exclusively to local governments—this is a major part of the home rule doctrine. SB 50 preempts local regulation for new infill housing close to transit. We oppose home rule preemption.

Senate Bill 50 does include provisions to encourage communities to opt for a community-led planning process to develop zoning and other policies that encourage affordable housing. Our City is currently updating its General Plan to address many local housing related concerns, consistent with the provisions within proposed Section 65918.55. Since spring 2017, a 27 member citizens General Plan Advisory Committee has conducted 16 meetings, with 8 more scheduled, many where the focus has been

on housing in Redondo Beach. The intent is to ensure that a broad range of housing types and densities are available. However, based on the proposed language of SB 50, these robust planning efforts we have undertaken would not even qualify for the option of a community-led planning process in lieu of the requirements of SB 50 because they are being conducted prior to January 1, 2020.

Redondo Beach provides for a broad range of housing types and densities. The City has also taken action to zone for higher densities around high quality transit nodes and to some extent along transit corridors. The location of the City's zoning districts that permit the highest residential densities (35 du/ac not including density bonus potential) are strategically located with respect to transit. The City's certified Housing Element identifies specific sites in strategic locations and includes specific programs for ensuring housing goals as required are achieved. Every area identified in the Housing Element has distinct challenges that require different approaches. Although Redondo Beach recognizes that transit oriented development may include high density residential development, it is not simply about allowing only more residential development, but should include job centers as well. In fact, studies show that job centers near transit increase ridership as much as, or in some cases more than, housing adjacent to transit.

Redondo Beach is a perfect example of a medium size coastal city striving to meet and address the housing needs of Southern California. We have every level and type of housing; singles, 1 bedrooms, 2 bedrooms, 3 bedrooms, multi-family housing, single-family housing and multi-million dollar coastal homes. Fifty percent of the housing units in the community is rental. We also have a Housing Authority with over 500 vouchers issued for Section 8 housing. We have numerous senior living complexes in all areas of town.

Like many communities in California, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Manhattan Beach are largely 'built-out' communities with worsening traffic, impacted schools, and water shortages. However, Redondo Beach's population continues to grow, along with average household size and the number of households. We have been averaging an additional 60 units per year for the last 15 years.

SB 50 proposes that development in proximity to major transit should be exempted from local controls on maximum residential density and parking, and should relax maximum floor area ratios (FAR) to a minimum of 3.25, and allow heights in excess of 45 to 55 feet. These imposed standards are nearly two and three times our current standards for building heights and FAR. Elimination of the controls on maximum density and significantly relaxing floor area ratios and height standards would allow buildings to be constructed virtually to all property lines resulting in over-covering of public and private open space that is already in short supply in the community. Regulations on parking, which is already at a premium in some areas of our beach community, would be invalidated and the provision of adequate parking could not be ensured for new development.

While the goal of SB 50 is to establish incentives for the development of affordable housing near 'jobs-rich housing,' major transit stops and along high quality bus corridors, the unintended consequences of any such development would be extreme and severe to the local community.

Redondo Beach's population density is 11,000 residents per square mile. Our city is one of the most densely populated areas in California. Demographia.com rated Redondo Beach as 43rd in population density for U.S. Cities over 50,000 people after the 2000 census. With this population density, the City as a result has 11 Level of Service 'F' intersections and similar parking challenges. Nonetheless, the City of Redondo Beach is producing a wide variety of housing after carefully considering the suitability and impacts of each housing project. As shown below, several larger projects are under construction, approved, awaiting construction, or in the planning stages. This does not include the conversions of many single-family homes to '2 and 3 on-a-lot' developments that are occurring all over town.

- One South is a 52 unit project that was recently completed (January 2019).
<https://liveonesouth.com>
- 219 Avenue I is a 12 unit apartment project, with 2 units affordable to low income households, that is currently under construction and nearing completion (March 2019).
- Legado Redondo will include 115 units and was approved June 2017.
<https://www.dailybreeze.com/2017/10/18/redondo-beach-oks-settlement-over-legado-development/>
- Construction is nearly completed on the Kensington Project—a 98-unit, 130 bed residential care for the elderly with a memory care facility on Pacific Coast Highway and Knob Hill, approved by the voters in 2016.
- The revitalization of our regional shopping center, The South Bay Galleria Development was approved on January 15, 2019 for 300 residential units, with 20% Low Income or 10% Very Low Income.
https://www.redondo.org/depts/community_development/planning/south_bay_galleria_draft_eir.asp

Many of the outlying cities in the LA area such as ours have a severe housing/jobs imbalance where over 90% of the residents leave their town in the morning to go to work. This creates huge impacts to our transportation sectors in one direction in the morning, to only reverse that impact during the evening commute. What these areas

need is more job creating business centers to reverse some of that flow, not more housing that will only worsen the problem.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Despite the city's contemporary land-use planning policies and zoning designations, the proposed legislation would replace our strategically planned, locally appropriate areas of housing intensification with a blanket policy of permitting ultra-urban development at unregulated densities--potentially converting valuable and viable job producing uses and local trip-reducing commercial uses in the process. This one size fits all approach to local land use regulation, if enacted as written, would have significant adverse impacts on our established community and its character. The proposed legislation would also have significant implications regarding traffic, parking, and other infrastructure that was designed decades ago for a suburban density.

Land use decisions by communities and local officials are complex and take into account many different issues such as school capacity, financial sustainability, available park space, traffic, air pollution, water needs, sewer capacity, parking, affordability, street maintenance, commercial needs, industrial needs, access to emergency services, etc.

A one size fits all approach dictated from the State will be a disaster for many communities by exacerbating impacts that will also have consequences with State-wide interest. Water needs will increase and student/teacher ratios will deteriorate just to name two. Legislation that creates even bigger problems with State-wide interests will demand more rules and regulations to fix the problems they create.

SB 50 would serve to further the imbalance of jobs with local housing that already exists in our City. As written, these provisions may sacrifice the development of viable commercial businesses in favor of housing. As part of our ongoing General Plan Update noted earlier, a City-wide market analysis confirmed that the City is jobs-poor rather than housing-poor. Ninety-three percent of our residents commute out of our City to their jobs. Our local conditions are unique to Redondo Beach and best addressed by Redondo Beach. We do recognize our responsibility to provide housing and are continuing those efforts with regular neighborhood meetings to determine as a community how best to address our local needs, and at the same time contribute to solutions that address regional issues.

State legislation should not interfere with complex decisions best handled at the local level. Local land-use decisions should be left to local communities who must manage and maintain the towns they create.

In conclusion, housing development should be left to the local agencies that are best equipped to evaluate the impacts of projects, and can require mitigations to protect the health and safety of the residents they serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. C. Brand', with a stylized, flowing script.

Mayor William Brand

CC: Senator Ben Allen, 26th State Senate District
Senator Mike Morrell, 23rd State Senate District
Senator Maria Elena Durazo, 24th State Senate District
Senator Anna Cabellero, 12th State Senate District
Senator John Moorlach, 37th State Senate District
Seantor Shannon Grove, 16th State Senate District
Senator Nancy Skinner, 9th State Senate District
Senator Mike McGuire, 2nd State Senate District
Senator Richard D. Roth, 31st State Senate District
Senator Thomas J. Umberg, 34th State Senate District
Senator Bob Wieckowski, 10th State Senate District
Assembly Member Kevin Kiley, 6th Assembly District
Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi, 66th Assembly District
Michael J. Arnold, Michael J. Arnold & Associates
City Council Members, City of Redondo Beach