

Communication from Public

Name: James Lloyd

Date Submitted: 01/28/2025 09:06 AM

Council File No: 24-1064

Comments for Public Posting: The California Housing Defense Fund (“CalHDF”) submits this letter to remind the Council of its obligation to abide by all relevant state laws when evaluating the the appeal against the proposed 121-unit housing development project at 2511, 2513, 2515, and 2517 West Sunset Boulevard, DIR-2023-2028-TOC-SPRHCA-1A / 24-1064, which includes 13 units for Extremely Low Income Households. These laws include the Housing Accountability Act (“HAA”) and California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) guidelines. The HAA provides the project legal protections. It requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant housing development projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards. (Gov. Code, § 65589.5, subd. (j).) The HAA also bars cities from imposing conditions on the approval of such projects that would reduce the project’s density unless, again, such written findings are made. (Ibid.) As a development with at least two-thirds of its area devoted to residential uses, the project falls within the HAA’s ambit, and it complies with local zoning code and the City’s general plan. Notwithstanding the appeal, the Council cannot reject the project without violating the HAA, unless it makes the written findings described above. Additionally, the project is exempt from state environmental review under the Class 32 CEQA categorical exemption (In-Fill Development Projects) pursuant to § 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, as the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations; the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. And recent caselaw from the California Court of Appeal affirms that local governments err, and may be sued, when they improperly refuse to grant a project a CEQA exemption or streamlined CEQA review to which it is entitled. (Hilltop Group, Inc. v. County of San Diego (2024) 99 Cal.App.5th 890, 911.) As you are well aware, California remains

in the throes of a statewide crisis-level housing shortage. New housing such as this is a public benefit: by housing extremely low-income residents, it will mitigate the state's homelessness crisis; it will bring new customers to local businesses; it will grow the City's tax base; and it will reduce displacement of existing residents by reducing competition for existing housing. It will also help cut down on transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by providing housing in denser, more urban areas, as opposed to farther-flung regions in the state (and out of state). While no one project will solve the statewide housing crisis, the proposed development is a step in the right direction. CalHDF urges the Council to approve it, consistent with its obligations under state law. CalHDF is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation whose mission includes advocating for increased access to housing for Californians at all income levels, including low-income households. You may learn more about CalHDF at www.calhdf.org.



Jan 28, 2025

**City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012**

Re: Appeal of Proposed Residential Project at 2511, 2513, 2515, and 2517 West Sunset Boulevard, DIR-2023-2028-TOC-SPRHCA-1A / 24-1064

By email: Submitted electronically to the Council

Cc: Erick Morales, Planning Assistant, erick.morales@lacity.org; City Clerk's Office, clerk.cps@lacity.org; City Attorney's Office, cityatty.help@lacity.org

Dear Los Angeles City Council PLUM Committee,

The California Housing Defense Fund (“CalHDF”) submits this letter to remind the Council of its obligation to abide by all relevant state laws when evaluating the the appeal against the proposed 121-unit housing development project at 2511, 2513, 2515, and 2517 West Sunset Boulevard, DIR-2023-2028-TOC-SPRHCA-1A / 24-1064, which includes 13 units for Extremely Low Income Households. These laws include the Housing Accountability Act (“HAA”) and California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) guidelines.

The HAA provides the project legal protections. It requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant housing development projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards. (Gov. Code, § 65589.5, subd. (j).) The HAA also bars cities from imposing conditions on the approval of such projects that would reduce the project’s density unless, again, such written findings are made. (*Ibid.*)

As a development with at least two-thirds of its area devoted to residential uses, the project falls within the HAA’s ambit, and it complies with local zoning code and the City’s general plan. Notwithstanding the appeal, the Council cannot reject the project without violating the HAA, unless it makes the written findings described above.

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regulations; the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. And recent caselaw from the California Court of Appeal affirms that local governments err, and may be sued, when they improperly refuse to grant a project a CEQA exemption or streamlined CEQA review to which it is entitled. (*Hilltop Group, Inc. v. County of San Diego* (2024) 99 Cal.App.5th 890, 911.)

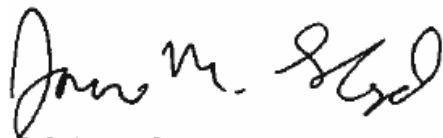
As you are well aware, California remains in the throes of a statewide crisis-level housing shortage. New housing such as this is a public benefit: by housing extremely low-income residents, it will mitigate the state's homelessness crisis; it will bring new customers to local businesses; it will grow the City's tax base; and it will reduce displacement of existing residents by reducing competition for existing housing. It will also help cut down on transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by providing housing in denser, more urban areas, as opposed to farther-flung regions in the state (and out of state). While no one project will solve the statewide housing crisis, the proposed development is a step in the right direction. CalHDF urges the Council to approve it, consistent with its obligations under state law.

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Sincerely,



Dylan Casey
CalHDF Executive Director



James M. Lloyd
CalHDF Director of Planning and Investigations