

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Christopher Short  
**Date Submitted:** 10/19/2023 12:08 PM  
**Council File No:** 23-0908

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am a 31 year resident of Reseda Ranch and I am very concerned about the terrible precedent being set by this and similar proposals such as CF 23-1039 for building large scale apartment buildings in primarily single family home areas. Whilst I understand the need for more affordable housing to be built in Los Angeles this is not the way to do it. There are many unused lots along some of the major streets and in commercial zones that are far more suitable for large apartment buildings and that are probably already zoned for such. These proposals appear to be developers attempting to exploit a loophole created by the initial sloppy implementation of ED1 that was closed by the mayor after the planning Dept. realized that ED1 did not explicitly say it was meant to be applied to only areas zoned for apartments. The city must not allow an administrative mistake to be used by profit seeking developers to build large apartment blocks right in the middle of, and immediately adjacent to single family homes. As the mayor has made clear, this was never her intent. The proposed development at 8217 Winnetka however does appear to be surrounded by existing apartments, I am more concerned about the proposed projects in (CF-23-1039). These are right in the middle of single family homes and would be extremely detrimental to the neighborhood. The two on Wilbur Ave. are within Reseda Ranch, an area specifically recognized by the city as an intact area of RA-1 zoned large lots allowing residents to enjoy gardening and keeping of animals up to and including horses. Putting large apartment blocks in the middle of this would destroy this unique area. I therefore urge the city council to deny the appeals for the projects at 7745 Wilbur, 7947 Wilbur, 19448 Saticoy and 8550 Variel. Here is an extract from the CIS for CF-23-1039 recently approved by the Reseda Neighborhood council supporting the denial of the appeal to move forward with the 7745 Wilbur proposal: "The Reseda Neighborhood Council supports the denial of the appeal to move forward with the construction of a 6 story, 69 foot tall, 220 unit apartment complex at 7745 Wilbur Avenue in the community of Reseda Ranch. The Reseda Neighborhood Council furthermore opposes any construction of a multi-family apartment structure at this site, at the site located at 7947 Wilbur, or on any lot located within the boundaries of Reseda Ranch. To be clear, this has nothing to do

with an opposition to the construction of affordable housing. Indeed, the community of Reseda has been, and continues to be, very supportive of the construction of affordable housing in our community, having supported more projects involving affordable housing than any other community in the southwest valley area in the last two decades. Rather, we recognize that the installation of such projects must be done in appropriate locations in accordance with the spirit of Mayor Bass' Executive Directive 1, and Reseda Ranch and these two sites in particular are as inappropriate as it is possible to be, and certainly not where the Mayor intended such projects to be built . They have no easy access to public transportation, they have a very low walkability to services such as shopping, restaurants and grocery, there are no similar projects anywhere nearby on Wilbur Avenue, and they would do irrevocable harm not only to the immediately adjoining property owners but to the community of Reseda Ranch as a whole, which is a community neither Reseda, nor the City of Los Angeles, can afford to lose." Attached is the letter from Councilman Bob Blumenfield explaining the situation and his opposition as well.



## BOB BLUMENFIELD

Councilmember, Third District

September 27, 2023

Dear Neighbor:

At the end of last year, Mayor Karen Bass issued Executive Directive 1 (ED1), which created a streamlined process for 100% affordable housing projects to speed up planning approvals in light of the homelessness crisis. The City has no discretion over ED1 projects, meaning they are automatically approved with no public hearings or community input. Nor are these projects appealable.

Months later, the Planning Department realized that ED1 did not explicitly say it was meant to be applied to only areas zoned for apartments. A handful of developers took advantage of this ambiguity and submitted large scale affordable housing projects on single family zoned lots in single family neighborhoods. The Mayor's office has made clear that her intent was not to enable these projects in single family areas. While the Mayor has now changed her directive to ensure that it explicitly does not include single family home lots, eight projects were submitted before she clarified her order. Once the intent was made clear, those 8 projects were taken off the fast track enabled by ED1. So far, the developers for 3 of these projects have appealed the City's decision to have them follow a different process. Unfortunately, the brunt of the impact is affecting several of our communities (District 3) and I want to be clear with you about what is happening.

ED1 does not require any notice to neighbors for these projects which is why you may be hearing about this issue now for the first time. One of the projects is located at 8217 Winnetka and is a 7-story building slated for 330 units. This is far out of scale for this location and I will not support this project as proposed. This project has been appealed and the appeal will be heard at the Planning and Land Use Committee next week.

In fact, five out of the eight properties in question are located in the northern part of CD3, specifically Reseda, Winnetka and Canoga Park.

Yesterday the first appeal from the eight cases was heard by the LA City Council. A 200 unit, 100 percent affordable apartment building which was proposed in Sherman Oaks (Councilmember Raman's district) and had their Councilmember's support. During the discussion, I made the case that these projects on single family lots should have some opportunity for environmental review and community input in light of the Mayor's intent that they not be covered by the ED1 streamlining. During the discussion, I tried to require these projects to follow a normal application process by denying the appeal.

Against my legal and policy objections, the Council voted against my motion that simply would have made these proposals go through the normal planning process and still fulfill the actual intent of ED1. Large scale apartments should not be wedged in-between single family homes, especially when there is no guarantee from developers that any mitigation efforts like new traffic

lights or improved sidewalks will follow such construction. Despite my objections, the Sherman Oaks project was given the go ahead to be built by a majority of the City Council. Unfortunately only four members of the City Council agreed with my position, and the appeals for the remaining six properties are still to come.

I will continue to search for creative ways to make sure that these projects follow a clear set of rules, which is what ED1 intended. And to be clear- I am in favor of ED1, just not rubber stamping large apartment buildings in single family home neighborhoods where they radically change communities. The decision today simply sets a dangerous precedent that unfairly impacts the West Valley.

The 8217 Winnetka project seeking approval under this order will be coming to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee next week on October 3. The other proposed projects are located at 7745 Wilbur, 7947 Wilbur, 19448 Saticoy and 8550 Variel.

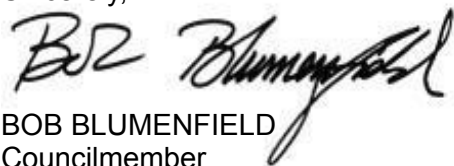
Residents are encouraged to submit a public comment to the PLUM Committee if you are concerned about the precedent set here or the construction of large scale apartment buildings in areas that are primarily single family homes

<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkConnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=23-0908>.

Right now we are at an inflection point and your thoughts are needed to guide the City forward.

I am following these cases very closely and the peace and safety of the neighborhood is of utmost importance to me. It is my distinct honor and privilege to serve as your representative on the Los Angeles City Council. Serving you and providing the highest level of constituent service is my top priority. My staff and I always strive to resolve issues and concerns as quickly as possible. Your engagement in identifying and solving problems is a key component of improving the quality of life in the San Fernando Valley. Please contact my Planning Director, Elizabeth Ene, at [elizabeth.ene@lacity.org](mailto:elizabeth.ene@lacity.org), if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Blumenfeld". The signature is stylized with a large "B" and "B" at the start of the first and last names respectively.

BOB BLUMENFIELD  
Councilmember  
City of Los Angeles