



October 11, 2024

Council Member John S. Lee, Chair  
 Council Member Heather Hutt  
 Council Member Imelda Padilla  
 Council Member Katy Yaroslavsky  
 Planning and Land Use Management Committee  
 Los Angeles City Council  
 200 North Spring Street  
 Los Angeles, CA. 90012

**Re: 710 Corridor Rezoning Program  
 Council File No. 24-1063**

Dear Councilmember Lee and Members of the PLUM Committee:

In 1999, over 250 properties in the neighborhood of El Sereno were recategorized under the “Public Facilities” and “Open Space” land-use designations in accordance with the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan in order to execute the expansion of the 710 Freeway. As a result of the government-funded project initiated in the early-1960s, affected property owners involuntarily lost value in their real estate assets and a sense of ownership over the place and community they called home.

In 2019, the Governor signed into law legislation to officially terminate the freeway expansion plan. When I served in the California Legislature, I voted in support of the legislation. Today over 250 properties, some of which are owned by Caltrans and some of which are owned by private entities, need to be rezoned. The properties that comprise the 710 corridor of El Sereno are predominantly single-family homes with other portions developed with a mix of multi-family residential, commercial uses and public spaces.

In response to the anticipated change in land use, zoning, and property ownership, in 2021, my office worked with the El Sereno community to create a *Neighborhood Vision Plan* for the 710 Freeway Corridor. This community-driven process revealed that a top priority of community stakeholders is to preserve the neighborhood’s predominant low-scale, single-family residential character and pattern of development. Indeed the affected area is primarily developed with one-story, detached single-family residences. This broad sentiment has been consistently expressed in public hearings and open houses hosted by the Los Angeles City Planning Department intended to solicit community input. The *Neighborhood Vision Plan* highlighted the importance of preserving existing single-family dwellings, renovating and rehabilitating them as needed, while acknowledging the need for housing affordability.

In the 710 corridor today, north of Stockbridge Avenue, CalTrans owns 29 properties while 42 properties are privately-owned. The City Planning Commission has recommended that the City Council rezone all 71 parcels from the Public Facilities (“PF”) Zone to the Restricted Density Multiple Dwelling (“RD1.5-XL”) Zone.

The RD1.5-XL Zone would allow the development of three to five apartment units on the typical lot. I believe allowing the RD1.5-XL Zone and enabling higher-density development would only create market incentives to attract private corporations and real estate developers to engage in speculative activity relative to the 42 privately-owned parcels. As a result, the predominant single-family residential low-scale character would be transformed with the encroachment of higher-density, larger-scale multifamily residential development. Furthermore, nothing would preclude a developer from assembling multiple lots which would yield even higher density apartments. Such a scenario would clearly contradict the community stakeholder priorities captured in the *Neighborhood Vision*. Alternatively, enacting the R1 Zone would preserve neighborhood stability.

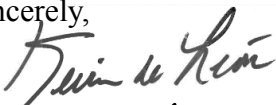
Amidst California's housing crisis, I remain acutely aware of the need for the production of new housing, more specifically, affordable housing. Arbitrarily upzoning a historically low-scale, low-density neighborhood disrupted by government action is not the remedy. The introduction of market rate units to the City of Los Angeles does not provide relief to my constituents whose household incomes fall at or below 80% Area Median Income. Because the privately-owned parcels do not have affordability covenants and requirements, unlike parcels currently owned by CalTrans, I have great concern that rezoning the privately-owned parcels to the RD1.5 Zone will both increase density, facilitate sales transactions at market-rate prices, and ultimately adversely impact community character.

Due to market pressures, upzoning in this predominantly single-family community would dramatically affect housing prices in the neighborhood, and most likely attract an influx of households with income at least 120% Area Median Income. These market pressures are the same forces that have historically displaced long-standing local residents due to market-rate development pressures and the rising cost of living. My wish for the community of El Sereno is protection for those residents who have been impacted by the whiplash of extending the 710 corridor.

Keeping in mind a balanced approach that considers both restorative justice for the community of El Sereno and California's housing crisis, I support amending the PF Zone to the R1 Zone in El Sereno while also giving homeowners the tools and resources needed to responsibly increase housing stock through the available use of building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). I spearheaded the creation of pre-approved standard plans for ADUs available completely free of charge to homeowners. The *Vision Plan* acknowledges that homeowners have an available policy tool to responsibly increase the housing stock by adding a second rental unit on a R1 lot in the form of an ADU.

For these reasons, I recommend that properties where the City Planning Commission has recommended an RD1.5 Zone north of Stockbridge Avenue, south of Newtonia Drive, west of Winchester Avenue, and east of Stillwell Avenue be rezoned to the R1 Zone.

Sincerely,



**KEVIN DE LEÓN,**

*Councilmember, 14th District, Los Angeles City Council*

cc: Vince Bertoni, Director of Planning