

Communication from Public

Name: David Barboza

Date Submitted: 12/08/2022 04:46 PM

Council File No: 22-1476

Comments for Public Posting: On behalf of Abundant Housing LA, please see the attached letter in support of the motion to reform the City's requirements around road dedications and widenings.



12/8/2022

The Honorable Nithya Raman, Mike Bonin and Bob Blumenfield
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Support – Road Dedication and Widening Reform – [Council File 22-1146](#)

Dear Councilmembers,

We write on behalf of Abundant Housing LA in support of your [motion](#) to reform the process of requiring road dedications and “improvements” (widening) as a condition of permitting many types of housing and other real estate development projects. The motion calls on the Department of City Planning and the Department of Transportation to report back on options to ensure that Los Angeles promotes livable streets that are safe, balance multiple modes of transportation and do not overburden the process of developing badly-needed housing.

Abundant Housing LA is a pro-housing, nonprofit advocacy organization working to help solve Southern California’s housing crisis. We support reforms to legalize more homes, make homes easier to build, increase funding for affordable housing, and protect tenants, which are all needed to make housing more affordable, improve access to jobs and transit, promote greater environmental sustainability, and advance racial and economic equity. As a community organization, in order to maintain our independence, we do not accept financial support from housing developers or their consultants.

Currently Los Angeles requires road dedications and widenings for many residential and commercial developments that abut highways (arterials) and collector streets. This leads to several problems. Firstly, the dedication and widening process is costly for project applicants, which means in the housing context that these costs are passed along and increase the cost of housing, which is already unbearably high for the most vulnerable Angelenos. The City fees for this process alone run to [thousands of dollars](#), and this does not include the cost of actually widening the street, which the applicant is also responsible for. Secondly, the process creates spot widenings which degrade the quality of street design by encouraging faster and more dangerous driving, destroying street trees and forcing pedestrians to navigate bizarre indentations in the street. Road dedications also decrease the size of properties, which, in conjunction with the City’s rules limiting residential density, limits the number of housing units that can be built, which exacerbates our housing shortage and affordability crisis. Road widenings might be more tolerable if they were tied to real improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders, but more often than not, the City’s street standards are merely geared towards funneling more automobiles through neighborhoods as quickly as possible, instead of

creating the comfortable sidewalks, protected bike lanes and dedicated transit lanes that would support sustainable mobility. This policy is highly problematic, given that Los Angeles suffers from poor air quality, needs to act aggressively to combat climate change and lost [289 people](#) to traffic violence in 2021. Instead of promoting Vision Zero, the goal of eliminating traffic deaths, the City has often acted with zero vision in this area.

Requiring City departments to report back on ways to address this problem is common sense. The long-term solution is to reform the City's street design standards, so that fewer road dedications are required in the first place, and redesigning existing roadways to better balance different modes of transportation. In the short term, the City can stop requiring the "improvement" or widening of streets and merely require the road dedications. This would shift the construction cost of widenings from project applicants to the City and would allow widenings that may still be deemed necessary after reevaluating street design standards to proceed more efficiently, for example, one block at a time, once a set of road dedications has been recorded. If Los Angeles thinks these widenings are necessary, it should pay for them with public funds. However, even requiring the dedications is problematic, because they imply that streets should be widened in the future.

Pushing for ever more car capacity is an antiquated and discredited 20th Century approach that degrades our City and compounds our biggest problems, like housing affordability, public safety and environmental degradation. Los Angeles must chart a different course, towards a more balanced, sustainable transportation system, that supports abundant housing. Rethinking street design and reforming the process of road dedication and widening is a great place to start.

For these reasons, we are proud to support the motion, and we offer our thanks to you for bringing this important proposal forward.

Sincerely,

Leonora Camner

Leonora Camner
Executive Director
Abundant Housing LA

David J. Barboza

David J. Barboza, AICP
Director of Policy and Research
Abundant Housing LA

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Name: David Barboza
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