



# CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

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## City Council Meeting – Council Member Items Report

To: City Council  
From: Casey McKeon, Mayor Pro Tem  
Pat Burns, Mayor  
Gracey Van Der Mark, Council Member  
Date: December 17, 2024  
Subject: **HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – HEALTH & SAFETY CRITERIA**

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### ISSUE STATEMENT

Housing development projects often forgo necessary amenities that contribute to public health and safety in the design and construction of residential buildings and site planning in order to maximize profits at the expense of public health and safety. Significant adverse health and safety impacts occur as a direct result of development projects that perpetuate overcrowding and do not provide open space areas, access to public parkland, or access to public transit and reliable transportation options.

Studies show overcrowding can affect mental health, stress levels, sleep and may increase the risk of infectious disease. In Huntington Beach, multi-family developments construct studio and single bedroom units with small overall square footage in order to maximize financial profits. This results in a lack of two bedroom, three bedroom, and greater sized units, thereby perpetuating overcrowding.

Residential development projects often construct buildings upwards and outwards on a project site to maximize the quantity of building floor area while minimizing areas of private and common open space and recreational amenities, vegetation and trees, and public parks to accommodate the most profitable project. Inadequate access to open space and recreational parks coupled with reduced areas of vegetation and trees results in significant adverse impacts to public health, including mental health impacts, poor air quality, and chronic disease.

Reliable, accessible, safe, and healthy public transportation options do not exist in Huntington Beach and residents are forced to rely on commuting by car. Drivers are contributing to increased GHG emissions while simultaneously absorbing the associated negative health and safety impacts. A lack of access to frequent, reliable public transportation results in increased traffic vehicle crashes, increased air pollution and associated respiratory illnesses, and decreased physical activity levels. When housing development projects provide neither a sufficient quantity of onsite automobile parking spaces, ADA compliant parking spaces, or electric vehicle charging stations for residents nor access to high quality public transportation, the residents suffer adverse health and safety impacts.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

To ensure that high density residential development does not cause significant and adverse impacts to public health and safety, staff is directed to develop criteria to ensure these issues are addressed in future high density residential developments.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

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This action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL**

Goal 5 - Housing, Strategy A - Take action to maintain local control of land-use planning.