



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CASEY MCKEON, CITY COUNCILMEMBER

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2023

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO UPDATE AND DEVELOP OBJECTIVE STANDARDS FOR
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CITY**

The State's recent housing laws (beginning in 2017 and through present) represent an overly ambitious and unjustified effort to increase housing - including in already-developed cities like Huntington Beach.

Such cities that are nearly built out, like Huntington Beach, have for many decades been carefully planned, zoned, and developed with extensive careful considerations for the following: infrastructure for roadways, storm systems, waste management systems; adequate water supplies to homes and businesses; public safety, fire response and access to homes and businesses, police response to homes and businesses; structure and aesthetic compatibility; safety and security of churches and schools; preservation of open space, wetlands, beaches, and parks; and so much more. The State's unjustified housing proliferation mandates through housing laws, especially since 2017, are a direct threat to the health, safety, and well-being of cities and the City's landscape and precious natural resources.

In fact, the City knows through the fire code expert and traffic expert retained by the City in defending one of its housing lawsuits, that both experts would not have recommended or supported the Elan project at Beach and Ellis.

To that end, the City of Huntington Beach, in its effort to continue to protect the citizens, their private property, safe access to public property, and the City's natural resources, must update and create objective development standards in its zoning and building code. The City must also update its specific plan areas including fire code and traffic management designed to protect the environment and protect the health and safety of the community. This update should include removing any subjective standards from the Municipal Code with respect to multifamily developments like "alternative means and methods" in the City's fire code. As an example, it seems logical that objective development standards should not allow multi-story residential buildings to occupy nearly every foot of the (newly-developed) property, but then require the use of neighboring private or public properties to provide large fire truck ladder access to that newly-developed property. The City should create a new zoning code section that sets forth the objective development standards (like Section 237.12 of the current zoning code) ensuring

developments uphold health and safety standards and can be evaluated based on well-defined objective criteria.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Direct the City Manager to retain the required consultant(s) to work with Community Development Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department and the City Attorney's Office to update the Municipal Code including the Zoning, building and fire codes to reflect improved objective standards for development, including removing any references to "alternative means and methods" from the fire code with respect to multifamily development and, to return to City Council by end of March with proposals for improved objective development standards.

