

Arleta Neighborhood Council

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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Attention: Arleta NC
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Arleta, CA 91331
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ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
Community Impact Statement

March 16, 2021

Nury Martinez, City Councilmember
City of Los Angeles Council District 6
9300 Laurel Canyon Blvd, 2nd Floor
Sun Valley, CA 91331

RE: Senate Constitutional Amendment 2

Dear Council President Martinez:

California State Senate Constitutional Amendment 2 (or SCA-2) is another threat to the people of the City of Los Angeles. Article XXXIV of the State Constitution relates to public housing where the majority of electors of a city, town, or county have the right to either approve or reject a low-rent housing project. There is subject matter that requires both review and consideration prior to casting a vote of being in favor of a resolution to propose to the people of the State of California for the repeal of Article XXXIV.

In the event of a repeal of Article 34 it has not been clarified whether proposed public housing projects will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. Some people argue that Article 34's original intended goals to allow for a public referendum has been thwarted over the decades by court cases in its interpretation and application. If that is the case then why is there yet another attempt to repeal this portion of the State's constitution for a *second* straight year in a row; again by the same authors State Senators Scott Weiner and Ben Allen?

As taxpayers it is infuriating to discover that the people's money is spent by government entities with no regard to a satisfactory proper return or care for a major public housing investment. There are multiple cases where mismanagement of public funds has taken place involving public housing projects and the fact that— in accordance with US Department of Housing and Urban Development demolition criteria—the cities of Chicago, St. Louis, and New York City demolished large public housing structures

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after they were deemed unfit for dwelling—which only further erodes the public's trust in government.¹ St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex of 33 buildings (11 stories each) on a single site of 57 acres were completed in 1955 only to be demolished twenty years later with the last one being imploded in 1976. The architect for the Pruitt-Igoe project would later lament at how destructive the residents had been *in addition* to the rapid state of deterioration of the projects themselves.² But rapid deterioration comes as no surprise when projects are awarded to the lowest bidder and developers employ cheaper materials over the more expensive and durable type, or because of government budget constraints that also impact the quality of the development. If the lifespan of publicly funded housing projects have been dismissed as an acceptable loss then our support for any of them is also lost.

We also do not know, after the construction of public housing projects if contracts with tenants require accountability in case of tenant inflicted damages upon the units. Will there be income and criminal background screening processes to determine tenant eligibility? What measures will be in place for community members to know whether people on parole (or with lawful and unlawful vices/behaviors) have taken residence in public housing units given that recent California legislation (Proposition 47 (2014)³ and Assembly Bill 109 (2011)⁴) has considerably relaxed definitions of what a crime is and what is its prosecution, or lack thereof, whereupon formerly incarcerated individuals were released without safety nets or protections to taxpayers?

The more prudent thing to continue to do is to include more subsidized units in mixed-use developments (with more aesthetically pleasing designs and amenities) so as to avoid the construction of only public housing projects that tend to stigmatize both the residents that live there and the neighborhoods that host them. Moreover, based on 2010 Census data, there are 164 Census Block Groups within CD 6, with 127 of these blocks having a significant population with a per capita income of less than \$22,000 a year. That's 77% of the Block Groups. Figure 1 illustrates Median Household Income Census 2010 Block Group data estimates with 2017 adjusted-inflation dollars for various intersecting political boundaries from Canoga Ave as the westernmost boundary to the city's limits on the east and everything roughly north of Mulholland Dr to the city's northern limits. Prior to 2004 the people of California had government code in place as one of the criteria for when a low-income project *could be rejected by a local agency*. The year 2003 was the last time a local agency could disapprove a public housing development if it was able to make written findings, based on substantial evidence in the record, for when California Government Code §65589.5(d)(4) would be applicable if:

Approval of the development project would increase the concentration of lower income households in a neighborhood that already has a disproportionately high number of lower income households and there is no feasible method of approving the development at a different site, including those sites identified pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583, without rendering the development unaffordable to low- and moderate-income households.⁵

While this language has since been removed, the chapter, section number, subdivision, and paragraph identifiers are still the same. Nevertheless, given that there are insufficient public safety resources in our neighborhoods as it is, and the fact that CD 6 has demographics with considerably lower-income

¹ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/centers/sac/dmd

² <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/apr/22/pruitt-igoe-high-rise-urban-america-history-cities>

³ https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=7.&title=1.&part=&chapter=33.&article=

⁴ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0101-0150/ab_109_bill_20110404_chaptered.pdf

⁵ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/03-04/bill/sen/sb_0601-0650/sb_619_bill_20030903_enrolled.html

brackets alongside higher crime rates (compared to wealthier communities along Ventura Blvd, Westwood Blvd, Porter Ranch Dr, or San Vicente Blvd), without a doubt, an introduction of public housing of the same type, even in smaller scale, will adversely impact the communities of CD 6.

Los Angeles has *both* a homeless crisis and a severe shortage of housing affordability.

The Los Angeles (County) Home Services Authority (LAHSA) now has a homeless count of 66,436 throughout the county for the year 2020 with the City of Los Angeles accounting for 41,290 of those homeless individuals.⁶ In 2019 LAHSA reported 58,936 homeless for the entire county.⁷ Recent surveys of homeless counts in Los Angeles County have expressed that the majority of the homeless are people with mental health illnesses, substance abuse addictions, traumas, chronic health conditions, and/or are experiencing physical health impediments.⁸ State laws prohibit involuntary commitment for care services, whether it be for people with mental health illnesses, substance abuse addictions, or any of the conditions named (and not named) above. This issue can no longer be overlooked. The evidence in the public forum demonstrates that there is a more significant need for state mental health institutions/hospitals/rehabilitation centers and employment growth than there is for actual public housing. *Yet the much needed facilities need not be constructed within a city's limits* because undeveloped territories are abundant in the state and county where there would be virtually no voter opposition, or much if any complaints by taxpayers, to proposals for temporary hangars that would be a fraction of the costs of constructing concrete buildings. We also cannot ignore the fact homeless counts also include *homeless delinquents/career criminals* and that there have been an array of aggressive, hostile, and combative homeless individuals that have burglarized residential property, committed vehicular property thefts and/or damages, assaulted, robbed, and/or harassed innocent bystanders/taxpayers in Arleta, Granada Hills, Panorama City, North Hills, Pacoima, Sun Valley, Mission Hills, and elsewhere within the City of Los Angeles at supermarkets, bus stops, parks, or other public spaces. Many cases often go unreported as well.

Regarding housing, market-rate unit construction outpaces that of affordable units.⁹ For the period between 2013 to 2020 in the City of Los Angeles there were 162,706 total units approved while only 20,591, or 13% of the total approved units, were categorized as being "affordable" while the rest were market rate units.¹⁰ Moreover, in the same City of LA housing progress report, for the year 2019 there were 29,713 total units approved while there were only 5,662 affordable units (or 20% of the total units approved). Los Angeles has undergone, and is undergoing, a tremendous development bonanza and it is unfathomable that all of the recently built luxury units are occupied in either Hollywood, Downtown Los Angeles, Koreatown, or elsewhere, particularly when some of the units are being leased within a range from \$2,000 to over \$10,000 per month.¹¹ What is the State doing to hold accountable the owners of recently built luxury housing structures with some units that sit empty years after completion? Is the State providing sufficient resources of its own to assist local agencies in the enforcement of laws governing housing and/or lack thereof?

⁶ <https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=726-2020-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-results>

⁷ <https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=558-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-shows-12-rise-in-homelessness#:~:text=LOS%20ANGELES%2C%20CA%E2%80%94In%20a,from%20last%20year's%20point%2Din>

⁸ <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/serious-health-conditions-trauma-unsheltered-homeless>

⁹ <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1m61m1n6>

¹⁰ <https://planning.lacity.org/resources/housing-reports>

¹¹ <https://www.apartments.com/hollywood-ca/luxury/>

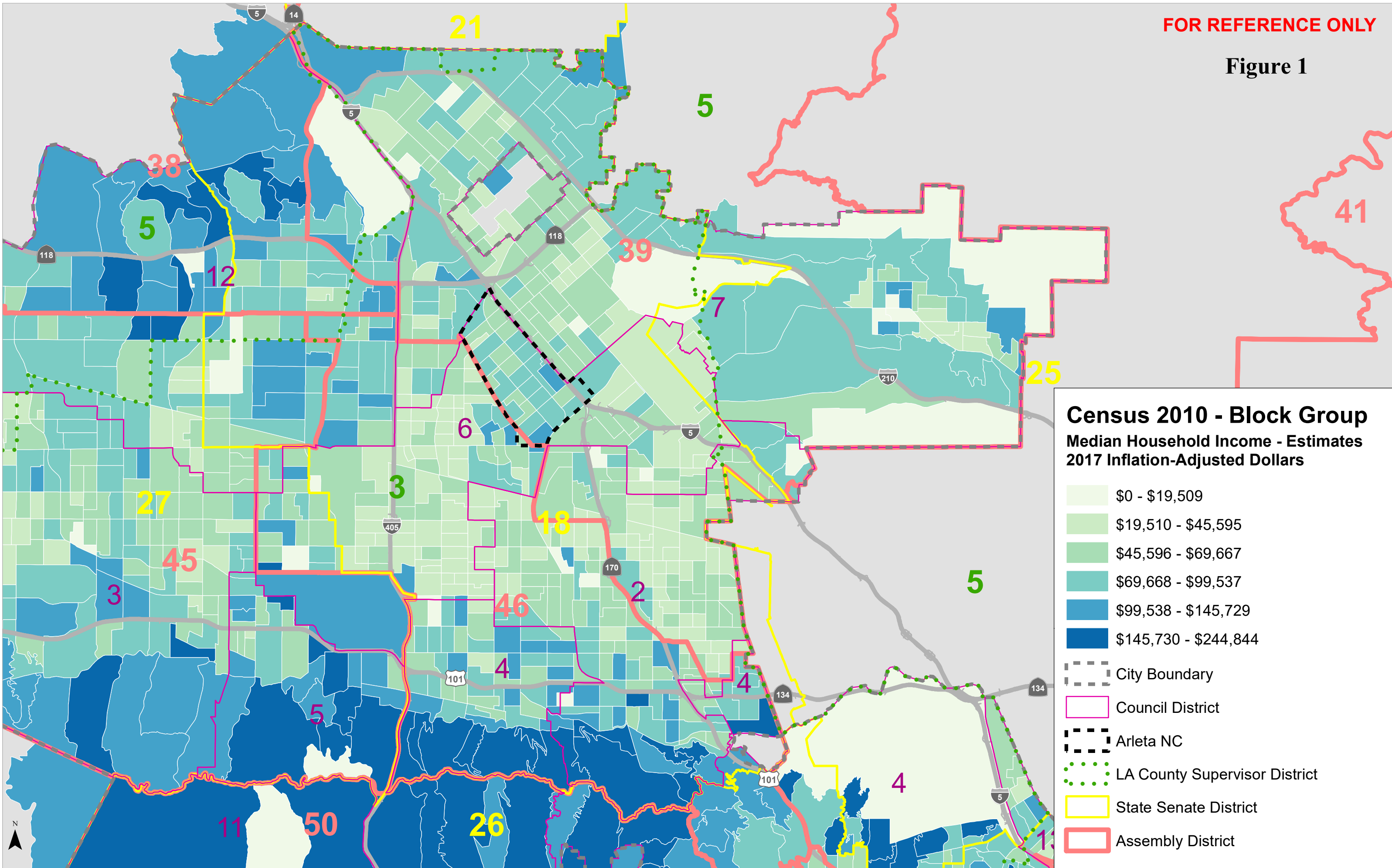
Additionally, construction has not been equitable throughout the City. Between 2015 to 2020, West Los Angeles Community Plan Area (CPA) had 517 affordable units and 4,245 market rate units built compared to Southeast Los Angeles CPA's 3,790 affordable units and 2,873 market rate units.¹² Canoga Park CPA has 184 affordable units versus 10,819 non-affordable units. Do Southeast LA's numbers not reflect a concentration of lower-income housing by comparison? Both West Los Angeles and Canoga Park CPAs are not building enough affordable housing and the Arleta-Pacoima CPA, given its demographics, will likely follow the construction patterns as found in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area as the population may be perceived as being less resistant to developments. Therefore, voter control must be maintained and SCA-2 must be discarded.

Given the preponderance of the evidence, unanswered questions, and conditions of the state of affairs for working California taxpayers and without addressing the needs for those without a shelter and employment the Arleta Neighborhood Council cannot support the repeal of Article XXXIV of the State of California Constitution. The State of California must not build public housing at any given site without the approval of the public.

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¹² <https://planning.lacity.org/resources/housing-reports> Slide 3 of 6

Figure 1



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; State of California; Los Angeles County; City of Los Angeles The City of LA, US Govt, State of California, LA County are not liable for any errors, omissions, inaccuracies from use of this document.