



Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending



March 7, 2023

Bay Area News Group Housing Headlines

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- “**Revenge through ‘Builder’s’ Remedy**” 2/13/23 Ethan Varian/Aldo Toledo Bay Area news group staff writers.
- “**SB 9 Results show NIMBY’s, YIMBY’s wrong**” February 19, 2023 by Katie Lauer BA news group reporter.
- “**Housing scarcity target of new Bill**” March 2, 2023 by Ethan Varian, Bay area News group.
- “**Housing still lags in spite of laws.** March 5, 2023 b Marisa Kendall, Bay area News group.

Facing a massive affordable housing crisis, the state legislature passed law after law to boost housing production. Is it working? Not quickly! Nearly 100 housing bills have been signed into law since 2016. They have faced intense push back from growth resistant cities and their residents. There is no quick fix to housing, or affordable housing, or low-income housing or very low income housing. These are desired assets that are illiquid, are costly, take a long time to build and complete, and fill, and the advocates for housing want it done ASAP. Only 5-10% of existing houses turnover each year. The culture of single family homes are imbedded in the aspirations of Americans. It includes “**My home is my castle**”. I want a quiet neighborhood, distancing between neighbors, yards for children and low density. Existing City ordinances start single family residential development at 6,000 square feet. Resistance to change is strong.

The small units such as accessory dwelling units have been occurring under the new laws, but only one home at a time. Applications to subdivide single family lots are lagging across most of the Bay Area. SB 9 the “California Home Act” signed in 2021 was designed to facilitate more options for homeownership in California/. It allows property owners and developers to construct up to two housing units on parcels where only one home was previously allowed. There are split lot options that allow a homeowner to build up to four units of housing on a parcel, if each parcel has at least 2,400 square feet per lot. Anne Paulson of pro-housing group YMBY is skeptical that towns are making real progress. The Turner Center study of Muhammad Alameldin and David Garcia found limited or nonexistent SB 9 permitting activity across 13 cities that were prime locations to take advantage of the recent law.

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State housing laws requiring that at least 20% of units in any home builder’s project be affordable began in 2018. Yet, 109 of 118 Cities and counties have not filed or have had their housing elements rejected as inadequate to meet increased housing goals by 2031 deadlines. One City declared part of the town a mountain lion sanctuary, another zoned for developmentally disabled adults only, or picky and obscure ordinances in every way are designed to make building homes difficult. SB 4 allows religious institutions to build affordable homes on their properties. But non-profits are notoriously underfunded and have to raise funds through donations or apply for grants which are inadequate to cover costs.

With Bay Area downtown commercial building sitting empty, more recently a Bill has been introduced that would allow empty office space to be turned into needed housing. Assembly member Matt Hanley, who has seen surging office vacancy rates introduced a Bill that will make it faster and easier to convert office buildings into new apartments and condos. AB1532 dubbed the “Office to Housing Conversion Act” could make use of grants Gov Newsom has outlined in his recent budget proposal. Alex Stettinski, CEO of the San Jose Downtown Association, said more office to housing conversions could help San Jose, a City facing a new work from home reality, to revitalize its downtown into a more balanced mix of offices housing, entertainment, retail and other uses. Under the proposed legislation, these conversions could not be prevented so long as 10% of the units are affordable and don’t exceed basic height limits and density requirements. They would be exempt from slow environmental review processes. It would allow conversion in all areas regardless of local zoning laws, and limit fees. But cities have long resisted building more homes and “The jury is still out on housing legislations’ impact.”

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