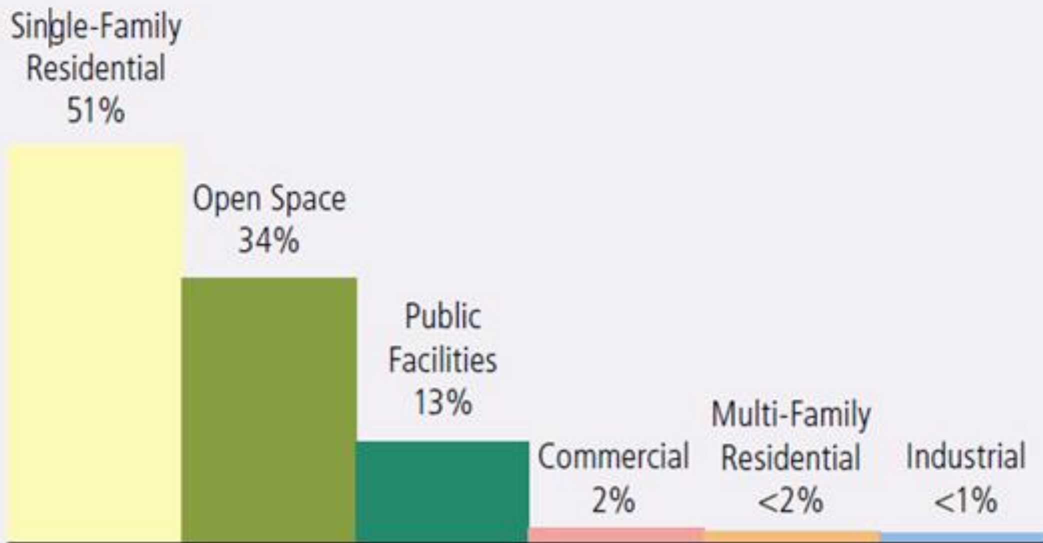

Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zones	Net Acres	Total Acres	% of Total Acres
Total			**9,057**	
Residential			**4,640**	**51.2%**
Single Family Neighborhoods			4,491	49.6%
Minimum	A1, A2, RE40	680		7.5%
Very Low I	RE20, RA	766		8.4%
Very Low II	RE15, RE11	636		7%
Low I	RE9, RS	2,009		24%
Low II	R1	371		1.9%
Low III	RD6	29		<1%
Multiple Family Neighborhoods			149	1.6%
Low Medium I	R2, RD3, RD4	22		<1%
Low Medium II	RD1.5, RD2	53		<1%
Medium	R3	74		<1%

Los Angeles Times

Editorial December 11, 2012

Don't blame realignment

Councilman Englander is wrong: The new law isn't responsible for four deaths in Northridge.

The fact that one of the suspected killers of four people in a Northridge home was "out on the street and not behind bars," City Councilman Mitchell Englander said last week, "underscores the dangers posed by realignment."

No, it does not. Englander has it wrong. The suspect would have been released from prison and would have been out on the street with or without AB 109, the sweeping 2011 law best known by the shorthand term "public safety realignment." The councilman's statement and his accompanying resolution calling for a change to realignment are off-base.

Realignment transfers authority over some felons from state prisons to county jails and, on their release, from state parole to county probation departments. The law was adopted hastily and took many local leaders by surprise a year and a half ago, so perhaps they could be forgiven if, back then, they were confused by the details of realignment and anxiously repeated blatantly false assertions that it would result in the early release of prison inmates or leave them unsupervised when they returned to their neighborhoods.

But elected officials have had plenty of time to catch up with the facts, and it's hard now to avoid the conclusion that a statement like Englander's — attributing the horrific Northridge slayings to realignment — demonstrates either a careless disregard for the facts or a cynical ploy to score political points.

Honesty about the real-world impact of AB 109 is crucial not because realignment is a flawless policy that should be left pristine — in fact, it is laden with potential problems and requires careful scrutiny and, if appropriate, thoughtful revision. A purely ideological defense of the law would be no more valid or useful than a purely ideological attack on it. But it is harder to discern the actual shortcomings when officials who should know better misdirect public attention to problems that have nothing to do with realignment and to counterproductive changes disguised as solutions.

In fact, Northridge shooting suspect Ka Pasasouk would have been released from prison at the same time with or without realignment, whether or not he had a previous record of violent crime.

After his release from prison, Pasasouk was arrested for drug possession. Under the former system, state parole officials would probably have recommended to a parole board that he be returned to prison. Under the new system, county probation officials — who now have some of the authority that would have been assigned to the state — were quite familiar with his earlier violent felony convictions and did in fact urge a judge to order him to be incarcerated. The judge instead ordered him to drug rehab. When he failed to check in with probation, county officials prepared an arrest warrant, just as state officials would have done under the old system. But before they could find and recover him, four people in the Northridge home were dead.

latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-realignment-northridge-shooting-englander-20121211,0,678878.story

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Did the Los Angeles County Probation Department act more slowly or make its case to the judge more poorly than state parole would have? And if that's so, was it because of incompetence, inadequate resources or something else? Would parole have followed exactly the same procedure on the same timeline and would the horrific killings have occurred anyway — as killings have, in the pre-realignment past, at the hands of felons who absconded after failing to report to their parole agents? Or did the judge make a poor ruling when she declined to heed probation's recommendation that the suspect be returned to prison? What steps can and should be taken to keep the public safe from killers, whether they are skipping parole or probation?

Those are the kinds of questions to which Englander should be demanding answers, instead of presenting a resolution — already signed by five of his colleagues, who also should know better — calling on the Legislature to change the realignment law. Realignment did not affect Pasasouk's sentence, and the call for stricter supervision, without an understanding or explanation of how, and at what point, and by whom supervision failed in this case — if in fact it did — is meaningless. Realignment changes the agency to whom the released felon reports, not the level of supervision employed.

It might be easier to cut Englander some slack were it not for the fact that this is his second illogical leap arising from the Northridge killings, which he also cited last week as a reason to adopt his proposal to regulate group homes. The site of the killings was such a home.

According to a statement from Englander's office: "The tragic murder of four people on Dec. 2 at an unlicensed boarding house in a residential neighborhood of Northridge in council member Englander's district underscores" — there is that word again — "the need to regulate such facilities."

No, it does not. Once again, Englander has it wrong. The suspected killer was not a resident of the group home; his victims were. They were not shot because the house was overcrowded or messy or because it was a blight — if it was — on the neighborhood. There is no reason to believe that he was more or less likely to have shot them had they been the only four residents of a tidy single-family home. The shooting and "the need to regulate such facilities" appear completely unrelated — and the attempt to link them, just like the attempt to link the shooting to public safety realignment, falls short of the standard of thought and action Los Angeles residents should demand from an elected official.

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CARE FOR US!

STOP THE COMMUNITY DOESN'T CARE ORDINANCE

Los Angeles Times Editorial December 9, 2012

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How crowded is too crowded?

L.A. City Councilman Mitchell Englander has been trying to craft an ordinance that would tighten laws on group homes and boarding houses. His latest effort still falls short.

No one wants to live near a noisy, crowded boarding house whose residents are, at the least, an annoyance and, at the worst, a threat to public health and safety. City nuisance laws and zoning codes are supposed to minimize such problems, but they're not enforced consistently or effectively against bad operators.

So L.A. City Councilman Mitchell Englander has been trying to craft an ordinance that would tighten laws on group homes and boarding houses. The L.A. Municipal Code currently defines a "family" as any group of people living in a residence and sharing access to common areas such as kitchens and bathrooms, a definition that offers advantages in a diverse city but makes it difficult to shut down a badly run boarding house.

Englander initially proposed a Community Care Facilities Ordinance that added restrictions on groups of people living together, the crucial one being a rule allowing only one lease per house in single-family and low-density neighborhoods. This would have made life hard for boarding houses, but it would also have jeopardized well-run group homes that serve veterans, the disabled and people recovering from substance abuse, among others. Some of those residents are receiving housing assistance that requires them to be on separate leases. Even seniors, college students or budget-conscious adults who band together in a house on multiple leases would have risked violating the law. As a result, the original ordinance was opposed by dozens of social service organizations, including the United Way.

Now Englander has retooled the measure, making several significant changes. One would allow three leases per group home rather than just one. The problem is that community advocates say even three would limit options for people in legitimate, responsible group residences. We agree.

Another change is more promising. It would allow unlicensed group homes that serve a societal need to apply, for free, for "reasonable accommodation" status, permitting them to house as many as two people per bedroom on several leases if the operators met various conditions, including providing sufficient parking and agreeing not to light the premises too brightly.

Englander is putting the new version of his ordinance before a meeting Monday of the City Council's Public Safety Committee at which the public can weigh in. That's a smart move. The councilman and the critics of his ordinance should see if there is a solution they can all live with before the full council votes on it next month.

www.StopCCFO.org

HOME FOR GOOD

An initiative of United Way of Greater Los Angeles & L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce