

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org).

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

#### Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: North Westwood Neighborhood Council

Name: Furkan Yalcin

Phone Number:

Email: [furkannwwnc@gmail.com](mailto:furkannwwnc@gmail.com)

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(15) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 02/09/2022

Type of NC Board Action: Against

#### Impact Information

Date: 02/24/2022

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 19-0603

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The North Westwood Neighborhood Council strongly opposes Council File 19-0603. We recommend that the City of Los Angeles vote against this measure. While the North Westwood Neighborhood Council applauds careful and well-thought-out fire safety measures, this measure would disincentivize affordable housing development in West Los Angeles, a sorely needed resource for our district.

## Community Impact Statement

[Council File: 19-0603](#): *City Building Code Fire District 1 Expansion / California Department of Forestry / Fire Protection Very High Fire Severity Zone / City High Wind Velocity Zone / Ordinance*

The North Westwood Neighborhood Council strongly opposes Council File 19-0603. We recommend that the City of Los Angeles vote against this measure. While the North Westwood Neighborhood Council applauds careful and well-thought-out fire safety measures, this measure would disincentivize affordable housing development in West Los Angeles, a sorely needed resource for our district.

The measure seeks to expand the [Fire District 1](#) designation to many areas of the city. The Fire District 1 designation is unique to Los Angeles in major California cities and was first created over 100 years ago to address issues of insurability in buildings constructed before the advent of modern construction techniques and sprinkler systems. Simply put, a Fire District 1 designation severely restricts the type of construction, building materials, and lot setbacks that can be applied to properties within those zones. Part of the proposed ordinance uses height districts, which allow certain areas to build taller buildings than the rest of Los Angeles, as a proxy for wildfire hazards.

One part of Westwood and most of Wilshire Boulevard is included in the original Fire District 1. This has had the effect of making development more expensive, most notably by restricting materials to the use of concrete instead of cheaper and more eco-friendly alternatives such as mass timber, a material not invented at the implementation of Fire District 1. Further costs come from additional fire sealants in windows and other aspects of construction. It would also directly conflict with the setback allowances Transit Oriented Communities are given by Measure JJJ when building new affordable units and would disincentivize builders from offering affordable units.

The policy does little if anything to address the very real threat of wildfires to our communities. The source inspiration for the ordinance, the [2014 Da Vinci apartment fires](#) that destroyed an unfinished building, were the result of arson, rather than wildfires. This motion does not focus on the real safety risk of fires in parts of the city exposed to wildfires. It would ban type IV (heavy timber) and V (wood-frame) construction of larger projects in areas with certain height districts - which includes a large portion of the city, including many of Los Angeles' most walkable and transit-rich communities, where we should be encouraging new housing. We propose that the City prevent wildfire damage by making affordable housing more available in the very places that Fire District 1 is already or is proposed to expand to. By promoting density, we prevent sprawl into unsafe, heavily forested communities which are

much more susceptible to damage from increasingly common wildfires.

The recent [report back](#) from the Department of Building and Safety reiterates that building costs would increase **10.6% to 47.1%** if this ordinance is enacted. It also concluded that an expansion of Fire District 1 would likely reduce the financial feasibility of affordable housing projects and may result in fewer affordable housing units in the City. Fire District 1 is a relic of an era before modern building standards and offers no known fire safety benefit.

The North Westwood Neighborhood Council urges the City Council **to vote no** on this measure.

It also urges the Council to consider the repeal of Fire District 1 altogether.