



July 21, 2022

The Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Attn: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: File 220446

President Walton and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

It is with great disappointment that I submit my veto of File Number 220446, the “fourplex” ordinance that was passed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 and Tuesday, July 12, 2022. While I support the original intent of the ordinance to add new desperately needed housing options for San Franciscans struggling with the high cost of housing, especially for our middle-income families, after many amendments, this ordinance no longer achieves the goal intended to actually produce more housing. Instead, it is fair to say that this ordinance, as amended, will set back housing production.

As Mayor, from day one I have been a strong supporter of policies that create new housing opportunities for all San Franciscans and directly address our city’s housing shortage and lack of affordability. Unfortunately, if enacted, this ordinance will accomplish neither goal. As I understand it, Board members received an independent report finding that the small-scale housing projects, as envisioned by this ordinance, are in many cases infeasible today because of high construction costs. Instead of cutting bureaucracy and reducing project costs, the Board added many new requirements and imposed new financial barriers that will make it even less likely for new housing to be built under the ordinance’s provisions.

Even more importantly, this ordinance shirks the city's obligation to comply with state housing laws and do our part to address the state-wide housing shortage. Last year, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 9 (SB 9) to require the streamlined, ministerial approval of duplexes and lot splits in single-family residential zones. This ordinance eliminates single-family zoning to deliberately sidestep SB 9 and its streamlining provisions without offering any local process improvements in its place. Instead, we should be working closely with our partners at the state to use every available tool – including state housing laws – to support housing production in our city. Right now, certain jurisdictions across the state are finding creative ways to rid themselves of this obligation. San Francisco must not join them in this anti-housing effort of trying to circumvent our collective obligation to build more housing for our residents.

For the future of San Francisco, the Bay Area, and California, we must make serious changes to how we approve and build housing. This duty lies with local, state, and federal leaders. There are too many people being forced to live on our street. There are too many families who can't afford to stay in this city. There are too many workers commuting long distances, or simply leaving the Bay Area. We cannot keep putting forward the same restrictive policies, and we certainly cannot put forward local policies that block progressive state streamlining solutions. We need dramatic change if we are going to meet the obligations of our upcoming Housing Element, which is going to require over 80,000 new homes to be built over the next eight years.

I remain committed to supporting effective proposals that will result in new homes while abiding by state law, and I welcome the opportunity to work with the Board on another ordinance that addresses the concerns raised in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "London N. Breed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "London" and last name "Breed" clearly distinguishable.

London N. Breed
Mayor