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Subject: OPPOSE File No. 231163
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Dear Land Use & Transportation Committee Members,

I am writing you to urge opposition to Sup. Chan's proposed ordinance (231163) that is being heard at today's committee meeting. This ordinance, as written, will have broad and damaging impacts to new infill housing, and it is entirely unwarranted when compared to state and national building codes, and denser cities in the United States, such as Chicago and New York City. SFFD's insistence on needing a 5-foot clear path, open to the sky, is a gross overreach and is not grounded in any type of rigorous study. Furthermore, Sup. Chan did not consult with any other stakeholders in the design and construction industry on measures to balance the need for fire safety with our city's pressing housing shortage. This proposed code change is in direct conflict with recently implemented legislation (File No. 230446 "Constraints Reduction") which reduced minimum lot widths to 20 feet. If approved, subdivided lots requiring a 5-foot clear path would then only have 15 feet of width for building. This renders almost all projects infeasible.

Modern building codes provide many fire safety features that did not exist in the early 1900's, which is when much of San Francisco's housing stock was built, and is the source for SFFD's examples of the hazardous and narrow conditions they must navigate with their equipment. New construction must follow modern codes that require fire safety features such as fire sprinklers, fire rated assemblies, and secondary exits. The proposed code changes will do nothing to improve safety in older buildings, but will have the effect of killing new housing.

In our small firm alone, this code change would render three projects infeasible, totaling (14) units of infill housing:

- (6) units in the Ingleside neighborhood on a wide lot with a vacant, fire damaged home
- (4) units in the Inner Richmond neighborhood across from Rossi Park
- (4) units in the Corona Heights neighborhood with good access to public transit

Please oppose this legislation.

Thank you,
Tyler Stowell, AIA
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