



# Ridgewood-Wilton Neighborhood Association

## Letter From The President

Hello Neighbors!

**Burglaries & Break-Ins.** Some bad news on this front. A house on South Wilton Place suffered repeat break-ins last weekend. Fortunately, the elderly owner was away and not hurt but she may never return to the neighborhood. What can you do for prevention? Make the house look occupied: tell your neighbors you'll be away, stop mail and have someone pick up newspapers and trash barrels, have lights and sounds on timers, park a car in your driveway. I'm no fan of ADT (who can't reliably tell the difference between Wilton Drive and Place) but their alarm has saved me more than once. House-sitters if you can manage it. These people are opportunists; they don't want confrontation, so make it look like they will encounter plenty and they will move on to some place else. Obviously I don't wish them onto anyone, but I can only work locally.

My own car was ransacked while parked in front of the house. I almost certainly forgot to lock it after staggering into the house with 45# of dog food. No excuse! The same guy apparently got several more on First Street, probably all unlocked. NextDoor and LAPD Olympic Division have multiple reports of car break-ins in the surrounding neighborhoods as well. Best advice: be proactive and make your car uninteresting by leaving nothing visible in it.. What attracts attention? Loose coins, clothing, electronics (if the charging cord is visible, the device itself may be under the seat) or anything that could be sold. Make sure your car is locked (about 1/3 aren't) even in your driveway behind a gate. From your point of view, it's only 80¢ of meter change or an old sweater, but if someone wants it, the trade off is a \$200 broken window.

**Neighborhood On The Block.** At the Hancock Park Virtual Town Hall last week, our new Councilperson, Nithya Raman, stated that she had supported SB 1120, last year's version of SB 9. This means she is willing to throw neighborhoods like ours under the bus. Once again, Brian Curran has published an excellent summary article in the Larchmont *Chronicle*, copied below with permission. And here are some excerpts from the pro-SB 9 literature. Nice to be called names, isn't it?

*"**SB 9**, similar to last year's SB 1120, would make it legal to **turn most single-family properties in California into two properties, and build two homes on each.** (Emphasis added) If you're ready to legalize more homes in your neighborhood, take 3 minutes to send an email to your state Senator in support of SB 9. Passing SB 9 would let homeowners build desperately needed housing in more than two-thirds of California's residential neighborhoods, where it is currently illegal to build. So it's no wonder NIMBYs oppose this legislation. Help counter their reactionary voices by sharing your support for SB 9 with your state Senator."*

**Visits.** I've now been to every house and so far have spoken to more than 60%, so I have to say it's going well. I really appreciate the cordial receptions and in some cases extended conversations. The afternoons are sunny and pleasant and the neighborhood even better! Thank you. Almost 80% have contributed the \$20 dues, and that doesn't count those who have taken an envelope to mail it. So if you see someone on your porch, Covid beard poking out around a mask, soccer ball clipboard in hand, it's me. If I missed you on the first pass, I'll try again.

The mailing list is getting updated on the fly, so this is the initial issue for some of you. Welcome! I hope you find my occasional letters helpful rather than bothersome. Feedback and suggestions are most welcome. You may find some helpful information on the web site, [www.ridgewoodwilton.com](http://www.ridgewoodwilton.com) but excuse the low level of programming: I'm just learning how to do it.

**GWNC.** Both Patricia Carroll, a resident of the Saint Andrews Square Neighborhood Association (SASNA) and Brian Curran, the Larchmont *Chronicle* columnist, were reelected to the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council. Thanks from Patti for our support and our thanks to them for their ardent support of neighborhoods. She reminds me that the GWNC needs volunteers for its committees such as Transportation (traffic), Sustainability and Outreach. Thanks to Dick Herman and Susan O'Connell who serve on the Land Use Committee.

**FILMING.** Next Wednesday, upper Wilton Drive corner will once again be the chosen site for filming a commercial. The Location Manager, Jennifer Levine is eager to minimize the inevitable disruptions. She can be reached at (310) 467-3742 or [jj@goforjj.com](mailto:jj@goforjj.com)

A fond farewell to Marita Geraghty who leaves her South Wilton home of 28 years for a more suburban locale. Marita was a fierce advocate for our neighborhood and its preservation, an active member of the Association Board and community. She leaves us big boots to fill and we wish her well.

Thanks for reading  
Bob Reeves, President

## Developing affordable housing: Don't believe the YIMBY hype

For anyone paying attention, affordable housing is currently being heralded as the cure-all for a host of the city's ills.

Homelessness, workforce housing, urban flight, poor public transportation, climate change and segregation will all vanish if the city BUILDS! Builds more, builds bigger, builds faster and builds everywhere.

Here in Greater Wilshire, we are in the eye of the storm. In Hollywood to our north, the Hollywood Community Plan Update has passed the City Planning Commission with the promise of more density, and — in Sacramento — San Francisco's State Sen. Scott Wiener and Bay Area YIMBYs seek to end single-family housing and local control. (YIMBY is an abbreviation for the real estate industry-sponsored "yes in my back yard" movement. It's supposedly a counter to NIMBY — "not in my back yard" — get it?)

Now don't get me wrong, I am neither anti-development nor do I deny the desperate need for more affordable housing. I do, however, question the veracity of some of the claims of local groups such as Abundant Housing, the Friends of the Purple Line and LA Forward ... and even some of the reasoning coming out of Council District 4 Councilmember

On  
Preservation  
by  
Brian Curran



Nithya Raman's office. They all are trumpeting that the affordability crisis has reached such a degree that all other considerations (historic preservation among them) must be laid aside for the greater good. I am also curious why these groups are putting their faith in what amounts to what retired city planner Dick Platkin, writing in "CityWatch Los Angeles," called "trickle-down affordable housing." That means expecting the real estate and development interests to adequately provide the solution to a social problem that they are partially responsible for. That certainly is a definition of wishful thinking.

Consider Hollywood, where the City Planning Commission just passed the new Hollywood Community Plan Update — that included the up zoning of central Hollywood ... in an effort to drive real estate development ... in the hope this will provide needed new affordable units ... which will come as a result of the construction of many

more market-rate units. What the planning commissioners neglected to do, however, was to protect the vast concentrations of existing (and often historic) affordable and rent stabilized units, which now will be prime targets for demolition and redevelopment. While the theory is that these units will be replaced, oftentimes years later, it is soon that the existing communities will be displaced and the neighborhood "cleansed" (as the "Los Angeles Times" put it), while newer affluent professionals with cars move in ... or not, inasmuch as Hollywood has among the highest vacancy rates in the city, according to a recent UCLA study.

### On Preservation

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what is affordable to someone making the county's average household median income.

The reality is that no developer is likely to buy an expensive single-family-home property to demolish it. Rather, developers are likely to go to urban Los Angeles areas where single-family land is cheapest (relatively). Those will be the single-family neighborhoods in low and moderate-income communities of color.

In a recent town hall with the Hancock Park Homeowners Association, our Councilmember Nithya Raman said she supported SB 9 and "gen-

erally, YIMBY advocates call for the end of single-family zoning, including in Historic Preservation Overlay Districts (HPOZs), calling it exclusionary and racist. They argue that social justice demands that existing residents must make room for "missing middle housing" so as to welcome those who historically have been denied access to resource-rich communities.

Their theory, here, is that the more of these new residences that contractors build, the cheaper housing will get. Senate Bill 9 is being sold as one such tool to achieve this. SB 9 would allow lot-splitting that encourages land speculators

to buy houses, demolish them wholly or partially, split the lot, and build six to eight market-rate housing units where one house previously existed. This will increase land values exponentially and make affordable housing impossible. SB 9 also eliminates objective zoning standards and allows unregulated building size.

SB 9 and these other YIMBY and developer proposals do not require units to be affordable. Why would a developer volunteer to earn less money than the free market will supply? For example, in our readers' general vicinity, new units in modern four-plexes rent for far above

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the density increases in neighborhoods as a moderate way of increasing housing," while at the same time prudently coming out as a supporter of single-family housing. When it was pointed out to her that SB 9 ends single-family zoning, she said that she would need to study the matter further.

The false narrative around affordable housing that the Councilmember and her staff unfortunately are hearing is the result of the lobbying efforts of market-rate developers and contractors. But this narrative is not going anywhere (at least, in terms of producing needed affordable housing). Only real planning that takes into account population

growth, infrastructure capacity and traffic (and historic preservation) — as well as state and federal affordable housing subsidies from Sacramento and Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-like entities — will guarantee a sustainable city with the affordable housing we seek. This is especially important to remember as our own Wilshire Community Plan is soon due for an update, and then the pressure will be on us.

**BEEZWAX**

BY  
JOHN