

Scott Lewis ([00:04:04](#)):

Hey everybody. Thanks. And we'll be using the app for questions so everybody can hear. Okay. great. Well, I wanted to do this panel and I wanted to do it in a way that we could actually maybe get some things across. There are probably a lot of people here who have already got a pretty solid perspective on housing, on housing laws and on proposals that have gone forward. But I do think we have an opportunity to help people understand things better and, and really have a good exchange of ideas and and perspective. So that's what I'll be working on today. I'm very excited to have my two panelists up here Saad from the MB Democrats' Board member Welcomes. Thank you.

Scott Lewis ([00:04:53](#)):

And my is Jeff Boyer from the neighbors for a better San Diego neighbor. Thank you. Neighbors. Yeah, neighbor. So we have investigative journalism for better San Diego. You're just neighbors for better San all, I guess. Yeah, exactly. Well we wanna get into SB 10 and overall just perspectives on, on housing. So you've probably seen plenty of SB 10 signs in different lots around the community. I would guess a majority of the signs are anti SB 10 I but I also think there's a lot of diverse perspective throughout the city. And one thing that's interesting about housing is nobody ever is able to speak up for the house, for the people who don't live in houses that don't exist yet. And I think I always try to represent the future that way as well. But let's get into, we wanna make sure we understand what we're talking about first.

Scott Lewis ([00:05:48](#)):

So I'm gonna start a definition of SSB 10 and the issue going forward. And then hope that both sides can correct me as we go on. Then I'm trying to perform an active journalism and my own knowledge about the issue is, is limited as well. So let's just start. SB 10 is already lost, so if you're anti SB 10, sorry, that ship is sold. <Laugh> <inaudible>. But it's implementation is obviously not guaranteed in any city. It's an optional implementation for every city. And what it allows, I think, very generally is for any parcel of land can be turned into up to 10 units of housing without the same sort of level of environmental review that's often required to build that kind of housing. That's it. And I think in general, now, obviously if, if you turn a house into several units that can, that can have some impacts, some discussion is warranted. Now in the city of San Diego, they did start to pursue staff started to pursue implementation of SB 10. They, they wanted to be the first city to implement SSB 10 here to make it possible for landowners to access it. And that that sort of way of getting things done. But they limited it, and correct me if I'm wrong, to one unit per thousand square feet of the parts, correct?

Geoff Hueter ([00:07:13](#)):

Correct.

Scott Lewis ([00:07:13](#)):

Okay. So that meant if you have a 5,000 square foot parcel, it would've allowed you to build five units on that parcel, regardless of where it is without the kind of environmental impact review warrant sometimes for discretionary purposes. Fair. We good so far?

Geoff Hueter ([00:07:31](#)):

Yeah. The, the bigger issue would've been that area ratio.

Scott Lewis ([00:07:37](#)):

Yeah.

Geoff Hueter (00:07:37):

But the one per thousand is correct,

Scott Lewis (00:07:40):

Right up

Geoff Hueter (00:07:40):

To 10.

Scott Lewis (00:07:41):

Yeah, we can get into that, that nuance thing is important and interesting, but every feel good about that sort of foundation. We're all good. Okay. Let's get into this discussion. So it went to the planning commission. The planning commissioners had a lot of trouble with it and decided not to advance it to the full city council. I think it was pretty clear that the mayor also got cold feet. A lot of people got cold feet about pushing this forward. And in part because of the outcry from folks like George and others. So, George, maybe I can let you start about what made you, what do you think this has gotten so polarized and interesting and why it's sort of penetrated the discussion? So, so

Geoff Hueter (00:08:24):

First of all, Jeff.

Scott Lewis (00:08:25):

Oh, I'm sorry, Jeff. Sorry.

Geoff Hueter (00:08:26):

That's alright. I, I get it. Jeff and cuter. So what what really made it polarizing was it was sold as a missing middle bill. And there there's all concept in urban development of what missing as a form factor that fits with the, the houses that are around it. And, and basic terms, when you look at missing housing, you look at things more broadly. The micro form based code, there's a basic concept that buildings should relate to each other and to the streetscape, and for that sense that there's certain things about housing build, it's single family or multifamily, and those are what's the bulk of the house, the setbacks or the design standards you imposed. These are things that are all allowed by <inaudible>, not just SB 10 for previous things. So where did SB 10 kind of run? Is that it didn't do any of those things?

Geoff Hueter (00:09:29):

Basically, it's look at you know, in 5,000 square feet there up to square feet the we would normally see is square. And so under those conditions, you know, building a quad class or a duplex or even a bungalow core would be in scale that less than three square foot envelope. But San Diego did is they said, well, we, to be flu air ratio, flu air ratio, take the size multiplied by the numbers in that sense, how big a building you build. And so what San Diego said is, we're gonna make the four area ratio, 3.0, 3.0 is like higher density than most of our arterial roads, like, you know, elk Boulevard and, and, you know, lot places more whatnot. So it's actually a really high density scale. And just to give you a sense of it, on a

one acre parcel, you'd be able to build 30,000 square foot building. Well, that isn't, it just isn't done through in terms of stage. We want housing that fits within the context of the <inaudible>.

Speaker 5 ([00:10:53](#)):

Todd what what do you think is misunderstood most about SB 10 and

Geoff Hueter ([00:10:59](#)):

Implementation and,

Speaker 5 ([00:11:00](#)):

And some of the things,

Geoff Hueter ([00:11:01](#)):

And I'm sorry.

Saad Asad ([00:11:06](#)):

So I feel like what's most misunderstood about SB 10 is really, it's quite modest in what will actually happen. Realistically, if you're looking at some of these lots, they will remain single family homes. When you're looking at a developer whether they should buy this land, the cost of land is expensive, the cost of construction is expensive. Am I getting feedback or No, you're good. Okay. and then you have to pay back the investors. So you have to find the right piece of land that'll actually be worth developing. Realistically, that's not gonna be happening. I mean, as much as I would probably on my side of just like, oh, I'd love to build more housing, SB 10 is gonna build some housing. It's just one tool in the larger toolbox. So it's not gonna be as radical in changing the dramatic nature of neighborhoods.

Saad Asad ([00:11:53](#)):

And when it comes to scale, at the end of the day, the max is 10 units, and that's on a 10,000 square foot lot. 10,000 is huge. So 10 units on a 10,000 square foot lot is not exactly gonna be overwhelming the neighborhood. So I think that's the kind of the nature of the nitty gritty of it. But the core of it is San Diego is in a housing crisis. I just looked down Zillow today, \$2,500 for a one bedroom, \$3,200 for just the median rent of anything. The median home price is 950,000. Nothing is affordable, not even at for moderate income folks. So that's the kind of scale or issue that we're dealing about when we're discussing it. So like setback discussions can often be a luxury when the reality is people are paying significantly more of their paycheck to rent.

Scott Lewis ([00:12:45](#)):

Let's talk about that. So another foundational principle in this discussion is the concept of supply and demand. And there are a lot of people advocating think legitimately in San Diego, that if we need, we're gonna to address the, the cost crisis, we need to respond with supply, supply and demand. We'll, we'll help at least keep things from going up so high, if not eventually reduce the cost of housing. Is that a premise that you accept, Jeff?

Geoff Hueter ([00:13:15](#)):

So, so the supply and demand part of the equation is a lot more complicated than that. It's just a matter of fewer people wanting housing relative to supply, and the fact that when people leave San Diego,

prices should go down. And, and we haven't really seen that. So there's more effect than, than just supply. And, and the part that usually gets underestimated is we're not talking about cars or TVs here. We're talking about housing supply. And, and there's two things that have taken place in San Diego that impact that equation that aren't typically talked about. And the first one is, and, and it's a good thing in a way, well, it's a good thing. So climate action reasons we said we don't want to build out into the city anymore, which means that you can only now build on land that's already been built on.

Geoff Hueter ([00:14:09](#)):

So we're, we're taking not just the most expensive places to build, but we're also posing a monopoly of, for the landowners of where you can build. And what happens not just in San Diego, but in other places in the United States and the world, is that that monopoly pricing power means that when you say, Ang put four houses on this 5,000 square foot square, I'll get the one quarter the price of, well, that what happens, what happens is the price of extracted from that property. And so unfortunately what we're finding is that most redeveloped housing doesn't end up being substantially less than the housing place. And even more so if, if you do want somebody to be able to buy a single family home they now have to compete against the person and say, you know, four units on a 10 units, et cetera. And so in some ways we're making housing less affordable. At the same time we're trying to increase supply. And it's, it's, to us, unless you have some form of government intervention to change that economic model, you're, you're gonna have a hard time meeting your supply of affordable. I think

Scott Lewis ([00:15:40](#)):

It's certainly true that there's a there's definitely a lot of people discouraging growth into the back country or outside the st but I don't think there's a as you think a natural ban on this that you can cite. And there's a, a lot of limitations and a lot of things in the way, especially with the vehicle mile travel regulations and fees. But there's still a lot of building occurring. It's just It is, it is discouraged.

Geoff Hueter ([00:16:05](#)):

Yeah. It's dis but discourage is, I mean, a can. Yeah, that's not an absolute boundary, but, you know, this is the principle of urban containment. And we're,

Scott Lewis ([00:16:14](#)):

Do you disagree with urban containment?

Geoff Hueter ([00:16:16](#)):

I I don't disagree with urban containment, but we need to recognize that it, that it wasn't a free lunch when it came to, you know, land valuation. Right.

Scott Lewis ([00:16:25](#)):

What do you think needs to be understood about supply?

Saad Asad ([00:16:30](#)):

So I think Jeff is right that there's a lot of factors at play that supply will not immediately make solve our homelessness situation, for example, that requires government intervention, that requires money spent on affordable housing, it requires money spent on shelters. The building of new housing won't immediately impact our existing homelessness crisis, but it would have an impact on some of the

immediate, like moderate and lower income individuals who are just trying to find a place to rent that's under \$2,000. So it's a larger issue and you're gonna have a long run kind of impact by building more of this housing. So I think that from a housing prices perspective, supply does play a factor for sure. But that's not to say that it's the only solution, and that's why SB 10 was part of the mayor's larger housing action package, which included tenant protections and allowing affordable housing to be built in more places. So it is about production, preservation and protection. You can't have just one, you need to have all three of these in order to ensure that people who live here can stay here. And so that people can have affordable rents and mortgages.

Scott Lewis ([00:17:39](#)):

So production would mean the creation of new homes. Preservation, I think is a word that has a lot of meaning in housing. But to you, you're talking about affordable units that remain affordable.

Saad Asad ([00:17:49](#)):

Yep. Feed restricted, affordable units. We're not bulldozing affordable units in order to create, or at least we're, if we are getting rid of them, they should be replaced.

Scott Lewis ([00:17:59](#)):

Just to continue with this sort of overall theme of housing, and then we'll get more into specifics with the SB 10 and other rules. I think a lot of people say they see a, a condom complex go up, or they see prices of a, of a new tower go and they're like, boy, that's, that's not affordable. What, what are we creating that for? One answer I always say as well, you know, rich people are going to buy or rent homes no matter what we can, if we don't create for homes for them, they will take over homes that used to be affordable and the the ladder will continue to knock somebody off the bottom run. But I do think that is a, that is one of those sort of natural things. We were talking about beach erosion last night. Like people say, well, why don't you just build a wall like wall? There are, there are sort of simple ways that are, that we deal with these prices and if you do build more homes that are so expensive that people can't afford them, people are gonna wonder what are we're doing here? So how do you help people keep that in perspective

Saad Asad ([00:18:59](#)):

In terms of like the building of these homes that are Yeah, yeah. So I think you're right in the sense that it stops people from competing for the naturally occurring affordable. The housing that's older, like the 1970s housing stock is still expensive. And you still have wealthy people coming to live in those places. Those apartment buildings that were built in the seventies, and they're often renting for 2,500, 3000 when in reality by having some of those market rate units began to be built that are more expensive, it kind of diffuses the competition. So the wealthy people aren't just taking up the older housing stock, but they're taking up the newer housing stock as well. So it is a little bit of like a wonky kind of discussion. But I think in the reality of, when I think of San Diego, there's market rate housing going up where I live in Mission Hills. Mission Hills is not affordable by any means. So having even a \$2,000 studio is cheaper than the \$4.5 million house that exists on a large lot. So I think that's also the scale of like, where is the market rate unit housing going up? And it's often more far more affordable than the single family homes that are within that neighborhood.

Scott Lewis ([00:20:11](#)):

Earlier, Jeff, when you were talking about what the city, where the city aired with SB 10, I, I understood into that, that there was a way that SB 10 could've been implemented that you might've been okay with. Is that what you're applying or are you saying you still would've had a problem?

Geoff Hueter ([00:20:27](#)):

So there, there's a way to build all houses, right? And, and even our general plan and blueprint, San Diego talks about how housing should be built in a way that's environments. And and, and forget about the SP 10 part, the idea that you can have missing no housing and then, and some of it's nostalgia for the forties and the streetcar suburbs, but there's still the idea that you, you can build housing within a built environment that's consistent with the houses that are next. It, it does take several things though. First of all, it, it takes a commitment to respecting the people that live in those neighborhoods and, and giving them a voice and how those things are shaped. But it, it also means, you know, saying, what are your setbacks? What are your landscaping requirements? And San Diego just, they didn't try and do anything that stayed within those limits because they never really tried to talk to stakeholders and understand what the <inaudible> were. And, and then there's another part of it, and look, a lot of what happened with SB 10 is because of what happened with the bonus. A right. You know, we we're now up to 142 Aus on a, on a single family parcel, and, you know, nobody imagined that that would be, and so it's just,

Scott Lewis ([00:21:52](#)):

I'm sorry, explain what you just said.

Geoff Hueter ([00:21:54](#)):

There's actually an A D U project, you know, a D u a granny flat that'll have 145 of 'em on a single family law in southeast San Diego. And so, you know, it's, it is not just, you see, the, the thing about 10 is that you can do this much, but what the state doesn't do, and what would be good is to say, don't do more than this. Right. In other words, you need to have a sort of a bound and a maximum to make sure that the type of housing you're trying to produce in this case, you know, again, missing middle is a specific kind of housing. When you say, I'm gonna build 10 units up to 30,000 square feet, you're not gonna get for sale, you know, quarts outta that, or <inaudible> or anything else, you're gonna get as big a thing as you can build.

Geoff Hueter ([00:22:44](#)):

And our experience is don't say, oh, nobody would do that. If they're allowed to do it, eventually someone's gonna do it. And that, that part of it not thinking through the regulations. And there's a lot of code enforcement issues that go with this. One of the things that I think the city can do a much better job to build trust with its communities is to say, look, we're gonna create these new building capabilities, but we're going to be vigorous and our code enforcement, because we expect the people that live in those secret already. And and frankly, there's not a good track record of that.

Scott Lewis ([00:23:20](#)):

I think coursing through a lot of discussion, like what you just had is, is this concept that if you live in a neighborhood, you have a contract with its environments that it is, it's supposed to be the way it was when you moved in. I think a lot of people have an objection to that, that, you know, you own your part, but you don't get to control everything around you just because of the way it used to.

Geoff Hueter ([00:23:45](#)):

So that specifically, that isn't what I said.

Scott Lewis ([00:23:47](#)):

I know, I'm, I'm just saying I'm asking you to react to that sentiment.

Geoff Hueter ([00:23:50](#)):

Yeah. And, and, and I think that, and it's not just the principle that applies to infill housing and single, it applies everywhere. I mean, again, it's in our, our general plan is that even when we build mid-rise and high-rise housing, that there's concepts that should be applied in terms of how big things are relative to their zone and to the streets gate and so on. So again, I think it goes back to if you think about the things that are in scale, then, then you have a sense of saying, you know, couldn't we enable this? And so on. And, and, you know, I think a good example, again, you take SB 10 out it and say, is this a type of housing that we wanna have in our city? Sacramento is going to a process now where they're trying to implement effectively missing middle housing through a general plan update. And you just see the whole sort of how they approach that, how they think about where different things should be built through that model.

Scott Lewis ([00:24:53](#)):

I think this is a common criticism, and I, I think it is, it's actually valid in the sense that there's a lot of look, a lot of us go to Europe, we love Europe, but there's a, there's a, there's a design conformity and, and appreciation there that makes neighborhoods feel whole, feel consistent, feel, even if they are densely packed, that they are consistent and walkable. And you can see here where there's neighborhoods where there's, you know, a an apartment, my, my, my neighborhood has a, you know, there's an apartment building across the street and then there's a, you know, a different style duplex type thing here. And then there's, it's just a, a, a mishmash of different uses and designs to the point where it does feel like the sense of community is lost. And I think a lot of people you know do react to that and wish there were more consistent standards or form-based design standards or something like that. Do you think the city whipped on on that, or is that a principle that the, you know, the pro housing crowd could, could incorporate?

Saad Asad ([00:25:59](#)):

So I think a lot of the issues when it comes to like setbacks and design standards at the core of a neighborhood, aesthetics is a privilege to like have a discussion over. I'm not saying that we shouldn't, like, we would be great if, you know, parts of our neighborhoods look like some European thing, but it is a privileged discussion to think that we should all have these exact, it should look like a craftsman house from the 1940s. We need more housing first, and we can, I think about design standards and aspects like that, but that's the ultimate kind of goal. Secondly, I'd argue that some of this missing middle housing is probably gonna be less garish in some of people's neighborhoods than the large 500 unit multi apartment complexes, a 10 unit complex. We're expanding what could be potentially built. Right now developers essentially can only build these gigantic units downtown or next to the transit corridors in El Cajon and Bankers Hill. But you can't build a 10 unit lot really, or 10 units easily anywhere. That's, is gonna be far much more aligned in scale than, you know, I think people object to the Park Boulevard complex that's much larger. 10 unit complex will be much more in line. But I think ultimately it's a very privileged discussion to be focused on aesthetics when, you know, I have friends who are just trying to find a place that's \$1,200 for a bedroom.



Scott Lewis (00:27:25):

Yeah. Well let's talk now specifically about SB 10. Where, where do you think it stumbled or the mayor stumbled or the staff stumbled, or the planning commissioners stumbled and it's implementation?

Saad Asad (00:27:42):

I think it's stumbled at the state level, just <laugh>. It should have been mandatory. It should not been an opt-in law that cities have to kind of adapt and kind of do. There's lots of other state housing laws that we've made mandatory and have applied it and gone more re re results. When you apply things at the local level and try and like come up with solutions, it's gonna be just a lot more difficult than when the state is kind of intervening and imposing it. I'm not surprised in some ways it's people have very strong associations with their specific neighborhood. The way that the city does a lot of its organizing and planning relies on these groups that probably very few people know about called community planning groups, which are a small segment of largely homeowners rarely have people of color, and it's just not necessarily represented of the people in that neighborhood. So when you rely on that form of community planning, you're not gonna get the results that we want to achieve.

Scott Lewis (00:28:40):

I I think that's a, that's a common point that comes up is the you, you need the outside entity, the states, to make these things happen. Because regardless of what you think might be okay, it will be allowed. And there will always be a political opposition to more housing in any neighborhood. And that, that must be circumvented by, by statewide initiatives. So do you, do you believe that that's a, that's true that there would always be opposition or that that could be, do you use those things to propose any kind of housing no matter what?

Geoff Hueter (00:29:16):

So one of the things we'd like to emphasize is there's a context for all of these laws. The context is the capacity that the city has today to build housing, and it important the capacity for housing and then actually having housing, right? And there's two places broadly where we designated for more housing. Housing, and one of 'em is in, in current parcels. So bonus density, and this is all housing elements. So San Diego has to go through housing elements certified that the process where they say we need to build the state determines through sand that we need 108,000 new homes in San Diego between now and 29. And San Diego had to go through the process that identifying where those homes could built and they went through, looked at their existing zoning and how underutilized was in terms of housing capacity. And they came up with 175 initially, we got several community plan updates where we got 275 just in terms of zone capacity before we do any bonus densities before we do ADU or SD line or anything else.

Geoff Hueter (00:30:34):

So when you add in these other programs, so Complete Communities is big one, complete communities. We can build, you know, well over a million new units in San Diego with the bonus, a d u regular adu, SSB nine in these so-called lock single family neighborhoods. We can build another million homes in city that if we're at 2 million in capacity and we're only building 5,000 a year, at some point we need to start asking the question, is this the zone capacity problem and we need to throw more capacity at it? Or is it an actual either regulatory burden that we put on this and we can't get enough projects to Permitting pipeline or at some level is this all developers wanna develop because they have their own economic



models that don't have anything to do with state analysis. And, and that's why one of the points we make is if we've got this much capacity, we have the, we have the ability to try and shape where it goes.

Geoff Hueter ([00:31:34](#)):

We have the ability to shape where it goes in order to further transit adoption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And a lot of this has to do with, and we talk about the places that we think are, you know, transit friendly cities, they're all population densities well above San Diego, and we're, we're not like San Francisco or Paris or Vienna. We're like Phoenix and Dallas and Houston. And so if you wanna create a transit friendly city, you need to start pushing people together, not spreading 'em all around in suburban neighborhoods. There's a lot there. Do you wanna understand <laugh>? Yeah,

Saad Asad ([00:32:19](#)):

I think one of the items I wanna comment on is that kind of always comes up is just the idea of like, what can San Diego be compared to in terms of what could its future. I think 100% San Diego is not gonna become San Francisco. People are still gonna rely on cars, it's still gonna be somewhat suburban. But that's not to say that things can't change. I think the better examples are Seattle and Denver Western cities built largely in the late 18 hundreds, 19 hundreds. They both have increasingly built more housing and or had increased their transit. Mode share or mode share is just a word for saying people are using public transit more often. <Laugh>. the other part I want to comment on is the zoned capacity. So I what SSB 10 and some of these laws do by allowing housing to be built in more areas is, I think it kind of breaks what is the exclusionary exclusionary nature of a lot of single family neighborhoods.

Saad Asad ([00:33:15](#)):

Single family neighborhoods can offer be great because they have access to great schools, parks, community centers, but because you have to own a single family house, there's a threshold. So even if it's \$700,000 for a house, that means you have to have that down payment of \$140,000 to live in that community and have access to those schools. So maybe our zone capacity probably allows us to build more in like downtown and those areas. But, you know, downtown isn't known for having the best schools. You know, what area, it does have really good schools, perhaps like Mission Hills. We should be allowing people to have access to those resources and communities and not excluding them from people just because they don't have the down payment to live in those neighborhoods.

Scott Lewis ([00:34:00](#)):

So I am reading your I'm reading your, I'm reading your questions and comments. There's one that came in making the distinction that while the a d U laws were had some impacts, they didn't allow for sale units to be built. But SB 10 does why don't you maybe you could put some perspective on this. Why weren't the advocates better at at, at making that clear in

Geoff Hueter ([00:34:30](#)):

Their message? Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Scott Lewis ([00:34:31](#)):

Well, he said, why weren't advocates better at sending this message about the, the difference between ADU being allowed to be, they're only allowed to be rented versus sold?

Saad Asad ([00:34:43](#)):

Try my best to answer that. I'm not sure I fully capture it. So from my understanding of SB 10, it allows for parcels, which is just a lot of land to be subdivided, which means it can be subdivided and to be sold into a lot that someone can then turn into a home. So instead of having to buy a 5,000 square foot lot, which you might not be able to afford, but you could buy a 2000 square foot lot, which will be, you know, a small sub portion of that, that would be much more affordable. I'm not sure if I'm answering that question.

Scott Lewis ([00:35:13](#)):

Yeah, I I'm looking at, I really

Geoff Hueter ([00:35:15](#)):

Quite

Scott Lewis ([00:35:16](#)):

Understood. Yeah, go ahead.

Geoff Hueter ([00:35:17](#)):

Yeah, so, and, and this, this kind of gets back to the scale part of it. So if you did say that, what you wanna be able to, and in effect the way to think about it is SB 10 would allow in effect small OT subdivisions. And San Diego actually has a small OT subdivision ordinances on the books today. It's not permitted, the, the smallest subdivision isn't permitted in single family zones, but it's, it's allowed in multi-family zones. And what happened with that is we don't see a lot of those. Bill, the ordinance has been around for a few years now, you know, we have seen some bungalow courts subdivided and turned into for sale houses. And the, you know, the, the challenging news there is a you know, bungalow court, single 600 square foot unit is still seven, \$800,000. So again, the, the land rising to be demand part of that happens, but the, the real reason the small lot subdivision, I think is failing is because it's allowed in areas with much higher allowed densities. And so what somebody does is go, well, I can build a bungalow court there. I can build a three or four or five story apartment building, which one do I make more money on? I make more money on the five story apartment building. And that gets back to San Diego and didn't examine the floor area ratio component, the total built scale of the buildings. When a thought of this long to encourage more sale housing, you need to make sure that building capacity

Geoff Hueter ([00:36:56](#)):

To, to encourage that in that type of housing as well. You wanna respond.

Saad Asad ([00:37:03](#)):

So this is sort of veering off of SSB 10, but I think there's a, a separate aspect of what you said, like a different ordinance that applies. But I do want to at least break out what SB 10 does in terms of like the scale. So it's not misconstrued as to what it, what it can actually do with SB 10. The largest height limit is 35 feet. So it's not gonna be five stories. So the is some limit to the potential scale of SSB 10 and 35 feet is largely to accommodate town homes. So you can have a lot and then turn it into like three town homes, which naturally are gonna be three stories tall.

Scott Lewis ([00:37:40](#)):

A couple questions along the same idea, but obviously one of the big hangups for people when an increase in density is discussed in their neighborhoods is that traffic and parking would be adversely affected. And I have a related question about concerns about whether infrastructure is accounted for and how, how that would be paid for the sewer lines, the other things that more people in more neighborhood in neighborhoods would require. Do you wanna address the parking and other impacts and why those are things that you think the city could handle if, if the dependent laws were are implemented?

Saad Asad ([00:38:20](#)):

Yeah, I always love to like, break apart the two. I think we often think about housing and parking the same. There's ways to manage parking. There's parking management strategies. In Barrio Logan, for example, there's parking permits. So residents have access to their places and they can much more easily park. So it shouldn't have to be just constantly put two and two together that housing and parking have to you know, go one-on-one. You can come up with parking strategies and parking policies that allow residents to have advantage and easily, much more easily be able to park rather than prioritizing visitors who should be perhaps, you know, paying at the fees or meters and things like that. And then with that said, the goal of any climate action plan is ultimately to reduce the amount of car trips that we make. Again, I think San Diego will still be driving more than San Francisco, but it has to come down somewhat.

Saad Asad ([00:39:12](#)):

It's part of the climate action plan goals. The cars spew pollution into the air, everyone's aware of that. So we need to reduce those trips. And part of that is by building in areas near major transit stops. Again, no, not everyone's gonna be taking the bus, but if 10% more people in your neighborhood are taking the bus, that's gonna mean less traffic, less congestion. So it's far better to build there in San Diego than I think I just saw a news report that they're building 160 homes out in Fallbrook, in Bonsall. Those people are gonna be taking up the freeways to get anywhere. They're not gonna be taking the bus to get to their job in U T C or Carlsbad or downtown. So it's all things considered better to build housing near those transit stops. And lastly, when it comes to infrastructure, whenever you're building a new development, you have to pay these impact fees to the city developer impact fees, neighborhood enhancement fees. If you're just, you know, exchanging one house for another, you're buying someone's house. There isn't any neighborhood impact fees that are assessed. But if you're buying that lot and turning into a sixplex, you do have to pay the city money, and that money is turned into stuff that can enhance the infrastructure. We see this in Bankers Hill where there's now much better pedestrian infrastructure on fourth or so, fourth and fifth Avenue and there's bike lanes and it's just much more friendly to walk around because of that development that goes to those areas.

Geoff Hueter ([00:40:37](#)):

Parking yeah, I think you just said, look, what we're gonna do is impose the a, a two car limit on every parcel that's being redeveloped, suddenly not seen be developed. Other words, there's an assumption that, that because we apply parking on the street that we, that we've avoided that problem and for a while you do avoid it, but eventually say we wanna scale this. Eventually you're gonna run out of parking even on streets. But I, but I think a more important part of the, of the car discussion, it gets back to, let's say you really want people to take transit, and the most important factor and people taking transit is what's called the density uses, which is when I, not when I, where I get on the, the bus or trolley, but when I get off the bus or trolley, what is it that I'm gonna do there?

Geoff Hueter (00:41:37):

And if there's only one thing I'm gonna do there, I'm gonna take my car. What you have to do is actually create enough density in specific places rather than trying to densify everywhere in order to create the, the sort of the critical mass you need to get transit deduction. The way to think about it is, and, and the estimates keep coming down, but let, let's say you were gonna add 200,000 people to the city of San Diego and overlay that, you say, okay, if I was gonna make, forget everybody else, if I was gonna make a city of 250,000 people, would I uniformly spread it over the landmass of San Diego or would I concentrate? And, and, and here's a perfect example. Housing Action Package has an allowance for building student housing and, and we have big universities. They're growing, they're becoming more residential. We need student housing. And they took the usual sort of mile around the campus saying, well, this campus, S D S U and U C S D all sit on transit lines. The best transit we have in San Diego is where these universities sink. And a, a better way to do it would've been to say, let us craft a, a student village concept or a housing concept that centers around the highest quality trends that we have in San Diego, rather than to try to sear it all over the city.

Scott Lewis (00:43:04):

I think a a a common criticism is, is similar where it is like, obviously part of the implementation of SSB 10 factored into the idea that it had to be near transit. And I think a lot of people said, well, some of these areas that are supposedly near transit aren't really near actual useful transit. You have a, a response.

Saad Asad (00:43:28):

Yeah. So I, and somewhat agree with Jeff and the concept of how of, of, you know, it's not just what's in the one one mile border of San Diego State. If people are taking the trolley, that means we should be allowing more housing near all those trolley and other major transit stops if they're coming to the university like that. So specifically on the concept of how close it needs to be to transit trying to make sure I'm hitting all the right points. So within, let me just start with like what's in the bill or what's in the package. So within SSB 10, if it's built the, the, it's applies to what's called oh man, getting all wonky sustainable development areas, which are these areas that are about one mile walking distance from a transit stop, but there's parking requirements for those that are more than 0.5 miles.

Saad Asad (00:44:21):

There are no parking requirements if you're 0.5 miles from a transit stop. The goal there is to reduce the total amount of cars that are used and reduce how many people are using it. And especially when it comes to student housing we're ideally making it so they don't have to rely on a car to get to their university. So I, with this concept of smearing of just, I, I, I don't think it's smearing because we are applying it into areas where people can access transit jobs and amenities. So it is not, you know, we're not, I think it would be actually bad if we were putting all the housing in an area that's far off from all those things, like a corner of Ranchos pen mosquitoes. We're actually applying it so that people in all of these areas can closer to the major transit and trolley lines, for example, can access their jobs, their schools, et cetera.

Geoff Hueter (00:45:13):

Yeah, so I, I think a different way to look at it. So a one mile walking distance from transit today, or the transit in the future, because we allow up to 2035 is when these will get built. So a lot of times it's non AIST transit, but in any case, you know, you can't get a grant from the federal government to build

housing a mile away from transit. You all these grant facilities, you know, are based on a standard distance from transit of a quarter mile or a half a mile, recognizing that the further you get away from transit, the less likely you are to get on in the first place. And the other effect though, still remains, the more you spread development away from that, the less likely you've created a sufficient density anywhere to, to, and, and get somebody interested in doing that as well.

Geoff Hueter ([00:46:14](#)):

So it's, it's, it's really not what's possible. It's making things more likely. And Sandag did its own transit study, and when you get beyond a half mile, you're at, you know, 10% propensity to use transit if somebody who's a quarter mile, half mile. So, and it's really about maximizing outcome. And again, because we haven't been created so much capacity, I mean, yes, there's a lot of single family land, but that says we don't need to use all of them. We should be using it where it really provides the highest outcome. And I, and I think another question to this is we want single family owning and, and really think of single family, family zoning as a type of multifamily these days. There's no place in San Diego where you're only allowed to build one house a minimum. You can build three homes and under nine you can build four.

Geoff Hueter ([00:47:13](#)):

And under the 80 bonus program it's, you know, not always 145, but four or five six is pretty easy to do. Well it, and one of things we emphasized is we could think differently about what we want the function of single family in housing to be. One of the things we propose to the city is rather than just trying to put as many four 50 square foot units as you can sit on a, on a lot, why not provide the incentive to build larger units so that we would have something that that single family neighbors could feel quite well, which is providing family size housing of two or three bedrooms. And it would provide the true general density that promoted, but it would also serve a family amenity in

Speaker 7 ([00:48:05](#)):

Economics. Economics, that's what, sorry, I had to say that,

Geoff Hueter ([00:48:11](#)):

But you could subsidize that with what money. Exactly. Now we need to talk about where you really get money, affordable housing, because as you see, none of these projects are pencilling out to fill the joint we have, but over 40% of all the homes that we built should be low, very low and extremely low incomes. And, and we're lucky on a project to get, you know, 8% or 10%, your honor, respond.

Saad Asad ([00:48:48](#)):

I think one part, let's guess there's a few different areas there. So how do we build affordable housing? And that's gonna be through government intervention. That's subsidies, housing vouchers there's not gonna be a market rate apartment that's, you know, \$600 in San Diego. So 100% agree that we need to have sustainable ways to have housing that's affordable and that's gonna happen through those means. I think often people try and weaponize that against new housing by saying, why isn't it a hundred percent affordable? A hundred percent affordable is not gonna be built without government intervention. With that said, nonprofit developers do want more opportunities and more places to build. You know, it would be great place to build is, you know, these middle missing middle types of housing. These for-profit developers might prefer to build these large multi-family units because they can get a much larger rate of return.

Saad Asad ([00:49:41](#)):

Something like eight units, they don't have to worry about getting shareholders happy as much. That's great for nonprofit developers who wanna build affordable housing. So by expanding where and the size, I think we're actually improving the ability to build some of this affordable housing. Commenting on the concept of the family bedrooms, I think, yeah, that there's lots that goes into it. You have to pencil out. Developers are not charities. But if we make it easier and we've create incentives and we make it so that that happens, we can create some of those within the larger San Diego housing action package. There are incentives for developers to create those two and three family bedrooms. Whether developers will take advantage of that is another item. Again, we need to, if we want public goods, then we need to put public investment behind them. Strong proponent of that. I'm not a market believer or someone who believes the market will solve for everything. We need to have a strong government that supports and protects and invests.

Scott Lewis ([00:50:43](#)):

Let's talk about there's two questions kind of related the status of SB 10 actually and its implementation here. One was a little bit more cynical saying like, the mayor and the staff had said that they would pass it, I think to have a majority on the council and the commission, and that they didn't have a political will. And then another one was just asking where we're actually at with implementation. So do you wanna start about why why he seemed to come up short?

Saad Asad ([00:51:10](#)):

Wait, why the mayor council? Yeah. I mean the Jeff's credit, they mobilized a lot of people to activate against SSB 10. You all saw the signs whether it was clearly what exactly SB 10 did. There was clearly a public outpouring and concern about, you know, how it's gonna affect single family neighborhoods. So that's likely, you know, what swayed some of the things coming up in an election year. And then the current status of it, it's not completely off the table. It's supposed to be going into work shopping to kind of find a way. As Jeff said, he believes in the concept of missing middle housing. He just didn't think SB 10 was the right way to do it. So perhaps there is a way to do it. We'll see that's the current status of it. But as we've seen with the state in the past, that when cities don't apply the laws that they create, the state intervenes.

Saad Asad ([00:52:00](#)):

So with SSB nine, the cities were very creating SSB nine was another way to spur housing production. Cities created a lot of like ways around it that in order to create and subdivide this lot, you had to have these specific things that had to be this big and eventually nobody built. So now the state revised that law. So we could still also see the same thing happening. The state could intervene and revise SB 10, make it mandatory. If cities aren't behaving and meeting their housing production goals, then the state has the ability to create new laws. If

Scott Lewis ([00:52:33](#)):

The state gave the cities the, and maybe I just don't understand the nuance the state gave the cities the, the option to implement this. What, what value did the state accident actually have other than was it environmental review way or like the cities have just done it anyway? Like, was it just like a, here's a good idea to consider.

Saad Asad ([00:52:53](#)):

It's the, the c q abridge basically. Yeah.

Scott Lewis ([00:52:58](#)):

Let's talk, there was a one, there was kind of a, a lot of people talking to about this comment that a developer North Park made about he had built a several units without parking or left parking and might have been required before that he was re you know, he realized in order to, to get these units on the market that he had to provide more options for parking. A lot of people use that as an example of like cop, like your right, they,

Geoff Hueter ([00:53:27](#)):

Yeah, quote San is not there yet.

Saad Asad ([00:53:32](#)):

So this is a building on I think El Cajon Boulevard or near El Cajon Bil Boulevard. No, actually it's university and 30th around there. They,

Scott Lewis ([00:53:44](#)):

No, north Parkway toss Verity. Yeah. Okay.

Saad Asad ([00:53:48](#)):

Yeah. So that's where this building is. They didn't build it without parking. And not as many people were grabbing up the spots they did. So what they did is they leased spots from the North Park parking garage, which if any of you have ever been to, is almost always empty. So I will say that I'm ecstatic and happy that the North Park parking garage is finally being used. If we want to talk about neighborhood aesthetics, one of the ugliest parts of North Park is it's a giant parking garage. So I'm glad it's actually getting used for once instead of just sitting there and not having any value to the neighborhood.

Scott Lewis ([00:54:24](#)):

Yeah, but the point is that that is the implicit part of the climate action plan, that you build apartments without parking so that people do not own cars and so that they use mass transit. Yeah, there's two takes, right? Fail. Well, there's two takes, right? Like one is like, well this is proof that it didn't work or this is also proof that there were other parking options in the not if related to climate action, like the idea that no, that people won't give out their cars. Yes, I jump

Geoff Hueter ([00:54:54](#)):

In. Sure. So, so I think there's an example of either planning in fantasy, there's always a trend, right? Other what are we trying to do with regard to transit? We're trying to densify enough of the city that it makes sense to go someplace without a car. And so as part of that strategy, we've said, okay, we'll decouple the parking requirement from the building requirement. And unfortunately it got presented as, we're going to not decouple these two things. We're gonna get rid of the, the parking part of it altogether because people aren't gonna take parts of that. What this example proves is that's just not realistic. And instead what we need to think about is what is the transition process over the next 20, 30 years where if we start out everybody needing a car, and over time if we do it well, the city evolves to where we need fewer cars and therefore we need less parking. And so when you get there actually



disagree and nobody needs parking, then you can tear down the North Park parking structure and put housing there. But

Scott Lewis ([00:56:07](#)):

I don't think you'd actually disagree with that, right?

Saad Asad ([00:56:09](#)):

No, I don't think then generally there's too much disagreement there. I think it is gonna be gradual. We're not gonna turn San Diego into New York. We're not gonna turn San Diego to have people have zero cars. That's not gonna happen. But again, I always think about examples that are more realistic. Seattle and Denver, the current San Diego number of household or cars per household is like 1.8. Which is, you know, that's a made up number. Nobody has an eighth of a car, but you know, you do averages. But in Seattle and Denver, it's closer to like 1.4. So that's slowly fewer cars per household. With that typically means that there's, you know, less households that have two cars and more households that have one car. That's the goal that we're gonna try and move to.

Scott Lewis ([00:56:50](#)):

Okay. We have a time for a couple others. I think this, this issue came up as a, as an example of historical preservation sort of being exploited or wrongly applied in this, in the case of the Little Red House in Mission Hills. That, you know, if, if you folks had your way that there we wouldn't have a chance to build 62 new homes there. Do you wanna put in perspective what what you might be thinking about that lot?

Geoff Hueter ([00:57:18](#)):

So that, that's obviously a, a complicated case. I think to put it in a bigger perspective, it it is. I mean that that's a hard case from a preservation standpoint. And people have different opinions on it. Whether you should preserving examples of individual buildings or preserving or district oriented context, you know, my personal opinion, you know, so I, I personally tend to lean against, but neighboring that property I thought was a good decision, preserve the library. Very unique example where I, I think we're again, sort of stepping back from all this, other cities have figured out how to implement adaptive reuse policies so that rather than having a battle over an individual property, you know, on the bulldozer above, you know, they figured out ahead of time how you are able to reuse the building to provide housing. So you'll get into these three, four year battles over a property. You know, you set the expectation, building preservation happen, happen. The developer gets to build with reasonable expectation. And that's a fair thing. One thing that's important is, you know, we need to set rules that people, you know, particularly developers who are putting a lot of money out there and lot risk that they buildable expectations and adaptive reuse.

Scott Lewis ([00:59:14](#)):

Do you have any points about that?

Geoff Hueter ([00:59:16](#)):

Oration?

Scott Lewis ([00:59:18](#)):

You don't have to.

Saad Asad ([00:59:19](#)):

I think adaptive reuse would be great if it's possible. It often isn't. The Mission Hills Library has been sitting vacant for I think three years. And I guess this really hits home 'cause I live right there. So it's, when people talk about like the community character, this is an abandoned lot that's not really being used to anyone's advantage. It's not helping anybody. It could have been supportive housing for people who are exiting homelessness. I think there are historic treasures that need to be preserved. I often find it is very much weaponized to preserve certain neighborhoods. I mean, just to be blunt, the often places where we care most about historic nature and historic character are the neighborhoods that were historically redlined. The neighborhoods that historically only allowed covenants that gave houses to white, like passed on from white you could only be a member of the Caucasian race to own that house. So I just, when we think about, I know, call me, call me woke for, for saying this, but whatever. It's just, that's the truth. That's the nature of that. We care about this historic preservation often in the most segregated neighborhoods while caring less about historic preservation in other neighborhoods. So I'm fine with historic preservation, but, you know, apply it fairly, apply it, not just exclude people. At the end of the day, we need to give people access to that opportunity, access to those parks. It shouldn't just be hoarded and excluded.

Scott Lewis ([01:00:47](#)):

Wrap up. Any thoughts about the crisis about the laws that mandated?

Geoff Hueter ([01:00:55](#)):

Yeah, I think, I think one thing, you know, if there is a working group carry this forward, it'd be nice opposed to city council. The other thing though, I wanted that, that sort of gets left out of it just to

Scott Lewis ([01:01:16](#)):

Clarify, homeowners as an interest group or actual people who own home

Geoff Hueter ([01:01:21](#)):

As an interest group. Okay. You know, I mean, you know, we show up in the planning commission and we get to make our statement that, you know, we're not involved earlier in the process even though we have our own policy code.

Scott Lewis ([01:01:35](#)):

Why does, why does their ownership of a home need to be represented? Yes. Like what's, what's that class? I'm just trying to picture like that, that class of people that you feel like it's

Geoff Hueter ([01:01:46](#)):

A, it's a class of people that, that live in the areas that are gonna be resolved. Right. In other words, the people involved in the resulting Got it. You know, they're, they're, they're in that now. You wouldn't do anything different. You don't go to Barrio Logan and do the community plan update, but not the resident. Not a good but I think the other important, and it gets to one of the things that's very underrated in all this, or very not really pointed out, is the most desirable targets for single family zone housing redevelopment, right? Our ACME and Southeast San Diego, they have the, the lowest property values relative to their lot sizes. And so if you look at things like the the A D U permits, most of those

are, the density of those is much higher in a place like Encanto Paradise Hills. And, and if you say, okay, SB 10 goes through, that's the area of much more than other risks.

Geoff Hueter ([01:02:58](#)):

If you wanna <crosstalk>, the other thing is that, say it here because it matters as well, is one of the tells and the slip ups, and I don't know if the planning department meant to expose it and it gets back to equity and transit and everything else, is they showed this analysis of the overlay between the sustainable development area and areas of opportunity in San Diego keep talking about how transit is gonna bring opportunity and the highest propensity of transit, the, our supposed most transit rich areas in the city are actually in areas of lowest opportunity. And it's not that the transit has caused that low opportunity, but there's an historic structure to when people work downtown, when those neighborhoods were built. And we've never rethought that to say, are we really incentivizing opportunity or are we just reinforcing, you know, patterns and development from 1940s. Todd, do you wanna wrap this up? Tell us where we need to go to make this affordable city? No, that's harder. Yeah.

Saad Asad ([01:04:12](#)):

It is not gonna happen overnight. The housing crisis is gonna take years to resolve. We build enough homes. The, we have to build, I think a hundred thousand homes by the 2030 to meet our goals. It's gonna take a while, but we need to make sure that we're doing everything we can as a city to create opportunities for warehousing can be built. I think everything about equity that Jeff mentioned is very important. That we're not just creating housing for, or we're not creating a city that's only available for doctors and lawyers and tech folks. That this needs to be a city that can be equitable and have accessible opportunities for all. So it's important to continue to build that housing build in areas where there's already existing infrastructure like parks, jobs, schools, and ultimately it's gonna be slow. There's gonna be setbacks, but we're gonna move towards that area where we have homes and opportunities.

Saad Asad ([01:05:06](#)):

And best way to do that is to show up, make your voice heard. A lot of you are local politics nerds. So <laugh>, show up to planning commission, show up to city council, write your written comments. That's the way way you can share your voice, even if you disagree with me. I think it's just a better way if we're all engaged and be able to show that there is this burden. There is a housing crisis. If I look at Zillow right now, it probably, everything's gone up. I'm sure. So that's the thing I only ask is, you know, this is a housing crisis and when you do everything we can to make sure that actually let me end with, you know, things like neighborhood quality often don't matter if you can't live in the neighborhood. So that's the most important thing I want to talk about, is we wanna have people live here and the only way to do that is to make it affordable.

Scott Lewis ([01:05:54](#)):

Well, thank you all. I I don't think we solved the housing crisis, but if we advance any bit of details or facts about the knowledge of the situation and others, I, I consider it a win. Just a note on programming. Rob Bonta from the Attorney General, he's still coming, but he's quite a bit late. The fog this morning delayed a lot of flight. So we will get started a little bit later in the podcast, live podcast. Hope you stick around afterwards. Of course. The, in the back. And it should be a

Speaker 1 ([01:07:09](#)):

So you're the, I just wanted this particular, I'm not official. No, no, no. Yeah, not official.

