

January 30th

**TO:** Todd Gloria, Mayor of San Diego

**CC:** Joe LaCava, Councilmember District 1  
Jennifer Campbell, Councilmember District 2  
Stephen Whitburn, Councilmember District 3  
David Foster III, Councilmember District 4  
Marni Von Wilpert, Councilmember District 5  
Kent Lee, Councilmember District 6  
Raul Campillo, Councilmember District 7  
Vivian Moreno, Councilmember District 8  
Sean Elo-Rivera, Councilmember District 9

**RE: Fire Safety**

The Palisades and Eaton Fires exposed serious vulnerabilities that are present in San Diego. The four fires that occurred in San Diego this month make it clear the time to act on fire safety is now. The Community Planners Committee (CPC) has grown concerned about the state of development in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). The three main concerns are infill projects, evacuation plans, and brush abatement.

At the January meeting of the CPC many members brought attention to high density ADU projects, meaning four plus ADUs, that are being built abutting canyons and hills. As was seen in the Eaton and Palisades fires, when buildings abutting these topographical features catch fire they quickly spread. This is only compounded by allowing ADUs to be built without setbacks. This should cause serious concerns over First Responders' ability to save structures, and residents to escape safely.

This brought up a lot of questions around planned evacuation routes. Canyons and Hills naturally lend themselves to dead ends and cul-de-sacs. These features trap residents with one road in and one road out, making timely evacuations impossible. Even if infill development is happening without these road features, not enough transportation options have been put in place to off set the newly built density.

Finally, multiple communities stated their Fire Councils have been hamstrung by the City. The primary complaint was that community Fire Councils were being stopped from assisting with brush abatement. With the City's pending budget issues it is fair to be concerned that the City won't have the resources to manage this on its own without community partnerships.

**Until these concerns are addressed the CPC requests that all infill projects in VHFHSZs that add more than double the dwelling units to a parcel be halted.**

While this moratorium takes place, the CPC would like to work with the Mayor and Council Offices to find compromise on the types of development allowed in VHFHSZ, evacuation routes for all communities abutting such zones, and a partnership between communities and the City for better brush management.

Ignoring these glaring problems will only lead to severe emergencies, where we wished we would have done something sooner. The members of the CPC looks forward to a collaborative effort to address these problems.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schlageter  
Chair, Community Planners Committee