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June 15, 2020

Courtney Shum, City Planner (via email)
200 N Spring St, Room 763
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Subject: Case Number DIR-2019-7299-TOC-
SPR -- Letter in Support of the
Fairfax Gardens Tenants
Association (800 & 830 Fairfax
Ave)**

Dear Courtney Shum,

The Mid City West Community Council (MCW)
Board of Directors **approved** the following
motion (22 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstention) at the
Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 board meeting:

The Mid City West Community Council
is writing this letter in support of the
Fairfax Gardens Tenants Association as
they fight displacement due to the
proposed demolition of 38 Rent

Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) units at 800 and 830 S Fairfax Avenue.

In September 2019, the tenants of the two buildings formed the Fairfax Gardens Tenants in response to the change in ownership and anticipated eviction. Property owners have signaled that Ellis Act evictions are expected in the coming months.

Though the proposed project has not been submitted to City Planning, early plans show that the developer, 830 Fairfax Owner II, LLC, intends to demolish the two existing apartment buildings in order to build an 8-story, 209-unit residential property spanning both lots and the Tom Bergin's parking lot. Although the new residential building would create 28 extremely low-income units, it would not make up for the loss of the current 38 RSO units on these properties.

The buildings are currently home to a diverse group of tenants who have lived there from just over 3 years to over 50 years. Current residents have lived in their homes for many years, have raised children and grandchildren in this neighborhood, and have formed a tight-knit, long-lasting community. By demolishing these apartment homes, the proposed project would cause irreparable harm to the families who

have no interest in leaving. The proposed development would not only displace and separate more than 32 families, but it will also change the makeup of the neighborhood and remove children, parents, and grandparents from their social networks, schools, jobs, health centers, places of worship, and other types of community groups.

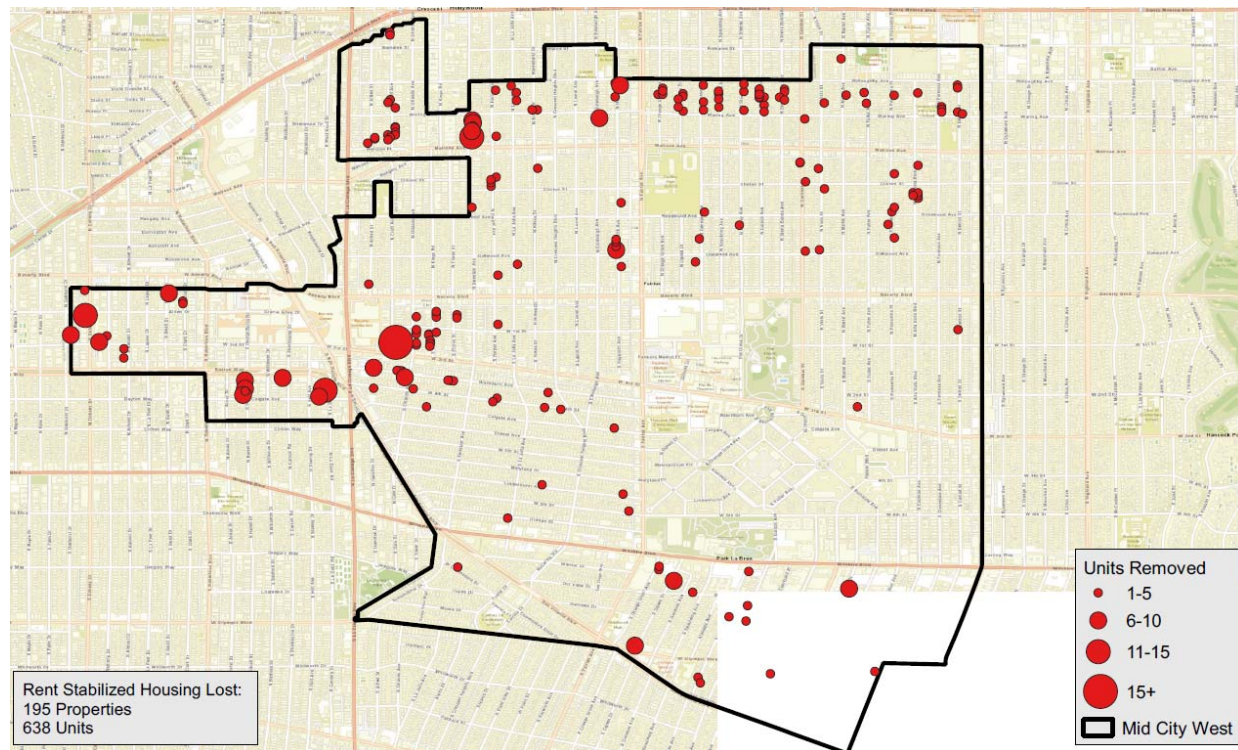
Although the price of rent currently varies depending on how many years they have been tenants of these units, RSO units tend to have lower rents than non-RSO units--especially given the long tenancy rates in the two buildings. With 2-bedroom apartments in the surrounding area averaging well above \$2,500 per month (Zillow), it is inconceivable that these families would be able to remain in their home community. Allowing the removal of these units and displacing the tenants will greatly harm the residents' financial stability and health.

We understand that the developer has already taken preliminary steps towards redevelopment when they filed for a Transit Oriented Community (TOC) verification (Case Number DIR-2019-7299-TOC-SPR) which encourages developers with incentives such as additional square footage and fewer mandated parking spots in exchange for building new housing near transit stops.

Although the developer and their communications partner, Ground Up Communications, have established channels of communication with the tenants, they have not provided additional information or a timeline of their actions. The lack of information has left tenants in precarious situations as they cannot prepare for the future. Tenant Association members have put off major life decisions as they await the news on the future of their housing.

In today's housing and homelessness crisis, it is crucial to save these RSO units especially for the elderly population in the building who live on a fixed income and those living from paycheck to paycheck. Preservation has not been at the forefront of the homelessness discussion--but it's a major contributing factor to the crisis. Data collected through the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department's application permits for Ellis Act shows that residents in 638 RSO units have been evicted from within Mid-City West Neighborhood Council boundaries in the last 12 years (2007-2019). That is 638 families who were displaced and no longer subject to rent stabilization. RSO units are one of the few types of affordable housing that residents in Mid-City West have depended on for stable housing. Displacing these tenants can put them at

risk of not finding another affordable place to live, relocating them away from their support system, and/or becoming homeless.



While we acknowledge the current housing crisis requires adding supply at every income level, displacing longtime community members is not the way to go about it. The proposed project would result in a loss of RSO units in a neighborhood and part of the city where we have seen significant growth in high-density, market rate buildings. This list

of completed projects since 2010 within a one-mile radius of our buildings is as follows: The Desmond (175 units), Vinz on Fairfax (149 units), Wilshire/La Brea Towers (480 units), the 5550 Wilshire Building (163 units), the Oakwood, the Mansfield

(132 units), the Urbanpolitan at Urban Lights, as well as the new hotel/residential tower at Wilshire and Crescent Heights. The Mid City West Community Council fully supports the Fairfax Gardens Tenants Association and retaining 38 RSO units at 800 and 830 S Fairfax Avenue.

Thank you for your attention to this vitally important matter to the Mid City West community. Please feel free to contact me via email at sepstein@midcitywest as needed.

Sincerely,

Scott Epstein, Chairperson
Mid City West Community Council

CC:

Lisa Weber, Deputy Director of Planning
Nicholas Hendricks, Senior City Planner