Surplus Public Lands for Affordable Housing!

San Francisco is in the midst of an historically unprecedented acute and widespread housing crisis—we all know this all too well. Voters have consistently indicated that they want the city to prioritize affordable housing NOW. What is all the more pressing about this crisis today is that a vast and increasing majority of residents are unable to afford the prices for housing—from extremely low income, low, moderate and middle-income San Franciscans, 75% of us all are shut out of the housing market. This Surplus Public Lands ballot measure will ensure that the city follows the voters’ will and makes permanently affordable housing a top priority when deciding what to do with surplus sites it no longer needs.

In our 7 mile by 7 mile City, land is an extremely precious resource, and a major constraint in developing more affordable housing. As a small city that is already mostly developed, we have a finite supply of sites across the City that are suitable for building housing, and they are quickly being taken up by market-rate development that is unaffordable to the vast majority of San Francisco residents.

Many city agencies own land in San Francisco that they no longer need for their core functions. This land is a public resource that should continue to serve the public interest. Agencies are sometimes tempted to sell off this precious land to the highest bidder. We need to stop privatizing these public resources and take advantage of the unique opportunity they offer to meet the housing needs of San Francisco residents. In this moment of housing affordability crisis, land is more valuable for the longterm public good than the money an agency can get from its sale.

**What this Measure Does:** The Public Lands for Affordable Housing ordinance expands the City’s existing Surplus Properties law, by making affordable housing a priority when a public agency wishes to sell or lease unused public sites that are appropriate for housing, and setting standards for minimum housing affordability when public land is developed.

- Requires public agencies to annually report all underutilized properties 1/4 acre and larger, adding public transparency and oversight by the Board of Supervisors.
- Gives the Mayor’s Office of Housing a “first opportunity” to acquire sites that are suitable for housing from public agencies that wish to sell or lease unused public land.
- Sets priorities for homeless families, low income workforce housing, mixed low and moderate income homes, and, for sites larger than two acres, allows mixed income projects with at least 50% affordable.
- Sets a minimum 50% affordable housing standard per Prop K goals for sites that the City subsequently sells or leases for private development if not built for 100% affordable housing use.

In the past, it has taken years of public pressure and community activism to ensure that public lands went to community uses, whether for parks or affordable housing. This Surplus Public Lands measure puts the people’s lands in the people’s hands—increasing transparency and public participation, and making it easier and faster to identify and secure sites that can be suitable to build the affordable housing that San Francisco residents urgently need. Under this measure, unused public lands will go towards meeting affordable housing needs for a wide range of San Franciscans shut out of the housing market, from extremely low income, low, moderate and middle-income households. With this measure, we will be one step closer to ending this unprecedented housing crisis and keeping San Francisco affordable for present and future generations of San Franciscans.