

Wendy Lao

From: Lisa Taner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2019 1:18 PM
To: Julia Klein; Planning Commission
Cc: Diane Papan; Eric Rodriguez; Maureen Freschet; Joe Goethals; Rick Bonilla
Subject: Input on the New General Plan - Who Should NOT Have Input

Important thoughts in regard to just who should have and who should NOT have input in our new General Plan. We should be able to identify these people with all the times they step up to the microphone at every single GP meeting, council meeting, etc.

Respectfully,

Lisa Taner

Per this link, <https://www.laprogressive.com/wimby/>:

W

IMBY stands for “Wall Street in My Backyard.” In a word, WIMBYs are the dedicated foot soldiers of the real estate sector. They not only repeat its talking points, but also wrap them in a thin veneer of focus-group tested buzzwords about housing, transportation, and climate change. The WIMBYs are their street fighters, traveling across town to other people’s backyards, to convince Neighborhood Councils and decision makers to support real estate projects requiring City Hall’s discretionary approvals.

WIMBYs present themselves as the foils of “NIMBYs” (Not in My Backyard), an epithet invented by their real estate industry patrons to deflect criticisms away from their projects. Instead of honestly responding to legitimate critiques, the WIMBYs prefer to smear their opponents. Sometimes, they even doxx (publicly posting personal information) them.

According to planning journalist Zelda Bronstein, this market approach to urban real estate intensified with the ascendancy of the high tech industries in Silicon Valley. Some of these new billionaires funded a real estate lobbying group, YIMBY California, closely allied with its Los Angeles partner, Abundant Housing.

While the YIMBYs—who neighborhood activists call WIMBYs—subscribe to the broad tenets of the classic urban growth machine, they have put its old wine into new bottles. They are not public sector interventionists, but market fundamentalists. They maintain that when real estate investors are free to invest wherever high profits lure them, cities will thrive. Subways and busses will miraculously fill with millennial passengers. Rents will fall in the face of a residential building boom, and climate change will be reversed as transit-oriented development reduces the generation of greenhouse gases.

To reach this make-believe utopia, the WIMBYs want to curtail General Plans, pare back zoning ordinances, and weaken the California Environmental Quality Act. They also could care less about supportive municipal services and infrastructure. In their view, private construction and population growth are independent of such mundane categories as planning, emergency services, street capacity, sidewalks, garbage collection, street trees, schools, parks, electricity, telecommunications, natural gas, water mains, sanitary sewers, and storm drains.

HOW CAN YOU SPOT A WIMBY?

Since no one admits to being a WIMBY, what are the giveaways that their posturing about affordable housing, mass transit, and climate change is just a charade? Here is a field guide to help you spot them when they are gallivanting into and out of other people's backyards. Whether you are at Neighborhood Council meetings, public workshops, or official hearings, you should look out for the following signs.

Sins of Commission. These are the basic clues that you are in the proximity of a WIMBY:

- When you hear someone say, we need more housing, your ears should tingle.
- Next, you can expect them say, all housing is needed, even if it is the market rate housing they lobby for.
- Finally, you will hear them say that new market housing benefits those who can only afford lower-priced housing through "supply and demand" and "filtering." But, don't wait for them to furnish any evidence because it doesn't exist. At most you may hear them reference a [State of California study](#) stating that filtering takes 25 years, without any data for the Los Angeles area.
- Another sure-fire indicator of a WIMBY is their claim that neighborhoods with single-family houses are responsible for the housing crisis because their residents are privileged white racists. Apparently the WIMBYs have never ventured into the many LA neighborhoods with largely Latino, Asian, and African-American homeownership.

Sins of Omission. You will never hear the WIMBYs say the following:

- The elimination of public housing programs is largely responsible for the housing crisis, along with [underfunding of Section 8 housing](#).
- Increasing [economic inequality](#) is another major factor, especially in California.
- Rent control should apply to all housing, not just Los Angeles apartments built before 1978.
- Los Angeles should require all new residential projects to incorporate 25 percent mandatory affordable housing.
- Pledged affordable housing must be [inspected on-site](#) each year to guarantee that rents are inexpensive and tenants are drawn from certified low-income lists.
- New construction should be contingent on adequate public services and infrastructure.

WIMBYISM IN THE CROSSHAIRS

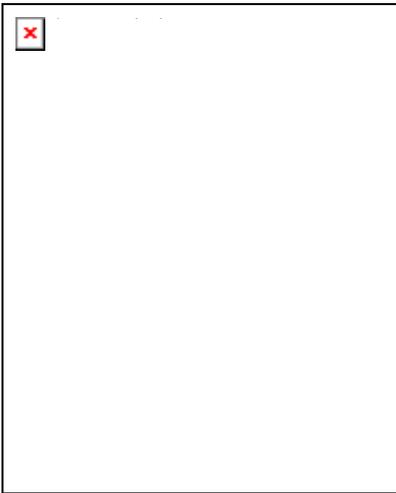
When, not if, the next deep recession hits, like the 2007-08 Great Recession's 4,000,000 foreclosures, and the 1986-89 Savings and Loan collapse, many WIMBY-supported real estate

projects will go belly up. Most likely, the Federal government will again cover these losses through bailouts and another Resolution Trust Corporation (1989-1995). The foreclosed and bankrupted properties can then sold off to bottom feeding real estate vultures at steep discounts.

The name for this safety net is “wealthfare,” and we can count on the WIMBY’s to advocate for their benefactors. They will make an about face, calling for the Federal government to rescue investors who gave residential construction their best shot until a failing economy dragged them down into real estate hell.

Since the evidence is piling up that the next Great Recession is getting closer, Wall Street, flush with trillions leaving the stock market or parked in low interest cash accounts, is moving deeper into highly profitable urban real estate, despite the increased risk. They are looking for lucrative projects that can be quickly approved, then flipped and/or rented so they can whisk away the profits in the nick of time.

They know that the standard planning and zoning process for their projects is likely to run out the clock. Their goal is to beat that clock, to rapidly get into and out of volatile urban real estate markets, like Los Angeles, before they take a nosedive.



Given this topsy-turvy economic future, the WIMBYs will be reeling

from one project to another, from one crisis to another, as their patrons flail against economic head winds they cannot control. With each desperate move, they will provide the rest of us with previously obscured information about their true identities and motives, making it all the more urgent to translate some of the omissions cited above – i.e., strengthening rent control, funding affordable public housing provision, and requiring onsite inspections – into legislated commissions.

Dick Platkin is a former Los Angeles city planner who reports on local planning controversies and a member of the Planners Network Advisory Board. A previous version of this article was published in CityWatchLA. Please send your questions, comments, and corrections to [REDACTED].