

Senate Bill 9

Last month, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 9, a controversial bill designed to combat the housing crisis. SB 9 changes zoning laws to allow multiple units on plots of land that were previously designated for single-family homes. That means...if you currently own a single family home in one of impacted zones, you may be able to legally add extra units to your land. A single unit lot can become a four unit lot. This provides extra housing options in our growing cities, while also allowing homeowners to generate income. While this draws concerns that developers will take advantage of the laws to create more unaffordable housing, it's important to note that there are caveats to the bill that preserve low income housing. For example...

- The zoning changes apply only to urban areas or urban clusters. Farms, wetlands, lots at high risk of fire or flooding, and sites in historic districts are among those that are specifically exempt.
- Units reserved for low-income housing or that had been rented within the previous three years could not be altered or demolished. The point is to avoid reducing the supply of rental and affordable units.
- Local governments can still impose safety standards and regulate the appearance of units and, to some degree, their placement on a lot. They cannot, however, require more than one off-street parking spot per unit, or any off-street parking if the units are within half a mile of public transit.
- Units built under the terms of this act may not be offered for short-term rentals.
- Anyone applying to subdivide a lot must commit to living in one of the units there for at least three years.
- The subdivided lots have to be at least 1,200 square feet each and roughly the same size. Cities would have to permit units to be at least 800 square feet, and could not bar them from being adjacent or connected.

As with any significant change, Senate Bill 9 brings both opportunities and challenges. For homeowners, it could mean a chance to maximize the potential of their property, generate additional income, or contribute to solving the housing crisis. However, understanding the specific regulations and how they apply to your area is crucial.

If you're curious about how SB 9 might affect your property or are considering taking advantage of this new legislation, I'm here to help. Let's discuss how these changes could benefit you or impact your neighborhood. Feel free to reach out with any questions or thoughts!

Senate Bill 9 Update Post

We posted about Senate Bill 9 when it was first signed, but now that it has been in effect for almost six months, let's talk about what it means for homeowners and investors in Los Angeles specifically!

- Senate Bill 9 is part of an initiative to address California's housing crisis. SB 9 provides a legal, streamlined process for homeowners to subdivide their urban single-family residential lot and/or build additional residential units on their property.
- This bill is beneficial for rental property owners who want to add a second long-term rental unit or for homeowners looking to build additional housing for their extended family.
- The bill also allows single family property owners to subdivide and sell half of their lot.
- SB 9 gives qualifying property owners the right to a maximum total of 4 units across the two lots.

Los Angeles Specifics:

- Places you CANNOT build: prime farmland, hazardous waste sites, high and very high fire severity zones, lands identified for conservation of protected species' habitat, and historical zones
- Areas that may require additional permits: earthquake fault lines, areas of high landslide risk, FEMA 1% annual chance flood zones, and coastal areas
- Buildings that cannot be demolished: officially recognized low income housing, rent controlled housing, housing that has been occupied by a tenant in the last 3 years

- Renting requirements: minimum rental period 30 days, no income requirement for tenants, for lot splits one unit must be owner occupied for 3 years, for two unit projects all units can be rented
- Selling requirements: for lot splits, one unit must be owner occupied for three years
- For two-unit projects, units can not be sold separately.

Senate Bill 9 presents exciting opportunities for Los Angeles homeowners and investors to maximize their property's potential while contributing to the city's housing needs. However, navigating the specifics of where and how these changes apply can be complex.

If you're considering taking advantage of SB 9 - whether to add rental units, build housing for family, or to explore lot subdivision - I'm here to help. Let's discuss how this legislation could work for you and ensure you make informed decisions. Feel free to reach out with any questions or to explore your options.