

LA loses third effort to block affordable housing in some neighborhoods

[David Wagner](#) Published Dec 23, 2024 12:27 PM



A “now leasing” sign advertises apartment for rent in L.A.’s Sawtelle neighborhood.

A judge has ruled that the city of Los Angeles illegally blocked low-income housing last year in a neighborhood zoned for single-family homes when officials rejected a developer’s application to build 220 affordable housing units in Reseda.

The developer, Evolve Realty and Development Corp., filed the project under Mayor Karen Bass's Executive Directive 1, a program to streamline approvals for projects entirely composed of apartments reserved for low- to moderate-income renters.

Like a handful of other ED1 projects, city officials put the application on ice because these apartments were proposed [in an area zoned for single-family homes](#). Bass later amended the program to ban ED1 projects in the 72% of L.A. residential land reserved for single-family houses. But a housing advocacy group called YIMBY Law sued for developers' right to proceed based on the original rules, which did not ban projects in single-family areas.

Learn the ins and outs behind L.A.'s housing crisis.

Sign up for Building Your Block, a seven-issue newsletter course from LAist that explains the obstacles around housing development in L.A. and what you can do to make things better.

The details

L.A. County Superior Court Judge Curtis Kin decided that the city illegally blocked the project in Reseda by trying to retroactively apply new rules to the project.

"The City was not entitled to change the rules while Evolve's application was pending," Kin [wrote in his ruling](#) last week.

0:40

LA loses third effort to block affordable housing in some neighborhoods

This is the city's [third loss](#) in court over actions to stop ED1 projects in single-family neighborhoods.

The reaction

L.A. City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, who opposed this development and other ED1 projects in his district, sent LAist a statement saying he felt the developer "took advantage of a legal ambiguity."

"My position on the facts have not changed," Blumenfield said. "Large scale apartments should not be wedged in-between single family homes by right, especially when there is no guarantee from developers that any mitigation efforts like new traffic lights or improved sidewalks will follow such construction."

Bass's office did not respond to a request for comment.

Dave Rand, a land use attorney who worked with Evolve on this project, told LAist the court victories should enable

developers to start building low-income housing in expensive neighborhoods.

"We see this as a win, not just for lawyers, but for hundreds of new affordable homes that will be added in much needed areas," Rand said.