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## **“BUILD BETTER” BALLOT MEASURE WILL SWAMP L.A. WITH TRAFFIC & CONCRETE Fine-Print Also Reveals Affordable Housing Loopholes for Developers**

**Los Angeles, March 26, 2016** - Neighborhood Integrity Initiative campaign director Jill Stewart warned Saturday that the so-called Build Better LA (BBLA) ballot measure will add to the city’s traffic pain and ruin neighborhoods by putting the L.A. overdevelopment boom on steroids. “BBLA should really be called Pave Over L.A.,” said Stewart.

Supporters of BBLA Saturday held a rally to kick off their campaign to get their measure approved.

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative ends the controversial practice by the L.A. City Council of granting exceptions to developers who want extreme developments not allowed by zoning. The same developers shower council members and the mayor with campaign cash, gifts and donations to their pet projects. They are allowed to destroy community character and max out local streets and water mains.

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative gives communities more control, openly targeting City Hall's broken pay-to-play system.

In stark contrast, BBLA doubles down on the pay-to-play and soft corruption at City Hall. BBLA makes our unqualified and untrained City Council members bigger land czars than ever with new powers to permit developers to ignore the rules so they can erect super-sized projects and stiff working class families.

BBLA envisions mass development in dozens of so-called “regional centers” in unsuspecting neighborhoods — where voters, and in fact most of the Los Angeles media, have never heard this term. BBLA also turns any neighborhood remotely near a frequent bus line or transit stop into a target for mass development— regardless of the current zoning. [Section 3 B.], Stewart said.

“BBLA will give developers a virtual license to drive families out of rent-stabilized apartments and devastate neighborhoods with their giant, soulless concrete luxury projects. Under BBLA, the developers will get rich, the City Council will get campaign contributions and Los Angeles will get stuck with gridlocked surface streets, more concrete, wrecked neighborhoods, less open space and more pollution.”

“BBLA supporters try to put lipstick on their piggish measure by saying it will require developers to provide affordable housing units in their projects,” said Stewart. “Don’t believe it. BBLA is a boondoggle.”

Three loopholes in the BBLA fine print reveal that its affordable housing promise is phony or unenforceable.

- BBLA promises to require developers of all major projects (those bigger than 10 units, and that need a City Council vote granting them an exception to existing zoning, height district or General Plan rules) to provide affordable housing units in their projects — the number of units to be determined by a formula.

Sounds straightforward, right? But the fine print gives developers a blatant escape hatch. Turns out the City Council, by majority vote, can merely “adjust” — reduce — the developers' promised affordable housing units if these politicians decide that the developer can't make a “reasonable return on investment.” This hyped-up new version of pay-to-play lets developers super-size their projects even as they use their “juice” at City Hall to evade their affordable housing obligations. This is the kind trickery we've come to expect from City Hall. See Section 5 (g)

- More fine print: BBLA supporters paint a rosy picture of a city with mixed-income neighborhoods (“residential development of all income levels”) created within several blocks of mass transit. But BBLA's fine-print allows developers to provide income-segregated housing so that upscale residents who pay market- or luxury-rate rents won't have to live under the same roof with the not-so-rich. Under BBLA, developers can build their affordable housing for low and very low-income tenants up to 3 miles from the choice real estate where their better-off tenants live. See Section 5 (b) (1)
- Still more fine print: Under BBLA, developers who don't want to build affordable units can pay an in-lieu fee into an “Affordable Housing Trust Fund.” City Hall politicians would then decide which of their pals can get their hands on this slush fund to build housing, a clear conflict of interest. You can already see the developers' lobbyists and campaign contributors swarming for access! This fine print sets up a blatantly politicized system filled with cost overruns and nepotism. See Section 5 (b) (3)

“BBLA will create massive overdevelopment, segregated development and crony capitalism development,” said Stewart. “It turns the less-than-competent City Council into powerful land czars looking for campaign money. BBLA ties the hands of the community so they can't affect overdevelopment. For real reform support the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative that ends this broken and dysfunctional system.”