

# REPEAL ZIR's

## Q&A

### WHAT ARE ZIR'S?

more info at [www.sbaor.org/main/repeal-zir-initiative](http://www.sbaor.org/main/repeal-zir-initiative)

ZIR is short for Zoning Information Reports. The City of Santa Barbara requires ZIR's to be obtained from the City when residential property owners sell their property. ZIR's include matters of City records pertaining to authorized use, occupancy, zoning and the results of a physical inspection of the property. The primary purpose of a ZIR is to provide information on zoning and permitted uses to potential buyers of residential property.

### HOW LONG HAVE ZIR'S BEEN AROUND?

45 years! Realtors initiated and fully supported the creation of ZIR's which originally were created as an *informational* report to disclose information about a property to potential buyers. These reports were \$25-\$40 and strictly informational. This was during the time of "buyer beware" and disclosures and private inspections were not the norm during a transaction like they are today.

### WHY SHOULD WE GET RID OF ZIR'S NOW? THEY DON'T SOUND TOO BAD TO ME.

✓ Shouldn't we expect better from our government? This initiative eliminates unnecessary permits and paperwork to make sure this costly, unfair, and antiquated ordinance is repealed.

✓ City inspectors often rely on incomplete files to investigate the permitting process. When property records have been lost or destroyed, the burden is on the homeowner to provide proof of their existence and persuade the City to accept the evidence. In other words, the City's position is that the seller is guilty until proven innocent.

✓ There's already a lot of paperwork involved in a transaction to sell property. The State already requires sellers to provide a Transfer Disclosure Statement to buyers, in addition to numerous other disclosures and reports that more effectively provide information on health and safety issues than ZIRs.

✓ ZIR's have evolved over the last 45 years from an informational report identifying illegal dwelling units to a costly, inaccurate, and unfair report. Don't just take our word for it... According to a Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report, ZIRs have outlived their usefulness.

✓ Inspections should be done by licensed and trained inspectors, but that's not happening. Zoning inspectors are not professionally licensed and trained building inspectors, yet they often call out building code violations, resulting in reports that arbitrarily penalize homeowners. A home that receives a clean report from one City inspector may be flagged with significant violations by another City inspector. The City's refusal to stand by the work product of its inspectors has cost Santa Barbara homeowners tens of thousands of dollars.

### WHY ARE ZIR'S CONSIDERED COSTLY?

45 years ago they were \$25-\$40 for an *informational* report. Today, the City is proposing to increase the ZIR's fees to \$400-\$1,120! Is this a fair fee for an inaccurate report?

### A BALLOT INITIATIVE SEEMS PRETTY EXTREME. HAVE THE CONCERNS REGARDING THESE REPORTS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE CITY'S ATTENTION?

Yes, the Santa Barbara Association of REALTORS®, on behalf of City homeowners, has talked to the City for the past 10 YEARS! Many ideas and solutions have been discussed with the City, but the City doesn't want to get rid of ZIR's because they believe the reports have "value". However homeowners have been burdened with unreliable reports and have lost value on their homes due to inaccurate reports.

### I'M A RENTER SO IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THIS APPLIES TO ME. WHY SHOULD I CARE?

If you or someone you know wants to own a home one day, you could fall victim to an inaccurate ZIR. Given the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of inaccurate reports issued by non-licensed City inspectors, would you want to jeopardized your homes value?