



COUNCILWOMAN LENA GONZALEZ

R-7

Date: January 16, 2018
TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FR: Councilwoman Lena Gonzalez, District 1 *LG*
Councilmember Dee Andrews, District 6 *DA*
Councilmember Al Austin, District 8 *AL*

Subject: Housing for All Policy

BACKGROUND:

To address our many housing needs, the City Council adopted 29 actions from the "Report on Revenue Tools and Incentives for the Production of Affordable and Workforce Housing." These recommendations, informed by a group of community leaders and housing experts, were designed to increase the production of affordable housing for all residents and especially seniors, students, working families, people experiencing homelessness and those in danger of being experiencing homelessness.

In 2017, the City undertook steps to analyze rental costs in Long Beach. While data between 2007 and 2017 showed variation across neighborhoods, there has been a steady increase in rental rates across Long Beach which far has outpaced income increases. Many residents are finding it difficult to keep up with the growing costs of rent and home ownership. These changes have been especially difficult for seniors on fixed incomes. Individuals experiencing homelessness or in imminent danger of homelessness need assistance most of all. The City has taken many steps to preserve the current stock of affordable housing and to develop new affordable units, but the need for affordable housing continues to grow.

The Seniors Advisory Commission has already highlighted housing as a growing challenge the senior population is facing. As our population grows, so does the senior community, often with fixed or limited incomes. Preventing senior homelessness must be a priority.

Cities across America have used a wide range of tools to assist tenants. With varied success, these tools have helped prevent homelessness, prevented people from having to move from their homes, or provided assistance when relocation is the only option. Employing these tools to protect our most vulnerable residents, especially seniors, is important for us to examine.

In addition, home ownership is a central ideal of the American dream; be that a single family residence, town home or condominium. Home ownership guarantees certain protections that are not afforded to renters. The City should examine our home ownership rates and related data, and look for tools to move renters to home owners and to assist in finding more paths to home ownership for our residents.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the City Manager to schedule a City Council report to review progress on the city's Report on Revenue Tools and Incentives for the Production of Affordable and Workforce Housing, adopted by the City Council in May of 2017. Include updates on all 29 action items, including progress on the inclusionary housing policy, short term rental policy, and updates on new funding from recent State legislation including recording fee legislation.

Direct the City Manager, through the Department of Development Services and the Housing Authority, to present research and findings on potential policies to support tenants, protections for seniors, rental assistance programs, and support for renters to move into homeownership. Policy considerations should include:

- A "Seniors First" program to ensure vulnerable seniors receive priority in rental assistance and relocation programs.
- Options for new and/or expanded rental assistance and relocation programs.
- Policies that support tenants adopted in other cities.
- Programs to assist renters with homeownership programs.
- Input from local housing and property owner organizations as part of the study
- Added resources and enforcement tools to address the issue of negligent landlords (persistent code violators, consistent quality of life issues, blight in the neighborhoods, etc.)

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff will study and advise on any potential fiscal impacts.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation