



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

# R-33

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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November 13, 2018

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a report on the results of the Nuisance Motel Pilot Program by the Office of Civic Innovation and Development Services Department; and,

Request the City Attorney to prepare an Ordinance to establish a Nuisance Motel Program. (Citywide)

## DISCUSSION

In October 2018, the City Manager directed the Office of Civic Innovation to coordinate an interdepartmental team to explore strategies to address nuisance activities of motel uses that affect the quality of life in the surrounding community. This effort was initiated and included staff from the City Prosecutor and City Attorney Offices, Development Services, Health and Human Services, Police, Fire, and Financial Management Departments. This team became known as the Nuisance Motel Task Force (Task Force) and was tasked to collaborate and develop a strategy to eliminate or reduce nuisance and criminal activities by establishing a procedure to enhance transparency and accountability in motel operations and a process to hold motel property owners accountable for nuisance and criminal activities.

The objective of the Task Force was to develop a compliance plan for nuisance motels and to test the efficacy of the compliance plan in a pilot program. The compliance plan that was developed incorporates best practices for motel operations as well as existing City regulations, with a focus on property security measures, and the use of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) tools and techniques. To implement the compliance plan, as well as provide additional vetting specific to the pilot motels, the Task Force conducted site meetings and provided additional operational recommendations for motel staff, such as added security inspections and activity logs.

### **Pilot Program**

To identify the motels with high levels of nuisance activity to include in the pilot program, the Task Force aggregated calls for service and Incident Report records from the Long Beach Police Department for all motel (and hotel) locations in Long Beach from January 1, 2014 through May 31, 2017. The data were analyzed by activity type. Calls for service were weighted by priority level to correspond with response time, with Priority One calls having the highest weight. Incident Reports were weighted by Part I and Part II crimes corresponding to the

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting Database. From analysis of the data, the Task Force selected six motels with high levels of police activity to participate in the pilot program. The first phase of the pilot program was implemented in the fall/winter of 2017, and a progress report on the results was presented to the City Council in a February 8, 2018 memorandum. An update on this program was considered by the City Council on February 20, 2018, at which time the City Council directed staff to explore the feasibility of a citywide Ordinance.

To determine the efficacy of the pilot program, a second data analysis of police activity from May 2017 to May 2018 was conducted to determine the overall effect of the pilot program at the six selected locations. This analysis demonstrated crime and nuisance activity had decreased at all pilot locations, with some properties showing a significant decrease in activity. Staff's presentation of this item will include an overview of the program and the most recent pilot program results.

### **Nuisance Motel Program Ordinance**

Based on the results of the pilot program, staff recommends that the City Council request the City Attorney to prepare a citywide Nuisance Motel Program Ordinance to codify the compliance plan and establish a review process for all hospitality locations in Long Beach. The review process would establish the interdepartmental team whose role would be to monitor compliance plan results at targeted motels and to oversee the review process at all hotels and motels in the City. The Development Services Department will provide administrative management of this program as well as coordinate with other City departments for its ongoing implementation.

### **Additional Alternatives to Address Nuisance Motels**

Staff continues to explore other programs and policies that would supplement and bolster the effectiveness of the Nuisance Motel Program and allow for greater scalability. Some of the most notable solutions are described below:

#### *Motel Conversions*

Research shows that national demand for motels has fallen across the country in recent years. In Southern California, many cities are repurposing motels outside of tourist demand areas into affordable housing. Earlier this year, the City of Los Angeles established an Interim Motel Conversion Ordinance to allow for motel establishments that participate in the program to convert into transitional or supportive housing on a temporary (15-year) basis by entering into a contract with homeless service providers. The Ordinance allows for a streamlined conversion process, including by-right approvals of any required entitlements, an exemption from residential development standards, and the option to return to a motel use upon termination of the contract. However, Los Angeles has yet to have any applications to the program due to pending litigation. Staff is currently exploring the feasibility of adopting a similar program in Long Beach to provide the option for select motels to voluntarily convert to transitional or supportive housing on an interim basis.

*Amortization of Motel Uses*

Staff is exploring the amortization of motel land uses in areas of the City where such uses are no longer integral to the surrounding land use fabric. The process would terminate motel uses after a certain period. The period of time must be sufficient to allow the owner of the property and/or business to recover their investment. Additional resources would be needed to hire an outside consultant to develop a depreciation schedule for the amortization of motel properties.

Staff has researched other jurisdictions in the region that have established amortization schedules for nuisance uses in recent years. In 2014, a contract between the City of Goleta and an energy consultant to study amortizing nonconforming oil-related uses in the City was in the amount of \$150,000. A more applicable case is the Amortization Program and Ordinance in National City, which released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide an amortization schedule for nonconforming industrial uses in the west side of the city. These services were budgeted at \$150,000.

*Zoning Tools - Uptown Long Beach*

While the pilot program and the proposed nuisance motel program are citywide in nature, a specific acute problem regarding the over-concentration of motels occurs specifically in North Long Beach. As part of the grant-funded UPlan Phase I project, the Development Services Department is developing new zoning for commercial properties north of Del Amo Boulevard. It is anticipated this new zone will prohibit new motel construction and render existing motels as legal non-conforming. Existing motels would be prohibited from expanding or altering their operations without a discretionary entitlement. This action is a required precursor to any future amortization program. During Phase II of the project, economic incentives to encourage the redevelopment of existing properties, including motels, will be explored.

*Motel Acquisition*

Staff is researching the possibility of acquiring and facilitating the redevelopment or rehabilitation of select hotel and motel locations in the City on a case-by-case basis, contingent upon funding, acquisition cost, nuisance and criminal activity at the site, and other site-specific factors.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Sarah E. Green on October 25, 2018 and by Budget Analysis Officer Julissa José-Murray on October 26, 2018.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action on this matter is not time critical.

FISCAL IMPACT

At this time, additional costs are not anticipated to implement a Nuisance Motel Program. As demonstrated by the pilot program, implementation of the compliance plan through the coordinated efforts of multiple departments has led to a reduction in the number of calls for service. The unified efforts of the involved departments appear to have created efficiencies by minimizing duplication efforts. By expanding the scope of the compliance plan's implementation citywide, it is anticipated the number of calls for services will diminish citywide, leading to further efficiencies. Staff will continue to monitor the level of staffing and other resources required to implement this program, and provide recommendations for resources allocation, if necessary. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



LINDA F. TATUM, FAICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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APPROVED:

  
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PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER