

Communication from Public

Name: Hayden Ashworth, Government Affairs LGBTQ Alliance of Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils

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Comments for Public Posting: Today the LGBTQ+ Alliance of Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils have voted to support Council File 20-0197 Today, L.A.'s homelessness catastrophe is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to be plagued by systemic racism, and will greatly worsen when hit with a tsunami of evictions in 2021. We cannot wait any longer for a comprehensive solution. The City Council's November 4, 2020, request for a report on types of government-owned social housing used in other countries and for recommendations on their implementation in Los Angeles gives our city a valuable opportunity to bring our unhoused neighbors indoors and keep others from losing their homes. We urge you to act courageously and with the utmost urgency. It is time to step away from the costly and wasteful private-ownership, for-profit approach to housing. Instead, we must recognize housing as a human right and a matter of public good, like mass transit, libraries, or schools. Social housing is the share of housing that is treated as a social resource for the community, rather than as a for-profit commodity. Rents are calculated through cost-based or income-based formulas. It is a state-supported approach to providing housing outside of the market, free from the ravages of inflation and speculation. As you will see in studying what other countries and cities have done, homelessness is largely prevented, and millions of very-low to moderate-income people have long term access to high quality housing. When public housing is available to a range of income levels, two things happen: (1) higher rents can be charged to higher-income residents, offsetting much of the capital cost; and (2) poor people have better access to amenities like parks, services, and transportation that come with a mixed income community. This model encourages real social integration and discourages culturally and economically segregated enclaves. As you design social housing for Los Angeles, we urge you to: Treat this situation as the dire emergency that it is. Every day that we fail to resolve this calamity, four unhoused people die in our streets. In developing this social housing proposal, involve people with lived experience in being unhoused and members of grass roots organizations and advocacy groups. They know what it takes to become successfully rehoused. Start with empty or underused

buildings or lots that are already publicly owned. This would eliminate property acquisition costs. Consider purchasing more hotels, motels, and other properties that can be quickly and economically transformed into permanent housing. This would invest the large amounts of money now being spent on short-term rent of these facilities in permanent housing instead. Maintain public ownership of this social housing. This would prevent the displacement of long term and low-income tenants when contracts with private owners expire. We've seen too much of that already as the original 30-year public/private contracts are not renewed. The HHH housing now being built will face the same fate in 55 years. Maintain public operation of this housing so that the sliding scale rent from all the tenants would go back into the public coffers to pay for operation, maintenance, and loan repayment. Once in operation, provide for meaningful participation in building governance by the residents. As you study social housing elsewhere in the world, you will see that principles such as these have made it successful. COVID-19 and the economic crisis we are facing make the pursuit of aggressive social housing policy difficult. However, they also make it absolutely crucial if we are to find permanent solutions to both the homelessness disaster and the chronic shortage of affordable housing. Please take the same kind of bold and immediate measures to address this tragedy that you are taking to the pandemic. Business as usual is too deadly to continue. Sincerely, Hayden Ashworth