

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 20-1042
Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached letter with amendments/concerns from Housing is a Human Right.



Los Angeles City Council
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

Housing is a Human Right
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HousingHumanRight.Org

3/15/2021

RE: CF 20-1042/ Land Use Reform – Zoning Ballot Measure

To the Honorable City Council of Los Angeles,

We are submitting this letter for the file regarding the proposed ballot measure for zoning in the city. While we agree there's an urgent need to address the city's housing affordability crisis, we are formally laying out several concerns and suggestions. Any housing policy should first and foremost help those who need it most. Trickle-down housing policy fails to do that -- and, in fact, fuels gentrification and displacement, harming working-class and lower-income residents.

The language in the ordinance itself is broad and addresses the more technical side of the problem. However, the city's housing affordability crisis isn't just a technical problem.

We ask that the language of any proposed ballot measure include the following aspects:

- Housing production must be focused on the economic levels with the most need, mainly Extremely Low Income (ELI) and Very Low Income (VLI). The city must acknowledge that market-rate is largely out of reach for those who are most impacted by the housing affordability crisis. Again, trickle-down housing doesn't work.
- Any proposed plan must include tenant protections to stop further displacement. Just guaranteeing a right of return doesn't go far enough when tenants must move into another building at higher rental prices. Tenants must have financial padding during any time of construction to ensure that they don't become homeless while waiting for a replacement unit to be built.
- The city must do more to preserve L.A.'s rent stabilized (RSO) housing stock. Due to the state law known as the Ellis Act, too many RSO units have been demolished or taken off the rental housing market to make way for luxury housing. Also, the state law known as Costa-Hawkins severely hampers the production of new RSO housing. RSO is the largest source of L.A.'s most affordable housing since it isn't governed by deed covenants that eventually expire. The city must preserve rent stabilized units, not create policies that further diminish RSO housing stock.
- Under AB 1505 (2018), also known as the "Palmer Fix", there is a legal right to implement and enforce inclusionary zoning. The city no longer needs to encourage affordable housing production by means of incentivizing through density bonus



programs. The city must require housing to be built at ELI and VLI levels across L.A. in order to be equitable and meet residents' needs.

- While we applaud the city for encouraging public participation, we also urge that the city work with a broad coalition, including renter and homeless advocacy groups. The city must have true representation on this matter, including for our most vulnerable residents.

L.A. City Hall must utilize more tools to address the current housing affordability crisis. Repeating what's already been done in the past is a recipe for more disaster. Thousands of market-rate units near transit were created, but this has resulted in an increase in unhoused residents, more gentrification, and skyrocketing rents. What's been done in the past is not only failing to create the results we desperately need, but it also harms working-class and lower-income residents.

The push to up-zone for more market-rate, or luxury, housing, without requirements for affordable units for low-income communities, only makes a bad situation worse. If city officials want L.A. to be a truly livable city for everyone, then assistance must start at the lowest end of the economic spectrum, not the highest.

The city must focus on producing more homeless housing at a lower price point per unit than traditional homeless housing projects coupled with supportive services where necessary. For example, utilizing the adaptive reuse of city-owned properties. For new development projects, the city must require a sizable percentage of VLI and ELI housing units that are so desperately needed. The city must stop the flow of people into displacement in the first place by looking at broader homelessness preventive measures.

There is so much more that we can do, we just have to want to do it.

Sincerely,

Housing is a Human Right