

MOTION

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

State and local laws have made the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs), and Movable Tiny Houses (MTHs) much more permissive and streamlined in recent years. Structures must comply with all applicable zoning, building, and residential codes. Eased development standards allow for many of these building types in any zone that allows for residential use by-right and where there is a proposed or existing dwelling unit on the lot. Additionally, parking is not required for new ADUs if they are located within a half-mile of public transit.

The Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) implemented the Standard Plan Program to provide interested parties a simplified permitting process for the design and construction of ADUs. The use of standard plans reduces the time required for plan check resulting in faster permit issuance. Under the Standard Plan Program, plans are designed by private licensed architects and engineers to accommodate various site conditions. Plans are then reviewed and pre-approved by LADBS for compliance with building, residential, and green codes.

Some of these approved plans include HCD-approved housing under state law, which is factory built housing that is pre-approved by state agencies for building code compliance and stamped prior to submission to LADBS. LADBS, in turn, is responsible for review of local scope—such as foundations, zoning, and site plan review. These homes are constructed in a factory, then transported to a site for assembly, and can offer substantial benefits, including lower construction costs, shorter development timelines, and overall efficiency, all while increasing the supply of housing. A smaller construction footprint also means a smaller carbon footprint, made all the more impactful through the use of energy-efficient and greener materials that provide a better life-cycle performance for these projects.

Unfortunately, there have been multiple examples of delays in the City's review and approval processes of HCD-approved plans. During an acute housing affordability and scarcity crisis, the City should do everything in its power to produce more housing to keep families, workers, seniors on a fixed-income, students, and others in Los Angeles.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, in consultation with the Department of City Planning, Bureau of Engineering, and the Los Angeles Fire Department, and with requested input from HCD-listed firms that are part of the Standard Plan Program, to report back within 30 days on current departmental reviews, approvals, and permitting procedures for HCD-approved single family and ADU plans—including a proposal for an expedited process for projects utilizing HCD-approved building plans—and identification of barriers slowing down staff reviews and plan check approvals. This analysis should also include recommendations on enhancing and incentivizing HCD-approved construction for small-scale projects in the City of Los Angeles, including through expedited clearance processes to streamline permitting and the feasibility of establishing a separate, expedited process for HCD-approved and other state-certified plans upon application completeness.

PRESENTED BY:


NITHYA RAMAN

Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY:


BOB BLUMENFIELD

Councilmember, 3rd District


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