

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 14-0268-S16

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Council Members and Committee Staff, Certainly, the loss of rent-stabilized housing is a critical issue that demands action. I am gravely concerned, however, with a drive to suspend density and transit corridor incentives. This pits progress in modernizing transit against advocates for affordable housing, and it is nonsense. Troublingly, language in the motion seeks to "restrict ... density bonus incentives or Transit Oriented Community (TOC) incentives" (see paragraph 4 on page 2 of the Motion). Such a call is counter-intuitive and will have the sum effect of REDUCING new affordable housing units for the very communities and in the very places where housing is needed most. The point is that transit developments and density-added developments are GOOD THINGS in a city where there is not enough housing -- They encourage additional units in a housing-starved city. The non-sequitur and unrelated bad-faith efforts by developers who abuse the discretion allowed with rent-controlled tenants should not be tied to progressive transit or development policy in any way. It puts a stink on two good causes (affordable housing and progressive transit policy). Just as there are bad-faith landlords, there also are anti-progress community members who peg new housing initiatives (whether affordable or not) as "gentrification." By attacking the very programs that help expand convenient and affordable housing options, the Motion shoots itself in the foot. Because the Motion in paragraph 4 attacks progressive policy to increase affordable housing and to promote transit solutions, I urge you to scrub paragraph 4 completely from its text. Solutions: Transit and additional units do not need to be the victims of affordable housing. Without victimizing transit incentives, one option is to simply require the same number of units inauspiciously removed to be provided by the new construction at one-to-one rent-controlled rates. A policy like this, for say 15 years at the same address after any removal of RSO tenants would promote both new construction and affordable housing. Progressive policies do not need to be pitted against one another. I support the spirit of this motion and wholeheartedly the cause to promote and create affordable housing. HOWEVER, I urge the Council and the Housing Committee to SCRUB the toxic paragraph 4 from the motion or to fix it (above solution?) as it is an inadequate way to address the concerns of all sides.

ALTERNATELY, please ABSTAIN from supporting this motion entirely as there is no need to attack transit policy in a city with such major transportation needs. Sincerely, John Engelke, Silver Lake Stakeholder and Activist