

MOTION

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority recently released the results of the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. Over the last year, the City of Los Angeles has seen a 16 percent increase in homelessness, with noticeable spikes among youth, seniors and victims of domestic violence, bringing the total number of people living on sidewalks, in cars and vans, or in parks and shelters to 36,600. Up and down the State, from San Francisco to San Diego, counties have reported double-digit increases in homelessness. In Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, homelessness is up more than 20 percent. San Francisco has seen a 17 percent increase, and Alameda County saw a 43 percent increase.

Equally startling is the 721,000 Angelenos that have been found to be severely rent burdened, spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing. According to the California Housing Partnership, since 2000, the median rent in Los Angeles County has increased 32 percent while the median renter's income has fallen 3 percent. According to a 2018 analysis conducted by the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, only one in three units in Los Angeles County is covered by rent control, leaving the majority of renters with little protection. Evictions, foreclosures, corporate conversions and rent hikes are driving people out of their homes and onto the streets.

The City, County and State must build more housing, particularly affordable housing. But it will take years to build enough housing to meet demand and bring down prices. In the meantime, the City must do more to ensure that people who are experiencing financial hardship are not unfairly or arbitrarily pushed out of their homes.

The Ellis Act is a state law originally adopted to provide small-scale property owners with an orderly way to remove their buildings from the rental market, and give local jurisdictions an opportunity to provide certain protections for displaced tenants. In recent years, however, the Act has been misused to clear the way for the eviction of long-term tenants, the demolition of units subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance ("RSO") and the development of new market rate units or the gradual re-introduction of units at market rates, or the construction of housing that fails to meet the City's affordable housing needs. Since 2001, according to the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department, nearly 25,000 RSO rental units were taken off the rental market using the Ellis Act.

Currently, tenant relocation assistance for evictions under the Ellis Act is tied to the direct expenses caused by the eviction, such as security deposits, moving expenses and at most a few months rent. This payout is tiered based on duration of tenancy, disability, the age of residents and income. This formula neglects to consider additional expenses associated with moving from a rent stabilized to a market rate unit, the expenses associated with commuting if the evicted tenant is unable to find or afford a comparable unit in the same community, or finding a new school or child care facility for their children or adult care facilities for parents or grandparents.

The ability to effect change at the city level is limited by state law, but that does not preclude local leaders and concerned citizens from advocating for changes to that law and amending local law where possible.



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I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID), with the assistance of the City Attorney as needed, be instructed/requested to report back on the feasibility of tying tenant relocation assistance required for evictions under the Ellis Act to:

- The median rental price for a comparable unit within the respective community plan area.
- Family size, unit size, and/or number of tenants.
- The annually adjusted consumer price index (CPI), according to local area indexes, as opposed to the Los Angeles-Long Beach Area CPI.


I FURTHER MOVE that the HCID, with the assistance of the City Attorney as needed, be instructed/requested to report back on the feasibility and with recommendations for increasing the affordable housing replacement requirement (currently 20 percent) in the Los Angeles Municipal Code section 151.28.B. for new building construction.


I FURTHER MOVE that the HCID, with the assistance of the City Attorney, be instructed/requested to report back on the feasibility of allowing tenants who are displaced as a result of demolition to be provided the right of first refusal to move into the new building, and have the right of first refusal to rent the new below-market rate units designated to replace the units that were demolished, at the rent that would have applied if they had remained in place, as long as their tenancy continues.

I FURTHER MOVE that the HCID, with the assistance of the Department of City Planning and City Attorney as needed, be instructed/requested to report back on the City's authority to restrict the provision of affordable development incentives at sites which evicted rental tenants under the Ellis Act, such as density bonus incentives or Transit Oriented Community (TOC) incentives, to ensure vulnerable housing sectors are not rewarding developers for creating unintended displacements.

I FURTHER MOVE that the HCID, with the assistance of the City Attorney as needed, be instructed/requested to report back on the feasibility and options for financing the acquisition or rehabilitation of RSO properties that are at-risk for Ellis Act evictions and demolitions for possible conversion to permanent affordable housing.

PRESENTED BY:


DAVID E. RYU
Councilmember, 4th District


MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

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SECONDED BY:



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