



Staci Roberts <staci.roberts@lacity.org>

Fwd: Motel conversion - Jan 23 - SAG

1 message

Safer Sylmar <safesylmar@gmail.com>
To: Clerk.CPS@lacity.org

Wed, Jan 31, 2018 at 9:51 AM

The Sylmar Advocacy Group is submitting a public comment to CF CF 17-1432 (Proposed Motel Conversion Ordinance).

Sincerely,

Sylmar Advocacy Group (SAG)
safesylmar@gmail.com

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January 23, 2018

RE: CF 17-1432 (Proposed Motel Conversion Ordinance)
Public Comment from the Sylmar Advocacy Group

Members of the City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Honorable Council Members:

The proposed Motel Conversion Ordinance would greatly affect Sylmar, which has 13 motels located within its 8 square miles, 9 of them grouped along one two-mile stretch of San Fernando Road.

The Sylmar Advocacy Group (SAG) is made up of Sylmar residents and businesses who advocate for the best interests of Sylmar that include fighting for a fair allocation of public resources and against proposals that will negatively impact the quality of life in our community.

As published, we do not support this proposed ordinance. Below are some, but not all, of our concerns:

1. **Equity:** No one community should have to host a disproportionate number of homeless services. Last year's Homeless Count found 225 unsheltered people. At this time, Sylmar already has two facilities serving homeless that are open or in planning stages, and a third proposed—for a combined 158 new homeless, not serving those already here.
One of the public comments noted in the Planning Department staff report (CPC-2017-3409-CA) noted the potential to disproportionately impact some communities more than others. It suggested that the City should take neighborhood impact into account and require Council Member support. This ordinance as is makes no effort to do that, but should.
2. **Performance Standards:** This section of the ordinance only refers to security night lighting and office space for supportive services. There is no property management plan to allay community concern that the premises be clean and well-maintained. There is no provision for quality control, oversight, and compliance, to make sure that service providers are actually helping the homeless. There is no requirement for on-site security, 24/7 availability of support personnel, and no complaint process for either program patrons or the community. To serve a high-risk population in great need, this ordinance is remarkable for how much is left out.
3. **Public resources:** Sylmar cannot handle such a program without an increase in police, fire, public works and sanitation. Last year saw a 50% increase in robbery in the very area where most of our motels are located. Each conversion will increase the demand for fire/police services. We don't have enough now! We still have only the one fire station that we had in 1960! How many more lives can we absorb into our community when our response times already fail national standards?
4. **Target population:** The ordinance says nothing about whether the homeless served at these motels would come from the local area, or be brought in from other parts of the city. The city should establish an equitable formula for motel conversion, based on the annual homeless count identifying those already in the community. This would decrease migration of the unsheltered to communities where services are provided, as well as, serve those currently existing in the community.
It says nothing about whether or not those served would have to adhere to any behavioral standards (such as no drugs or alcohol), or would have to contribute any portion of their

monthly benefit payments. It says nothing about where unsuccessful participants would go if they got evicted—would they be dumped on the streets of Sylmar?

5. **Budget Sustainability:** There needs to be more information about short and/or long-term funding. If this program is to last 15 years, what will happen if rent subsidies and supportive services end when the County Measure H sales tax expires in 10 years? Would Sylmar program patrons end up on the streets of Sylmar, creating an even larger number of homeless bleeding into the surrounding residential communities, or will they be left in the motels with no supportive services?

Motel conversion is not a popular concept in our community according to a January poll taken through the community network Nextdoor.com. This found that of 226 respondents in 21 neighborhoods, only 8% were in favor of conversion, 60% did not support the concept, 2% were unsure, and 30% said not without additional City resources. We think this reflects anger over the City's failure to respond with adequate outreach, sanitation, or law enforcement to existing homeless problems without adding more.

However, should this ordinance be amended to include greater sensitivity to local concerns, equity and more clarity as to operational procedures, Sylmar Advocacy Group would be open to consider changes.

Sincerely,
Sylmar Advocacy Group
safesymlar@gmail.com