

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org).

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

#### Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: NoHo Neighborhood Council

Name: James Askew

Phone Number: 917-254-0-081

Email: [jamesaskewfornocho@gmail.com](mailto:jamesaskewfornocho@gmail.com)

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(15) Nay(0) Abstain(1) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 08/12/2019

Type of NC Board Action: For

#### Impact Information

Date: 09/27/2019

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 19-0623

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: At its August 12, 2019 meeting, the NoHo Neighborhood Council voted to support City Council Motion 19-0623, which calls on the City to draft a report on the amount of vacant, habitable housing units in Los Angeles and to examine policy options for a "Vacancy-" or "Empty-Homes-" Tax Ordinance.

Dear Honorable Council Members,

At its August 12, 2019 meeting, the NoHo Neighborhood Council unanimously voted to support City Council Motion 19-0623, which calls on the City to draft a report on the amount of vacant, habitable housing units in Los Angeles and to examine policy options for a “Vacancy-“ or “Empty-Homes-“ Tax Ordinance.

The City of Los Angeles is in desperate need of truly affordable housing for its residents, where “affordable” means that no more than a third of a person’s income is spent on housing. Just this year, the California Housing Partnership and the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing found that 568,255 new affordable housing units would be needed to meet demand in LA County, and the construction of new units will take years to impact currently rising rents. In the meantime, the lack of affordable housing has exacerbated a humanitarian crisis on our streets, where upwards of 60,000 persons live without a home. In North Hollywood, our community saw the largest percentage increase in the numbers of persons experiencing homelessness of any neighborhood in LA between 2017 and 2018, and as of the 2019 LAHSA Homeless Count our district reported 1,653 persons living in their vehicles or in makeshift shelters.

Additional incentives and funding sources that can rapidly put affordable housing options on the market are necessary to meet the scale of this problem. With thousands of affordable rental units having been lost to Ellis Act conversions, short term rentals, condominiums and hotel uses, vacancy rates in areas of the city experiencing the largest growth in development have hit 17-year highs, and industrial vacancy rates rose a full percentage point between 2017 and 2018. While determining accurate vacancy rates has been historically difficult due to a lack of available data, The American Community Survey now estimates that 93,535 homes are currently vacant in the city of Los Angeles.

Cities with similar affordable housing shortages such as New York, Vancouver and San Francisco have implemented or are exploring taxes on Vacant Residential and Commercial properties. In Vancouver, for example, all owners of residential property are required to submit annual property status declarations, and properties which are deemed empty are subject to a tax of 1% of their assessed taxable value from the previous year. Exceptions are made for principal residences or homes rented for at least six months of the year.

A similar ordinance in Los Angeles could have broad, beneficial effects. Speculators who own residences in The City but do not live here can be pressured to return homes to the market, and taxes levied by property owners willing to pay the penalty can be used to buttress Affordable Housing funds and initiatives.

We therefore call upon The City to instruct the Housing, Community and Investment Department, The Department of Building and Safety and the Department of City Planning, with the assistance of Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Attorney's Office, to study similar laws and to prepare and present an ‘Empty Homes and Under-Utilized Property Tax’ ordinance. We stand resolved that such a Tax would be a vital tool in our ongoing efforts to address our affordable housing crisis.

Sincerely,

The NoHo Neighborhood Council

