

Google Groups

Support for The Alexan Project

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Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee,

I am very concerned that the single biggest barrier to solving our homeless crisis is zoning, NIMBYs and lawsuits--and the PLUM has the power to end homelessness and bring down rents. I urge you to tackle the problem.

My husband has a small real estate holding company but building new housing is sadly out of the question--the zoning is just too challenging. I have seen hundreds of thousands of dollars get thrown away on zoning battles for non-profits--worthy projects stopped by all powerful neighborhood councils.

I do not believe big developers or tax payers or non-profits building affordable housing can solve the problem of homelessness and high rents. But I do believe that new zoning can allow all of us to solve it. We just saw it in Jerusalem. It is a very different model but it is successfully bringing down rents and expanding the housing stock--and it did not involve a penny of tax-payer money. It was simply a zoning change to allow contractors to expand the size of existing buildings.

The suggestions listed below I believe would have a profound affect. The market can solve this problem if the red-tape was removed. Currently, no one but powerful developers dare tread into the treacherous waters of building "affordable" housing. There is an untapped potential of thousands of Angelenos who can build our way out of the problem--allowing small investors, mom and pops, and homeowners to make a small profit and solve these intractable problems at the same time.

Please consider these changes:

1) Allow garages to be converted to ADUs -- including "Tiny Homes" to 2-story, 2-bedroom options ACROSS LOS ANGELES. Nobody in Hancock Park or West LA needs an empty driveway or even a garage.

2) Proactive Zoning

Whatever number of affordable units LA wants to build should be pre-zoned. Let the PLUM fight it out with various agencies and neighborhood groups, rather than the entrepreneurs, small investors, mom and pops, contractors, architects, house flippers who want to be part of the solution. Money wasted on zoning fights just means fewer units and higher rents.

3) Micro-housing – 200-400 square foot units and Tiny Homes – have an untapped potential to give thousands an opportunity to live in vibrant and desirable urban neighborhoods at the fraction of the cost. In Seattle, studio units have a bathroom and kitchenette, while floors have a shared common room with a full kitchen, dining area and TV for entertaining and socializing. Designed for efficiency, they come with Murphy beds and clever storage solutions and often feel twice the size they actually are. In Seattle, developers can rip down a derelict single-family home and build a micro-housing building of 64 units. Units can rent for less than \$800 a month, which is the market rate. Developers make money. And when there is money to be made, investment pours in. Let the market solve the problem!

4) A Vacancy Tax

Abandoned and derelict lots and buildings and empty storefronts destroy the fabric of a community and hurt local property values. The city already has a fine for banks that foreclose but do not keep up a property. Any property left fallow for more than a few months should be subject to a hefty fine so the landlord leases or sells the property--and NIMBYs cannot be allowed to get in the way. Houses should be lived in, storefronts should we used!

Sincerely,
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