

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.

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

Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(13) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 07/19/2021

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 08/31/2021

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 17-1432-s1

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports this Motion [Exhibit 1] and urges modification of the Interim Motel Conversion Ordinance to allow for commercial office space to likewise be converted to transitional and supportive housing in a similar manner. Converting commercial space to transitional and supportive housing helps solve multiple problems. Doing so will provide those most in need with stable housing, coupled with mental health, addiction, and vocational services. It will also provide a steady income stream for the owners of otherwise often-vacant commercial spaces and could fill up potentially unsightly vacancies. This entire process will be streamlined and sped up. Conversion of commercial space to transitional and supportive homes is both feasible (as demonstrated by a number of conversions to other types of housing in Los Angeles) and far less expensive than new construction. And to be clear, existing businesses and spaces with an active commercial rental market will not be affected by such an ordinance, as proposals for conversion would target underused spaces. [Please see attached for full CIS]

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
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Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

[07/19/2021]

Attn: Council President Nury Martinez, Councilmember Kevin De Leon, Councilmember Gil Cedillo

From: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

RE: Interim Motel Conversion Ordinance Expansion / Commercial Office Buildings / Supportive and Transitional Housing / Supportive Services / COVID-19 Pandemic / Homelessness Crisis
([Council File: 17-1432-S1](#))

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports this [Motion](#) [Exhibit 1] and urges modification of the Interim Motel Conversion Ordinance to allow for commercial office space to likewise be converted to transitional and supportive housing in a similar manner.

Homelessness in our city is a crisis that deserves a full toolkit of housing responses. Homeless counts in Los Angeles rose 61 percent between 2015 and the pre-pandemic 2020 count—and likely have only risen further since. In Los Feliz's council districts, Districts 4 and 13, counts increased 72 percent each. More housing is urgently needed.

Meanwhile, commercial real estate has been hit hard by the pandemic. Even beforehand, trends in retail and office work left many storefronts and offices in the city vacant. But in 2020, office leasing in Los Angeles hit a 20-year low in space rented. Both existing trends in e-commerce and new moves to remote work may depress demand for retail space for years to come.

Converting commercial space to transitional and supportive housing helps solve multiple problems. Doing so will provide those most in need with stable housing, coupled with mental health, addiction, and vocational services. It will also provide a steady income stream for the owners of otherwise often-vacant commercial spaces and could fill up potentially unsightly vacancies. This entire process will be streamlined and sped up. Conversion of commercial space to transitional and supportive homes is both feasible (as demonstrated by a number of conversions to other types of housing in Los Angeles) and far less expensive than new

construction. And to be clear, existing businesses and spaces with an active commercial rental market will not be affected by such an ordinance, as proposals for conversion would target underused spaces.

Exhibit 1

MOTION

Los Angeles faces an unprecedented housing crisis that has contributed to an unprecedented homelessness crisis, in which tens of thousands of people suffer on our streets daily. As the deadly COVID-19 virus continues to spread, it is an urgent public health and moral priority that we provide shelter for people currently living on our streets using all available tools at our disposal.

The City has declared a shelter crisis due to the significant number of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles; this crisis requires both construction of new and acquisition of existing buildings that can be converted into supportive housing and transitional housing, which provide access to assistance and services for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The City's Comprehensive Homeless Strategy also includes identifying opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing private properties that are capable of being converted into Transitional and Supportive Housing, with special focus on hotels and motels. In response, in 2018, the City Council approved both the Interim Motel Conversion and the Permanent Supportive Housing Ordinances to reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to the production of affordable housing. Since 2018, the City has approved 42 PSH projects resulting in over 3,500 beds, with thousands more in the pipeline. This strategy to repurpose existing buildings has proved successful in providing greater flexibility to struggling building owners, while also meeting the goal to provide inexpensive, affordable housing options to address our housing crisis.

Early in the pandemic, the City, the County and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority quickly brought more than 7,000 vulnerable people indoors in a period of a few months. Project Roomkey, the central initiative of this effort, secured more than 4,000 rooms in 37 hotels between the City and County of Los Angeles, which served more than 6,000 people. While Project Roomkey provides urgent, interim housing, Project Homekey further seeks to acquire hotels and motels that can permanently convert to supportive housing.

As the City's economy recovers from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and tourism returns to Los Angeles, it is reasonable to expect that hotels will see more business. The City should explore options for adaptive reuse of existing buildings throughout the City that go beyond just hotels and motels. In particular, commercial office buildings could potentially be converted into housing. With more companies moving to remote work, it is also feasible that some commercial buildings will sustain vacancies into the next year. The City should consider whether underutilized office and commercial buildings could be reasonably converted into housing.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of City Planning, Department of Housing and Community Investment Development, and City Attorney, in consultation with the Department of Building and Safety and the Los Angeles Fire Department, to report back with feasibility of and recommendations for expanding the provisions of the existing Interim Motel Conversion Ordinance to existing commercial office buildings.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council instruct City Attorney to prepare draft changes to the Motel Conversion Ordinance that would allow the repurposing or adaptation of commercial office buildings into supportive and transitional housing with supportive services.

MAR 24 2021



PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District



PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY:

