

MOTION

The Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID) is often the primary contact for persons who are being evicted or struggling with increasing housing costs, and may be at risk of becoming homeless. HCID oversees thousands of housing units that are affordable to extremely low to moderate income households. Many of these units are restricted as a condition of public financing or density bonuses and are leased up in accordance with certain regulations. The leasing of these units is managed by each project owner's property management company and HCID requires that owners provide unit availability on a public database. While listings are important, the City should seek ways to supplement its inventory of affordable housing and enhance its housing services to ensure that residents who may be at risk of becoming homeless are supported during such a vulnerable time.

The primary systems that help facilitate referrals to housing are separated by target populations: homeless/at-risk of homelessness populations are served through the Coordinated Entry System (CES), while the non CES population is referred to HCID's affordable housing website. The CES system assists persons of various acuity levels get placed into housing. HCID's website provides a listing of affordable units throughout the City, and individuals must call each property to inquire about availability and eligibility. The recent increase in homelessness calls for new measures to ensure that those who are not in the CES system, but facing challenges in gaining housing through the City's database do not fall into homelessness.

The City should explore ways to enhance its database and referral process to support those individuals who are at risk of losing their housing. Efforts to enhance HCID's database with units that have rent restrictions by other public entities, facilitate rental of units restricted as a result of density bonuses/land use incentives, improve coordination with owners of restricted units, increase marketing/advertisement of the Department's services, and the need for designated staff to support individuals navigating the City's database or in need of other resources such as rental assistance, should be considered.

I THEREFORE MOVE that Council instruct the Housing and Community Investment Department to report with recommendations to:

- Improve the Department's affordable housing referral system;
- Improve the Department's advertisement of affordable housing to vulnerable populations, including the feasibility of enhancing its centralized database with other government-restricted units;
- Coordinate with other housing referral programs and developers that offer affordable housing;
- Develop mechanisms to assist with the filling of restricted units created through density bonuses; and
- Identify any resources the Department may need to implement a more efficient referral system.

PRESENTED BY: 

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SECONDED BY: 


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