

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

Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

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

Date of NC Board Action: 05/06/2021

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 05/13/2021

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 20-0197

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports social Housing / International Models / Construction / Government-Owned Properties / Funding Sources (Council File: 20-0197). Please see the letter attached.

**HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD
COUNCIL**

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<http://www.highlandparknc.com>
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

**CITY OF LOS
ANGELES**

CALIFORNIA



**DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD
EMPOWERMENT**

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Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

May 6, 2021

Attn: Council President Nury Martinez, Councilmember Kevin De Leon, Councilmember Mark Ridley Thomas, Councilmember Gil Cedillo, Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell

From: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

RE: Social Housing / International Models / Construction / Government-Owned Properties / Funding Sources ([Council File: 20-0197](#))

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, representing more than 60,000 stakeholders, supports this [Motion](#) [Exhibit 1].

Los Angeles needs a dramatic increase in low-income, affordable, and mid-range work-force housing. A potential solution is social housing -- built and owned by the government. Social housing is generally mixed income, adequately served by public transportation, has access to amenities and shops, regulated to deter discrimination, and self-financed after the initial public investment, with tenants paying rent on a sliding scale.

This Motion requests that City agencies such as the CLA, CAO, and HCIDLA study and report on the types and models of social housing used in European communities, Singapore and other prominent international examples for inclusion in the City of Los Angeles. The Motion requests that City agencies report back on funding sources for social housing such as State and Federal funds, new revenue sources, and a public bank to facilitate financing.

The LA City Council Housing Committee Report is included [here](#) and the full City Council has voted in favor of this Motion. This Community Impact Statement is being proposed in advance of City agency reports to underscore the need for housing in Highland Park and throughout Los Angeles. There is an urgent need for stable and affordable housing for thousands who pay more than 50% of their income on rent. In addition to those being forced onto the streets due to high rents, there are thousands more who are housing-insecure due to the COVID pandemic.

Peter Dreier of Occidental College, Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy, who has written extensively on housing issues, has written an article “Why America Needs Social Housing” and is included here:

<https://prospect.org/infrastructure/america-needs-social-housing/>

When public housing is available to a range of income levels, two things happen: (1) higher rents can be charged to higher-income residents, offsetting much of the capital cost; and (2) poor people have better access to amenities like parks, services, and transportation that comes with a mixed income community. This model encourages real social integration and discourages culturally and economically segregated enclaves.

As you design social housing for Los Angeles, we urge you to:

- Treat this situation as the dire emergency that it is. Every day that we fail to resolve this calamity, four unhoused people die in our streets.
- In developing this social housing proposal, involve people with lived experience in being unhoused and members of grassroots organizations and advocacy groups. They know what it takes to become successfully rehoused.
- Start with empty or underused buildings or lots that are already publicly owned. This would eliminate property acquisition costs.
- Consider purchasing more hotels, motels, and other properties that can be quickly and economically transformed into permanent housing. This would invest the large amounts of money now being spent on short-term rent of these facilities in permanent housing instead.
- Ensure that low-income residents and those of greatest need get priority for units, while still ensuring that each social housing building has mixed-income units.
- Maintain public ownership of this social housing. This would prevent the displacement of long term and low-income tenants when contracts with private owners expire. We've seen too much of that already as the original 30-year

public/private contracts are not renewed. The HHH housing now being built will face the same fate in 55 years.

- Maintain public operation of this housing so that the sliding scale rent from all the tenants would go back into the public coffers to pay for operation, maintenance, and loan repayment.
- Once in operation, provide for meaningful participation in building governance by the residents.

As you study social housing elsewhere in the world, you will see that principles such as these have made it successful.

COVID-19 and the economic crisis we are facing make the pursuit of aggressive social housing policy is difficult. However, they also make it crucial if we are to find permanent solutions to both the homelessness disaster and the chronic shortage of affordable housing.

Please take the same kind of bold and immediate measures to address this tragedy that you are taking to the pandemic.

Due to the urgency of this issue, we urge the city to expedite this report in light of our unprecedented housing crisis.

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council Vote: YES 15 NO 0. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Estrella Sainburg', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Estrella Sainburg

President,

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

Exhibit 1

HOUSING

MOTION

The affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles is unprecedented and out of control. Reliance on the status quo system of producing housing is not going to solve the problem. Los Angeles needs to explore social housing as a new solution.

Families are struggling, with many paying more than 50% of their income on rent. Thousands of people are being forced onto the streets. Workers are commuting hours between their jobs and homes they can afford. Young professionals are moving to other parts of the country where housing is more affordable.

According to a report from the California Housing Partnership and the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, LA County needs to add 516,946 units of affordable housing to meet **existing** demand from low-income renters. We need a dramatic increase in low-income, affordable, and mid-range workforce housing. We will never meet this demand if we rely just on coaxing the private sector into building affordable housing through tax credits, subsidies, and zoning incentives, or on giving a small percentage of extremely low-income renters a housing voucher.

A potential solution is social housing -- housing built and owned by the government. Unlike the widely disparaged model of U.S. public housing - which suffered from under-investment, poor design, segregation, and lack of political support - social housing is generally: mixed-income, adequately served by public transportation, has access to amenities and shops, located and regulated to deter discrimination, and self-financing after initial public investment, with tenants paying rents on a sliding scale.

Social Housing can mean any rental housing owned and managed by the government, by non-profit organizations, or a combination of the two, in order to provide affordable housing. Cities like Vienna, Austria; and countries like Finland and Sweden have long held that housing should be an entitlement with a public investment; and each has undertaken social housing in unique ways. Singapore also takes an innovative approach to social housing. In most cases, social housing is provided for both low-income and middle-class households. In most cases, management is contracted out to providers; and can include resident councils or other decision-making structures that actively engage residents. Models in these cities and countries are worth examining and considering for their relevance to Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles should consider pathways to establishing Social Housing in Los Angeles to accommodate our urgent need for affordable housing. The city should review

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different models, determine potential funding sources, advocate for changes to laws that pose barriers to construction, and consider a social housing demonstration project.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, in cooperation with the Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID), and in consultation with researchers, experts and activists in the field prepare a report on the types and models of social housing used in European communities, Singapore, and any other prominent international examples, with recommendations for their applicability in Los Angeles, including potential benefits and hurdles.

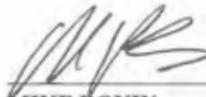
I FURTHER MOVE that City Attorney, CLA, CAO, and HCID report back on: how many additional units of public housing are allowed, per council district, under the voter approved limits of 3500 units per council district; and steps necessary to allow for additional construction of new social housing, including recommendations on legal or electoral steps required to remove caps on public housing.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA, in consultation with the CAO and HCID, report back on possible funding sources for a social housing in Los Angeles; including:

- state and federal funds;
- the creation of new revenue sources, including but not limited to: a flipping tax, a land value uplift tax, an out-of-state transaction tax, or a vacancy tax;
- the potential use of a newly-created public bank to facilitate financing; and
- the potential for the City to recoup costs on the back end by renting or leasing units established by the City;

I FURTHER MOVE that CLA, CAO, and Asset Management Division of the Department of General Services report back with recommendations for city-owned properties that could be used for a social housing demonstration in the City of Los Angeles; and to consider how partnerships with other government entities which own property within the City could facilitate the development of social housing on those public lands.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN

Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:

