

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

Name: Nicholas Pisca

Phone Number:

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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: 04/01/2021

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 04/14/2021

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 21-0062

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council recommends that: A permanent rent relief registry needs to make a provision that landlords cannot decline any rent relief subsidy if it is being paid to the landlord to avoid tenant eviction, and if landlord declines, the subsidy should be paid directly to the tenant and not impact eligibility for any other state or local subsidy the tenant may receive; A permanent rent relief registry needs to work in tandem with a Right to Counsel program providing tenants with legal representation so that tenants may navigate the State and City tenant protection measures to prevent eviction; A permanent rent relief registry needs to fill in the gaps of the State bill SB 91 to provide rent debt relief to tenants due to COVID-19 loss of income by forgiving rent debt, and should be met with a comprehensive relief program to support the small landlords and nonprofit affordable housing providers with the greatest need;

**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

April 1st, 2021

Attn: Council President Nury Martinez & Councilmember Kevin De Leon

From: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

RE: Renters Relief Registry / Ranking System / Transparent / Equitable / Housing Assistance
([Council File: 21-0062](#))

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

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

Nearly a year into the COVID pandemic, hundreds of thousands of Angelenos are behind on rent. [Almost 70%](#) of all low-income households in Los Angeles County have lost income since March 2020 due to the pandemic. An estimated [1 in 3 Angelenos](#) has been infected with COVID, and low-income communities of color are [disproportionately impacted](#), experiencing higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that beyond the housing instability and vulnerability that tenants experienced before COVID, the pandemic has increased housing vulnerability exponentially due to renters' massive loss of income. Patchwork emergency tenant protections* (which are not eviction moratoria) have been instituted by the State, the County and the City of Los Angeles, but these tenant protection ordinances required that all past due rent would still be owed at the end of the emergency.

During the COVID-19 emergency the City also instituted Emergency Rental Relief programs which were limited in scope and funding, required that tenants submit lengthy applications, and

provided rental subsidies directly to the landlord who could either accept the subsidy or reject it. Tenants who applied were entered into a lottery and, if chosen, the subsidy would help pay only a small portion of back rent to prevent the tenant from being evicted. In many cases landlords rejected the subsidies, even though tenants desperately needed rent relief and were left with thousands of dollars of rent debt.

New State bill SB 91 extends AB 3088 tenant protections to June 30, 2021 and provides a renters relief program as a temporary stop-gap measure. Landlords may opt out of the 80% Federal subsidy if they forgive the 20% remaining rent owed, again placing tenants in an untenable situation of owing thousands of dollars of rent debt. Compared with the temporary rent relief and patchwork eviction protection ordinances made available to tenants previously, this Motion requests that a permanent, transparent and equitable rental relief registry program be put in place which prioritizes funds to residents based on tiered-level criteria such as COVID-19 loss of income, institutional poverty, needs of essential workers, and families with children living below the poverty line to ensure funding is always directed to the most vulnerable residents, and to help pay back rent to avoid eviction. This permanent rental relief registry will help tenants stay in their homes and prevent homelessness.

This Motion requests that the Housing and Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) report back on the creation of a Permanent Renters Relief Registry.

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council recommends that:

- A permanent rent relief registry needs to make a provision that landlords cannot decline any rent relief subsidy if it is being paid to the landlord to avoid tenant eviction, and if landlord declines, the subsidy should be paid directly to the tenant and not impact eligibility for any other state or local subsidy the tenant may receive;
- A permanent rent relief registry needs to work in tandem with a Right to Counsel program providing tenants with legal representation so that tenants may navigate the State and City tenant protection measures to prevent eviction;
- A permanent rent relief registry needs to fill in the gaps of the State bill SB 91 to provide rent debt relief to tenants due to COVID-19 loss of income by forgiving rent debt, and should be met with a comprehensive relief program to support the small landlords and nonprofit affordable housing providers with the greatest need;

Yes_ 13 No_ 0 Abstain_ 0

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Estrella Sainburg', written over a horizontal line.

Estrella Sainburg

President,

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

*The Los Angeles Emergency Tenant Protections Ordinance instituted in March of 2020 and updated in May of 2020 extended tenant protections to 12 months after the emergency is lifted by the Mayor and the tenant would have up to 12 months after the emergency is lifted to repay past due rent. These ordinances were not eviction moratoria. The ordinance provisions allowed notices and evictions to be filed due to non-payment of rent and tenants had to locate a legal services provider and present an affirmative legal defense of COVID-related loss of income to an unlawful detainer eviction. In April 2020 the State Judicial Council ruled that no court summons could be issued, putting a stop to evictions. The Judicial Council Rule 1 was lifted September 1, and the State Bill AB 3088 took effect which provided statewide protections so long as tenants conformed to certain requirements. Evictions were still filed and tenants were required to hire legal representation to assert their defense. Regardless of tenant protection measures, whatever rent that could not be paid due to COVID loss of income would remain as unpaid rent debt and subject to eviction once the emergency was lifted unless tenants declared that unpaid rent was due to COVID loss of income and conformed to requirements of State bill AB 3088 providing a defense to evictions. According to the State bill, past due rent could be collected by landlords via Small Claims Court. AB 3088 expired on January 31st and SB 91 extended the Statewide tenant protections to June 30, 2021. A statewide rent relief provision has been added to the new State bills which expires on June 30, 2021.

Exhibit 1

HOUSING

MOTION

Far too many residents of our City are at risk of falling into homelessness. Study after study has proven that prevention of homelessness is far more cost effective for a city than rehousing the same person when they become homeless. Greater housing security also creates additional positive health and life outcomes- youth who experience housing insecurity have additional lifelong impacts and the unending stress of poverty and discrimination which includes disproportionate eviction rates have been shown to be a contributor to higher death rates among communities of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased this pipeline of housing vulnerability. The City must prepare now to be able to quickly assist residents with the fallout when the eviction moratorium ends, to ensure that highest risk residents are helped quickly and cost effectively. In 2019 the City created the Emergency Renters Relief Program, and in 2020 the fund was recreated as the COVID-19 Emergency Renter's Relief Program. Both programs and the subsequently privately funded Mayoral initiative of the Angeleno card had many more applications than the fund total amount could support.

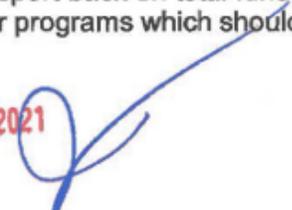
In order to better prepare for the waves of housing needs, the City must acknowledge that there is a permanent citywide need for rental assistance and create a standing registry for residents who need help. Residents signing up for the registry should be able to securely request help from the City. In return the City will be able to triage assistance to those who will need the most help paying back rent and avoiding future eviction.

Instead of a randomized lottery system created after new funds are found, the City must develop a permanent, transparent and equitable registry program which prioritizes all future funds to residents based on criteria directly correlated to the pandemic and institutional poverty such as communities which rank highest on scales such as the Urban Institute's Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index, status as essential workers, and households with children living below the poverty line to ensure distribution of funds is always directed first to the most vulnerable among us. Additionally residents deserve to be able to see what tier of aid they fall under at any given time and understand the available funding as it changes so they can plan realistically instead of standing by hoping to "win a lottery" of aid that is likely to be insufficient to meet all the need.

After development of the registry the City should work to coordinate with any existing programs for financial support from low interest loans to non-profit funds to County support programs and use the known universe of need to provide accurate estimates and requests for funding needs to state and federal programs.

I THEREFORE MOVE the City Council instruct the Housing and Community Investment Department to report back on the creation of a Renters Relief Registry including development of a ranking system to score applications by where any City renter can register to receive aid based on a prioritized list, and also get regular notification of any other sources of rental and housing assistance known to the City of Los Angeles, including a report back on total funding and staffing needs to maintain such registry and any grants or programs which should be used to start the program; and,

JAN 13 2021



I FURTHER MOVE that the aggregate data from the Registry be shared publicly once a quarter and included in the Housing and Community Investment Department's annual report to help provide better information to policy makers, researchers and the residents of the City regarding the full depth of the housing crisis in the City of Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY:

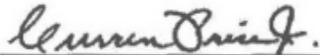


KEVIN DE LEÓN
Councilmember, 14th District



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:



CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District