



Sophie Hahn
Councilmember District 5

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL

Meeting Date: January 24, 2017

Item Number: 35

Item Description: Referral to City Manager: “Step Up Housing” Initiative – Micro-Units to House Homeless and Very Low-Income People

Submitted by: Councilmember Sophie Hahn

This supplemental refers to the City Manager and the Ad Hoc Committee on Homeless Solutions to develop options to rapidly increase housing for the homeless and for individuals and families eligible for Very Low Income housing through new and innovative solutions, and bring recommendations back to Council.



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RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager and the Ad Hoc Committee on Homeless Solutions to develop options to rapidly increase housing for the Homeless and for individuals and families eligible for Very Low Income housing, and bring recommendations back to Council.

The City Manager and Ad Hoc Committee should consider all potential options and mechanisms to rapidly increase housing including, but not limited to:

- New and innovative ideas for rapid and low cost development or acquisition of housing using not for profit, public, cooperative, land trust, private or for-profit, hybrid and other models.
- The potential of rapid and cost effective development using modular/prefabricated building techniques
- The possibility and feasibility of using public vs. private land for new developments
- Changes to the Zoning and Building codes to support rapid increase in the development or acquisition of housing to be used for the homeless and/or individuals qualifying for Very Low Income housing.
- Identification of funding sources, including new and innovative models of public, private, not for profit and other creative funding, that would facilitate rapid development or acquisition of such housing, and sources of funding for payment of ongoing costs, rent and services.
- The demographics of Berkeley's homeless and very low income populations, to determine priorities for housing types to be acquired/developed. Consider age, family size, mobility/ability and other characteristics that would inform the optimal type of housing to develop or acquire on a priority basis.
- Feasibility of developing or acquiring very small units and/or SROs and whether such units meet the needs of an identified priority demographic, and whether such units would be for temporary/short term/transitional or long term habitation.
- Consider the potential need for on-site services, communal space, amenities and other features optimal to serve target populations and the space, financing and other elements necessary to accommodate such services and facilities.
- Identify potential partners for provision of services and management of buildings and facilities.

- Consider any and all other factors which might result in the rapid and cost effective development or acquisition of housing for the Homeless (with appropriate services) and for individuals qualifying for Very Low Income housing, including innovative solutions to all challenges.

Report back to Council with recommendations by June 30, 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to undertake necessary research.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley is experiencing a crisis of homelessness and affordable housing. A major obstacle to housing the homeless is a lack of appropriate housing stock, with services as needed, to support a “Housing First” model for individuals to rebuild their lives. Existing models of development have so far failed to deliver enough housing to meet needs, and Berkeley must move quickly and cost effectively to do so.

In addition to traditional models and paradigms, new and innovative models for siting, building, financing, permitting and otherwise enabling the rapid deployment of housing must be considered and, where feasible, implemented. At the same time, it is important that housing developed or acquired meet the needs of the target populations, and include appropriate services, features, unit sizes and types and other characteristics to maximize the positive impact of these investments for the community. And, to the extent that such housing development or acquisition will rely on public land or public financing, we must ensure that limited public space and resources are being used optimally.

The existing proposal locks in features including unit size, building size, unit rent levels, financing and other features at a high level of specificity. To avoid limiting the ability of the City and the community to obtain the best housing and service outcomes at the best cost, it would be optimal for the City Manager and Ad Hoc Committee to review a variety of features, financing, cost structures and other elements that would best meet the needs of our homeless and very low income populations.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

None

CONTACT PERSON

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