Councilmember Ben Bartlett
District 3

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett & Councilmember Linda Maio & Councilmember Lori Droste

Subject: Direction to City Manager: "Step Up Housing" Initiative – Supportive Housing for Homeless and Very Low-Income People

RECOMMENDATION
Direct the Ad-Hoc subcommittee to discuss and facilitate implementing the following actions:

1. Identify parcels of City owned land for siting assisted-living buildings.
2. Amend the permitting and approvals process to facilitate the rapid creation of below market housing.
3. Issue requests for proposals through a competitive bidding process for a development of up to 100 units of housing in an expedited manner. For-profit and non-profit developers can be included in the bidding process. The proposal should demonstrate partnerships with a housing non-profit and a service provider.
4. Identify potential obstacles in creating prefabricated micro-units in a timely fashion. Recommend courses of action to remove those obstacles.
5. The housing non-profit, in partnership with Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers, will be responsible for managing and operating the building. Request the non-profit to employ a cooperative model in managing the property.
6. Establish criteria for selecting individuals and determining eligibility. These need-based criteria will take into account seniors, people with disabilities, and former Berkeley residents who have become homeless.
7. This project shall be subject to the terms of the community workforce agreement with existing prevailing wage requirements.
8. Priority consideration will be given to: (i) Proposals that most quickly provide the maximum number of units for the least amount of cost, and (ii) proposals that include locally sourced materials and construction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
Staff time.

BACKGROUND
On January 14, Laura Jadwin, a homeless resident of Berkeley, was found dead of exposure. Deaths of homeless individuals are tragic and preventable. Our City is experiencing a homelessness and housing affordability crisis. City staff estimates that there are currently between 900 and 1200 homeless people living in Berkeley. Due to high housing costs, numerous low-income members of the Berkeley community are at risk of homelessness. Furthermore, the Trump administration's anticipated funding cuts may cause the City's homeless population to multiply exponentially. This is a health and safety emergency that has cost lives and degraded standards of living for all residents.

We see this crisis as an opportunity for innovation. This item referral seeks to jumpstart innovative financing and development models for assisted and low-income housing that emphasize speed, durability, and cost efficiency.

This referral will reduce costs by constructing the building above City owned land and by empowering the City to speed up its permitting and approvals process. Additionally, this item seeks to mitigate prohibitively high building costs. Prospective developers are encouraged to present innovative financing and construction solutions for the rapid creation of scalable assisted living models at reduced costs.

Step Up housing will foster human resiliency, leverage scarce resources, and rationalize the regulatory process. Given the urgency of the homeless crisis, the City must immediately identify and implement solutions.

The City Council, just like all local governments, has a duty to ensure the welfare of its people. Berkeley's Step Up Housing Initiative will provide a road map for future supportive housing developments that can be replicated in other affected communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
This item will result in a positive environmental impact on the community. Increasing local access to low-income housing reduces automobile dependence and tailpipe emissions.

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