

## CHIP Community Meeting: Affordable Housing Strategies for the next Community Health Improvement Plan

September 05, 2019

### MEETING NOTES SUMMARY

#### Introduction

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force (Task Force) convened community-based stakeholders to obtain feedback on potential policies and strategies to be included in the new Community Health Improvement Plan's (CHIP) affordable housing priority area. The list of potential policies and strategies was initially compiled at the CHIP affordable housing stakeholder meeting in the fall of 2018 and has since been built upon through additional community engagement efforts with key informants, community residents, and the affordable housing ad hoc committee of the Task Force.

After presenting background information about the CHIP, community partners were invited to prioritize local, state and federal policies in different affordable housing topic areas that they consider important and would like to focus the group discussions on. Community partners then participated in three discussion group rotations to provide insight on the selected CHIP policies and strategies related to increasing access to quality and affordable housing in LA County while identifying existing work DPH could support and build upon. Community Partners were then asked to select four policies from the list that they would recommend for the action plan portion of the CHIP in any group category. Input from this community meeting along with other input collected throughout the CHIP community engagement process, will be used by DPH and the Task Force to vet and select strategies for inclusion in the CHIP. The CHIP will be release for public comment in early 2020.

#### Group A: Increase Opportunities to Produce New Affordable Housing Throughout LA County & Prevent Displacement

*Policies #1 and #3 were the two policies prioritized for discussion by meeting participants. Please see the handout on recommended policies at the end of this document for more details.*

*Policy Priority #1: Encourage local governments to mandate that a percentage of new housing built in a particular building must be affordable and included within an enforceable and monitored agreement.*

##### *Opportunities*

- Inclusionary Housing
  - Work with developers to allocate a minimum of 15% affordable housing allocation
  - Close the loop hole for developers to opt-out of including affordable housing units by paying a fee.
  - Support smaller cities so they are not nervous about incorporating inclusionary housing policies as smaller cities may not have the technical knowledge or staff time to support it.
  - Look at Long Beach for examples of inclusionary housing policies.
- DPH could do a study on the frequency that "in-lieu fees" have been utilized by developers in LA County instead of fulfilling the requirement to build affordable housing units on site; advocates see this as a loop-hole alternative.
- Communication Strategies:
  - Educate the community that affordable housing is not a threat and won't bring undesired changes
  - Partner with key community advocates who can educate others in their communities
  - Address myths that taxes on development will stop development
- Support land-banking. Work with local governments to look at available County and City owned land and reserve it for affordable housing.
- Support an effort at the state-level to set affordable housing quotas that Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) sets for each city. If those targets are not met, there should be repercussions.

Unfortunately, local governments won't support this effort but advocates have been pushing for accountability for local jurisdictions to meet the targets.

- There are many empty lots in our communities. Help us identify the owners and if they're willing to build affordable housing.
- Support the establishment of a relocation fund.
- Address the many housing units in Downtown Los Angeles that are vacant (market rate lofts). Cities should be penalized for allowing units to be vacant.
- Check-in with SPA 4's DPH community liaison who is a part of affordable housing efforts in the City of LA.

### *Challenges*

- Community-based organizations don't have the bandwidth to actively work with multiple local governments. State policies are helpful.
- Need a more regional approach, possibly through Council of Governments (COGs), and encourage cities to work together. They may already be coordinating to address homelessness.
- There is a need for supportive housing in addition to affordable housing units
- There is still discrimination against Section 8 Voucher holders and it is challenging to get landlords to accept them even with the incentives.
- The housing community has yet to agree on which policies to support that can address both short-term and long-term housing solutions.

*Policy Priority #3: Support a countywide policy to make it easier to develop affordable housing in high resource areas and address opposition by local residents and other stakeholders.*

### *Opportunities*

- Offer incentives to owners to build affordable housing, e.g. tax reduction, or access to improvement funds
- Create affordable housing messaging campaigns and support those already in progress. Many non-profits don't have the capacity to disseminate information to the public at-large.
- Support education efforts in multiple communities and provide incentives to allow residents to attend.
- LA County is working on rent control for unincorporated areas. There's an opportunity to build on that momentum and spread it to other cities.
- Do what's in DPH's power to keep children and families where they are currently housed, prevent displacement, evictions, family separations due to mixed status.
- High resource areas suggested for affordable housing development: Westwood, Venice, West LA
- This policy could be connected to development around transit areas (policies 3 & 4)
- Provide incentives to landlords to do home improvements.

### *Challenges*

- Zoning is a challenge. Higher resourced areas aren't zoned for apartments – need to change zoning. *(Cities need technical assistance to make zoning changes)*
- Some City councils don't care about building affordable housing.
- Need community education but people who work may find it challenging to attend educational sessions.
- Homeowners have a lot of power and political clout.
- There are very few efforts being done to go after high resource cities not abiding by affordable housing policies.
- Need opportunities for families to live in less dense areas. Less dense cities and those already not contributing their fair share of affordable housing units need to do their part in increasing affordable housing units to benefit the region.

### *General Input on the other policies in this section*

- Connect public health messaging efforts in affordable housing to child abuse prevention outcomes. Messaging can include that supporting families with young children with basic necessities, such as housing,

during an already stressful part of life can help preventing toxic stress, child abuse and neglect due to homelessness.

- Eliminate the option for developers to not include affordable housing units (*the loophole allows developers to instead pay into a fund*).
- Partner with coalitions that engage residents (*such as First 5 LA's Best Starts*) to work on card writing campaigns to advance policy change.
- Support community-land trusts in high resource areas.
- Establish a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to acquire and hold property in a "land bank" in order to preserve existing at-risk affordable housing and develop new affordable housing on vacant and underutilized land. See the Department of Public Work's LA River Master Plan Update: Housing Goals Draft.
- Zone for multi-family zoning like Minneapolis (*Minneapolis adopted a policy to eliminate single-family zoning citywide*).
- Support first time home ownership programs.
- The housing community is fractured as there is not a unified agreement on which priority policies to work towards, especially those working on short term housing vs long term housing.
- Some cities do not want to build affordable housing and penalties should be put in place if not compliant.
- Identify areas where community members want affordable housing and help community organization leads schedule meetings with the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) on behalf of community members.
- Emergency shelters are being built in areas that are not safe. DPH could have a role in educating other County departments and contractors about what is and is not a safe location to build emergency shelters.

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## Group B: Increase Opportunities to Protect Tenants' Rights, Prevent Displacement and Unjust Evictions

*Policies #11 and #12 were the two policies prioritized for discussion by meeting participants. Please see the handout on recommended policies at the end of this document for more details.*

*Policy Priority #11: Support legal mediation services to prevent evictions.*

### *Opportunities*

- Tenant rights is a public health issue (evictions are a public health crisis). There is an opportunity for communication and education efforts.
- Emergency funds from the Department of Children and Family Services' contracts are depleted by emergency housing assistance. More funds are needed to keep families together, prevent child abuse and entry into foster system – housing is biggest stressor in people's lives.
- A comprehensive County structure is needed with funding to protect tenant civil rights, not just a pilot program.
- Align local efforts with statewide tenant protection efforts. Strengthen statewide policies so that they channel through to the local level.
- An inventory of existing work is needed to align all tenant protection efforts within the County
- Build upon eviction prevention services, such as cash for keys where agreements are established between the landlord and tenant to voluntarily move out for a lump sum, for rental properties and eviction prevention services within clinics.
- Assignment of legal representation (The County is only focused on this)
- Support emergency rental assistance efforts for families or individuals at risk of evictions.
- Support Right to Counsel – Look for the County's report back to the Board and motion for Measure H funds which includes eviction protection and full scope legal rep by 2020-21. The \$12.5 million that the Board has allocated is not enough.

### *Challenges*

- Full scope legal representation is needed (merge policies #11 & #12), not just mediation.
- More access to attorneys is needed to represent tenants in Norwalk, Compton, Pomona, Chatsworth with an integrated approach.

*Policy Priority #12: Implement tenant protection measures to avoid displacement impacts from housing repairs and improvements.*

*Opportunities*

- Broaden the scope of the problem of displacement beyond home repairs & improvements. People get displaced for other reasons as well.
- Support existing work to implement tenant protection measures, such as:
  - Partner with community-based organizations to support renter's right to counsel. Local organizations working on this include Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) and the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Action.
  - Support making permanent the interim rent stabilization ordinance in unincorporated LA County and the strengthening of tenant protections, such as the consideration of a just-cause eviction clause.
  - Promote statewide advocacy such as Assemblymember Chiu's AB 1482 Tenant Protection Act of 2019.

*Challenges*

- Seeking services for families with mixed immigration status. Although there are resources to help them, families with an undocumented family member don't know which resources to trust and are not seeking assistance. LA County should address the mis-information being spread and support mixed-status families.
- There needs to be more education and coordination for children and family services with tenant services.

*General Input on the other policies in this section*

- Policy #14: - Does it have to be centralized for LA County? Can the centralized system be SPA-specific or by region?
- Look at policy #14 as an equity issue. Use caution as it can be weaponized against low-income homeowners (predatory practices of investors). Focus on large investors.
- Landlords shouldn't be able to raise the rent if housing isn't safe/livable/up to code.

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**Group C: Increase Opportunities to Preserve Affordable Housing Throughout LA County**

*Policy #15 was the policy prioritized for discussion by meeting participants. Please see the handout on recommended policies at the end of this document for more details.*

*Policy #15: Support rent control protections*

*Opportunities*

- Rent Control - State efforts
  - Advocates are working to pass statewide rent cap through AB 1482
    - Realtors and landowners oppose but Governor Newsom is in support.
    - There is an opportunity to add a just-cause eviction clause and to extend the 60-day written notice period.
    - Los Angeles County lobbyist should add this bill to their list of bills to support
  - Passing Costa-Hawkins could support/incentivize cities to enact rent control.
- Rent control - Local jurisdictions
  - Cities need technical assistance to develop, implement, and monitor rent control protections.
  - There is large opposition to rent control in Whittier.
  - The County should support local jurisdictions that are considering rent control.
  - Elected officials and landlords have a lot of power in housing stock. They don't want to build more in Whittier and are not interested in multi-unit housing. Elected officials and landlords want to maintain single-family zoning.
- Communication strategies
  - Preservation should be defined carefully

- Housing crisis is a health crisis
- DPH should continue to share facts and data.

### Challenges

- Concern for seniors on fixed income being displaced and becoming homeless
- Concern over evictions due to overcrowding or bad quality of housing. Are those conditions better or worse than living in a car or motel?
- Support redevelopment agencies since funds for affordable housing decreased after those agencies disappeared.

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## Group D: Support Policies to Prevent Homelessness

*Policies #20 was prioritized for discussion by meeting participants. Please see the handout on recommended policies at the end of this document for more details.*

### General Input on the policies in this section

- Although policy #20 (economic security) received the most votes, it is a long-term solution. Supporting efforts such as #19 (emergency grants) is a near-term solution that can be applied now, but more resources need to be allocated because current funds are not enough to meet the demands of this need.
  - Stay away from loans, even if it's low-interest. Loans bury people into more debt. Participants of the meeting were supportive of emergency grants.
  - Include a strategy to support community benefit agreements for publicly owned land. If Metro, for example, takes on a project, they should hire locally and provide "living wage". If cities are giving away land to build on, there should be restrictions on who gets jobs to build and what gets built. Land use should be more closely watched by the County for what gets done and developed on County land.
  - Support social enterprises that hire "hard-to-hire" individuals.
  - Look at Santa Monica and Sacramento for examples of local jurisdictions working on universal living wage for seniors.
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## Community Prioritization

Below are the votes made on the affordable housing policies and strategies by community-based partners in attendance. The first column of the table represents the number of votes each policy and strategy received by community partners when asked to vote for two policies each for Groups A (*red*) and B (*green*), and one policy each for Groups C (*blue*) and D (*yellow*) that they consider important and would like to focus the group discussion on. After the group discussion, community partners were asked to select the top four policies and strategies they would recommend for the action plan portion of the CHIP across any group category.

Prioritization by stakeholders present at the 9/5/2019 meeting

Votes in Round 1 (Discussion)	Votes in Round 2 (Prioritization Recommendation)
#1 – 14	#1 – 5
#2 – 1	#2 – 0
#3 – 14	#3 – 7
#4 – 6	#4 – 2
#5 – 6	#5 – 8
#6 – 7	#6 – 5
#7 – 1	#7 – 0
#8 – 0	#8 – 0
#9 – 9	#9 – 5
#10 – 6	#10 – 3
#11 – 10	#11 – 1
#12 – 14	#12 – 8
#13 – 2	#13 – 1
#14 – 8	#14 – 3
#15 – 21	#15 – 14
#16 – 1	#16 – 2
#17 – 3	#17 – 0
#18 – 3	#18 – 3
#19 – 9	#19 – 7



*Photo: Group discussion at the Sep. 5, 2019 Affordable Housing Solutions for the Next Community Health Improvement Plan 2020-2026 Stakeholder Convening*