

CATEGORY: Policy

COMMITTEE: PHS & Homeless

PURPOSE: CIS in support of the City of Los Angeles Council File 21-0063 to assess the number of underutilized parcels owned by the City or City agencies

BACKGROUND:

In order to address the ongoing homelessness crisis and create more policy opportunities to create new housing using City resources, the Los Angeles City Council has ordered the Chief Legislative Analyst, Department of General Services, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Water and Power and all other city departments that own land report back on the underutilization of city-owned parcels and potential of using them for temporary or permanent supportive housing for those residents of the City of Los Angeles currently housed.

The City's motion, as written, is the following:

"The current homelessness crisis has had an enormous impact on the future and wellbeing of Los Angeles. Homeless individuals are on countless streets, in city parks, and under freeways. Despite voter approved measures which allocated billions of dollars to addressing homelessness, the homeless population has only increased. One of the challenges that is often cited when discussing how to house the homeless is available land. Land acquisition can be expensive and, unless there is a willing seller, very time consuming.

The City owns an enormous amount of land throughout its almost 470 square miles of territory. While much of this land is utilized for libraries, parks, police stations, and fire stations, a sizable amount of land is unused or underutilized. The city has done previous analyses to determine if land is suitable for homeless housing and staff reports have shown very little land that is available for use.

However, the city needs to look at this through a new lens that is focused solely on the technical and financial aspects of building homeless housing - not future uses or plans. Furthermore, while there are restrictions on how certain land can be used, temporary housing has been constructed on many sites and successfully housed homeless individuals.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, in coordination with the City Administrative Officer, Department of General Services, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Water and Power, and all other city departments who own land

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to report back on the underutilization of all city-owned properties and the feasibility of using them for temporary or permanent homeless housing; and,

I FURTHER MOVE that ability to use a property shall be based on technical, financial, and legal feasibility and not future uses for any given property; and, I FURTHER MOVE that this report also analyze any previous studies of city yards and shops to determine which ones are under utilized, arranged poorly, or can be consolidated with other city yards; and,

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of General Services and other necessary departments evaluate all leases of city facilities to outside entities to determine if the leases can be modified to provide space for homeless housing; and,

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Recreation and Parks report on all parcels owned by the department that are not deed restricted for park purposes and determine if under section 594(c),(d), and (e) of the Los Angeles City Charter any land is unsuitable for park usage.

I FURTHER MOVE that these aforementioned reports be transmitted back to Council within 30 days of the adoption of this motion.”

Whereas, the last Greater Los Angeles Homeless county indicated that over 41,200 Angelenos are currently experiencing homelessness;¹ and

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles owns almost 470 square miles of property; and

Whereas, Chong (2020) demonstrated that 16 percent of development costs in Los Angeles County are for the purchase of land, almost 9 times the amount for a development in any of the surrounding counties;²

THE MOTION:

Therefore, be it resolved that the Mar Vista Community Council support CF 21-0063 and the City’s efforts to explore the feasibility of using underutilized City-owned parcels for the development of temporary and permanent supportive housing.

¹ “2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.” Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). <<https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=726-2020-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-results>>.

² Chong, Hoyu. “Demystifying the High Cost of Multifamily Housing Construction in Southern California.” University of California Riverside School of Business Center for Economic Forecasting and Development. February 2020. <https://ucreeconomicforecast.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/UCR_CEFD_Multifamily_Housing_White-Paper_3_2020.pdf>.