

Affordable Housing Opportunities for Pico Neighborhood, Item 3A

Dear Housing Commissioners;

The PNA Board of Directors is writing this letter in response to the item 5C on Housing Commission agenda for Oct. 17, 2019. We appreciate that the opportunity to discuss the issue of gentrification and its impact in Santa Monica, in particular the Pico Neighborhood. Regardless on where you stand regarding gentrification, one of the impacts is resident displacement. The Pico Neighborhood has suffered from gentrification and now long term residents are experiencing displacement through Ellis Act, tenant harassment that leads to residents voluntarily leaving their homes and through evictions due to tenants not being able to afford the high rents. The following are recommendations that we would like the Housing Commission to consider as you develop your plan of action.

Our Recommendations

Housing Trust Fund

- The trust fund should be used to purchase rent control apartments that are up for sale to ensure that rent control units are preserved and renters is protected from displacement.
- In a separate program, The Trust Fund should promote homeownership by working to purchase apartment buildings and offer residents the opportunity to purchase their units

No Net Loss Ordinance

- We agree on adopting an ordinance which requires that every unit that is eliminated must be replaced. However, this has to be more than just replacing units at the same rent. There has to be a policy to ensure that Santa Monica renters that have been displaced are given the opportunity to return to those new units. Residents that have been displaced in the past should have the *Right of Refusal*.

Revise the “good credit” requirement for affordable housing

Currently CCSM is the primary Community Housing Development Organization in Santa Monica that is receiving city money. Many low-income residents that apply are barred from receiving housing due to bad credit. This works against the intended goal of providing housing to low-

income residents. Credit should not be a determining factor on securing affordable housing.

- Revise the “good credit” requirement for affordable housing and limit it to the last 2 years and or utilize other references to determine the ability to pay the rent
- Provide Credit Counseling that will work with tenants to fix their credit report

Establish a “Neighborhood Preference” for long term Pico Neighborhood renters/residents

- Using San Francisco as a model in addressing displacement due to gentrification, the City of Santa Monica should adopt a similar policy that works to give priority and or preference to Pico Neighborhood residents when there is construction of new housing in and near the Pico Neighborhood.
- Furthermore, there should be an affirmative marketing approach targeting the Pico Neighborhood when advertising for new housing opportunities.

Prohibit Market Rate and Moderate Rate Housing for New Housing Constructions

- In order to mitigate the already tight market pressures that exist in the Pico Neighborhood, market and moderate rate housing must be prohibited. The creation of more moderate rate to market rate housing in the Pico Neighborhood will only work to increase rents in the area and facilitate the displacement of more long-term residents.

Land-use Policies

- Prohibit land use policies that incentivize demolition and re-development of existing buildings. This will work to preserve existing local businesses and will protect them from displacement.
- Create zoning policies that will protect the scale and character of the Pico Neighborhood