




COUNCILMEMBER VIVIAN MORENO

**City of San Diego
Council District Eight**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 22, 2025

TO: Councilmember Kent Lee, Chair, Land Use and Housing Committee

FROM: Councilmember Vivian Moreno 

SUBJECT: 2025 Land Use and Housing Committee Priorities

In response to your memorandum soliciting priorities for the Land Use and Housing Committee, I urge your careful consideration of the following:

Fire Safety Building Regulations

Due to the increasing impacts of climate change, wildfire events are happening annually with greater frequency and intensity. Wildfires can threaten the safety of any community in the city, but losses to life and property from these events can be minimized by enacting building construction standards that reduce the likelihood of a building catching fire. Although the City is in compliance with California Fire Code, the California Building Standards Commission allows for local modifications to be made as reasonably necessary due to local climatic, topographical, and geological conditions. This committee should request a review by the Development Services Department and Fire-Rescue Department regarding any potential modifications to existing city building regulations to ensure future construction in the city meets the highest fire safety standards.

Increase Production of Middle-Income Homes

Exploring innovative ways to increase the production of middle-income units is critical as the Annual Report on Homes shows that only 214 new homes in the middle-income category were issued building permits in 2023, bringing the total to 285 since 2021. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goal is 19,319. In fact, out of 9,693 new homes permitted only 2,576 were accessible to San Diegans making a moderate, low or very income. The remaining 7,117 were meant for those making above a moderate income. That trend needs to change if there is any hope of meeting the RHNA goals and making sure all San Diegans have a home. The

Committee should discuss strategies to increase the construction of middle-income homes in the city, including requesting a review by city staff on how the complexity of the Land Development Code may slow down new middle-income housing projects.

Middle-Income First-Time Homebuyers Program

In recent years this Committee has reviewed and approved the structure of a pilot middle-income first-time homebuyers program. Although the program has not been funded, it is my great hope that a pilot program can be created with the use of grant funding. The Committee should review a revised pilot program from the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC).

Expansion of the Low-Income First Time Homebuyer Program

The Committee should explore strategies to expand the existing low-income First Time Homebuyer Program and how to increase participation in communities of concern.

Preserve and Protect Existing Affordable Housing Units

According to SDHC, there are over 6,000 affordable units throughout the city with affordability restrictions that will expire by 2033. Doing everything possible to make sure these existing homes remain affordable is key to meeting the city's RHNA goals. Last November, I worked closely with the San Diego Housing Commission to propose an Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance to the LU&H Committee. The Committee unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the ordinance. The full Council will discuss the ordinance in early 2025. If the ordinance is enacted by the City Council, this Committee should discuss next steps on how best to support implementation of the ordinance and request that an annual update on the city's efforts to preserve existing affordable homes be provided on an annual basis.

Evaluate and Review Inventory of Existing Affordable Housing Units

The Committee should evaluate and review existing affordable housing units under lease with the city or SDHC to determine if leases can be extended to preserve the affordability restrictions in place. Additionally, an analysis on the current estimate of naturally occurring affordable homes throughout San Diego should begin and the committee should discuss potential ways to also preserve the existence of these homes.

Local Preference in Distribution of Affordable Housing

Each year the city permits the construction of many affordable homes across San Diego. As these homes are built, local residents searching for an affordable place to live in their neighborhood naturally inquire about the availability of these units for sale or rent, but unfortunately they often do not have access to these affordable homes. The city should take steps to provide local residents with a preference for access to homes built in their community that have affordability restrictions on them. This will allow people who desire to remain living in their community with the opportunity to benefit from new development being funded with federal, state, and local tax

dollars being built in their neighborhood. Any development that receives city or SDHC funding via a NOFA, or other funding source, should be required to provide local residents with preference when affordable homes are made available upon completion of a project.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Production

The Committee should monitor construction of ADUs, JADUs and tiny homes to assess the effectiveness of the city's incentives to build these units and explore potential reforms to current policies if needed and receive an update from SDHC on its ADU program.

Modular Housing

The Committee should explore policies to facilitate the construction of modular housing in the city, including strategies to attract modular home manufacturers to locate production facilities in the city in order to make the provision of modular homes easier and cheaper in San Diego.

Underutilized Commercial Properties

The market for large commercial properties throughout the country continues to be limited. The use of these properties for housing represents a prime opportunity for additional areas to build more housing in the city. This Committee should further explore the use of underutilized commercial properties for middle-income and affordable housing production.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Process

This Committee should receive updates from SDHC and the Economic Development Department on the performance of each affordable housing Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) issued, awards, and review potential for consolidation of these two separate NOFA programs.

Federal, State and Regional Agency Grant Funding for Housing Related Opportunities

This Committee should receive an informational update from city staff, SDHC, and city lobbyists regarding available grant funding for the creation of permanent supportive housing, affordable homes, and middle-income units. The Committee should discuss potential state and federal legislation the city could pursue to increase housing and homelessness funding and programs. Additionally, the Committee should be updated by staff on the progress made in implementing any recommendations pertaining to obtaining housing related grant funding made by the City Auditor in an upcoming performance audit of the Department of Finance and Department of Government Affairs regarding grants.

Regular Reporting on Homelessness Data

This Committee should receive regular updates regarding homelessness that communicates data such as beds being utilized, individuals contacted through city outreach, the use of safe camping and safe parking sites, and any other relevant information. Having the most up-to-date data is

critical in making sure the Committee is able to monitor the success of homelessness related programs and services and to make the most informed decisions on how the city can invest in future homelessness facilities and programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit priorities for the 2025 Land Use and Housing Committee. I look forward to working with you and the whole committee to ensure the city moves forward in implementing policies that ensure all San Diegans have access to housing that fits their needs.