

Communication from Public

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Date Submitted: 12/05/2023 12:03 PM

Council File No: 20-1265-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached letter from the USC Forward Coalition regarding Agenda Item 1, "Verbal update from the Department of City Planning in response to Motion (Harris-Dawson - Raman) requesting the City Attorney to incorporate additional recommendations to those adopted by the Council on January 20, 2023, to amend the South Los Angeles Community Plan Implementation Overlay Ordinance, and to address displacement and the preservation of affordable housing."



December 5, 2023

Los Angeles Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Agenda Item 1, South Los Angeles CPIO Amendment

Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee:

I write on behalf of the USC Forward Coalition as organizations with a stake in the proposed CPIO amendments for South Los Angeles, No. CPC-2022-5432-ZC-CPIOA. The USC Forward Coalition is a broad coalition of students, community organizations, and union members united to make the University of Southern California (USC) a better neighbor and accountable to its surrounding communities

Our members have participated in the process culminating in the proposed CPIO amendment because of the rampant demolitions and displacement occurring in their neighborhood within the overlay area. The frequent demolition of existing housing has begun to remake the neighborhood to facilitate the construction of expensive student housing that is often rented by the room. This new housing is not intended for existing neighborhood residents, largely longtime Black and Latino residents who are low income.

The process of creating the new South LA CPIO began years ago. Our members gave detailed feedback on the typing of protections necessary to prevent displacement. On January 11, 2023, the City Council approved a motion requesting that the city attorney draft a motion to include five important changes to prevent displacement in the South LA CPIO. On January 17, 2023, the Planning and Land Use Management Committee adopted the report on those changes. On January 25, 2023, the City Council further adopted the Committee's report.

Our coalition has submitted further legal justification for those amendments, including examples of other cities with similar requirements. We have also asked the City Attorney to meet with our coalition regarding the amendments, but have received no response.

It is now nearly one year since the January motion, and the South LA amendment has not returned to the City Planning Commission. In the meantime, development projects are being submitted to the city that will not have the benefit of these protections. These delays are contributing to the remaking of the neighborhood and displacement of our neighbors.

The requested changes are listed below:

- 1) Add a requirement that developers notify tenants in buildings to be demolished of their legal rights under the CPIO, including their right to return to a new unit at an affordable rent, the rent guidelines for the new project, and any procedures the tenant will need to follow in order to claim an affordable unit.
- 2) Add specific requirements for how long a developer must hold open a replacement unit for a displaced tenant and establish notification procedures to advise the tenant when the new unit is ready.
- 3) Add a requirement that a developer who is found to have committed unlawful tenant harassment or illegally evicted a tenant loses the right to a demolition permit for five years.
- 4) Add a private right of action to enforce all provisions of Section V-1 of the CPIO, which shall include civil penalties, treble damages in certain circumstances, and mandatory attorneys' fees for a prevailing plaintiff. This right to bring a civil action shall extend to current and former tenants at a property, as well as the city itself.
- 5) Explore and propose adding to the CPIO additional protections for tenants in the case of demolition, including but not limited to expanding the location where requirements for replacement units apply and eliminating exemptions to right of return to replacement units.

These edits to the CPIO amendment are meant to serve its intended purpose and preserve affordable housing while preventing permanent displacement. I hope that the Committee can find out what the delay is in bringing back these important amendments, what the timeline will be going forward, and encourage City staff to work with us going forward.

Finally, I note that these are issues faced not only by residents who live within the South LA CPIO area, but also in other areas of the city. Our coalition supports extending these protections not only within our neighborhoods, but in all other places that require them.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

Estuardo Mazariegos

Co-director, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Los Angeles
on behalf of the USC Forward Coalition