



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Landlord/Tenant Ad-Hoc Committee Update on Work Plan

1. Motion to approve Landlord/Tenant Ad-Hoc Committee's suggestions on the Rental Rights Program, with the intention of revisiting these suggestions in a redlined version of the ordinance at a subsequent council session.
2. Motion to approve Rental Rights Marketing Strategy.
3. Motion to provide direction on the desire to establish a Dispute Resolution/Mediation program.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for August 22, 2023 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Council initiated the establishment of a Landlord/Tenant Ad-Hoc Committee (Ad-Hoc Committee) to address rental housing issues in Glendale. The Ad-Hoc Committee's purpose was to gather citizen input and provide recommendations to the City Council on landlord/tenant rental housing matters. The Ad-Hoc Committee was assigned three main tasks, including reviewing the Rental Rights Program ordinance (municipal code Chapter 9.30), developing education and marketing strategies, and evaluating a voluntary dispute resolution program. The Ad-Hoc Committee was originally comprised of seven members, later six members, representing both renters and landlords in Glendale, and convened monthly for a total of eleven months.

Staff has compiled three comprehensive reports attached as Exhibits 1-3 addressing the Rental Rights Program, marketing and outreach strategies, and mediation options. These reports provide detailed analyses and recommendations made by the Ad-Hoc Committee. The attached reports offer valuable insights for decision-making and further improvement of the rental housing landscape in Glendale.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction on three key areas of discussion:

- **Rental Rights Ad-Hoc Committee Suggestions:** Evaluate suggestions made by the Ad-Hoc Committee for changes to the Rental Rights program ordinance and either: (1) initiate the changes directly, (2) request additional analysis of suggested changes, or (3) offer alternatives to suggestions made.
- **Rental Rights Marketing Strategy:** Approve or reject proposed marketing strategy for the Rental Rights Program or offer alternatives.
- **Dispute Resolution and Mediation:** Review dispute resolution program for landlords and tenants and provide direction on whether to either (1) bring back a more detailed report, (2) bring back an outline of a program, or (3) reject all proposals for a dispute resolution program.

BACKGROUND

On August 24, 2021, the Community Development staff presented a report to the City Council regarding the establishment of a Landlord/Tenant Advisory body in Glendale to address rental housing issues. The City Council directed staff to prepare a report that would outline the framework for creating a Landlord/Tenant Ad-Hoc Committee. On January 18, 2022, the City Council approved the establishment and framework of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

The Ad-Hoc Committee's mission was to serve as a conduit for citizen input analyzing and recommending options on landlord/tenant rental housing issues to the City Council.

The Work Plan of the Ad-Hoc Committee was to:

- Review the Rental Rights Programs and recommend any possible changes to the ordinance, if needed.
- Discuss and develop best practices for education and marketing on landlord/tenant issues in Glendale; and
- Discuss and evaluate a voluntary dispute resolution program for landlords and tenants.

Other topics of discussion by the Ad-Hoc Committee included a rent registry program, new legislation ideas, rental programming, and other residential rental housing issues. The Ad-Hoc Committee's aim was to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of rental rights measures, ensuring that both landlords and tenants are well-informed.

The Ad-Hoc Committee originally consisted of seven members represented by both renters and landlords in Glendale, with one neutral representative. At the nine-month mark, unfortunately one Ad-Hoc Committee member seat was vacated due to an

unexpected death. That seat was left vacated. The following individuals were originally chosen by City Council to serve on the Ad-Hoc Committee:

- James Son (Landlord)
- Razmik Grigorian (Landlord)
- Jennifer Schultz Bertolet (Landlord)
- Victor Hairapetian (Neutral)
- Davit Zargaryan (Tenant)
- Isabela Tevanyan (Tenant)
- Teal Marchande (Tenant)

The Ad-Hoc Committee convened monthly, holding meetings for a total of eleven months. The Ad-Hoc Committee successfully worked through the tasks outlined in its work plan, with a single meeting remaining for any follow-up work assigned by City Council. By not concluding the desired twelve meetings, Council may identify any additional concerns and/or work assignments for the Ad-Hoc Committee to receive from City Council before officially concluding its work. Alternatively, should no further need for the Ad-Hoc Committee arise, staff will inform the Ad-Hoc Committee of its resolution and conclude its operations accordingly.

Reports on Committee Work

Staff has compiled three comprehensive reports addressing the three key topics assigned to the Ad-Hoc Committee by the City Council. These reports are included as attachments and provide a detailed analysis of the Rental Rights Program ordinance, outreach and marketing strategies, and options for mediation. The reports include:

- Committee Suggestions on the Rental Rights Program (Attachment 1)
- Marketing and Outreach for Rental Rights (Attachment 2)
- Tenant Dispute Resolution and Mediation (Attachment 3)

Next Steps

Once the City Council reviews and discusses the work and suggestions made by the Ad-Hoc Committee, staff can incorporate any suggested changes and reach out to stake holders for input. Staff can achieve this through community meetings, reach out to specific landlord and tenant organizations and provide forms on our city webpage for stakeholders to share their opinions.

Once stakeholders have expressed their opinions, staff will return to City Council with a draft of the new ordinance with suggested changes and stakeholder opinions, at which time City Council will have the opportunity to approve final draft of changes or provide further direction.

ANALYSIS

Attachment 1 - Committee Suggestions on the Rental Rights Program

The Rental Rights Program was introduced by the City Council on February 12, 2019, as a response to the ongoing affordable housing crisis and escalating rental rates. It aimed to address these issues while considering the diverse perspectives and concerns expressed during the extensive deliberations. The program consists of three main sections: Just Cause Eviction, Right to Lease, and Renter Relocation. Collectively, these provisions within the Rental Rights Program were implemented to enhance stability, protect tenants from unfair practices, and address the challenges associated with displacement in Glendale.

The committee executed a structured and comprehensive methodology to diligently review the Rental Rights program. In this phase, they delved into the intricacies of the program, meticulously scrutinizing its provisions, rules, and regulations. They assessed each section and analyzed it line by line, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the program's content.

In the Ad-Hoc Committees analysis of the current Rental Rights program, they observed that the program is extensive and covers many areas and provides good protection for tenants while maintaining balance between tenants and landlord. However, while the program's intent to cover all its bases is commendable, it has led to a degree of complexity and difficulty in understanding and following its guidelines. One of the overall agreements that the Ad-Hoc Committee had was that the program needs to be simplified. The program's extensive coverage and the inclusion of multiple exemptions have contributed to its intricate nature, which can pose challenges for both landlords and tenants seeking to navigate its provisions. Also, some sections of the program have been found to be outdated and in need of change and revisions.

After staff received the comments, suggestions, and revisions from the Ad-Hoc committee, they compiled a concise report outlining the recommended changes. Subsequently, staff presented the report to the committee for final approval before submitting it to the City Council.

In conducting their review, the Ad-Hoc Committee cited sections of the ordinance and provided their thoughts and suggestions on what could be amended and how, however they refrained from voting on making official recommendations as to how it should be amended. This was to allow the City Council the ability to evaluate the identified sections, and deliberate amongst themselves of how to best amend it. If the City Council wishes to evaluate a complete and recommended draft ordinance, the City Council could provide direction to remand the assignment back to the Ad-Hoc Committee for decision making.

Attachment 2 - Marketing and Outreach for Rental Rights

The City Council tasked the Ad-Hoc Committee with evaluating the marketing strategy for the Rental Rights Program and coming up with new ideas and strategies that would better target landlords and tenants. The Ad-Hoc committee's role was to gather insights, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that would effectively target both landlords and tenants.

Through collaborative discussions and analysis of the program's goals and objectives, the Ad-Hoc Committee generated valuable insights and suggestions to strengthen the marketing strategy. Staff used the Ad-Hoc committees input in shaping a robust plan that aligns with the needs and preferences of the target stakeholders.

Building upon the Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendations, staff developed a comprehensive marketing strategy that employs various channels and tactics to maximize outreach and engagement. The strategy aims to raise awareness about the Rental Rights Program, educate the public about its benefits and provisions, and foster compliance among landlords and tenants.

Attachment 3 - Tenant Dispute Resolution and Mediation

The Ad-Hoc Committee was tasked with assessing the feasibility and desirability of establishing a mediation program to address various issues, including rent increases, security deposits, evictions, habitability, and relocations. During the Ad-Hoc Committee's deliberations, it became evident that there was a consensus that a mediation program could bring benefits to the community. A majority of members agreed that such a program would be voluntary and non-binding in nature, aiming to facilitate constructive dialogue between parties involved in housing-related disputes.

A voluntary and non-binding program refers to a mediation program that does not require participation. In this context, "voluntary" means that participation in the program is not mandatory or legally required. It is up to the parties involved, both tenants and landlords, to decide whether they want to engage in the mediation process.

Overall, the Ad-Hoc Committee felt that tenant/landlord mediation/dispute resolution programs promote effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, and timely resolutions. By providing a constructive platform for dialogue, these programs can benefit tenants and landlords by preserving relationships, reducing costs, and offering tailored solutions to their specific disputes.

While the Ad-Hoc Committee acknowledged the need for a mediation program, it also recognized several challenges associated with a voluntary approach. One of the key concerns is the reliance on the willingness of both tenants and landlords to participate in mediation. Unfortunately, some landlords may choose not to engage in the process, leaving tenants without access to the benefits of the program.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

No stakeholder/outreach was conducted as part of this report.

FISCAL IMPACT

Making changes to the Rental Rights Program ordinance and implementing a Dispute Resolution and Mediation Program will have cost impacts. Staff will return to Council with a more detailed analysis based on Council's direction.

Implementing the marketing strategy will cost approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000, which was included as a part of the FY 2023-24 budget. No new appropriation is being requested at this time. The City Council approved funding is outlined below:

Existing Appropriation		
Amount	Account String	Funding Source
\$20,000	44450-1070-CDD-8507-P8001	General Fund (Measure S)
\$30,000	45450-1070-CDD-8507-P8001	General Fund (Measure S)

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

This item is considered a ministerial activity and therefore, not subject to CEQA review.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Adopt a motion providing direction on the suggestions made the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Alternative 2: Consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Ad- Hoc Committee Suggestions on the Rental Rights Program

Attachment 2: Marketing and Outreach for Rental Rights

Attachment 3: Tenant Dispute Resolution and Mediation