



Office of the City Manager

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ACTION CALENDAR

September 24, 2019

(Continued from September 10, 2019)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
Submitted by: Kelly Wallace, Interim Director, Health, Housing and Community Services
Subject: Companion Report: Utilization of City-Owned Property at 1281 University Avenue to House up to 8 - 10 RV Dwellers

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to conduct a feasibility analysis of 1281 University Avenue as an interim site to host Recreational Vehicle (RV) dwellers.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Staff time will be necessary to assess the applicable zoning, building and public health standards as well as the needs identified by the Commission including paving, curb cuts, sanitation facilities and trash services. Additional staffing would need to be identified to screen applicants for the local preferences identified by the Commission.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In a separate report scheduled for September 10, 2019, the Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) is recommending that Council issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for residential housing development with at least 50% of the units restricted to 50% Area Median Income (AMI) households. Their recommendation also requests Council consider an interim use of the site for housing.

Analysis will need to be completed to determine if the site is feasible, how many people and/or RV's and what improvements could be accommodated, and what services and amenities would be needed. This research would need to be prioritized within the Council referral system to enable the staff time and resources for this type of project.

BACKGROUND

The parcel at 1281 University Avenue is vacant lot consisting of approximately 3,600 square feet and is adjacent to the Berkeley Way Mini-Park. City records indicate that while the park and lot are on a single legal parcel, the lot has never been included in the park and is therefore not subject to park-related land restrictions.

On February 8, 2018, the City released an RFP seeking proposals to acquire and develop the site as housing for people with extremely low-incomes with a preference for

homeless services, per Council's direction. On September 25, 2018, the City Council authorized to staff to negotiate and enter in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Resources for Community Development (RCD) for a 16 unit affordable housing development based on the HAC's recommendation. In December 2018, RCD informed the City they did not believe the financial resources needed for the proposed project would be available in a timely way, and formally withdrew from the negotiation process. On May 2, 2019, the HAC voted to reissue an RFP for the site and consider interim uses for short term housing.

The Homeless Commission passed the following motion on June 12, 2019:

ACTION: M/S/C Hill/Marasovic that the Homeless Commission recommends that the currently unused City-owned property at 1281 University Avenue be used to house on an interim basis up to 8-10 RV dwellers, or as many as the property would safely accommodate, selected by the City of Berkeley. The RV dwellers would be selected by the City of Berkeley based on the strength of their ties to the community such as employment in Berkeley, attending school in Berkeley and families with children in Berkeley schools; and to submit the report as amended and authorize the Chair to present on behalf of the Commission on this report.

Vote: Ayes: Behm-Steinberg, Hill, Kealoha-Blake, Marasovic, Mulligan
Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Hirpara (excused).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff should determine if 1281 University is a feasible site for RV parking and, if so, what staffing, resources and funding would be needed to provide the necessary improvements, services and amenities. Staff would also need to coordinate between departments to develop an implementation plan that screens, permits and services the RV dwellers.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Council could elect to leave the site vacant while the City pursues the RFP for residential development with affordable housing. The small size of the site may limit the amount of RVs that can be serviced at the location relative to the amount of work necessary to prepare the site to be suitable to host the RVs. There also may be a problem for finding a new location if and when construction is scheduled to begin on housing.

CONTACT PERSON

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