DATE: May 9, 2019

TO: Homelessness-Housing Task Force

FROM: Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: Solicit Input on the Development of a Rental Housing Database Related to Implementation of the City of Hayward's Existing and Proposed Tenant Protection Policies

RECOMMENDATION

That the Homelessness-Housing Task Force (HHTF) reviews the report and provides feedback regarding the development of a rental housing database.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to solicit feedback from the HHTF regarding a rental housing database. This report provides a description of the database that is being developed to administer the City of Hayward's existing and proposed tenant protection and residential rent stabilization policies. The database will be developed and implemented in phases to respond to pending legislative changes. The first phase will identify all rental housing units and the associated policies applicable to each unit (mediation, just cause, tenant protection). The second phase will include tracking tenant petitions, outcomes and reasons for withdrawal, and create a repository for rental housing complaints including units not covered by the mediation program. The third phase will incorporate elements from any newly enacted legislation such as a system to file rent increase notices or notices of termination of tenancy. The fourth phase will explore suggestions from HHTF members such as automated noticing. Staff will roll out the database and its feature gradually over the next year.

BACKGROUND

On January 31, 2017[1], the City Council convened a work session to review housing affordability strategies and resources in Hayward and Alameda County. Subsequently, stakeholder meetings were hosted in early 2018 that identified access to information as a

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[1] January 31, 2017 Staff Report and Attachments:
https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2947412&GUID=7B833FA7-2B44-404D-86D2-031C37926B34&Options=&Search=

concern of both stakeholder groups. On February 6, 2018[2] and March 27, 2018[3], the City Council convened a subsequent work session to review housing affordability strategies and, among other things, directed staff to improve access to information and create a system to log complaints related to residential rental properties within the City. On February 19, 2019[4], the City Council convened a work session that defined the parameters for an approach to amend the RRSO. Included in this discussion was an update regarding progress on the residential rent stabilization database that is intended to improve access to information about unit covered by the RRSO and serve as a repository for residential rental property complaints. During the March 21, 2019[5] HHTF meeting, staff provided a summary of the direction received at the February 19, 2019 Council Works Session and an additional agenda item was requested to discuss and provide feedback on the phases of developing a rental housing database.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to describe the rental housing database, the development phases, and solicit feedback from the HHTF regarding the database that is being developed to administer the City's existing and proposed tenant protection policies, including any existing or updated rental housing policies.   Housing staff is working with Information Technology (IT) staff to develop a database using the Knack database platform. Data will be obtained from public records to identify all potential rental properties in the City of Hayward.   The database will: identify units subject to any rental housing policies administered by the Housing Divisions; track petition workflow including status of the petition, outcomes and reasons for petition withdrawal; serve as a repository for complaints regarding residental rental housing including units not covered by the mediation program; and provide statistical information to the public regarding residental rental properties.

Knack Database Platform

Staff researched databases used by other jurisdictions and determined that the Knack platform would best suit the needs of the City. The platform is a configurable backend database and includes the ability to build pages to help manage and share the data. The advantages of this platform are:
- The database is customizable and can be modified easily as the need for information changes.

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[2] February 6, 2018 Staff Report and Attachments:
https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3335549&GUID=DDD8866E-BAEB-44BF-8EBB-2F716A750170&Options=&Search=
[3] March 27, 2018 Staff Report and Attachments:
https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3458584&GUID=A516B525-DC67-41CD-A8FF-C4779E6B8FE9&Options=&Search=
[4] February 19, 2019 Staff Report and Attachments:
https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3863371&GUID=E3FF2A1F-D770-463F-ACC2-8EBEFC711CF3
[5] March 21, 2019 HHTF Report and Attachments:
https://hayward.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=683156&GUID=CD677198-DD3F-48DF-BD4F-963CBDC09B72&Search=

- Information from the database can be made available on the website that will provide community members access to information.
- The system allows unlimited users, which means it has the potential to be the mechanism for receiving rent increase notices and notices of termination of tenancy.
- The City can customize reports that will improve analysis and access information about rental housing.
- The platform has an application programming interface, which means data can be extracted and integrated into other systems.
- The system is low-cost.

Data

The data will be obtained from public records. All potential residential rental property will be included in the dataset regardless of whether they are subject to the residential rent stabilization ordinance. Since all rental properties are not accurately identified in public records, there is likely a margin of error especially related to single family home rentals. This information will be refined over time based on documentation provided by owners and renters.

Database Description and Implementation

The purpose of the database is to administer the rental housing policies, increase access to information, and analyze program statistics. The database will be implemented in phases to respond to pending legislative changes and the features will be gradually rolled out. The development of the database in phases is necessary to manage staff workloads as well as to sync the database with policy changes as they are adopted by the Council. Attachment II provides samples of information retained in the database and reports to be available. Note for the samples, the address may be real, but the petitions and complaints are fictitious.

Phase I. The first phase will identify all rental housing units and identifiy the policies applicable to each unit. It has been designed to identify units that are covered by the RRSO, but since the data will include all potential rental units, the database can be modified to identify units subject to various housing policies approved by the City Council, such as Just Cause for Eviction or a future Mediation Program with Binding Arbitration. *Figure 1* in Attachment II provides a sample list of units and information tracked for each unit. For example, it includes the status of the unit as covered, not covered, or exempt from the rent stabilization restrictions. This information can be filtered by the status of the unit or by any field in the table. If new legislation is approved, the database will be modified to identify the provision the unit is subject to. This summary information can be made available to the public to assist tenants and landlords in identifying the housing policies that apply to each unit.

Phase II. The second phase will include a system to track tenant petitions, outcomes and reasons for withdrawal, and create a repository for rental housing complaints including units not covered by the mediation program. *Figure 2* in Attachment II provides a sample of the petition summary information that will be used to manage the workflow. *Figure 3* in

Attachment II provides a sample of the detailed information that will be collected regarding each petition. Based on the information collected, the City can evaluate the volume of petitions, the nature of the petitions, at what stage the petitions are being resolved, the outcomes of the petitions, and the effectiveness of the process. While detailed information regarding each petition would not be available to the public, generalized statistical information will be available through reports.

The database will also act as a repository for complaints related to rental housing. Tenants will be able to submit complaints online or by contacting staff. The City will not intervene in the complaints, but will notify the landlord that a complaint was received. Similar to the Better Business Bureau or Yelp, landlords can respond to a tenant's complaint, but resolution of the issue will be left to the tenant and landlord. This component of the database will enable the City to track rental housing issues not covered by the RRSO and collect information.

Phase III. The third phase will incorporate elements from any newly enacted legislation such as a system to file rent increase notices or notices of termination of tenancy. Staff will work with IT to determine the best approach for utilizing the database to administer the new legislation. Staff will evaluate the system's capabilities to allow landlords to upload information to the system and facilitate compliance with any potential requirements to file notices.

Phase IV. The fourth phase will explore suggestions from HHTF members such as automated noticing. The system has the capacity to create automated notices to confirm receipt of petitions or to provide a new property owner with resources to help them understand the legislation related to rental propery they acquired in Hayward.

Ongoing. Staff can generate reports based on the information in the database. As a customizable database, the City will have the ability to create a variety of reports. Reports can be made public on the website, which can include filters so that users can isolate specific information. *Figures 5-7* provide sample reports including a petition report that has been filtered. Reports associated with each phase will be made available once there is data to report.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the anticipated number of records, the database will cost between $1,000 to $2,150 annually. There are sufficient funds budgeted in FY 2019 operating budget to cover the cost associated with the database. The total fiscal impact is less than the amount budgeted, and there is no additional impact to the Rent Review Fund.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This agenda item supports the Complete Communities Strategic Initiative. The purpose of the Complete Communities Initiative is to create and support structures, services, and amenities to provide inclusive and equitable access with the goal of becoming a thriving and promising place to live, work, and play for all. This item supports the following goal and objectives:

Goal 2:   Provide a mix of housing stock for all Hayward residents and community members, including the expansion of affordable housing opportunities and resources.

Objective 1:   Centralize and expand housing services.

PUBLIC CONTACT

In January 2018, staff hosted meetings with tenants, landlords, representatives of community-based organizations, and advocates to listen to these stakeholders' perspectives on housing issues. Additionally, staff conducted an online survey to provide an alternate mechanism for participation in the housing discussion. Analysis of the results of the survey were included in the February 6, 2018 staff report. One of the topics discussed by stakeholders was better access to information.

Additionally, on April 6, 2019, staff hosted a community open house to provide information about proposed changes to the RRSO and to solicit community feedback. Improved access to information was also discussed by stakeholders at that meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to work with Information Technology Department to develop the database. Over the next month, staff anticipates finishing the frame work for the database and uploading the data the following month. Proposed changes to the RRSO may delay the implementation of the database as modifications will be necessary. Staff anticipates that information will be available to the public later this year.

Table 1. Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RRSO) Amendment Timeline

Meeting	Topic	Date
City Council	Proposed Rent Stabilization Legislation to Amend RRSO	May 21, 2019 (7:00 pm)

Prepared by: Christina Morales, Housing Division Manager

Recommended by: Jennifer Ott, Deputy City Manager

Approved by:

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Kelly McAdoo, City Manager