

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DAVID GOUIN, DIRECTOR
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: PROPOSED FEE BASED RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Housing and Community Services Department that the Council conduct a study session to receive a presentation on a fee-based Rental Inspection Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to present a proposed fee-based Rental Inspection Program as a component of Santa Rosa's comprehensive housing strategy. Outreach was completed, and program design was discussed with California Apartment Association (CAA) and North Bay Association of Realtors (NORBAR), tenant advocacy, and other community groups. Program options are included in the presentation. Subject to Council's direction, staff will return with a draft ordinance and fee based cost estimate for potential adoption.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council of the City of Santa Rosa selected a proposed rental inspection program to be included in its Tier 1 housing goals. A component of the housing strategy may be to adopt a local ordinance and create a new program intended to safeguard the health and safety of all rental units.
2. The proposed Rental Inspection Program was first introduced to Council at a Study Session on April 5, 2016 during a Code Enforcement presentation as a possible proactive tool to improve the quality of the rental housing stock and create a policy that provides safe, decent and sanitary housing for all rental units in Santa Rosa.

ANALYSIS

1. Santa Rosa has an estimated 35,000 rental units. In Fiscal Year 18/19 Code Enforcement received 214 complaints regarding substandard housing conditions. In this same time period, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) program inspected 1000 units in Santa Rosa's most challenged neighborhoods and 700 units had health and safety violations.
2. Outreach was held with the rental property and real estate owners' groups, tenant advocates and other community organizations to seek input and recommendations of a successful program. In brief, those groups representing property owners are not in favor of Santa Rosa establishing a Rental Inspection Program while those groups representing tenants are in favor.
3. Management Partners, a consulting firm, compiled best practices for rental inspection programs from other cities as part of the code enforcement study completed in 2017. Based on the study and feedback from stakeholders, staff will discuss a program design based on key Council decisions:
 - Does the City Council want to rely on existing inspection services from the Housing Choice Voucher Program, Neighborhood Revitalization Program and Code Enforcement, or does the Council want to advance a Rental Inspection Program?
 - If the Council wants to advance a program, would it apply to all or some rental units. If it applies to all rental units, the full Council can proceed with the discussion. If applies to a lesser amount, a process to secure a quorum will need to take place.
 - Decisions on other program components such as frequency of inspections, inspection standards, inspection process, relocation fund and self-certification.
4. Should the Council want to advance a new program, staff will return with a draft ordinance and fee program estimate for consideration and potential adoption.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the

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environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

None

CONTACT

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