Homelessness: What about people with records and the mentally ill?

By Gregory Bradbard

It’s time to revise the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, adopted in the 1960s in response to the climbing rates of involuntary confinements of mentally ill individuals. This law made it far too difficult for law enforcement to get mentally ill people into treatment they say they don’t want, but whose insisted contempo- raneous arrests that would create a seamless transition into housing, mental health support services is abso- lutely essential.

Gregory Bradbard is president of the Homeless Housing Association.

Reform the Lanterman Act to help the severely mentally ill

By Susan Shelley

What is missing a dis- gruction of the “homeless- ness” problem into distinct categories with unique causes. In the 1960s, California adopted the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which provided for the involuntary commitment and treatment of a person who is a danger to himself or herself or others who is gravely disabled. The definition of gravely disabled” included being un- able to provide for the basic personal needs for food, cloth- ing or shelter. Being mentally ill must be recognised and people must be helped, not crytically used as a justification for wasteful tax increases or pro- found public works projects.

The problem of substances abuse cannot be helped by en- couraging addicts to return to the streets. Instead, they really need to be connected to welfare and the community. Treatment, wrap-around services for foster care youth “aging out” of the system, and careful, cons- idered discharge planning ser- vices for people released from jail — too many newly released persons from county jails are being released into homelessness.

We have got to pinching the homeless pipeline system.

Robert R. Dorn is president and CEO of The California Endowment.

Deal with the downsides of criminal justice reforms

By Mike Morrell

Since 2013, Democratic lead- ers in Sacramento have pushed changes into the justice system that have led to an estimated 80,000 furloughs of prison and jail inmates in our county.

Many of these individuals leave custody struggling with mental health challenges and substance abuse. As some of the state’s most vulnerable, the individuals who are on the streets solely be- cause they can’t afford to live anywhere, a combination of mental health and addiction, and other issues that require specialized efforts, including supplemen- tary housing, can be found. But some of those prob- lems arise from spells of housing instability and the data suggest that there are increasingly num- erous homeless for whom economic drivers are the main issue.

We still need to address building affordable housing, expand rent stabilization or- dinance (including anti-evic- tion protections) and ensure that the positive developments from our local investments in housing assistance and job opportunities can be realized.

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Housing

What do local governments need to do?

Understand value of affordable housing

By Alan Greenlee

California is experiencing a housing affordability crisis as we face a staggering deficit of 12 million homes that are affordable to low-income Californians.

Undesirable contributors to this deficit are the long-standing strategies that have stifled home production statewide over the last 40 years. We collectively — community by community — dug ourselves into a hole, a lack of housing inventory and affordable to low-income Californians.

By Joel Kotkin

Housing production needs to be affordable through market interventions that can handle additional density, such as transit-oriented real estate. We can hold local governments accountable for the lack of middle-income jobs that were an unanticipated consequence of Proposition 13, while still increasing residential densities.

By Mike Morrell

The people who do so in order to reap the rewards, services and land values associated with new housing are described as NIMBYs (i.e., putting a manufacturing plant spewing noxious and hazardous chemicals in the middle of a residential neighborhood).

By Greg Devereaux

There are many reasons that more housing isn’t being built in the state — the absence of CEQA, market-economic, the lack of middle-income jobs that are often required to support mortgages, development impact fees that are inappropriately sized, or simply a lack of state laws and policies that discourage building up instead of out, added cost from requirements in auto, and the lack of skilled construction workers, just to name a few.

Don’t trim over local control

By Larry Dunn

Reduce local barriers, costs to build

Local elected officials are representing the views of their community — most of whom already have their homes. But the bigger “local control” issue for builders in a housing market which can add $200,000 or more to the price of a home — fees for inspections, public places, affordable housing, stormwater, utilities, numerous and expensive requirements for funding, and for any amenity tax above and beyond what a development might need.

Respecting property rights is key

By Adam Summers

I think most people can coexist with those who oppose new developments to “preserve the character of our community.” After all, they got their good deal when housing was more affordable, land was more plentiful and there were fewer people. They didn’t want to resettle to a new community, so they want to maintain it as they knew it.

Local governments should have discretion to work with developers on land-use policies and development policies that create a range of options, one of which could be preserving community character.

Streamline building processes

By Mike Morris

Some developers believe that a “cash-box” zoning, a share of the property tax would permit them to put offices into zoning and actions that would sup- press the creation of new housing.

By Adam Summers

He is the director of Agenda at the Economic Roundtable, a nonprofit group that analyzes issues related to property tax reform. He previously served in the California Senate.

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