

Renter Protection Policy Work Status Update – November 2023

On November 29, 2021, the City Council adopted a package of rental protection policies.¹ The policies are summarized below. Since that Council meeting, staff have focused primarily on the three policies identified by Council as priorities. Some policies are also identified for incorporation into Housing Element programs.

	Policy	Brief Description	Work Status
1	Rental Registry Program (RRP) (CC Motion #E) HIGH PRIORITY	Establish a program that gathers information on rental units in City for purposes identified by Council.	<p><u>In progress.</u></p> <p>Council referred the design and implementation to the Policy & Services Committee, including proposed fees, resources, and timeline. P&S Committee provided feedback in September 2022.²</p> <p><i>RRP Program Development Phase I</i> - RFP released March 2023. Proposals received April 2023. Currently in contract negotiations in Fall/Winter 2023.</p> <p>Community meeting in March 2023.</p> <p>Draft Rental Registry Program ordinance prepared. Public meetings before the Human Relations Commission and Planning &</p>

¹ City Council Meeting Minutes, 11/29/21: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/city-council-agendas-minutes/2021/11-november/20211129/20211129amccs.pdf>

City Council City Manager Report ID # 13786, 11/29/21:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/city-council-agendas-minutes/2021/11-november/20211129/20211129pccs.pdf>

City Renter Protection Policy Development Webpage: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Long-Range-Planning/Renter-Protection-Policy-Development>

² Policy & Services Committee Meeting City Manager Report ID # 14139, 09/13/22:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/policy-and-services-committee/2022/20220913/20220913ppsr.pdf>

	Policy	Brief Description	Work Status
			<p>Transportation Commission May 2023.³ Housing Ad Hoc meeting August 2023.⁴</p> <p><i>RRP Program Development Phase II</i> – This future phase will include community outreach, City budgeting and staffing, and RRP software development.</p> <p><i>RRP Program Implementation Phase I</i> – This future phase will include community outreach, RRP launch, and rental unit initial registrations.</p> <p><i>RRP Program Implementation Phase II</i> – This future phase will include community outreach and RRP reporting.</p> <p>HRC also discussed the RRP at their February 2023 meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral, see Item 8 below.</p>
2	<p>Expand Tenant Relocation Assistance (CC Motion #B)</p> <p>HIGH PRIORITY</p>	Update existing local ordinance to extend tenant relocation assistance requirements to properties with ten units or more	<p><u>Completed.</u></p> <p>Council acted upon an ordinance that expanded Tenant Relocation Assistance codified in the Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 9.68.035.⁵</p> <p>HRC also discussed Tenant Relocation Assistance at their February 2023</p>

³ Human Relations Commission Staff Report, May 24, 2023:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/community-services/human-relations-commission/agendas/5-24-23/05-24-23-hrc-retreat-agenda.pdf>.

Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report, May 31, 2023:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/planning-and-transportation-commission/2023/ptc-5.31-public-agenda.pdf>.

⁴ Housing Ad Hoc Staff Report, August 31, 2023: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/3/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/rrp-housing-ad-hoc-committee-staff-report-08.16.23-for-jl.pdf>

⁵ Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 9.68.035 Relocation assistance for no-fault eviction:

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/paloalto/latest/paloalto_ca/0-0-0-66806.

	Policy	Brief Description	Work Status
			meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral, see Item 8 below.
3	Eviction Reduction (CC Motion #C) PRIORITY	Create local ordinance to expand eviction protections in AB 1482 to include rental units receiving occupancy within the last 15 years.	<u>Completed.</u> City Council acted upon two ordinances which updated Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 9.68 Rental Housing Stabilization to include local just cause eviction protections, including covering more rental units than in state law. HRC discussed Eviction Reduction at their February 2023 meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral, see Item 8 below.
4	Anti-Rent-gouging (CC Motion #D)	Consider preparation of a local ordinance to expand the number of units covered by AB 1482 rent increase limitations.	<u>Not started.</u> Council referred the anti-rent gouging topic to the Policy & Services Committee, including the review and discussion of measures to address loopholes. This work is incorporated into the Housing Element workplan. Staff anticipates work on this topic starting Winter 2023. HRC discussed Rent Increases at their February 2023 meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral, see Item 8 below.
5	Security Deposit Limit (CC Motion #F)	Create a local ordinance that limits the locally allowable amount of security deposit charged for unfurnished rental units to 1.5 times the monthly rent.	<u>Completed.</u> City Council acted upon an ordinance in which updated Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 9.68 Rental Housing Stabilization to establish a new security deposit limit for unfurnished rental units that is lower than the limit allowed by state law.

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6	Fair Chance Ordinance (CC Motion #H)	Consider preparation of a local ordinance that supports fair chance policies.	<p><u>In process.</u></p> <p>Council referred the fair chance policy topic to the Policy & Services Committee, including a staff analysis of consequences and unintended consequences. This work is incorporated into the Housing Element workplan. Staff anticipates continued work on this topic in Winter 2023/Spring 2024.</p> <p>HRC discussed Fair Chance at their February 2023 meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral, see Item 8 below.</p>
7	Right to Counsel (CC Motion #G)	Provide tenants with legal assistance in housing-related cases.	<p><u>Ongoing.</u></p> <p>Ongoing to identify ways to support County efforts on right to counsel.</p> <p>Santa Clara County won a grant in Spring 2023 to investigate the Right to Counsel topic. City staff is coordinating with the County regarding investigation findings.</p> <p>City staff met with the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority in Spring 2023, which is preparing a Bay Area Eviction Study, the results of which will likely explore the Right to Counsel topic. City staff will coordinate with BAFHA regarding the study findings.</p> <p>City staff joined the Santa Clara County Eviction, Tenant/Landlord Disputes, & Rent Relief Collaborative that meets monthly and discusses the Right to Counsel topic.</p>

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8	Improving Implementation of Existing Renter Protection Policies (CC Motion #I)	City review and assessment of the implementation of existing renter protection policies.	<p><u>In progress.</u></p> <p>Council referred this implementation review and assessment to the Human Relations Commission.</p> <p>HRC discussed many existing and new Renter Policies at their February 2023 meeting as part of their Motion I Council referral.⁶ HRC recommendations will be brought to City Council for direction in Winter 2023/Spring 2024.</p>

⁶ For more specifics, refer to the Human Relations Commission February 9, 2023 meeting minutes and the April 27, 2023 meeting minutes whereby one February 9, 2023 HRC motion was clarified:
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Other-Services/Commissions/Human-Relations-Commission/HRC-Current-Year-Agendas-and-Minutes>.