

Attn:

San Jose City Mayor Matt Mahan &
 San Jose City Council Members;
 Rosemary Kamei, Sergio Jimenez,
 Omar Torres, David Cohen, Peter Ortiz,
 Devora Davis, Bien Doan, Domingo
 Candelas, Pam Foley & Arjun Batra
 200 E. Santa Clara St.
 San Jose, CA 95113

Re: File 23-1191-Affordable Housing Strategies: Production, Preservation and Protection (9.7.23
 Thursday @9a).

Greetings San Jose appointed public officials,

I am addressing concerns with the housing items in San Jose, Santa Clara County, California and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Out of experience as a renter at market rated apartments, a renter in a shared dwelling (room for rent in a house/apt) and currently homeless; I have ample issues and ideas with the housing system/s and the current housing laws/ordinances.

As a renter, there should be a cap on the "late fee" for rent due. I have seen it as high as \$75.00 and I have heard some places charge as high as \$100.00. It seems that the owner/s and or property management group, exploit the situation and try to get more money out of renters than needed. The bank fee for a bad check is \$25.00 for the first instance then it goes up to \$35.00 for the following instances. Same goes for the "screening fee." I believe this cannot go past \$59.00 per adult. While the current rate for a background check through one of the major providers is currently \$11.99. There should also be a cap on the cleaning fee.

Through a property group query of mine years ago, they wanted to charge the max cleaning fee of \$150.00 but failed to provide me with the cleaning company's charge receipt. Instead this rental company used their internal billing software (IE quickbooks) and designated that the cleaning fee was \$150.00 in their books. This property group also charged me for their maintenance man's hourly rate to "clear the apt?" I had left it empty and they were doing a full renovation of the apartment complex after the fact. The manager had refused to tell me what his hourly wage was and put just a price I had to pay them directly in their internal quickbook invoice (quickbooks is an invoicing software system that the user designates the itemization of fees/charges and adjusts the accounts once payment is applied by the user. The user can edit to their need/want.).

In addition to that, there should be a deposit limit on what an owner/property manager company should require in order to move in. I think half of 1 months rent is reasonable unless the owner/property manager can justify a higher deposit. I have read through a few websites and have read that 2 months max of rent can be requested as a security deposit.

In that same query with that rental group, they had given me and my roommate a 90 day no cause notice to vacate This was AFTER I had inquired why our rent was more, while residing there for over 5 years and they had a renovated unit going for much less than what we were currently paying. I had even saved their craigslist ad and forwarded it to them. I truly believe that the "no cause" notice should be abolished.

Regarding utilities, tenants should not be charged a fee for the company that the property group designates to bill for services. One property I had an apartment at made us pay utilities split amongst the adults per apartment in the building. Our upstairs neighbor had pets and children and it wasn't fair that we were having to pay for their utility usage, in addition to the fee for using their services and then another fee for paying online?!

As a victim of domestic violence, I truly believe that the city, county, state and federal level shouldn't have access to the rent registry. My ex has friends within the county and city that I am sure looks up my information with no problem. I believe unless you have a warrant/subpoena, that information should be private. Especially if your information isn't publicly listed. This also would be a deterrent to those city employees that the public may have issues with regarding biases and or court orders for harassment and or stalking. I currently have an issue with a county worker and I am seeking legal help as she has provided my info outside of the office and now has changed positions to an office supportive housing position.

Through my experience of applying to low income housing, I had one representative tell me that because I currently had no employment, no monetary proof in my checking/savings account to pay rent and bad credit, they were going to toss out my application for their 3 year wait list program?! I truly feel that if it is just a wait list and if the wait period is more than a month, they should not deny someone the ability to be on the wait list. Further a person's personal situation can change. Once I would have been next up from the wait list queue, I could update with my **current employment** and monetary status. I have also found that there are wait lists with a longer wait time than 3 years. The Santa Clara County's housing authority's wait time for section 8 housing is about 10 years. The VISPDAT wait I've heard is about 2+ years.

I fee that ALL rental properties should have a retention rate of about 3-5 years to keep an application on file, regardless of their eligibility. As stated before a person's status (either employment, monetary funds and or credit) can change within a few months and especially years. There should be a change in city, county, state and even on a federal level, on per-screening applicants. Given that we are in the most expensive place to live in the US (based on a redfin article), there should be adjustments made to having good credit, when you have a good rental record. I feel if you have a good rental record and no issues with the property manager, credit shouldn't be a deciding factor.

Regarding the AMI %'s, they should be adjusted and reflect the current and upward trending of the cost of living in San Jose. There should also be a cap % of rent on a federal level, especially if the property and or unit itself has no renovations being done. The property manager should be able to provide the legit receipt of any such renovations by the third party vendors used in order to justify any increases.

Regarding all applications for at market, below market, low income and tax credit rentals, their applications are more than 10 pages long. The tax credit rentals are the longest. One in particular even had a required 5pg background form to be submitted with an additional fee. Applicants should have the ability to submit these as a pdf to the property manager directly. From experience with TRYING to get a hold of a live representative on the phone is far, few and in between. I also do not understand why San Jose is making certain rental properties have applicants do an "Affordable Housing Rental Application," in addition to the property group's application. In my opinion, the city and county have no business pre-screening applicants because it is the property groups responsibility. I feel the city is doing too much to make the application process more bureaucratic and cause delays. I feel it is a major privacy concern.

One day I had called each # on a provided list from the San Jose Housing dept and I only was able to reach 4 people. I feel if these places are to busy to answer their phones they should have an automated message providing details on the property manager, if their complex is full and if they have a wait list available. Either way, further details should be given for their website. I favor post or fax. I had tried to go in person to a few of these places but was met with gates requiring a code/key. Some even stated that you couldn't even come into the office without an appointment. So if the leasing company doesn't answer correspondence, how is the public to be aware of this. Further, they should be required to post the property managers contact info in the window visibly. One site even was out for lunch and given that it was Summer, I didn't want to wait in the heat with no where to sit or use the restroom.

Further continuing into that, there is no explanation on how the Office of Supportive Housing in the county "assists" us as VISPDAT applicants. I have gone down to this office in person a few times and they were explaining that they mainly deal with the case managers at the designated agency and not the applicant directly. Hence me being there wasn't beneficial for my case. I had also felt there is no full training for these case managers on all the available housing programs clients are eligible for. There should be an email blast and or social media notification as to spread the word.

As for the county's VISPDAT and DV VISPDAT process, there should be more of a streamlined process for applicants to be able to view their account and do updates themselves versus waiting for an appointment and using public transit and or gas in their vehicle to do a basic update. From my experience, case managers are not that great at explaining after the intake has been done, what is next. Nor is it helpful that this VISPDAT is over sought by a manager to make sure the appointed case manager is doing what they're supposed to and not purposefully designating housing and or resources to a person because of the case managers personal bias.

Going into that, I wasn't able to get clarity on how the voucher/s works per the VISPDAT and how the funds are distributed between the participant, county and property. There is also no explanation on the differences with the tax credit, low income and at market rated units. Or what is more beneficial. It seems the case managers want all individuals to hurry and sign the dotted line versus making sure the appointed housing is suitable and will create continuous stability for the client. I have heard stories that some individuals that had received vouchers and the money wasn't distributed to the clients property owner for the designated use and ended up using savings and defaulted to a late rent payment with a late fee.

So thank you for your time on these pressing matters.