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# CITIZENS COORDINATE FOR CENTURY 3

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## RECAP - FEBRUARY BREAKFAST DIALOGUE

### *2018 - The Year of Housing – How San Diego’s Crisis Continues to Spur Action, Collaboration*

For nearly two decades, San Diego has endured a housing crisis as costs rise, construction lags, and homelessness grows. Resources have always been inadequate to the scope of the problem, but this year, voters will be asked to support one statewide and two city bond measures with the potential to generate hundreds of millions of dollars for new Affordable Housing and supportive services. With new resources, we could help low wage workers, seniors, homeless individuals and others at risk in our expensive housing market. In February’s Breakfast Dialogue we asked, “What are the three proposals? And is money the only answer - what else would we need to do to maximize the benefit of additional resources?”

**Panelists included:** Stephen Russell, Executive Director of San Diego Housing Federation; Debbie Ruane, Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer, San Diego Housing Commission; Ginger Hitzke, President, Hitzke Development Company

**Moderator:** Betsy Morris, Housing & Urban Public Policy Specialist, Former President and CEO of the San Diego Housing Commission

“What will San Diego do to stand up for housing?” This is the question Betsy Morris, Moderator for our event, asked to kick off the program. She went on to explain that 15 measures were passed at the state level in California last year for housing, to accomplish a variety of goals including creating permanent sources of funding for the construction of Affordable Housing, but more still needs to be done.

Ms. Morris gave an overview of a new housing bond measure California voters will be asked to approve in November, or [SB3](#), the Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018. If approved the measure will provide a total of \$4 billion among existing programs such as the Farmworker Housing Grant Fund, the CalHome Program for low- and very-low income households to become or remain homeowners, the Infill Incentive Grant Program, and the Transit-Oriented Development Implementation Program, among others.

Steve Russell gave an overview of a bond measure his organization, the [San Diego Housing Federation](#), is sponsoring to “create a safety net for veterans and seniors, and to break the cycle of homelessness”. The bond would raise \$900 million in capital for housing construction and services for the homeless. Mr. Russell made a compelling argument to offer help to people in the bottom rung of housing who have felt the pinch of the housing crisis more than anyone else.

“To understand San Diego’s housing crisis, we need to understand what has happened with housing in San Diego during the last decade”, he said at the beginning of his presentation: 10,000 Single Room Occupancy units lost (torn down) downtown, the rising costs of new housing, and the fact that production of new housing is not keeping pace with job creation, thereby leading to higher costs of existing housing.

Mr. Russell also provided a snapshot of another initiative that will be placed on the ballot which would include funding for housing among other items, referred to as the “[For a Better San Diego](#)” measure. The measure would provide a permanent new source of dedicated funding to address homelessness, specifically to fund homeless programs, and revenues would come from increased visitor taxes.

Debbie Ruane summarized the services – which focus on real estate, rental assistance, and homelessness – provided by the [Housing Commission](#), and their ongoing work with the City to ensure more production of housing, especially Affordable Housing. She spoke in support of the bond measures saying, “We have a political moment of opportunity where housing is recognized to boost our economy, tourism, and affordability. But in order to win, we need more housing”.

Ginger Hitzke talked of the many challenges she faces as a developer of Affordable Housing, including an overview of the costs involved. But she also remarked that “never before had there been so much support for more housing in San Diego, and that’s a good thing”.

C-3 has hosted numerous breakfast dialogues in the past on housing. We were fortunate and pleased to host this one to shine a light on the enormous need for Affordable Housing in particular.

C-3 will take an official position on the housing measures in the future. In general, the production of more housing – especially for the most vulnerable in our society – is supportive of our mission. And we are encouraged to see funding proposals brought forth locally, amongst our local leaders, to complement regulatory reforms also on the table, and create real solutions for San Diegans.

*February 22, 2018  
The House of Hospitality  
Balboa Park*