



TUESDAY | October 23, 2007

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Los Angeles Should Act Now on Affordable Housing



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our Web calendar.](#)

THU | Oct. 25
Joint Meeting—
Transportation & Goods
Movement Committee and
International Trade &
Investment Committee
Featuring John Hummer,
Deputy Secretary of Goods
Movement, California Business,
Transportation and Housing
Agency
[more info](#)

THU | Oct. 25
Land Use, Construction &
Housing Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Oct. 25
Business After Hours—
Eastside Mixer
[more info](#)

TUE | Oct. 30
Economic Outlook Briefing
[more info](#)

TUE | Oct. 30
Rusty Hammer Reception and
Book Signing
[more info](#)

THU-SAT | Nov. 1-3
International Business
University Competition
[more info](#)

MON | Nov. 5
Mobility 21 Summit
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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The current downturn in the nationwide housing market should not cause the City of Los Angeles to take its eye off the important priority of building more housing that is affordable to middle income families.

A human resources manager for any company in our region will tell you that the cost of housing is the single largest impediment to recruiting and retaining a talented workforce. Parents who have raised their children in our region are watching them move to other parts of the country where housing costs less. Teachers, firefighters, police officers, nurses and thousands of other workers must commute long distances several hours each day in order to serve the citizens of L.A. These commutes add congestion to our highways and heighten the possibility that companies will need to move out of L.A. to attract the work force they need.

The California Legislature recognized this crisis in 2004 and passed Senate Bill 1818 to incentivize the construction of more housing, both market rate and affordable. The law encourages cities to enable builders to add a few more housing units to projects in multi-family and commercial zones so that fixed costs can be spread over more homes – with middle class buyers and low-income renters the beneficiaries. The bi-partisan consensus on SB 1818 was overwhelming – it passed the Senate unanimously and only garnered four nay votes in the state Assembly. Each city in California must adopt a local ordinance that complies with the incentives outlined in the bill.

After three years of discussion, deliberation and compromise by a broad range of stakeholders including the city's Planning Department, the business community, nonprofit developers, legal aid organizations and neighborhood groups, the City of Los Angeles is nearing a vote on the implementation of an SB 1818 housing incentives program. After a thorough review by the City Planning Commission, the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee recommended approval to the full City Council.

We urge the City Council to move on this initiative. L.A. needs more affordable housing in every neighborhood and the recommendation before the City Council is vigilant about protecting the character of neighborhoods.

The short supply of housing in the City of Los Angeles has played a major role in increasing the cost. Working families cannot afford to wait any longer. Building more affordable housing is the right thing to do for longstanding citizens and newcomers alike.

And that's the Business Perspective.

Gary L. Toebben
President & CEO
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The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.

by Gary Toebben,
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Angeles Area
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Commerce

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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