



PRESS RELEASE



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City Planning Proposes Ban on Private Detention Centers in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES—City Planning has released a draft proposal to amend the Zoning Code to prohibit the operation and construction of private detention centers. If adopted, it would make Los Angeles the first city in the nation to enact such a ban. Modeled after Assembly Bill 32, the proposed amendment would establish measures to enforce the prohibition, in addition to restricting any accessory uses or incidental activity related to “community detention facilities for unaccompanied minors” and “private detention centers.”

Over the years, the detention system in the United States has locked up hundreds of thousands of immigrants, often exposing detainees to brutal and inhumane conditions at an exorbitant cost to taxpayers. Many of these detainees are asylum seekers, including victims of violence and human trafficking and unaccompanied minors in search of a better life. The urgency of this issue has been compounded in recent months by COVID-19. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) figures, more than 7,300 detainees have tested positive for the virus, and eight have died from it, as of November 2020.

While current federal policy relies on the private sector to detain immigrants, Los Angeles has taken measures to ban private detention activity in the City, recognizing the serious physical and emotional trauma detainees and communities have suffered in private detention. In February, the City Council approved a temporary ban on private detention centers after an Arizona-based firm attempted to open a detention facility under the guise of a “temporary residential facility” in Arleta.

“City Planning is committed to creating long-range policies that are equitable, and just,” said Director of Planning Vince Bertoni. “This proposed zoning amendment will protect our immigrant communities and help ensure that our land is not used to compound inequality and injustice.”

City Planning held a public hearing to collect public testimony on November 12, 2020. The proposed draft amendment will advance to the City Planning Commission December 10, 2020, before moving to the City Council for final consideration.

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