



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Report

Receive a preliminary response to Referral Number 2023.18 (Adams) regarding obtaining data on renters and evictions in the unincorporated Monterey County.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors receive a report on renter and eviction data in the unincorporated Monterey County and provide direction to staff.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On July 25, 2023, Supervisor Adams submitted a referral (Referral No. 2023.18) requesting the development of a method to collect and track data on renters in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County.

The County of Monterey ("County") currently does not have a system to track and collect renter or eviction data in the unincorporated areas. In an effort to obtain renter data for the unincorporated areas, Housing and Community Development ("HCD") obtained housing and renter data from the United States Census Bureau ("Bureau").

The Bureau is a federal agency and is the nation's leading source of data about the United States' people and economy. The Bureau has a significant amount of data on renters at various geographic levels in the United States. This data includes information such as housing unit characteristics, vacancy status, the number of units paying rent and the amount of their rent, the number of occupants per room, and the amount of rental cost as a percentage of household income.

HCD staff have prepared the following renter data summary to review with the Board. Additionally, staff will review a potential method that the County could utilize to track this data.

County staff obtained Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data that spanned from 2010 to 2023. The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides yearly data and collects important economic and demographic data at all geographic levels in the United States. Obtaining this data for the unincorporated areas of Monterey County requires obtaining data for the entire area of Monterey County and then subtracting all incorporated cities.

There is a significant amount of Bureau data available regarding renters, but staff wanted to highlight the following data for the Board today. Staff has included the full data report as **Attachment B**. Staff has additionally summarized some of the key data points below.

- 29% of the housing units in the unincorporated Monterey County are renter-occupied.
- Of the Housing Units in the unincorporated Monterey County, approximately 15% are vacant.
 - o Of the vacant Housing Units in the unincorporated areas, approximately 60% are vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. These are more commonly referred to as non-primary resident homes.
- Approximately 48% of renters in the unincorporated areas in 2010 were paying more than 30% of their household income in rent, whereas in 2023, that percentage increased to approximately 54% of residents.
- The percentage of residents who are paying more than \$3,000 per month for rent increased from 6% in 2015 to 15% in 2023.
- In 2015, almost 30% of households were paying less than \$999 per month for rent; in 2023, that number dropped to 12%.

Referral No. 2023.18 requests that the Board receive information from HCD on the development of a method to track and collect data on renters and evictions in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County. HCD currently does not have a method to track and collect renters' data other than obtaining data from the Bureau. The Bureau provides detailed data that can be used to inform overall trends within Monterey County. If the Board seeks more detailed information on renters in the unincorporated areas, that would require that HCD or another County agency develop a method to track and collect that data.

Evictions

Referral No. 2023.18 also requests renter eviction data from the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office serves evictions warrants when renters refuse to vacate a structure. Serving warrants to evict tenants is the last step in an eviction process. Additionally, data on renter evictions in 2020 through 2022 was impacted by COVID-related policies that froze evictions and once the freeze was lifted, the Sheriff's Office saw an increase in evictions. The numbers below show how many evictions were served by year, but there is no way to know the specifics behind each case without having an employee do the research.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Evictions</u>
2022	264
2023	261
2024	274
2025 (partial year)	88

The Sheriff's Office is currently not collecting any renter's data. There are two employees in the Office that work on specific areas of the unit which are garnishments and accounting. These two employees are assisted by a temporary employee that helps with tasks such as walk-ins, mail, answering phones, restraining orders and evictions. Due to funding constraints, the temporary position will be lost. If additional tasks are assigned to track, monitor, and/or report on renter and eviction data, the Sheriff's Office will need additional resources to perform these tasks.

Rental Registry

HCD staff are aware of many other jurisdictions within the State of California that have a rental

registry. A rental registry generally requires that all rental properties within the jurisdiction register, with some exceptions. Rental registries implemented by other jurisdictions within California usually require that the property owner register the unit on an annual basis and submit some basic information on the unit, such as the unit's square footage; the unit's occupancy status, the number of units registered at that property; the number of bedrooms; the number of bathrooms; the monthly rent; if the tenant receives a housing voucher or other rental subsidy; the Assessor's Parcel Number; and the year the property was built. A rental registry program was recently adopted by some local cities within Monterey County, including the Cities of Monterey and Salinas. Rental registry programs can provide data to jurisdictions that inform policy decisions about the regulation of the rental market.

The development of a rental registry program for the County would require that staff conduct community outreach, research, and draft a new regulatory regime. A rental registry would additionally require dedicated staff to manage the program and ensure a seamless implementation. Implementation efforts would require establishment of registration fees, development of software for tracking of data, development of interfaces the data collected, on-going assistance for tenant and landlord questions, and enforcement of any mandates for registration. At this time, HCD does not have the resources to implement such a program. Additionally, the work to create the program would need to be balanced with the other priorities and projects.

Continue to Use Bureau Data

In lieu of obtaining more detailed data, staff could continue to obtain Bureau data and analyze trends in the data. Staff could, as needed, provide short, summarized reports to the Board that could detail the new Bureau data and note any changes in overall trends. Additionally, based on the Board's direction today, this data could be used by staff to prepare a slate of policy options based on current data trendlines. Staff recommends this option as it does not require the implementation of a new regulatory process and allows staff to use existing high-quality data.

Current Renter Resources

The County and several Monterey County cities use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to provide fair-housing resources. This service has been provided by a non-profit housing organization called Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity (ECHO) in recent years. Other, more targeted programs for housing are also offered through the Department of Social Services and the Veteran's Affairs. HCD is working with ECHO to provide more detailed information on services they provide to unincorporated residents and property owners including the reasons the services were needed. EHCO has reported that many calls and questions are answered by providing education on both sides. ECHO coordinates and refers cases to legal service providers like the California Rural Legal Authority (CRLA) as needed.

HOUSING IMPACTS

- ☐ Reduces constraints on Housing Development
- ☐ Increases constraints on Housing Development
- ☒ Neutral

If the Board directs staff to develop a rental registry program, the initial impact would be added

administrative burdens and fees for property owners/landlords. Property owners and prospective housing developers may view a rental registry requirement as a burden or constraint, particularly on small scales; however, this is likely not a significant factor in rental housing retention or new development. Any fees charged for the registration program have the potential to be passed on through rental rates. A rental registry can increase data and information about rental rates and opportunities and could increase accountability of landlords potentially benefiting renters. The registry program itself will have minimal impacts on housing. Use of data obtained from a registry for future policies on the rental housing could have additional impacts.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

This report has been prepared by HCD. Depending on the Board's direction today, HCD would consult with other departments as needed.

FINANCING:

As recommended, there will be no impact on the General Fund. If the Board desires that HCD add the development of a rental registry to its Long Range Workplan, this would require the dedication and prioritization of staff time and resources. Additionally, if the Board desires HCD to develop a rental registry this would likely require additional staff positions to ensure the program could be developed and implemented.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The proposed policy supports the Board's Economic Development, Health & Human Services, and Administration initiatives by providing additional information to the Board and the public on renter data in the unincorporated County and on potential methods to collect and develop a tracking method for rental units and evictions in the unincorporated County.

- ☒ Economic Development
- ☒ Administration
- ☒ Health & Human Services
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Public Safety

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Reviewed by: Craig Spencer, Director of Housing and Community Development

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

Attachment A - Referral No 2023.18

Attachment B - United States Census Bureau Data for the Unincorporated County of Monterey