



February 2, 2025

Riverside Mayor and City Council
City Hall
3900 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92522

CC: Riverside City Manager, Mike Futrell

Via email:

City_Clerk@riversideca.gov, DGause@riversideca.gov, pdawson@riversideca.gov, pfallcone@riversideca.gov, ccervantes@riversideca.gov, SRobillard@riversideca.gov, cconder@riversideca.gov, smill@riversideca.gov, jperry@riversideca.gov, shemenway@riversideca.gov, AHolcomb@riversideca.gov, mbruns@riversideca.gov, SGarcia@riversideca.gov, REngles@riversideca.gov, SArellano@riversideca.gov, MMaldonado@riversideca.gov, llagunas@riversideca.gov, lvega@riversideca.gov, MKruse@riversideca.gov

Re: Urgent Action Needed - Reconsider City Council Vote on Quality Inn Project

Dear Riverside City Leaders:

We write to bring your immediate attention to a January 13, 2026 council vote rejecting a \$20.1 million state grant and the use of \$9.5 million in federal and state grant funding to convert the Quality Inn Motel into apartments for low income and unhoused residents. This vote not only has devastating policy consequences but also raises serious legal questions. The goal of this letter is to ask the City to reconsider its position in light of its legal obligations under its Housing Element and fair housing laws.

This proposal was initially brought to the Riverside City Council from the Riverside Housing Development Corporation (RHDC) in February 2025. It called for remodeling 114 hotel rooms into studio apartments prioritizing low-income residents and people who are unsheltered. City staff explained during the council meeting that this is a **one-time funding opportunity from the state to address the need for permanent supportive housing**, and it is unclear whether the City will have another such opportunity in the foreseeable future.

At least one of the members who voted no on this proposal expressed opposition to the Housing First model, the state's evidence-backed approach to providing housing for unsheltered Californians.¹ Several of the comments during the meeting were based on unfounded stereotypes or animus against unhoused community members.

¹ See California Welfare & Institutions Code § 8255.

The rejection of this proposal will undoubtedly have a major impact on the City's affordable housing goals. The City's Housing First Plan commits to, "Housing First as a best practice approach to address homelessness, and specifically to using the supportive housing intervention that is characterized as deeply affordable housing paired with wrap-around supportive services targeted at hard-to-serve homeless households with a disability."² The City's legally enforceable Housing Element relies on its Housing First Policy and commits to the creation of new, deeply affordable housing units like the proposed project.³

ACLU SoCal and partner organizations are investigating this City Council vote and how this impacts the City's ongoing legal commitments, including under the City's Housing Element. We strongly encourage the City to reconsider its vote, paying particular attention to how the City will meet its legal obligations under its Housing Element and other fair housing laws without the approval of this project.

We are available as a resource, and we are happy to discuss this matter by phone. We can be reached by phone at 213.977.5278 or by email at kr Rogers@aclusocal.org. Thank you in advance for your prompt reconsideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Kath Rogers
Senior Staff Attorney

² City of Riverside, Housing First Strategy, pg. 1, March 13, 2018, available at: <https://riversideca.gov/sites/default/files/ohs/pdf/Housing%20First%20Plan%20CC%20Approval.pdf>

³ See e.g. City of Riverside Housing Element, 2021-2019, at pg. 27, available at: <https://riversideca.gov/cedd/sites/riversideca.gov.chedd/files/pdf/planning/general-plan/2023/2022-09%20Final%20Certified%20HE%20Technical%20Background%20Report.pdf>