

Summary of the March 13, 2025 Listening Session

Logistics

- This listening session was held virtually over Zoom and started at 6:30pm.
- Deputy City Manager Katie Wand and City Attorney Alisha Patterson gave a presentation, which is included in this Attachment for reference. The presentation included draft ordinance language and the attendees were invited to provide feedback on the draft language.
- There were ~8 people in attendance.

Feedback on Draft Language

- Threatening an individual with physical harm and threatening disclosure of personal information should apply to all forms of harassment (i.e., tenant-on-landlord, tenant-on-tenant, and landlord-on-tenant). Several speakers expressed that if an ordinance is adopted, it should include all forms of harassment, not just landlord-on-tenant.
- There needs to be a clear definition of harassment, not broad language. One speaker provided specific examples of what language should be included:
 - Tenants may not use ordinance to avoid paying rent.
 - Landlords should not face retaliation for enforcing their rights when tenants break the lease.
- If an ordinance is adopted, it should prohibit any party from making false claims based on information they know or should know is incorrect. Several speakers expressed that an ordinance would need safeguards in place to ensure it is not abused by landlords or tenants.
- If an ordinance is adopted, the City should be sure that it is distributing the ordinance to all impacted parties, especially smaller “mom and pop” landlords. One speaker stated that they do not want smaller landlords to inadvertently violate an ordinance that they didn’t know anything about. Another speaker stated that they are opposed ordinance language that would impose excessive financial penalties that could be onerous on small landlords.
- Several speakers expressed concern that the City does not have data on landlord-on-tenant harassment and/or the effectiveness of a self-governing ordinance. One speaker stated that landlords who act in good faith should not be treated the same as those who may be “bad actors.” Several speakers stated that there are already county and state laws that protect tenants from harassment, so adopting this ordinance would be redundant.

Summary of the March 20, 2025 Listening Session

Logistics

- This listening session was held in-person in the Padua Room at the Alexander Hughes Community Center. The listening session started at 6:30pm. The meeting was not recorded or live-streamed.
- Deputy City Manager Katie Wand and City Attorney Alisha Patterson gave a presentation, which is included in this Attachment for reference. The presentation included draft ordinance language and the attendees were invited to provide feedback on the draft language.
- There were ~11 people in attendance.

Feedback on Draft Language

- Some attendees (tenants) expressed some concern over language that is too vague, specifically in the areas of tenant-on-landlord and tenant-on-tenant harassment. Some examples of issues that could arise include:
 - If a tenant is complaining about another tenant, is there only one complainant? If so, how can harassment be determined?
 - How would it be known if other tenants have actually moved out due to the actions of another tenant?
 - Could loud children or babies crying be examples of disruptive behavior that justifies harassment?
 - If a tenant asks a property manager too many questions, could that be considered harassment?
- Several attendees voiced that threatening to disclose private information or call ICE should apply to tenant-on-landlord and tenant-on-tenant harassment as well as landlord-on-tenant.
- Some tenants expressed general concern with landlord-on-tenant protections in an ordinance because of the power differential between landlords and tenants. If a tenant is violating the terms of their lease, then the landlord can evict the tenant if they breach any of these terms. Tenants do not have this power. Tenants have very little recourse (other than leaving) if a landlord is harassing them.
- Some tenants are concerned that providing written notice of harassment will result in escalation/worse harassment but also feel that notice is good to prove intent (i.e., You were told it was harassment and kept doing it.) There should also be consideration of a notice period being waived if there is retaliation.
- Several attendees feel as though 30 days is too long for corrective action. It may be appropriate for “catchall” items, but it should not take 30 days to give a parking space back or fix maintenance issues. Staff was asked to consider different notice periods for different types of violations, depending on how long it takes to fix. There was also discussion of possibly shortening the notice period but allowing extensions if the other party is making diligent progress towards corrective action.
- Language that clarifies “entry into unit” and “catchall” items are very important for tenants. Other specific requests included:
 - A landlord should not be allowed to refuse a tenant access to their original lease agreement or refuse to provide the tenant with a copy of their lease agreement/addendums to lease.
 - The ordinance should only allow landlord to enter when tenant is present and should be required to work with tenant on day/time of access, unless it is an emergency matter. Landlords should also comply with existing laws that require them to tell tenant ahead of time what specifically access is needed for. Providing 24-hour notice (absent an emergency) should be the bare minimum, not the standard. Every attempt should be made by the landlord to schedule entry when a tenant can be present. Several tenants report that their landlords do not give reasonable notice or time periods (i.e., a two or three hour window should be provided, not 9am to 5pm, which is effectively all day) and that additional work or inspections are done without proper notice.

- There should be a provision in the ordinance that prohibits landlords from telling people where tenants lived or confirming tenants live in specific units. This could be reciprocal to apply to tenant-on-landlord harassment.
- One attendee expressed concern over having this ordinance and stated that in the City of Los Angeles, no one wants to own rental properties anymore because its ordinance is so restrictive that it is miserable for everybody. Any ordinance adopted by the Claremont City Council should be reasonable for both landlords and tenants. Landlord/tenant conduct or related matters should be addressed in a lease, not an ordinance.
- Landlords withdrawing amenities (i.e., parking spaces, on-site laundry, etc.) should be prohibited by ordinance.
- If an ordinance is adopted, several attendees had questions as to how the ordinance would be disseminated to property managers, property owners, tenants, occupants, etc. There was a suggestion that in addition to outreach conducted by City staff, that the ordinance should require landlords provide notice of the ordinance in connection with new or renewed leases. It would also be helpful if the City prepared a “fact sheet” to direct tenants to source material from which they can learn what their respective rights and responsibilities are.

Note from Staff

PATH Consulting is a policy consulting student organization at Claremont McKenna College that works with individuals in local government. PATH expressed interest in attending the listening sessions and producing a report based on the feedback that was received from the public. The report that was submitted to staff by PATH is included in this Attachment for reference.

The background image shows a park scene. In the foreground, there is a large, modern sculpture made of curved metal plates, some of which are inscribed with names. The sculpture is set on a concrete base. To the left, there is a red brick path and some landscaping with green plants and flowers. In the background, there are trees and a building with a tiled roof. A semi-transparent green rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

Anti-Harassment Ordinance Listening Sessions

March 13 and 20, 2025



Purpose of Meeting

- City staff has prepared a brief overview/presentation, but the majority of the meeting is reserved for feedback from the community. When we open public comment, attendees are encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback on the Anti-Harassment Ordinance.
- City Council will consider an Anti-Harassment Ordinance in spring 2025.



Community Listening Sessions

- No decisions will be made during tonight's meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to gather feedback from the community (including landlords and tenants) on an Anti-Harassment Ordinance.
- Councilmembers may be in attendance to listen only, but will not participate. If you wish to speak to a Councilmember, you may contact them outside of this meeting.



Background

- On January 1, 2020, the California Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482) established an annual rent cap of five percent plus inflation, or ten percent, whichever is lower. However, AB 1482 allows evictions through “substantial remodel evictions”, landlords are allowed to raise rent past AB 1482 caps once the remodel is completed.
- In 2022, several Claremont residents who are long-time renters in large complexes reported that their landlords were threatening to evict them so they could “substantially remodel” their unit and raise rents.



Background

- In response to these concerns, at its regular meeting on October 25, 2022, the City Council approved an urgency ordinance and a regular ordinance that placed a six-month temporary moratorium on certain “no fault” residential evictions due to property owner’s intent to substantially remodel the tenant’s unit in the City of Claremont.
- At that time, the City Council also directed staff to conduct community outreach to gather feedback on additional tenant protection ordinances.
- After the community listening sessions held on February 8 and 15, 2023, the City Council adopted a Just Cause Eviction” Ordinance on May 23, 2023, which went into effect on June 22, 2023.



Background

- In June 2023, at the direction of the City Council, staff invited community stakeholders to meet and discuss a potential Anti-Harassment Ordinance.
- While the intent of the meeting was to discuss the framework and substance of an Anti-Harassment Ordinance on a conceptual level and to work towards recommendations that could be shared with the City Council, stakeholders recommended a lot more research and work be done before an ordinance can be presented to Council.



Background

At the February 11, 2025 City Council meeting, staff asked Council for policy direction on four key decisions:

1. Should the Temporary Housing Stabilization and Relocation Program be phased out once LACAHSa establishes a permanent rental assistance program funded by Measure A?
2. Does the majority of the City Council want to adopt the Anti-Harassment Ordinance as proposed?
3. Does the City Council wish to pursue a contract for third-party dispute resolution/mediation services, for which the City would pay to provide said services to assist with housing provider/tenant disputes at no cost to the housing provider/tenant?
4. Should staff move forward with the next steps to establish a Claremont Rent Registry?



Background

During the meeting, the Council voted as follows:

1. Maintain the Claremont Temporary Housing Stabilization and Relocation Program through Program Cycle 4 and re-evaluate once the Los Angeles County Affordable Housing Solutions Agency (LACAHS) produces a program budget for a permanent rental assistance program using Measure A funds, which would be administered at a regional level.
2. Introduced an Anti-Harassment Ordinance and directed staff to conduct stakeholder outreach before second reading of the ordinance.
3. Not to pursue a contract for third-party dispute resolution/mediation services as these resources are already available through LA County.
4. The motion to move forward with the next steps to establish a Claremont Rental Registry failed. The Council directed staff to bring the matter back if the FPPC determines Councilmember Reece does not have a conflict of interest and can participate.



Background

- During the meeting, the Council discussed other forms of harassment that should be explored before the second reading.
- The Council directed staff to explore a reciprocal anti-harassment ordinance that also prohibits “tenant on landlord” and “tenant on tenant” harassment (instead of only prohibiting “landlord on tenant” harassment).
- The Council also directed staff to invite stakeholders to be a part of the process. This direction brings us to today’s session.



Landlord/Tenant Disputes

- The City of Claremont does not have its own housing authority and does not get involved in private landlord/tenant disputes.
- If a landlord or tenant contacts the City regarding questions specific to their lease/rental agreement, they are advised to utilize the services provided by LA County and/or to seek advice from their own attorney.
- If the Claremont City Council ultimately approves an Anti-Harassment Ordinance, City staff would still have no direct role in landlord/tenant disputes.



Resources

- The City does not and cannot provide legal advice to citizens (this includes landlords and tenants)
- AB-1482 Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (State law)
- Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (general legal assistance) - nls-la.org
- Stay Housed L.A. - stayhousedla.org
- City of Claremont webpage - claremontca.gov/City-Services/Housing/Tenant-Assistance



Draft Language – Tenant Harassment

Tenant harassment is prohibited. Tenant harassment is defined as a landlord's knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific tenant or tenants that causes detriment and harm, and that serves no lawful purpose, including, but not limited to, the following actions:

- A. Reducing or eliminating housing services required by a lease, contract, or law, including the elimination of parking if provided in the tenant's lease or contract except when necessary to comply with a court order or local, state, or federal law, or to create an accessory dwelling unit or additional housing
- B. Failing to perform and timely complete necessary repairs and maintenance required by local, state, or federal housing, health, or safety laws; or failure to follow applicable local, state, or federal laws to minimize exposure to noise, dust, lead paint, asbestos, or other building materials with potentially harmful health impacts.
- C. Abusing the right of access into a rental unit as established and limited by California Civil Code Section 1954, including entering, photographing, or filming portions of a rental unit that are beyond the scope of a lawful entry or inspection.
- D. Threatening a tenant, by word or gesture, with physical harm.



(continued)

- E. Misrepresenting to a tenant that the tenant is required to vacate a rental unit through an intentional misrepresentation or through intentional concealment or intentional omission of a material fact.
- F. Threatening or taking action to terminate any tenancy including service of any notice to quit or other eviction notice or bringing action to recover possession of a rental unit based on one or more facts which the landlord either knows to be false or could have determined through reasonable diligence were false. No landlord shall be liable under this subsection for bringing an action to recover possession of a rental unit unless and until the tenant has obtained a favorable termination of that action.
- G. Threatening to engage or engaging in any act or omission which renders the rental unit unfit for human habitation and occupancy
- H. Refusing to acknowledge or accept receipt of lawful rent payments of rent or other charges as set forth in the lease agreement or as established by the usual practice of the parties or applicable law.
- I. Inquiring as to the immigration or citizenship status of a tenant, prospective additional tenant, occupant, or prospective additional occupant of a rental unit, or requiring any of these people to make any statement, representation, or certification concerning their immigration or citizenship status.



(continued)

- J. Disclosing or threatening to disclose to any person or entity information regarding the immigration or citizenship status of a tenant, whether in retaliation for engaging in legally protected activities, to influence them to vacate the rental unit, or for any other reason. No landlord shall be liable under this subsection for disclosing information pursuant to a lawful court order.
- K. Retaliating, threatening to retaliate, or interfering with tenant organizing activities, including forming or participating in tenant associations and unions.
- L. Demanding information from a tenant that violates the tenant's right to privacy, including, but not limited to, demanding disclosure of the tenant's residency or citizenship status or social security number, except as authorized by law
- M. Other repeated intentional acts or omissions of such significance as to substantially interfere with or disturb the comfort, repose, peace, or quiet of a tenant(s) and that cause, are likely to cause, or are committed with the objective to cause a tenant(s) to surrender or waive any rights in relation to such tenancy.



Draft Language – Landlord Harassment

Landlord harassment is prohibited. Landlord harassment is defined as a tenant's knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a landlord that causes detriment and harm, and that serves no lawful purpose, including, but not limited to, the following actions:

- A. Threatening the tenant's landlord, by word or gesture, with physical harm
- B. Threatening to engage or engaging in any intentional act or omission which renders the tenant's rental unit or any other rental unit in the same building or complex of commonly-owned buildings unfit for human habitation and occupancy.
- C. Other repeated intentional acts or omissions of such significance as to substantially interfere with or disturb the comfort, repose, peace, or quiet of the landlord or one or more other tenant(s) in the same building or complex of commonly-owned buildings and that cause, are likely to cause, or are committed with the objective to cause the landlord or other tenant(s) to remove one or more rental units from the market or surrender or waive any rights in relation to such tenancy.



Draft Language – Tenant on Tenant Harassment

Tenant-on-tenant harassment is prohibited. Tenant-on-tenant harassment is defined as a tenant's knowing and willful course of conduct directed at another tenant of the same building or complex of commonly-owned buildings that causes detriment and harm, and that serves no lawful purpose, including, but not limited to, the following actions:

- A. Threatening another tenant, by word or gesture, with physical harm.
- B. Threatening to engage or engaging in any intentional act or omission which renders another tenant's rental unit unfit for human habitation and occupancy.
- C. Other repeated intentional acts or omissions of such significance as to substantially interfere with or disturb the comfort, repose, peace, or quiet of one or more other tenant(s) and that cause, are likely to cause, or are committed with the objective to cause one or more other tenant(s) to surrender or waive any rights in relation to such tenancy.



Draft Language – Consequences of Harassment

- Affirmative defense for tenants facing eviction
 - A tenant may use the protections afforded in the ordinance as an affirmative defense in unlawful detainer, ejectment, and other actions when their landlord engages in actions constituting tenant harassment as defined in this article and other applicable laws.
- Private right of action with monetary penalties
 - A landlord or tenant who prevails in court under the ordinance may be awarded civil penalties up to \$10,000 per violation, with up to an additional \$5,000 per violation for prevailing landlords/tenants who are 65 years or older, or are persons with disabilities.



Public Comment

- Each person will get 3 continuous minutes to ask questions and/or share their public comment.
- Staff will respond to audience questions. Questions that require additional research will be addressed in an FAQ document (posted on the City's website).
- Questions/comments received during this meeting will be compiled and shared with the City Council prior to their consideration of the ordinances in spring 2025.



Public Comment



Claremont's Housing Harassment Ordinance in Context

Comparative Policy Analysis and Community Response for Council Consideration

Jaden Andrews

Deborah Aguirre

Asher Carriero

Eleanor Halaby

PATH CONSULTING

CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

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1 | BACKGROUND

The Anti-Harassment Ordinance is a proposal from the City of Claremont staff that would be a standalone chapter in Claremont's Municipal Code. This ordinance would apply to all renters and landlords, not just those under the protection of the existing Just Cause Eviction Ordinance. It aims to protect tenants from harassment or retaliation by landlords, housing providers, or their representatives. Additionally, the ordinance seeks to expand upon existing state law protections, which protect tenants from discrimination. The ordinance aims to address various forms of housing harassment, such as issues related to tenant safety and enjoyment of their properties, and incorporate penalties and enforcement measures to ensure landlords comply with these protections. The Anti-Harassment Ordinance was first addressed in June 2023 when the Claremont City Council invited community stakeholders to meet and discuss the proposal. These stakeholders included tenant groups, housing associations, and providers. The goal of the meeting was to examine the framework of the ordinance and create a recommendation for the City Council.

During the meeting, participants discussed the complexity of the ordinance and considered possible alternatives, such as a mediation service. They also conducted a survey of Claremont's rental housing community and gathered feedback from tenants and providers while researching how other cities enforce their anti-harassment laws. After reviewing the data, it was determined that further research and more community and stakeholder engagement were needed before the ordinance could be passed. The staff recommended putting the ordinance on hold following the initial meeting, citing the need for significant city staff oversight and enforcement, resources that were deemed too costly given the lukewarm community engagement.

As a result, on March 12, 2024, the City Council decided against pursuing the ordinance that would require dedicated city staff to resolve disputes between tenants and housing providers. Instead, they opted for a more self-directed approach. This revised approach would still address the issue of harassment but would require much less city intervention. It would establish a framework that landlords and tenants could follow independently, with an emphasis on mediation and community input. The city council plans to engage directly with the public and gather feedback on the progress of the ordinance before fully adopting it into the city's code.

2 | EXISTING POLICY

The City of Claremont's draft tenant harassment ordinance aims to provide clear protections against landlord and tenant harassment in residential housing. It seeks to expand existing state law to prevent more specific instances of disruptive or abusive behavior undermining stability within a housing area. The draft ordinance clarifies existing definitions of harassment, defining it

as knowing and willful conduct with no lawful purpose that causes harm, disruption, or intimidation in a housing context.

General laws exist to prevent discrimination and harassment in a broader context. The California Fair Employment and Housing Act also prohibits discrimination in all aspects of housing. Another law that helps address the potential abuse of power of landlords is California Civil Code §1954, which limits the entry of landlords to a tenant's residence to emergency situations or with consent from the tenant. Additionally, general harassment procedures exist for the entire state, outlined in California Code of Civil Procedure §527.6. In this code, harassment is defined as

“unlawful violence, a credible threat of violence, or a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person that seriously alarms, annoys, or harasses the person, and that serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be that which would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress and must actually cause substantial emotional distress to the petitioner.”

California Code §527.6 allows victims to seek temporary restraining orders and compensation from their harassers. The broad definition allows for various circumstances to fall under the conditions of the code, allowing all categories of harassment and forms of it to be taken into account.

The two most relevant state laws for anti-harassment in the housing context are California Civil Code §1940.2 and §789.3. While these laws establish a basic foundation, they are limited in scope and application. Civil Code §1940.2 prohibits landlords from using threats, fraud, intimidation, or unauthorized entry to influence tenants to vacate and allows a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 per violation. Civil Code §789.3 prohibits landlords from willfully shutting off utilities, removing windows or doors, or changing locks to intimidate tenants. Tenants may receive compensation for damages according to this code, up to \$100 per day, in addition to attorney's fees and injunctive relief.

While these laws address some of the most overt forms of landlord misconduct, they fall short in key areas. They do not provide clear definitions for many commonly reported forms of harassment, such as verbal abuse, coercive buyout offers, or harassment related to tenant organizing. They do not create any local enforcement mechanisms or require landlords to inform tenants of their rights. The financial penalties are limited and may not be sufficient to deter repeat or intentional violators. Additionally, the protections only apply to landlord-to-tenant conduct and exclude other dynamics, such as tenant-to-tenant harassment or retaliation from other actors in a housing context.

Other California laws, like Civil Code §1954 (about entry rules) and Code of Civil Procedure §527.6 (about civil harassment), can provide extra help in certain cases like lawsuits or restraining orders. However, these laws are broad, harder to invoke without legal assistance, and not tailored to the realities of rental housing disputes. Their general language makes them less effective for resolving tenant harassment problems in a targeted and timely way.

Several California cities have recognized the limitations of the California Civil Code and adopted their own, more detailed tenant harassment ordinances. This report examines local ordinances in Los Angeles, Burbank, Chula Vista, San Jose, and Antioch. While these ordinances vary in scope and detail, they share a commitment to providing tenants with more specific protections, more expansive definitions of harassment, and more meaningful remedies. Antioch stands out as the most comprehensive.

Los Angeles offers a detailed ordinance with specific examples of prohibited behavior, including verbal abuse, buyout coercion, threats based on immigration status, and retaliation for tenant organizing. It includes enhanced penalties, additional protections for seniors and disabled tenants, and affirmative legal defenses. San Jose has expansive definitions of harassment and a wide range of remedies, including triple damages, injunctions, and attorney's fees. They also explicitly protect tenant organizing and prohibit intimidation based on language or immigration status. Burbank's 2025 draft is modeled closely on Los Angeles and San Jose. It incorporates strong anti-retaliation language and includes protections for online and sexual harassment. Chula Vista's ordinance is narrower, reflecting state law more closely. It includes protections against utility shutoffs, entry abuse, and verbal threats but does not address buyouts, sexual harassment, or retaliation related to tenant advocacy. Antioch combines many of these approaches and adds criminal penalties, mandatory landlord notices, and penalties as high as \$10,000 per violation. It is the only city reviewed that includes both civil and criminal enforcement options.

Table 1 (see next page) summarizes the differences between California Civil Code, the five examined cities, and Claremont's draft ordinance. Claremont's draft covers many similar issues to the other ordinances and those covered in state law. It does distinguish itself by including tenant-on-tenant and tenant-on-landlord harassment—an approach not found in any other reviewed ordinance. Its emphasis on “knowing and willful” conduct without lawful purpose also raises the threshold for enforcement, potentially reducing ambiguity. However, the draft omits several provisions that have become standard in stronger tenant protections elsewhere, including prohibitions on coercive buyouts, rent hike threats, and sexual harassment, as well as notice requirements and criminal penalties.

Table 1							
Provision	CA State	LA	Burbank	Chula Vista	San Jose	Antioch	Claremont
Threats/Coercion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Failure to Repair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utility Shut Off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Abuse of Entry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Immigration Harassment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Verbal Abuse	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sexual Harassment	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
False Legal Info	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denies Rent Payment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Privacy Violations	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Organizing Interference	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Discrimination	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coercive Buyouts	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Retaliatory Rent Hikes	No	Partial	Partial	No	Yes	Yes	No
Affirmative Defense	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Private Right of Action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enhanced Damages	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seniors/Disabled Penalties	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attorney's Fees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Injunctive Relief	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Criminal Penalties	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Notice Requirement	No	Partial	No	No	No	Yes	No

3 | PUBLIC COMMENT

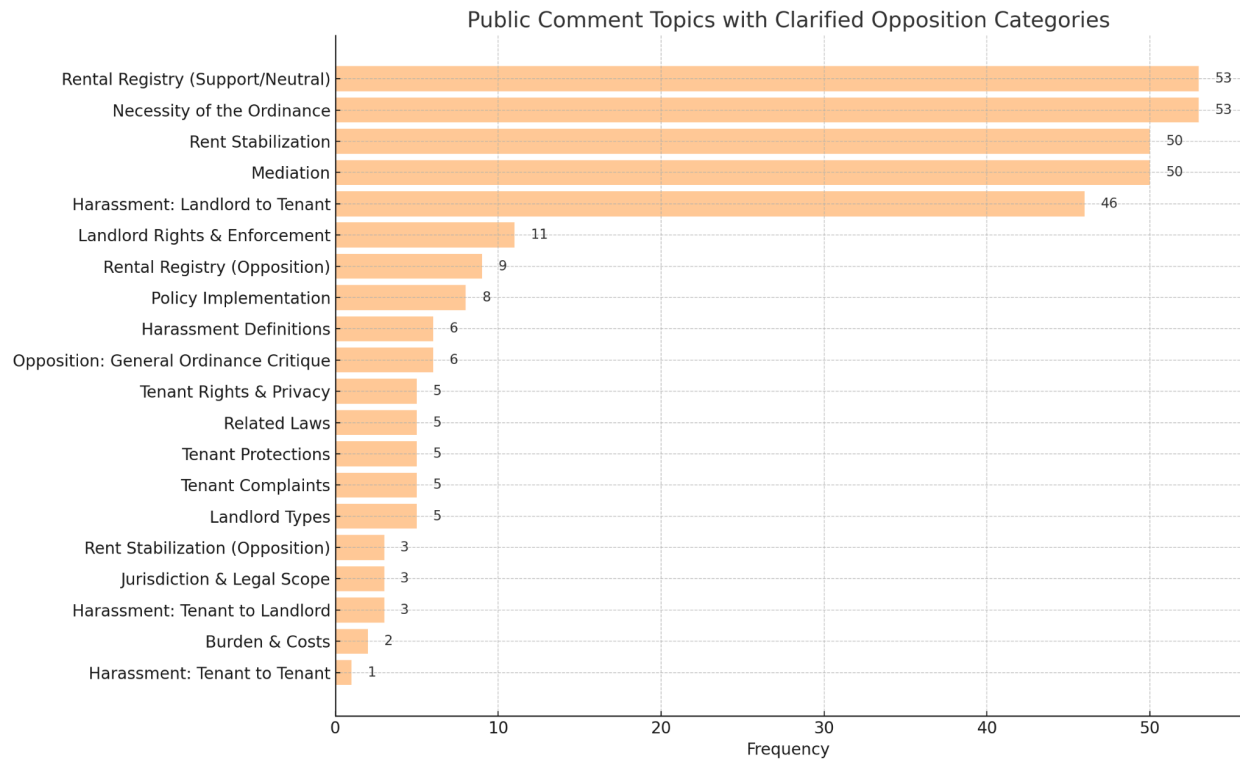
METHOD

Given the council's emphasis on community engagement as a cornerstone of the revised policy direction, a thematic analysis was conducted using community feedback from the February public comment and the two town hall meetings for the ordinance. The city had already acknowledged that initial community input was limited and inconsistent, prompting the shift toward a more collaborative and less top-down enforcement approach. As such, capturing and analyzing resident voices became essential to ensure the revised policy is responsive to tenant needs and concerns.

Using *Quirkos*, a thematic analysis software that organizes data based on prevalence, our team coded and categorized recurring themes in town hall comments. We identified key issues such as rent stabilization, landlord harassment of tenants, the necessity of the ordinance, and concerns over the rental registry. The thematic analysis prioritized which issues should be addressed in the revised ordinance. This method provided a structured way to incorporate public feedback into the policy process, which aligns with the City Council's stated intention to "engage directly with the public and gather feedback" before finalizing the ordinance.

By grounding both the comparative and thematic analyses in the challenges and decisions Claremont has already faced—particularly the concerns around enforceability, cost, and community input—this methodology ensures that our recommendations are both context-sensitive and evidence-based. The findings from these analyses support a policy framework that is enforceable, equitable, and aligned with community needs, while also reflecting successful practices from across California.

RESULTS



The thematic analysis of public comments from the two town hall meetings revealed strong community support for the Tenant Protection Ordinance and a general urgency for its passage. A majority of speakers expressed that the policy should be enacted promptly to address long-standing issues facing Claremont renters. Rising rental prices and the threat of being priced out of Claremont emerged as the most pressing concerns among residents, reflecting a widespread fear of housing instability and displacement.

The council has delayed the rental registry, but it is still one of the most divisive issues in the public comment reviewed. Community members were largely split, some advocating fervently for the registry, while others opposed it, citing concerns about bureaucracy, privacy, and implementation burden. This division was particularly evident in written feedback, where the rental registry was both praised as essential and criticized as intrusive.

Landlord harassment of tenants was one of the main recurring themes. Several community members recounted or referenced experiences of intimidation or unfair treatment, reinforcing the need for stronger tenant protections and more accessible enforcement mechanisms. These testimonies underscored the limitations of current systems and the potential of the ordinance to

address such power imbalances, empowering tenants to take action individually against potential landlord abuses.

Importantly, feedback also reflected a divide in landlord perspectives. While some property owners were vocal in their opposition to the ordinance, a subset of “mom and pop” landlords emphasized their support for balanced policy. These landlords asked not to be equated with large corporate entities and expressed a desire for regulation that acknowledges their distinct position in the rental landscape.

It is also worth noting that an unusually high volume of written comments came from a student organization at the Claremont Colleges known as Inclusive Claremont. All of their emails strongly advocated for the ordinance as well as the rental registry. While these perspectives are valuable, the views of 5C students should be considered with caution, as they represent a disproportionate share of the input and, as temporary residents, may not have a direct stake in long-term issues like the anti-harassment ordinance or rental registry.

4 | POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Expand the definition of harassment to match regional practices.

While Claremont’s draft ordinance already includes many critical protections—such as prohibitions on verbal abuse, privacy violations, discrimination, and intimidation—it can be strengthened by incorporating provisions adopted in peer cities. Based on our comparative analysis and community feedback, we recommend adding the following:

- *Sexual Harassment:* Include protections against unwanted sexual conduct and gender-based intimidation
- *Coercive buyout offers:* Prohibit repeated offers to vacate a unit without proper disclosures
- *Retaliatory Rent Increases:* Prevent landlords from raising rent in retaliation for tenant complaints
- *Notice of rights:* Require that landlords provide written notice of rights and protections at beginning or renewal of tenancy
- *Criminal Penalties (in addition to civil):* Consider limited criminal penalties for egregious or repeated violations, in addition to civil remedies. While only Antioch includes such measures, they may serve as a stronger deterrent in cases where civil enforcement is insufficient or inaccessible, especially since the anti-harassment ordinance is intended to be self-governing.

These additions reflect practices in Los Angeles, San Jose, and Antioch that help close remaining gaps in the ordinance and ensure clarity for all parties. The public comments emphasized that harassment is an ongoing issue between tenants and landlords within the community, and these additions will ensure full protection and compliance.

Recommendation #2: Differentiate between smaller and larger landlords.

The ordinance should distinguish between small-scale “mom-and-pop” landlords and larger corporate landlords who can handle enforcement differently. Public opinion touched upon the disproportionate financial burden that the ordinance could place on small landlords. This tiered penalty system will promote compliance without penalizing those with limited legal or administrative support. To ensure equitable enforcement, we recommend adopting a tiered penalty system that accounts for scale and capacity based on the number of units owned:

- *First-time or small-scale landlords:* Receive reduced fines, warnings, or extended grace periods
- *Large or repeat offenders:* Highest penalties should be applied, given greater operational capacity and regulation familiarity

Recommendation #3: Promote outreach and shared understanding to prevent misuse.

To ensure the ordinance is applied fairly and effectively, we recommend Claremont implement a comprehensive outreach and education campaign aimed at tenants and landlords. Many concerns were expressed regarding the possible misuse of the ordinance and confusion over enforcement. By ensuring that all parties understand their rights and protections, the city can reduce unintentional violations and create compliance through clarity, not just punishment.

Some examples of outreach could include flyers, online resources, an FAQ page, and public sessions to walk through the ordinance, how it works, and where to go for help.

Recommendation #4: Introduce a sunset clause that requires mandatory review every 3-5 years to assess effectiveness.

This ensures that the ordinance remains relevant to the people of Claremont. The city can measure if it is achieving its intended outcomes through public outreach. This allows responses to concerns from both the city and the public regarding ordinance effectiveness. Transparency was a core value of stakeholders in public comment, and demonstrating that the ordinance is not static builds trust with the community.

Recommendation #5: Implement an online incident form for transparency and oversight.

We recommend establishing an online incident form that individuals must complete when invoking the ordinance in a tenant-landlord dispute to support the ordinance's self-governing nature without placing additional administrative burdens on the city. This form would serve as a non-enforcement tool to collect data and help identify patterns of misuse or unintended consequences. Additionally, the form could be anonymized and create a repository of examples to inform future improvements. It also offers the city a minimal approach to monitoring effectiveness, eliminating the need for formal mediation and staffing. A person could submit the form at the time of filing a formal complaint, thereby easing concerns about legitimacy and enforcement. The public desired impartiality and fairness from the city, and this form could promote accountability for all parties, including the city.

Recommendation #6: Reconsider the rental registry in the future after ordinance implementation.

While the city council rejected the rental registry recently, public feedback revealed continued interest in its potential benefits. Many residents believe that the registry is a tool to support compliance, enhance transparency, and add another layer of accountability for all parties. Given the mixed public response, we recommend that the city revisit the rental registry following the implementation of the anti-harassment ordinance. Once the ordinance has been in place for some time, the city will be in a stronger position to evaluate whether the registry is needed to protect tenants further and track patterns of complaints. However, recommendation #5 is a temporary solution that can be implemented in the meantime.

Further reconsideration should be informed by community feedback, lessons from the anti-harassment ordinance, and a reevaluation of the benefits.