

Use of Motels as Interim Shelters/Housing for Chronic Homeless Individuals

In the 2019 Homeless Count, the number of chronically homeless rose 17%, from 13,275 to 15,540. We know that housing this vulnerable population is a challenge and we need to explore all housing options available. One of the most effective ways to immediately secure safe and secure housing for homeless residents is the use of motels.

Today, however, due to their price, motel vouchers are reserved exclusively for the most vulnerable residents, primarily families with children. This leaves tens of thousands of additional homeless residents languishing on our streets, unsheltered, while motel rooms across the county remain empty.

The high price of motel vouchers is due, in part, to the County’s current and ineffective purchasing policy, whereby community-based organizations approach motel operators and ask to purchase vacant rooms at the motel. This leads to inflated costs and less vouchers purchased. A smarter model would involve the County purchasing some or all of the rooms in a motel ahead of time, using a Master Lease Agreement, thereby “buying in bulk,” and saving tax-dollars. In one instance, LAHSA’s use of a Master

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

BARGER _____

HAHN _____

Agreement to purchase motel rooms lowered costs significantly. It's clear that this model needs to be dramatically expanded.

In the wake of the current homeless crisis, it is imperative that Los Angeles County harness its immense purchasing power to drive down the cost of motel vouchers by aggressively pursuing master lease agreements with motels to house chronically homeless individuals.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer in collaboration with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Los Angeles County Development Authority, Department of Mental Health, Department of Health Services and other stakeholders to report back in 30 days with a plan to:

- a. Identify at least one motel in each SPA with which the County can enter into master lease agreements to shelter homeless individuals; and
- b. Evaluate the feasibility of turning the motel parking lots into "Safe Parking". The plan should include evaluation of the cost of outreach workers, security and services at each site.

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JH:lo