

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND  
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**Urgent Housing Initiative for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness**

This year, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s (LAHSA) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count estimated that there are approximately 59,000 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles County. This data reflects a Countywide increase of 12% from 2018 to 2019. In 2018, the PIT Count showed 56,257 experiencing homelessness, when only a few years earlier, in 2015, there were 41,174 experiencing homelessness Countywide.

In 2018, a historic effort took place to permanently house more than 21,000 people. This was 23% higher than the year prior and more than double the number housed in 2014 thanks to unprecedented resources provided by Measure H and Proposition HHH.

More than 44,000 of the individuals experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County are without shelter. Out of that, approximately 16,000 people are living in vehicles and more than 11,000 in tents and makeshift shelters or encampments.

The devastating outcomes of having such a large unsheltered population are becoming clearer. Unsheltered homeless persons experience disproportionately high rates of poor overall health they often do not get treatment for their physical and mental health symptoms; they are more likely to become victims of crime and exploitation; and they face an increased risk of premature death. This year, nearly three homeless people are dying each day on the streets, in vehicles, shelters, hospitals and parks across the County. So far in 2019, deaths of homeless people in Los Angeles County are on a record-setting pace to top 1,000. In 2018, there were 918 deaths among those experiencing homelessness, an increase from 834 in 2017.

While Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles are working to build sufficient interim and permanent housing to meet the need locally, the time and expense associated with ground-up development is not feasible or sustainable.

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The annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC) completed by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) aggregates the total number of beds and units provided for people currently experiencing homelessness, including short-term resources like emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens. The inventory also includes housing projects for formerly homeless persons, including permanent supportive housing, rapid-rehousing, and other forms of permanent housing.

According to the 2019 HIC, the Los Angeles homeless services system offered over 21,000 housing units and around 15,000 shelter beds to people experiencing homelessness across the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC). Over three-quarters of all beds in this category (77%) were used in emergency shelters. Families used over half of the emergency shelter beds (51%) and adult individuals used 45% of the remaining emergency shelter beds.

A variety of housing options are needed and need to be pursued simultaneously, including options designed for short-term and long-term stay, as well as housing designed specifically for individuals, families, youth and those with pets. There are different housing options already in existence and some under development in Los Angeles County. Kensington Campus in the City of Lancaster will provide both short-term and long-term housing with supportive services to local residents in need. The Star Apartments located in Skid Row provide an example of permanent supportive housing built from innovative pre-fabricated units for long-term residency.

We must also acknowledge that our current approach to building housing is unsustainable, unaffordable and inefficient. Affordable housing units can routinely cost more than \$400,000 dollars to build due to the price of land, the cost of labor and construction materials, compliance with environmental standards, and the competition for that labor. Permanent supportive housing units can cost even more to build, with prices per unit of new construction exceeding \$500,000.

Despite efforts to increase housing stock, the reality is that over 75% of individuals experiencing homelessness in LA County going without shelter represents the highest number of unsheltered homeless persons in the United States.

This reality is vastly different from other jurisdictions with comparably large homeless populations. For example, in New York City, a majority of the homeless population is not on the streets, but in some form of shelter due to a 1981 lawsuit that resulted in an enforceable “right to shelter” citywide.

In other jurisdictions, like the City of San Diego, local leaders have pushed for immediate housing solutions, like Sprung structures to serve as bridge housing. These facilities are intended as a temporary stay for people transitioning out of homelessness and into permanent housing while they receive supportive services from health counselors, substance abuse counselors, case managers, and outreach specialists.

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Austin, Texas also provides an example of a faster and more affordable solution for housing in its Community First! Village, where more than 200 people who were once chronically homeless live in tiny homes and RVs. Everyone who lives at Community First! Village pays rent, ranging from \$225 to \$430 per month; many residents receive supportive services and employment opportunities on-site. This option could be explored for both short and long-term housing locally.

Other opportunities worth exploring include shared housing models and new forms of single resident occupancy structures to more permanently house those transitioning out of homelessness.

While Measure H has created a Coordinated Entry System in LA County that connects homeless individuals to supportive services, only a small portion of the funding was earmarked for capital development of housing. While the City of Los Angeles benefits from funds generated by Proposition HHH to build out a network of interim housing sites, the County at-large has no equivalent fund for capital. A portion of capital is set aside from Strategy E8, Enhance the Emergency Shelter System, and a pool of capital funding was created through the Interim Housing Capital Fund Pool. While Measure H has worked to enhance supportive services like outreach, case management, discharge planning and connection to public benefits, it has not significantly increased the development of more homeless housing stock. Best practices reveal that individuals have the best chance of stabilizing and rehabilitating after they are connected to a housing resource.

The humanitarian crisis of homelessness in LA County has garnered national attention as well as the attention of a broader group of local stakeholders, including local businesses, committed to collaborating with public entities to solve this problem. It is imperative that LA County allows opportunities for public-private partnerships as we develop and implement solutions for supportive housing so that we can best leverage the collective interest of our region to serve those in need.

LA County is building towards a future where a wide spectrum of housing options must exist to meet the needs of our residents. Achieving this vision at our current pace will take decades, which is why we must adopt creative and innovative approaches to streamlining and expediting homeless housing projects in the most cost-effective manner. We also need a focused, dedicated subject-matter expert to successfully shepherd an unprecedented level of projects from start to completion.

Now is the time to use every tool at our disposal to bring individuals and families experiencing homelessness inside. We can no longer wait to intervene in the humanitarian crisis that plagues every community in LA County.

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**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct CEO, working with each of the Board Offices and interested cities, the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Regional Planning (DRP), LA County Fire (Fire), CEO Homeless Initiative (HI), Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation Districts), Department of Public Health (DPH), other relevant County Departments to develop an urgent housing plan with concrete, measurable and attainable deliverables that includes, but is not limited to, sites for short-term and long-term housing options broken down by quantity/availability, cost and timeline of each option by February 4, 2020.

**WE, FURTHER MOVE THAT** the Board of Supervisors direct CEO to:

1. Develop a process by which all steps necessary to implement the urgent housing plan, including permitting, zoning and approval processes, are streamlined and expedited, working in consultation with LACDA, DPW, Planning, Fire, HI, Sanitation Districts, DPH and others, as appropriate. Also consider appropriate exemptions to Title 22.
2. Identify ongoing and one-time funding for capital projects to be used for the development of homeless housing.
3. Identify a housing expert from the private sector to provide oversight for the development and implementation of the plan.
4. Develop a robust communications and outreach strategy to engage with communities impacted by the implementation of the plan.
5. Schedule bimonthly set item on the Board's agenda for status reports beginning on December 10, 2019.

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