



West Hills Neighborhood Council

*"It's our neighborhood.
Let's build a community."*

September 8, 2017

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Dear Sirs and Madam:

The West Hills Neighborhood Council has voted to request the immediate establishment of emergency triage shelters and safe parking locations in the West San Fernando Valley for relief from the increasing number of homeless encampments and vehicles used for habitation on city streets.

Background

In recent years, homeless encampments and vehicle dwellings have increased dramatically in the West SFV. Research shows that unsheltered homeless individuals who remain unserved in the street are at increased risk of poor outcomes, i.e. health risks, incarceration, loss of work skills, etc. Sheltering these individuals, who often become costly high utilizers of emergency, police and medical services, provides significant cost savings to taxpayers. The lack of available shelter beds and safe parking locations in the West SFV fails to serve the needs of thousands of unhoused men, women and children. Moreover, the lack of shelter beds and safe parking locations impedes law enforcement's ability to effectively manage the public safety concerns within our community.

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P.O. Box 4670, West Hills, CA 91308-4670
mail@westhillsnc.org • www.westhillsnc.org



Proposal


By utilizing current allocations, including City and County budgeted funds, MHSA funds and funds from newer funding sources such as Measures HHH and H, new shelter housing will be created in existing repurposed buildings in the areas with the highest concentrations of homelessness throughout the SFV. This proposal aligns with both the City and County Comprehensive Strategic Homeless Strategies to improve emergency shelters. Special considerations should also be made for particularly vulnerable and/or underserved populations, i.e. veterans, women, children and LGBT teens.

In addition, the Safe Parking Pilot Program, CF 15-1138-S15, must be made available as quickly as practical at as many County, City, Metro and approved private parking lots as possible to address increasing numbers of people living in vehicles. On these premises, social services should be made available for unhoused clients to access the Coordinate Entry System (CES) and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), case management, mental health and substance use treatment. Vouchers for RV waste disposal should be provided, as this prevents unhealthy discharging onto public streets.

Both the emergency triage shelters and the Safe Parking Program should be made available throughout the SFV so each community can best triage and manage its own issues of homelessness. All proposed shelters and safe parking locations should be well maintained with appropriate security to ensure safety.

These proposals are meant only as short-term plans to directly deal with the current crisis and not to be permanent infrastructures. They serve as a stopgap measure. Then, going forward, responsibility will shift to City and County agencies to properly house citizens with the abundance of funds that are now available.

Very truly yours,



Daniel J. Brin
President/Co-Chair
West Hills Neighborhood Council

cc: Hon. Herb J. Wesson, Jr.
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