

14-1101

HOUSING

MOTION

Dubbed the nation's "homeless capital," the City of Los Angeles has long struggled to adequately address the conditions of homelessness. Indeed, the City has one of the largest homeless populations in the country, much of it concentrated in a one-square-mile section of Downtown, and with large populations notably in Hollywood and Venice.

A little over two years ago, the City launched Operation Healthy Streets (OHS) to address public health risks in the Skid Row area of Downtown Los Angeles. The program's initial focus was on eliminating hazards that posed immediate risks to public health. This work has established protocol that is now being used beyond the Skid Row area to address numerous homeless encampments across the City. In an effort to go beyond street cleaning, City entities have joined forces with the County to provide social, medical and mental health services to people living on the streets who are being contacted during Operation Healthy Streets by City crews and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority [LAHSA].

While improved coordination with the County around Operation Healthy Streets is a very positive first step, it underscores how much more potential there is to truly address, prevent and end chronic homelessness in the City.

LAHSA is a joint agency for the City and County responsible for homeless services for the City, as well as the entire Los Angeles County, which includes 87 other cities and many other unincorporated areas, in all covering more than 4,000 square miles. Given the size of the City of Los Angeles and the scale of the problem and challenges of chronic homelessness in the City, the City of Los Angeles should consider creating a position to actively coordinate with the County and LAHSA on programs, efforts and priorities to address homelessness.

The County is generally responsible for the provision of social services, and since it has a larger geographic focus, additional collaboration is needed to ensure resources are deployed in the City, sufficient to meet the challenge.

The City is a source of significant funding for housing programs, investing millions in affordable, transitional and permanent supportive housing. There exists an opportunity to better coordinate placement of formerly homeless individuals into various City funded housing units as well as using City assigned vouchers.

Given the urgency of addressing homeless in the City, it may be appropriate to establish a full-time coordinator, director or czar to manage homelessness initiatives across the City, and to coordinate homeless social services with the County of Los Angeles and LAHSA. A homelessness coordinator could provide additional support to maximize the impact of the funding the City is providing.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the CAO and CLA be requested to report to Council with recommendations for providing a full-time coordinator, director or czar within the City's organizational structure for coordinating activities to address homelessness, including coordination with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Los Angeles County, and other government agencies.

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