



May 21, 2018

The Honorable Herb J. Wesson, Jr.
President, Los Angeles City Council
Councilmember, 10th District
200 North Spring Street, Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear City Council President Wesson,

Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) writes to express our support for the proposed temporary homeless shelter in Koreatown located at 682 S. Vermont Avenue (CF No 18-0932).

Founded in 1992, KIWA multi-industry worker center based in Koreatown, Los Angeles. KIWA's mission is to build the power of immigrant workers and residents and to organize a progressive grassroots leadership to transform our workplaces and communities, in Koreatown and beyond. Many years ago, our worker members began urging us to respond to the escalating rents and housing insecurity affecting them and other community members in Koreatown. Since this time, we have organized anti-displacement campaigns, advocated for stronger tenant protections, served on the steering committee of the campaign to develop and pass Prop JJJ/ "Build Better LA" to better align transit-oriented development with affordable housing and good jobs, and supported the creation of more affordable housing in our city. Through a partnership with Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), KIWA built a 52-unit affordable housing building, *Casa Yonde*, to provide housing and supportive services to low-income individuals and families including many who were formerly unhoused. These individuals and families are vibrant, resilient members of our community.

We face a grave humanitarian crisis in our city--homelessness--that to solve, will require all of us to join hands together. KIWA thanks the Mayor and Council President for leading our city in addressing this immense crisis. KIWA supports the City's initiative to provide shelter and supportive services for homeless Angelenos in Koreatown and in every district. In Koreatown, we urge the City to move forward plans to address homelessness in communication and collaboration with Koreatown organizations working with and providing services to unhoused community members and those at risk of homelessness, and local affordable-housing organizations serving extremely low-income tenants.

Prior to this time, the communication with Koreatown stakeholders was not adequate and many Koreatown stakeholders felt deeply disrespected. The situation in Koreatown is heartbreaking and unfortunate, and it must be addressed. At the same time, we all must move forward to address the human suffering our city faces. Every day is a new opportunity to continue working together to solve this crisis.



There is a deep, unmet need for affordable housing in Los Angeles. KIWA door-knocked and phone-banked fellow Angelenos to support the passage of Proposition HHH in November 2016 with 77 percent of the vote, and the passage of Measure H in March 2017 with 69 percent of the vote. The public has given us a mandate to solve the homeless crisis in our City and County. Proposition HHH provides for \$1.2 billion dollars in construction funds for supportive housing and homeless facilities, a long-term strategy to provide much needed housing. Measure H provides over \$355 million dollars a year in services to complement HHH, providing the much needed support and services that individuals experiencing homelessness need.

According to the most recent estimates, there are approximately 400 homeless individuals in Koreatown, one of the largest densities of homelessness in the City. Still, there is much research to be done to understand our homeless population and their diverse needs, which can continue at this Bridge Home. Most publicly owned land in Koreatown are parks, libraries, and schools, and there are very few options to site a temporary shelter where it is desperately needed. The only available site in Koreatown owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles is the DOT Parking lot at 682 S. Vermont Avenue. Furthermore, this site is nearby the Vermont/Wilshire LA Metro transit hub, providing a proximity to mass transit that is important infrastructure to supporting homeless Angelenos' access to services and jobs.

Koreatown needs this shelter, and other neighborhoods like Westwood, Hollywood, South Los Angeles, Mid-City, Studio City, Valley Village, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and Chinatown are considering doing the same. Once again, we support the use of the DOT parking lot at 682 S. Vermont Avenue as a temporary homeless shelter to help solve this crisis in Koreatown. Every neighborhood and community needs to participate throughout the City if we are to achieve the mandates of Proposition HHH and Measure H and ensure Los Angeles is a city for us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Suh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alexandra Suh
Executive Director