

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: East Hollywood Neighborhood Council (EHNC)

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(15) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 2/22/2021

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 02/23/2021

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 21-0113

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The East Hollywood Neighborhood Council (EHNC) is in support of the motion to expand and renew Project Roomkey with some recommendations. The country as a whole, particularly Los Angeles and other cities with large populations of unhoused people, has been struggling to provide housing and assistance for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. Project Roomkey aimed to provide safe, service-enriched interim housing to this vulnerable population through master-leasing vacant hotels and motels, but it lacked the funding and the authority to be implemented effectively, and ultimately fell short on providing enough shelter for unhoused individuals. The motion by Council Members Bonin and Ramen is a necessary step to help provide long overdue assistance to our unhoused population by tapping into FEMA funding. President Biden issued an executive action directing FEMA to reimburse cities for 100% of what they spend on non-congregate shelters through September 2021, including back-pay for expenditures made prior to this executive action. This timeline would give the city plenty of time to develop and open more permanent solutions, including permanent Interim Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing sites secured through Project Homekey, while still providing shelter in the interim.



The Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

2/22/21

Re: Council File: 21-0113: Project Roomkey Expansion / Interim Non-Congregate Shelters / Homeless Housing / Master Lease / Hotels, Motels, and Vacant Apartment Units / Authority to Commandeer / Public Health Emergency

Position: Support with recommendations

Dear Councilmembers,

The East Hollywood Neighborhood Council (EHNC) is in support of the motion to expand and renew Project Roomkey with some recommendations.

The country as a whole, particularly Los Angeles and other cities with large populations of unhoused people, has been struggling to provide housing and assistance for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. Project Roomkey aimed to provide safe, service-enriched interim housing to this vulnerable population through master-leasing vacant hotels and motels, but it lacked the funding and the authority to be implemented effectively, and ultimately fell short on providing enough shelter for unhoused individuals.

The [motion](#) by Council Members Bonin and Ramen is a necessary step to help provide long overdue assistance to our unhoused population by tapping into FEMA funding. President Biden issued an executive action directing FEMA to reimburse cities for 100% of what they spend on non-congregate shelters through September 2021, including back-pay for expenditures made prior to this executive action. This timeline would give the city plenty of time to develop and open more permanent

solutions, including permanent Interim Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing sites secured through Project Homekey, while still providing shelter in the interim.

Two major pitfalls of Project Roomkey was the untenable master-lease agreement presented to the hotel owners who were willing to house the unhoused and to a lesser degree a lack of buy-in from hotel owners who were hesitant to house unhoused people in their space, resulting in a significant underutilization of available hotel rooms for emergency shelter.

However, the Los Angeles City Attorney has [reviewed](#) the legality of commandeering hotels and motels for this project and determined that the Mayor's emergency powers grant him the authority to commandeer private property for public use when needed for the protection of life, and to bind the City to pay fair market value to compensate the property owner.

We understand that this is an extreme measure, but we need to find ways to provide immediate relief to our unhoused citizens, and we have some additional recommendations as outlined below;

- The Project Roomkey expansion should include additional funding for case management systems and staffing for service providers, so that every person who is enrolled in the program can work on not only a path to permanent housing but also access to mental and physical healthcare, ensuring that residents of Project Roomkey sites are exited to permanent housing and not turned back out onto the street;
- As Hotels can be complex properties to manage which have existing and working employed staff on premises - a more comprehensive approach should be considered when a Master-Lease for the entire hotel or for a partial amount of hotel/motel rooms for the unhoused is being negotiated with hotel/motel owners. The EHC recommends that the City Attorney work in conjunction with the California Hotel and Lodging Association and the Hotel Association of Los Angeles to negotiate a fair and beneficial agreement to all parties concerned. Existing hotels under existing contract to house covid-related essential medical workers should be exempt from any authority to commandeer the property.
- Project Roomkey should not include Care+ sweeps or other tactics that serve to further destabilize and marginalize unsheltered people as they currently stand - instead adopting the motion outlined by Council Members Bonin and Ramen in [CF-21-0031](#);

- The Project Roomkey expansion should account for funding and staffing for enhanced outreach services to identify and build trust with unsheltered individuals and connect them with Project Roomkey sites;

Sincerely,

Ninoska Suarez

East Hollywood Neighborhood Council

CC:

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