

LA CAN statement on Mayor Garcetti's \$49 million emergency shelter plan

The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) has always maintained that housing is a human right – and that temporary fixes will not end homelessness. A case in point: Mayor Eric Garcetti's emergency shelters plan, dubbed A Bridge Home.

While agreeing with the Los Angeles Times that the mayor's proposal is "an acknowledgement that the city has been unable to keep pace with the number of people falling into homelessness" (4/16/18), we believe it is a necessary option for Angelenos who have nothing left to lose but the sidewalk for a bed. That said, the proposal should be recrafted to ensure that participation is "voluntary" and to eliminate its emphasis on *quid pro quo* criminalization.

The Plan

On its face, the plan seems straight-forward although limited in scale compared to the size of the problem. \$20 million from July through January 2019. 15 shelters, \$1.3 million per council district. 100 beds per shelter, 1,500 new shelter beds. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority will contract the shelters to local community providers.

According to the 2017 homeless count, the City of Los Angeles has roughly 25,000 "unsheltered" people living in tents, vehicles and on sidewalks. There are currently 7,476 interim housing beds in the city, which amounts to 29% of the actual need. The present Koreatown shelter debate illustrates those gaps in real time. The 2017 homeless count identified 368 homeless people living in Koreatown. The proposed shelter is estimated to hold up to 65 beds, which is roughly 18% of what's needed. Increased enforcement is a signature feature of the plan.

Quid pro quo

The reward for communities that house a shelter is the promise that the city will keep it clear of encampments. Council districts are not required to provide shelter commensurate with the number of people in need before enforcement begins. The only thing a community needs to do to qualify for increased enforcement is house a shelter.

Communities that don't build a shelter will not get the "benefit" of increased policing and encampment removal. In other words, go along with the plan or your district will continue to receive current levels of service. Or, more aptly stated: you'll be forced to suffer the consequences of a city lacking the political courage and leadership to address its housing crisis.

Cost

"To fund enforcement, Garcetti is proposing a \$29 million boost in homelessness spending...(for) special LAPD Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) teams and Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) workers who would keep the area free of encampments." (Radio 700)