

## **Community Benefit Agreement**

### **For the Tiny Homes Alexandria Park Village in North Hollywood**

#### **What is the Tiny Homes Alexandria Project?**

The Alexandria Park Tiny Home Village is a transitional housing development funded by the City of Los Angeles for the purpose of providing private and secure temporary dwellings for persons experiencing homelessness in the San Fernando Valley. It is the second project of its kind to open in North Hollywood, after a similar development at NoHo Park on Chandler Blvd opened in February 2021. The Alexandria Park site had its Grand Opening on April 26, 2021. Each of its 103 units can house two people, for a maximum of 200 residents. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the units are single-occupancy.

The homes themselves are sometimes referred to as “Pallet”™ shelters after the company that manufactures them. They are pre-fabricated, reusable, and transportable 65-square foot dwellings with heaters, air conditioning, and beds.

Residents of the Tiny Homes receive a variety of services such as thrice-daily meals, access to showers and storage lockers, and connections with outreach case managers and civic support that can include housing navigation, document procurement, mental health support, job training, and more.

The site is considered to be a “Bridge Housing” development by the City of Los Angeles and is administered by *Hope of the Valley*, a 501.3.c non-profit that also manages the Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission in Pacoima, Bridge Housing sites in North Hollywood and Northridge, Tiny Home Villages at Chandler Park and in Reseda, and additional new shelter beds planned for the San Fernando Valley. Between 20 and 26 Hope of the Valley staff members will be on site at Alexandria Park, in addition to a security guard. The CEO of Hope of the Valley, Ken Craft, was interviewed by The Committee and has taken a hand-on role in community outreach.

#### **Client Population and Recruitment**

Individuals who are currently camping in the immediate area of the facility, including under overpasses located on Oxnard, Victory and Laurel Canyon Blvds, adjacent to the concrete wash area next to the NB 170 Freeway, and in the Laurel Grove Neighborhood, will be prioritized for residency.

**The committee would like to see further clarification from Hope of the Valley and LAHSA on next steps for individuals who are deemed to need substance abuse intervention.** All parties would like to see these individuals receive care, and all parties would like to see these

individuals provided housing. In addition, the committee recommends that Hope of the Valley utilize the substance abuse counseling opportunities provided by **Victory Outreach Church**, which is located at Valley Plaza. The committee will seek additional information on this issue moving forward.

In addition, the committee has questions regarding ongoing recruitment of individuals who initially may refuse housing. As residents move on toward permanent housing, will replacement recruitment continue to prioritize individuals who are unhoused in the area? **The committee would like further clarification on this issue** as well, as well as serving as an ongoing liaison between requests for outreach from local leaders and LAHSA.

## **Safety and Security**

### **Crime Prevention**

The Alexandria Park site occupies a parcel that is bordered by Erwin Street to the south, Sylvan street to the north, the 170 Freeway, embankment and a portion of the Los Angeles River drainage area to the west, and the Valley Plaza commercial parcel to the east. At this time, the Valley Plaza strip is mostly vacant, with boarded up storefronts facing Laurel Canyon and fenced off parking lots facing the project. There has been long standing community concern over perceived Building & Safety Code violations for the section of the parcel located on Laurel Canyon Blvd. The area of concern in particular is from 6241 - 6261 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Some boarded up sections of the buildings have been removed and individuals are moving freely in and out of non-residential structures, with electric wiring and broken glass from inside strewn upon the sidewalk.

In addition, COMPSTAT (Computer Statistic) Crime Data for the area indicates [a critical mass of theft, robbery and burglary incidents on the 6200 block of Laurel Canyon](#) since the beginning of the year. **The committee recommends that the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, in cooperation with LAPD and Los Angeles City Attorney's Neighborhood Prosecutor for the area, ensure that all relevant Code statutes for this portion of the parcel are investigated and enforced.**

In addition, while the City of Los Angeles will attempt to secure easement parking for staff and potentially residents of the village, it is unclear whether residents will have vehicles that need to be parked overnight during curfew hours. The committee would like clarification on whether portions of the lot will be determined as 'safe parking' or if other homeless individuals will be allowed to park in the area if allowed?

**Our committee recommends that LAHSA designate a nearby Safe Parking Site in Council District 2 in order to serve both residents and other local vehicle dwellers during overnight hours.** While a site is proposed for one lot near Ventura Blvd. and Goodland Ave. in

the next few months, it is more than 4 miles away and will only have capacity for 25 vehicles nightly.

A Safe Parking Site would require individual security in addition to the Alexandria Park security team and require management from a separate NGO. In addition, the committee recommends that portable restrooms and access to CES (Coordinated Entry System) be made available to dwellers of this area. **We recommend another site be secured as close to the area as possible.** This would prevent vehicle break-ins and targeted violence against vehicle dwellers, and eliminate the need for vehicle dwellers to move their vehicles nightly throughout the surrounding area to avoid penalties and fines.

In addition, our committee recommends **regular communication and coordination between private security, Tiny Homes Village Security and LAPD.** It is recommended that these three entities draw up a set of agreed-upon protocols for security issues that may occur and have **frequent, scheduled check-ins with the SLO** (Senior Lead Officer) for the area. The Ad Hoc committee will be willing to serve as a liaison for this effort on an ongoing basis.

### **The Role of Law Enforcement**

The LAPD and many city government agencies have experienced a reduction in their budget this current fiscal year, including the disbanding of the HOPE units in February 2021. The North Hollywood precinct received two additional officers who served as a HOPE unit previously.

Our committee recognizes that both LAPD and the community can benefit by having another agency or agencies deal with non-emergency homelessness issues. **Our recommendation is that resources such as Supplemental Outreach Teams, in coordination with additional nonprofit support for outreach, group therapy/substance abuse and housing resources for populations unable or unwilling to transition into the Tiny Homes Village, are appropriately funded and allocated to address local issues in the East Valley.** This allocation would be a more targeted and appropriate approach, and allow the LAPD to deal with emergency and life or death issues. The entire community would benefit from this approach.

While these Supplemental Teams are a good first step, the committee recognizes the need for training and coordination of these teams with existing resources, and partnership with LAPD when the need arises. The committee is willing to support partnership and communication with local law enforcement and outreach teams in the best manner which is appropriate. In addition, local law enforcement recognizes and echoes the need for additional Supplemental Outreach and treatment options for individuals with substance abuse challenges.

While we understand that resources are limited and that priorities must be balanced, with the recent City and State budget allocations, more resources can be found to support the expansion of Supplemental Resources and also support overtime for LAPD members who wish to apply it toward continued relationship-building with the unhoused community. It must be noted that LAPD have in some cases been the most consistent presence in the area and have taken on

activities that would traditionally be handled by clinical social workers or case workers; these efforts should be continued and maintained with consistency by specialized workers who have a specific focus on the East Valley. **Therefore we strongly recommend these workers are hired and/or report to Council District 2 and ultimately the Councilmember is accountable for their success.**

## **Fire Prevention**

The risk of fire due to continued encampments and remaining debris on the 170 embankment is high and needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Unfortunately two fires broke out within a span of days in late February, one behind the project and one to the north of Victory Boulevard. Because the embankment is considered under the jurisdiction of either Caltrans or LA Metro (depending on which section), it has been difficult for LASEN to coordinate trash cleanups of the area. The result has been an unsightly buildup of debris spanning the entire embankment.

The committee has worked with both Council District 2, State Senator Bob Hertzberg and Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian's staff to address this issue and facilitate coordination between agencies. **It is the committee's recommendation that an MOU is created to facilitate monthly maintenance of the area by CALTRANS crews, for the purpose of collecting debris for LASEN to haul away. The continued blight on Caltrans property has been a major source of consternation among residents and business owners in the area for more than a year.** While LA Sanitation is prepared to embark on area cleanups once COVID restrictions are lifted and available housing is in place, it is not incumbent on them to clean Caltrans property. The Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council is prepared to continue advocating to address this issue with state leadership.

## **Intra-Agency Cooperation and Additional Resources**

### **Veterans**

Los Angeles County has launched a robust effort to ensure veterans living in Los Angeles County are able to more fully access targeted support measures such as dedicated housing, benefits, mental health treatment and job training. The **Veterans Peer Access Network**, spearheaded by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental health, has deployed what the county refers to as 'Access Agents' to travel directly to veterans in need within all 8 Service Planning Areas in LA County. **The committee recommends that Hope of the Valley and LAHSA case workers coordinate any services for individuals who have served in the military, including National Guard, with VPAN and/or Goodwill which is the designated VPAN service provider for Supervisorial District 3.**

### **Substance Abuse**

**Victory Outreach Church** and their leadership, Ray and Crystal Solorzano, are familiar with rehabilitation counseling, and host several marriage and youth classes, as well as manage a

recovery housing residence in the west valley. They maintain good relationships with many of the unhoused individuals near their facility. **The committee will recommend Victory Outreach be involved in recruitment efforts and potentially group therapy/substance abuse counseling efforts since they have established trust within the community.** Ray also offered their facility, directly across the parking lot from the village, as a potential meeting site if needed.

### **Daytime Programs**

When Hope of the Valley CEO Ken Craft spoke to the Ad Hoc committee in January, he indicated that HOTV relies on partnerships with other community NGOs and volunteer organizations for classes and other activities for residents during the day. Once COVID-related restrictions are lifted, the committee would like to learn more about these efforts and how they can potentially positively impact residents as they transition to permanent secure housing.

### **Long Term**

The planned length of time of the project is 3 years, due to the scheduled Stormwater Capture Project slated for June 2024. **Upon completion of that project, the committee recommends use of QUIMBY funds to restore the park for the benefit of local residents.**

It is the committee's understanding that all residents who enter the Alexandria Park Tiny Homes Village will be provided with the opportunity to enter into permanent housing by the commencement of the Stormwater Capture Project.

Upon the completion of this Community Benefit Agreement, the committee will transition into a community liaison role, providing education opportunities for both the service provider, residents of Alexandria Park, and the surrounding community regarding efforts to address the needs of the unhoused in the Laurel Grove area. In addition, the committee will oversee efforts to update the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council's website to maintain a clear flow chart of intra-agency responsibility regarding this issue, and provide updates to the community on how to get involved.

### **Summary of Committee Requests and Recommendations:**

1. Greater coordination and communication between the Councilmember's office, service providers, and volunteer organizations on conducting outreach and intakes.
2. Educate the public on ways they can help, or request aid for, persons experiencing homelessness in their area (Call 211 to connect families with CES, create an outreach request at [www.lahsa.org/portal/apps/la-hop/](http://www.lahsa.org/portal/apps/la-hop/), donate goods and food, etc.).

3. Strict enforcement of Building and Safety codes by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office of violations within the Valley Plaza parcel
4. Establishment of Safe Parking Site in Council District 2 as close to site as possible
5. Regular communication and coordination between private security, Tiny Homes Village Security and LAPD, facilitated by this committee, including frequent, scheduled check ins with the Senior Lead Officer for North Hollywood
6. Council District 2 agrees to invest in Supplemental Outreach Teams for conducting additional engagement and presence on weekends and after-hours overtime budgets for LAPD Officers who wish to support these activities.
7. Creation of MOU to facilitate regular, scheduled maintenance of the 170 embankment by CALTRANS crews, for the purpose of collecting debris for LASEN to haul away
8. Coordination of Veteran services with LA County Veterans Peer Access Network and designated service provider for Supervisorial District 3
9. Coordination with non-profits, municipal agencies, and local treatment centers to provide outreach and counseling efforts to unhoused persons unable to reside in the Tiny Home infrastructure due to substance abuse.
10. A commitment to using QUIMBY funds to restore Alexandria Park for the enjoyment of the community after project duration.

## Appendix: A Brief History of Los Angeles City Policy as it Relates to the Rights of the Unhoused

Prepared by Peter Haderlein

The history of how the local government of Los Angeles has treated its poorest and most vulnerable residents is long and complicated, and cannot be adequately relayed with brevity. For a thorough and scholarly account, we recommend “The Making of a Crisis: A History of Homelessness in Los Angeles”, a 2021 report by the UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy[1]. Two passages from their executive summary are worth quoting in their entirety:

*“The lack of affordable housing put pressure on Angelenos at multiple points over the past hundred years, pushing many into homelessness. However, rising property values and rents, the incursion of real estate and business interests in local development, the inability of LA City and County to coordinate on housing solutions, and lack of protections for tenants over the past forty years have all contributed to the massive shortage of affordable housing today.”*

*“Policing of homeless transient laborers spurred the growth of Los Angeles’s carceral system in the early twentieth century. Since then, policing and criminalization of homelessness has remained a primary method of poverty management in the region. The criminalization of homelessness has disproportionately affected people of color and homeless individuals with mental illness.”*

### City Law and Civil Rights

A timeline of how municipal code enforcement over the activity and siting of the city’s unhoused population has changed over time is worth summarizing to provide additional context. Los Angeles presently has two major laws governing its enforcement response to persons experiencing homelessness existing in public spaces (in addition to a number of local ordinances and restrictions related to “public nuisance”, trespassing, and vehicle parking). They are:

- Municipal Code 41.18, which bars persons from “sitting, lying, or sleeping in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way”[2], and
- Municipal Code 56.11.3.(d)-(i), which bars persons from storing bulky personal property in a public area if it does not allow for passage as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act[3]. Critically, this can include shelters such as tents.

The former law was passed by the City Council in 1968 in response to concerns over “urban blight”. Enforcement of 41.18 (also called the “sit-lie ban”) was almost nonexistent in the 1980s and 90s under Attorney General (and later Mayor) James Hahn. The LAPD began enforcing the rule with greater impunity in the early 2000s in response to perceptions of worsening living conditions around Skid Row in Downtown LA. The “sit-lie ban” was found unconstitutional in 2006 in the case of *Jones v. City of Los Angeles*, a lawsuit brought by the ACLU against the City

on behalf of Skid Row residents repeatedly arrested for sleeping and residing in public places, which often resulted in them losing all of their belongings. In particular, the court found that:

*“The Eighth Amendment prohibits the City from punishing involuntary sitting, lying, or sleeping on public sidewalks that is an unavoidable consequence of being human and homeless without shelter in the City of Los Angeles.”[4]*

The landmark decision in *Jones* was buttressed by a 2018 case: *Martin v. City of Boise*. In that instance, the Federal court found that the city of Boise, Idaho could not “criminalize the act of lodging in public unless it has sufficient beds for its homeless population or offers shelter to a specific individual before commencing enforcement”. When the Supreme Court declined to take up the appeal in September, 2019, the ruling stood. It is therefore illegal (except under very specific circumstances) to arrest people for sleeping in public spaces if the City has no alternative housing to offer.

In October, 2020, the City Council proposed new revisions to 41.18 that would have barred sleeping, sitting, and lying within 500 feet of overpasses, freeway on-ramps, and service provider locations[5]. Said motion was remanded back to committee after public outcry and has not been brought back for a vote.

### The Gap between Housing Needs & Availability

The status quo of the service provision infrastructure for those experiencing homelessness is a patchwork of efforts by federal, state, county, and city agencies and programs, bulwarked by the good-faith actions of charities, non-profits, and volunteers, and recently bolstered by the 2016 passage of Propositions H and HHH, which raised sales taxes to fund the development of 10,000 supportive housing units across LA County. The Alexandria Park Tiny Home Village (and its sister projects at Chandler Park and other locations) is one such collaboration between the non-profit and public sectors, essentially funded by taxpayers and administered through the outreach arms of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the Los Angeles City Council, and other Los Angeles municipal departments (Department of Mental Health, etc.).

Even with the influx of funding, the number of new affordable and permanent housing locations is slow to materialize and the availability of temporary and transitional shelter beds has never met County needs. As of its last count, Los Angeles County has 66,433 residents who are unhoused, with 555,105 rent-burdened households made all the more vulnerable by the economic conditions surrounding the COVID-19 recession[6]. LA now needs half a million new affordable housing units to meet current demand.

In March, 2020, a lawsuit filed by a consortium of Downtown LA businesses and commercial interests was filed against the city for its failure to properly and timely address the state of homelessness on Skid Row. The acting Federal Judge, David O. Carter, and the City settled out of court in June, 2020 when the City agreed to provide 6000 new beds of shelter for at-risk



persons experiencing homelessness and encamped near freeways over the next 18 months[7]. This brought an era of confusion over the summer as City and County Agencies received mixed messaging on where to prioritize services[8]. Judge Carter issued a new injunction in April, 2021 that ordered the City to place a billion dollars in escrow (to be set aside for services benefitting the region's homelessness response) and to offer housing to all persons on Skid Row by October, 2021. Since the offer of housing is contingent on spaces actually being available, the City is under renewed pressure to find options, and is so far leveraging the quick construction of pre-fabrication units, such as the Tiny Home Pallet™ shelters, and the usage of empty hotel and motel rooms via Projects Roomkey[9] and Homekey[10].

### The State of Sanitation Sweeps

When the office of Mayor Eric Garcetti implemented the "A Bridge Home Program" in 2018 to fund temporary housing in all 15 Council Districts[11], public response was mixed and often fraught, with protests erupting in neighborhoods in opposition to their construction[12]. In attempts to appease community concerns, the City created new rules allowing for the creation of "Special Enforcement and Cleaning Zones" or SEZs. Within the bounds of an SEZ (set to encompass a limited block radius surrounding each Bridge Home, and starting one month after its opening), the LA Department of Sanitation ("LASAN") and the LAPD have the purview to enact "enhanced cleanups" to temporarily displace encamped persons for the ostensible purpose of power-washing the sidewalk and removing trash[13]. This practice is not without its own controversies, for as much as it is leveraged to maintain pedestrian right of way and eliminate sanitation hazards, it has also put persons experiencing homelessness at risk of agitated encounters with law enforcement and resulted in the loss of precious personal belongings. Increased security measures also came at high costs, with overtime payments for LAPD officers assigned to patrol Bridge Housing sites amounting to \$1.3 million per location[14].

Ultimately, the City's response to community concerns and the needs of the unhoused remains an ad-hoc complaint- and request-driven model, and adjustments to the SEZ policy resulted in the implementation of the CARE and CARE+ teams in June 2019[15]. These are multidisciplinary units of outreach and sanitation workers shadowed by law enforcement personnel and tasked with cleaning encampments (with advanced warning) and connecting unhoused persons with service providers[16]. Team assignments are often dictated at the behest of the various City Council offices, and tend to prioritize repeated contact with established encampment sites and Bridge Home locations. At the onset of the coronavirus crisis and in alignment with recommendations from the CDC, the City Council voted to instruct CARE and CARE+ crews to suspend enforcement of any laws requiring tents to come down during daytime hours (with exceptions for those that impeded ADA access). Given CDC advice against transitioning individuals into congregate settings during the pandemic, and to reduce exposure to outreach workers, encamped unhoused persons were to be left to shelter in place. This policy guided the actions of LAHSA, LASAN, and the LAPD throughout the pandemic, but would prove to be inconsistently applied in practice. In September 2020, the CARE/CARE+ cleanups/sweeps

resumed via a City Council vote, and by December, 2020, enhanced cleanups continued in the SEZ zones throughout the city[17].

After months of debate and after losing multiple lawsuits over the confiscation of homeless property[18], the City Council unanimously passed a motion in April of 2021 to shift LASAN's CARE/CARE+ cleanup and sweeps response to a voluntary, services-based approach rather than a mandatory law-enforcement action taken to clear encampments. The details of how the policy will evolve are still under discussion.

---

[1] Kristen Moore Sheeley, et al.

<https://luskincenter.history.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/66/2021/01/LCHP-The-Making-of-A-Crisis-Report.pdf>

[2] MC 41.18 [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los\\_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-128514#JD\\_41.18](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-128514#JD_41.18).

[3] MC 56.11.3 [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los\\_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138386#JD\\_56.11](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138386#JD_56.11).

[4] <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-9th-circuit/1490887.html>

[5]

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-23/councilman-buscaino-asks-for-a-ban-on-homeless-camps-near-city-shelters>

[6]

<https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=726-2020-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-results#:~:text=LOS%20ANGELES%2C%20CA%E2%80%94The%20Los,point%2Din%2Dtime%20count>.

[7]

<https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2020-06-18/city-and-county-agree-to-provide-6000-new-beds-of-shelter-for-homeless-people-in-next-18-months>

[8]

<https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2020-10-23/judge-efforts-bolster-complicate-homeless-housing>

[9] <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/housing-programs/project-roomkey>

[10] <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/homekey.shtml>

[11] <https://empowerla.org/a-bridge-home-faq-for-las-temporary-homeless-housing-initiative/>

[12] <https://projects.laist.com/2019/koreatown-shelter-protest/>

[13] [https://laist.com/2018/10/11/homeless\\_cleanup\\_crackdown\\_planned\\_near\\_bridge\\_housing\\_site.php](https://laist.com/2018/10/11/homeless_cleanup_crackdown_planned_near_bridge_housing_site.php)

[14]

[http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/high-security-costs-tied-to-bridge-housing-patrols/article\\_31d2f7cc-6870-11e9-8289-c7b22d8543a1.html](http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/high-security-costs-tied-to-bridge-housing-patrols/article_31d2f7cc-6870-11e9-8289-c7b22d8543a1.html)

[15]

<https://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-announces-new-plan-deploy-new-sanitation-teams-deliver-services-homeless-encampments>

[16]

<https://lacitysan.org/san/sandocview.jsessionid=revhcLJGHigyDOpQYbcuJVZw6hWjcqXO8JHx35A9LYCK1-cttela!-1667113144!NONE?docname=CNT041939>

[17]

<https://www.kcrw.com/news/shows/greater-la/coronavirus-homelessness-parents/homeless-encampment-cleanups-la>

[18] <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-tents-camps-lawsuits-20181010-story.html>

*ADDENDUM:*

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-14-853>