

**WESTSIDE CITIES**

- BEVERLY HILLS
- CULVER CITY
- LOS ANGELES
- SANTA MONICA
- WEST HOLLYWOOD
- COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

November 26, 2008

Ms. Rebecca Isaacs  
Executive Director  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority  
453 South Spring Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Dear Rebecca:

As you are aware, the Westside Cities Council of Governments has been actively engaged in planning discussions for the 2008-09 Winter Shelter Program for over six months with members of the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition, and local government colleagues in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Culver City, West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. This group collaboratively developed a pilot approach for the 2008-09 Westside Winter Shelter program in response to structural and operational problems associated with the 2007-08 Winter Shelter pick-up and drop-off location at the OPCC Access Center at 503 Olympic Blvd. in Santa Monica.

On November 20 the Westside Cities COG carried a motion to support the Santa Monica request for a pilot program. We were disappointed to learn that after months of collaborative problem-solving and negotiations we were not able to come up with a mutually beneficial approach that would provide a Santa Monica pick-up and drop-off location to ensure that people who are chronically homeless, vulnerable, disabled, and linked to services in Santa Monica have access to shelter.

Because this pilot was geared to serving those homeless people already living in Santa Monica, additional resources may have been available. The City of Santa Monica offered funding for bus transportation from the OPCC Access Center to the Winter Shelter program. Additionally, Flora Gil-Krisiloff expressed willingness to consider funding staff to monitor and manage the OPCC pick-up site in the mornings and evenings. If the concept for this pilot were to have moved forward, Step Up On Second expressed interest in using similar criteria for approximately 25 of the chronic and vulnerable homeless people which they serve daily, thus adding an additional pick-up and drop-off location.

We share your concern that the Winter Shelter Program be an accessible and effective resource during inclement months for people who are homeless. For over two decades, Santa Monica service providers, residents, law enforcement, business and faith communities and countless others have been at the forefront of developing and sustaining effective approaches to address and end homelessness. The pilot solution offered in this situation was community-based and scalable – two important ingredients in any successful effort to end homelessness.

Given the ongoing issues with the Winter Shelter program and the essential need it addresses, we sincerely hope that all parties become open to piloting innovative solutions to unique problems.

Sincerely yours,

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

Councilmember John Heilman  
Chair, Westside Cities Council of Governments

CC: LA City Council Members  
Mayor Villaraigosa  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors