

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
AND CHAIR HILDA SOLIS**

**AGN. NO.
MARCH 22, 2016**

Providing Alternatives to Incarceration and Hospitalization for Homeless People Living on Skid Row and Struggling with Chronic Alcoholism

There are a significant number of homeless individuals in Skid Row who are incapacitated due to severe and chronic alcoholism. Many of these individuals can be seen unconscious on the sidewalks, staggering across busy streets, and generally in an extremely disheveled and impaired condition.

Currently, in Skid Row there is no site that specializes in receiving and stabilizing chronic alcoholics. Consequently, these individuals are either picked up by the police due to their erratic and sometimes threatening behavior or by ambulance as a result of a 911 call.

The Los Angeles Fire Department's (LAFD) records indicate that there is a large cohort of individuals who are picked up and transported to the hospital as many as 50 times per year, with a high proportion of those calls related to chronic intoxication. Nearly all of the ambulance transports from Skid Row arrive at the LAC+USC Medical Center emergency room (ER). Once at the ER, the LAFD emergency medical technician (EMT) must wait in the emergency room until the patient is received by ER staff, often resulting in an up to six-hour wait for the EMT known as "wall time". In nearly all of these cases, the patient is evaluated, determined to be intoxicated, provided fluids and other treatments, and then released. This is a scenario that plays out hundreds of times a month with no meaningful intervention for the patient and at great cost to LAFD and the Los Angeles County (County) health care system.

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On September 1, 2015, the Board of Supervisors directed that the new County Office of Diversion and Reentry, housed at the Department of Health Services (DHS), use a portion of its previously allocated diversion funds to create “[n]ew sobering center programs, with the first to be located in the Skid Row area...” (Directive 5.b.vi). The DHS Division of Housing for Health has identified a site in Skid Row that could be rapidly converted for use as a community diversion site for chronic alcoholics. This site would provide an alternative destination for both the police and fire department to send individuals whose primary presenting issue at the time of contact is severe intoxication. The site will also be accessible to street outreach workers and other community providers who come in contact with a severely intoxicated individual in Skid Row. The site identified for this program is located at 640/646 Maple Avenue and was recently vacated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) after being used as the temporary quarters for the Downtown Mental Health Center. This site consists of a complex of modular buildings providing 9,500 square feet of program space that can be easily retrofitted for the Sobering Center’s needs. The County will continue to pay a monthly rent to lease the land but can reduce costs by purchasing the modular buildings once retrofitted for use by the Sobering Center. Once completed, a new 24-hour/7-day Sobering Center could provide approximately 8,000 visits a year to roughly 2,000 unduplicated clients.

The core goal of the Sobering Center will be to provide a safe place for chronic alcoholics in the Skid Row area to sober up and be linked to interventions that will help them break out of the destructive cycle through streets, jails, and hospitals. The length of stay will vary but generally range between eight and 23 hours. DHS is working in close collaboration with the Department of Public Health’s Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) division and DMH to ensure there will be access to a full spectrum of follow-up care for individuals assisted by Sobering Center staff. The program will attempt to link all clients to longer-term treatment and housing options. The operational model for the program will include County-employed health professionals providing on-site health monitoring in conjunction with a community-based provider to deliver mental health, addiction, social work, and operational services.

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The approximately \$2M in one-time capital costs and \$3.4M in annual operational costs will be covered through previously allocated diversion funds and, to the maximum extent possible, leveraged Medicaid waiver dollars. Moreover, the new Sobering Center will help the County avoid millions of dollars in current costs incurred by the police, LAFD and hospital. For example, the County will avoid \$9.6M in annual costs if just 60% of the 8,000 Sobering Center visits are diverted from the hospital.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Consider the attached Negative Declaration together with the fact that no comments were received during the public review process, find on the basis of the whole record that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment and no adverse effect on wildlife resources, find that the Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the Board of Supervisors to approve the Negative Declaration, adopt the Negative Declaration, and authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to complete and file a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the project;
- 2) Authorize and direct the Chief Executive Officer to execute amendments to the leases, and any other ancillary documentation, with Maple Avenue Investments, LLC and 646 S. Maple Holdings, LLC, (Landlords) necessary to effectuate the amendments to Lease No's. 78125 and 78126 which will include the following provisions:
 - a) Extend the lease term and Use A term for both leases to eight years for the continual use of the properties located at 640 South Maple Avenue and 646 South Maple Avenue, Los Angeles.
 - b) The combined maximum first year rent of \$173,040 (\$7,210 per month per lease) is subject to Consumer Price Index increases of no less than three percent and no greater than five percent annually. The rental and related costs are funded by the Department of Health Services and the new Office of Diversion and Re-entry funds.

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- c) Provide a reimbursable Tenant Improvement Allowance of \$900,000, payable via lump sum, or construction progress payments, to Landlord of Lease No 78125.
 - d) Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to amend Lease No. 78125 with a provision permitting reimbursement to the Landlord, or their approved assigned vendor, for work or services requested by the County.
 - e) Authorize the Landlord of Lease No. 78125, or his approved assigned vendor and/or Director of Internal Services, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer to acquire telephone and data systems at a cost not to exceed \$300,000. All of the telephone, data, and low voltage systems will be paid in a lump sum or financed over five years by the Telecommunications Equipment and Services Master Agreement.
- 3) Authorize and direct the Chief Executive Officer to execute a purchase agreement and any other ancillary documentation at a cost not to exceed \$570,000 plus any applicable governmental fees, transfer fees and taxes, with Pacific Mobile Structures, Inc. (Vendor) necessary to effectuate the purchase of the 9,500 square feet modular office currently installed and leased at the Premises; and
- 4) Authorize and direct the Chief Executive Officer and the Directors of Health Services and Internal Services Department to take actions necessary and appropriate to implement the project. The lease amendments will be effective upon approval by the Board of Supervisors.

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