



BOB BLUMENFIELD

Councilmember, Third District

August 23, 2019

Proposition HHH Citizens Oversight Committee
City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Proposition HHH Housing Innovation Challenge

Dear Citizens Oversight Committee Members:

I would like to comment not about the projects before you, but to call out a project that applied for this funding that could have opened this year to house families and individuals in the West San Fernando Valley. It didn't make the cut. I'm disappointed and ask for your help to create bolder, better opportunities in the future.

Although I have supported every proposal for supportive or affordable housing in my district, we still have very few new supportive housing units and far too few affordable units.

As we all know, the crisis is now. We need housing now.

We had an opportunity to take an almost completed, 18 unit market rate building and turn it into shared housing with this grant. Shared or permanent supportive housing units could have opened this year. I hoped to flip the script in the West Valley, where most construction has been luxury housing, by transforming a market rate building into an affordable one.

The building could house 36 people or more by December of this year. In the West Valley, where I have to fight for any permanent supportive housing units, 36 people in homes, would be an incredible step.

Proposing a truly innovative idea for this challenge grant was very exciting for me and my staff. Unfortunately, it was too innovative and failed to meet the criteria to even be evaluated for this program. I am extremely disappointed by this outcome.

While the price per door was not cheaper than normal, it was not more expensive, and by housing multiple people or families in each of these large units, the cost per person was justified. Absent funding this building will be market rate luxury units, instead of housing for people who desperately need it. And that's a shame.

In my view, the administrative threshold for this grant relied too heavily on a traditional construction public process. This is counterproductive to innovatively creating more housing. A better process would have been to judge each application solely on the merits.

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In my view, the administrative threshold for this grant relied too heavily on a traditional construction public process. This is counterproductive to innovatively creating more housing. A better process would have been to judge each application solely on the merits.

Innovative projects should be done quickly, but the fastest project still in consideration won't open for years. That's just not fast enough. The project in my district could house people almost immediately.

We're looking for ideas that are outside the box to help address homeless. Waiting for years while almost 40,000 Angelenos are on the street isn't working. We need an immediate improvement.

The affordable housing and homelessness crisis can't just fall on the shoulders of the limited number of affordable housing developers. We need to bring all developers to the table – make a call to their civic duty and help us. Everyone needs to help solve this humanitarian crisis. Innovation sometimes will require new ways of thinking to make real change. Shared housing should not be dismissed.

I respectfully ask that your future challenge grants embrace innovation more fully and that you support projects in the West San Fernando Valley, such as the one proposed, where they are urgently needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Blumenfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember
City of Los Angeles