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February 1, 2016

Homelessness & Poverty Committee

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Co-Chair

Councilmember Jose Huizar, Co-Chair

Councilmember Mike Bonin

Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo

Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr.

200 N. Spring Street, Room 340

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 15-1138-S1, Comprehensive Homeless Strategy

Dear Councilmembers,

The LA Fashion District Business Improvement District (BID) represents over 4000 businesses and 900+ property owners, and is adjacent to Skid Row. The Fashion District generates \$10.8 Billion in economic activity for LA County. We commend the City for producing *The Comprehensive Homeless Strategy*. It is a great start with strong recommendations that we applaud. We are also encouraged by the City and County's partnership in its pursuit to end homelessness.

We encourage the two part approach to solving homelessness by focusing on both short and long term solutions. Below are the short-term solutions that we urge you to implement in order to address the serious homeless crisis facing our City.

- **Fund Additional Outreach Workers** – The most successful means of housing and providing services to the homeless is through outreach. Additionally, there are many individuals beyond Skid Row and those areas should also gain from having outreach workers.
- **Find Urgent Care Beds to Treat the Mentally Ill** – Currently there are five urgent care centers in the County of Los Angeles, but people can only stay there for 23 hours. With 30-40% of LAPD arrestees having a mental illness, there needs to be another option for these individuals other than jail or the emergency room. The City needs to find more beds and transitional housing for the mentally ill.
- **Utilize City Owned Property to Open New Storage Facilities** -- The City should be able to immediately utilize its own property to provide citywide storage for homeless individuals' personal property.
- **Adopt the Draft Ordinance Amending Section 56.11 of Los Angeles Municipal Code** – We support the draft ordinance as amended by the Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee on January 25, 2016. It balances the rights of all community members, including homeless individuals.

- **Keep the Winter Shelters Open Year-Round & 24 hours a day** – The City’s 861 existing shelter beds and additional 440 winter shelter surge beds that are available for inclement weather should be maximized year-round and 24 hours a day. There should also be supportive services available in the shelters. This would make it easier to locate individuals and help them secure housing. These facilities should also be used as storage locations for homeless individual’s property.
- **Fund Additional Environmental Compliance Officers (ECO)** – There are 16 ECO’s and another 4 being trained. These 20 ECO’s citywide are not enough to maintain sidewalks and public areas in a safe and clean manner.

Please consider these short-term recommendations as you deliberate the *Comprehensive Homeless Strategy*. We are happy to support you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Kent Smith
Executive Director

cc: Fashion District Board of Directors