

Background – Request Investigation of Funds Used for Homelessness (motion recommended to the WRAC Board by the WRAC HOC)

Recommended motion text:

“ _____ NC/CC, a member of the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC), urges (1) the federal government to intervene and conduct a federal investigation into the use by the city of Los Angeles, the county of Los Angeles, the state of California and all city, county and state agencies of federal funds received to address homelessness; (2) the state government to investigate the use of state funds for such purpose; (3) the county government to investigate the use of county funds for such purpose; and (4) the city government to investigate the use of city funds for such purpose, due to the mismanagement and non-accountability of taxpayer dollars being squandered while leaving a humanitarian crisis on our streets.

" _____ NC/CC further calls upon our city Councilmembers to communicate this request with the relevant respective federal, state, county and city authorities, including our U.S. Senators, Congressmembers, the U.S. Attorney General and Dept. of Justice; our Governor, state Senators, Assemblymembers and state Attorney General; our county Supervisors and District Attorney; and our Mayor and City Attorney.”

Relevant reporting:

https://www.westsidecurrent.com/news/exclusive-after-spending-550-million-over-70-percent-of-los-angeles-county-s-project-homekey/article_efe6bf0c-75bf-11ef-ab3c-9b098130204a.html

<https://www.foxla.com/video/1522264> (interview with Jamie Paige/Westside Current)

<https://www.circlingthenews.com/70-percent-of-project-homekey-homeless-rooms-remain-vacant/>

<https://www.circlingthenews.com/homelessness-and-the-failure-of-mainstream-media/>

https://www.westsidecurrent.com/news/las-costly-gamble-50-million-on-luxury-homeless-housing-amid-vacancies-and-red-tape/article_473f6a78-11e9-11ef-92b9-0b22ca012708.html

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-04-09/state-audit-california-fails-to-track-homeless-spending-billions-dollars>

<https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/audit-la-homelessness-spending-poor-accounting-inconsistent-care>

On September 24, 2024, the WRAC HOC hosted Jamie Paige (Westside Current editor) and Chris LeGras – co-authors of a series of eye-opening investigative articles in the Westside Current (linked above), detailing the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on housing for the unhoused, with over 70 % of project Homekey rooms vacant (as of their most recent reporting)! Paige and LeGras provided HOC members with shocking details of their investigation and the failures that they uncovered.

On October 2, 2024, auditors looking into homelessness spending in LA City and County (per Judge Carter’s order in the LA Alliance lawsuit), told the judge in federal court that public funds often do not appear to be properly accounted for or well-spent. The auditors found that contracts with service providers were not written in a way to measure outcomes or to set standards, resulting in inconsistent and poor care. Spending was often unsubstantiated or inaccurate (see LAist article linked above) . . . And on the state level, the State Auditor issued this alarming report in April 2024: <https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2023-102.1/index.html#section3>.

Simply put, the mismanagement, lack of accountability and possible corruption by officials, agencies and entities involved in spending taxpayer funds – purportedly to address homelessness -- are evident.

Based on this information, on other reporting, and members’ own experience with the systemic failure to address the growing humanitarian crisis in Los Angeles, the HOC believes strongly that a serious investigation by appropriate federal, state, county and city authorities into the use – and/or misuse -- of taxpayer funds must be undertaken forthwith. The HOC unanimously passed this motion for recommendation to the WRAC Board.

*Jay Handal, HOC Chair and Chris Spitz, HOC & WRAC Vice-Chair
Prepared for the WRAC 10/21/24 Board meeting*

Note: PPCC, WWNC & MVCC have independently passed this motion or modified versions. See also PPCC letter to the Little Hoover Commission: <https://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/PPCC-Letter-Little-Hoover-Commission.pdf>.