



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

**SHEILA KUEHL**  
SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT

September 15, 2017

Dear Sylmar Stakeholder,

I am sending this open letter to the community to describe our proposal for the Sylmar National Guard Armory and to ensure maximum transparency about our plans for this property. First off, I want to thank the hundreds of stakeholders who took time out of their busy lives to share their vision for this property. Many people have strong opinions and divergent viewpoints about its best use and, in a range of impassioned feelings, my office received a number of constructive and useful suggestions that shaped the proposal I am sharing. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has participated in this process thus far and those I will hear from in the future.

The Sylmar Armory has served as a winter shelter for more than 20 years. As homelessness has increased in LA County and after the passage of Measure H in March the County began exploring the feasibility of turning all of the winter shelter sites throughout the County into year-round emergency shelters. In April the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) reported back to the Board of Supervisors that it was feasible to open the Sylmar Armory year-round. The National Guard agreed to lease the building to the County year-round for this purpose. LAHSA also recommended opening the Armory as a Navigation Center.

In May my office began convening a Community Input Board to review LAHSA's recommendations and provide input into the future use of the building. My office also began meeting with the neighboring businesses and began holding community presentations about the proposal in August. Simultaneously LAHSA released a report in August about the unique needs of women experiencing homelessness in the County.

Based on community input and LAHSA's report I have decided to ask LAHSA to work with the National Guard and LA Family Housing to open the Sylmar Armory as year-round bridge housing for women experiencing homelessness. I will ask LAHSA for the building to provide between 65 to 85 bridge housing beds for women. I believe strongly that this proposal will enhance public safety in Sylmar both for women experiencing homelessness and the larger community. I will ask that LAHSA provide funding for 24-hour security including security for the entire block around the building. The site will not allow walk-ups or provide any services for people who are not clients staying in the bridge housing, thus ensuring it will not be a magnet for other people in the community. I will also ask LA Family Housing to continue to convene a Community Input Board that

my office will participate in to ensure that the bridge housing is a good neighbor in Sylmar.

I knew at the beginning of this process that there was no way to make all of the stakeholders in Sylmar happy with any proposal, but I am confident that the current proposal is a compromise and includes some of the best thinking shared by many community members. The reality is that none of us are okay with the status quo. Homelessness in LA will not change unless we help more people get off the streets. I will be working with communities throughout my district to site similar programs because I know that this is the only way to we can make any headway against a serious homelessness problem.

I plan to introduce a motion to be heard on October 3 to ask LAHSA to proceed with the proposal outlined above. The Board meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. I look forward to continuing our community dialog about this proposal and its implementation.

Sincerely,

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

Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor, Third District