



For Immediate Release

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Los Angeles City Councilmember Koretz Looks to Slash the Cost of Tiny Houses for the Homeless

Los Angeles, CA - December 15, 2020 - Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz introduced a motion today asking the City Administrative Officer and the Bureau of Engineering to find ways to cut the cost per unit of its Pallet Shelter tiny house village program in a citywide effort to more quickly and efficiently provide interim housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Tiny houses are prefab 64-square-foot and composite sheds that are being used as quick and inexpensive emergency shelters for homeless individuals. The City of Los Angeles has plans to open the first tiny-house village in January but cost analysis has revealed a burdensome price tag on the project, approximately \$130,000 per unit while other cities are accomplishing similar size installations a fraction of the cost (as little as 10% of that paid by L.A.).

“Our City’s homelessness crises, which has been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, has too often been burdened with cost-overruns and a lack of a sense of urgency,” said Koretz. “It took us more than two years to figure that out with HHH projects, but we don’t have the luxury of doing that with these tiny homes. The way we’ve started is a classic example of the perfect being the enemy of the good. In this case, the good has to be functional, practical, and affordable.”

One reason for the sharp increase in the City’s addition of a variety of expensive amenities which may not serve the basic mission of the tiny home villages efficiently. The City is proposing to place each structure on a newly-poured concrete pad and run plumbing and utility lines into each village. Not only does this run up the price of installing the villages, it creates difficulties in identifying suitable sites.

Koretz’ motion calls for the City’s Bureau of Engineering and City Administrative Officer, the two departments responsible for planning the tiny house village program, to “value engineer” the program to see how appropriate accommodations can be provided at a reasonable cost and to report back with recommendations in 30 days. It cites the experiences of Riverside, Sonoma, and Santa Cruz, where similar facilities have been created for as little as \$12,000-\$17,000 per unit. Koretz has a history of seeking economical ways to house the homeless, commissioning one of the first modular HHH housing projects and proposing that the City look at creating “safe camping” sites to better manage and accommodate the city’s street- and sidewalk-dwellers.

The motion was referred to the City Council’s Homelessness and Poverty Committee for consideration after the holiday recess.