



San José Councilmembers Doan and Batra Offer Breakthrough Pilot Program to Save Lives; Reduce Homeless Encampments

San José Councilmembers Doan and Batra propose a three-district pilot program that will offer up to 1,000 dignified pre-engineered beds for every unsheltered person in the pilot area; will address quality of life issues

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 2/29/2024: Two San José councilmembers have had it with the city's chronic inability to address the inhumane living conditions of our unsheltered neighbors in San José. Today, CM Bien Doan and CM Arjun Batra are launching for consideration a new program that will use cutting edge, pre-engineered lodging solutions to create a congregate shelter community with the capacity to meet the needs of every single homeless person in the pilot districts of 2, 7, and 10.

Called SJ LUV (**L**ifting **U**p **L**i**V**es), the pilot program aims to use pre-engineered structure technology at one of four already-identified sites in District 7 to create dignified shelter opportunities that will not only provide beds for the unhoused, but also useful wrap-around services to help those residents address issues like mental health, substance abuse, and job training.

Because the program will provide capacity for every homeless person in the pilot districts, it will meet the parameters of the 9th Circuit Court's *Martin v Boise*, thereby allowing the city to require that homeless residents, including those in lived-in vehicles, in those districts leave creeks, parks, sidewalks, and public spaces in favor of the safe shelter communities.

"Enough is enough, we have a crisis and must act in crisis mode" said former Fire Captain and current Councilmember Bien Doan, District 7. "For far too long we have enabled unsafe, inhumane, and dangerous living conditions for the unsheltered by relying on woefully slow and brutally expensive projects. Job #1 is to help get our homeless neighbors off the streets immediately--not a decade from now. It's time lead on this issue and save lives now."

"We have the tools, we have the technology, we have proven, market-tested alternatives," said former Intel and IBM executive and current Councilmember Arjun Batra, District 10. "I'm enthusiastic that we can leverage the insights we've acquired and maintain our creativity to assist as many individuals as swiftly as we can. We need to do everything in our power to deliver as quickly as possible, dignified shelter for the unsheltered."

The Councilmembers' proposal can build the shelter community in less than five months after the green light to begin construction is received, for a cost of roughly \$16,000 per bed, or a cost savings of 98.9% over the current Permanent Supportive Housing approach which can take up to a decade to build beds that can cost around \$1.4 Million each.

Over the last five years, San José's homeless population has increased by 44% according to the annual Point in Time counts, and only 30% of the City's homeless population is sheltered.

Pre-engineered congregate housing is widely acknowledged as a successful and viable option; structures can be made and assembled in as little as two weeks and have been used as gymnasiums, homeless shelters, hospitals, schools, dormitories, convention centers and more. In fact, the south hall of the San José Convention center is a prefabricated building that has been used for business, entertainment, and emergency needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our south hall was used as a shelter to house our homeless neighbors.

Recently, the city of Reno, NV constructed a shelter campus for over 1,000 people in just 60 days. San José's model is based upon the Reno model, which is acknowledged as the "most affordable mass shelter on the West Coast."

About the City of San José

With nearly one million residents, San José is the largest city in the Bay Area and one of the nation's most diverse and creative. San José's transformation into a global innovation center in the heart of Silicon Valley has resulted in the world's greatest concentration of technology talent and development.

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