County of Los Angeles to Open Temporary Homeless Shelter in Lawndale

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County of Los Angeles has initiated a new program called “Project Roomkey.” This program is intended to provide a safe place to shelter-in-place for asymptomatic homeless individuals who are at high-risk of complications should they contract COVID-19 (i.e., those age 65 years or older and those with existing underlying health conditions). These homeless individuals will be placed in local hotels contracted by the County for use as temporary homeless shelters. The County’s goal is to provide 15,000 hotel rooms across Los Angeles County for this purpose.

In Lawndale, the County has secured an agreement with the Best Western Plus South Bay Hotel (at 15000 Hawthorne Boulevard) for use of its 97 rooms beginning the week of April 20th. The entire hotel is expected to be used as a temporary homeless shelter for at least a three month term. The County will work with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and People Assisting the Homeless (PATH, a homeless services provider) to operate the shelter. Homeless guests will be provided three meals per day and medical services, and security guard(s) will be onsite.

The City of Lawndale supports the public health goals of Project Roomkey, however, the City was not consulted by the County in developing the program or the agreement with the Best Western hotel. The City is now trying to coordinate with the County and Sheriff’s Department to minimize potential impacts from the shelter in the community. The City is also considering administrative and legal options to protect its residents and businesses.

For more information on Project Roomkey, please click here.