



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

R-16
Office of Dee Andrews
Council Member, Sixth District
Memorandum

Date: December 15, 2009

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

From: Suja Lowenthal, Councilmember Second District
Dee Andrews, Councilmember Sixth District *DA*
Rae Gabelich, Councilmember Eight District *RG*

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM:** Help for Long Beach Newly Homeless

DISCUSSION

With a 13.9% unemployment rate, individuals who traditionally have been employed and lived in homes or apartments are facing foreclosures and evictions. Before literally sleeping on the streets, some people resort to living in their vehicles. Our fellow residents often are faced with depressing and unpleasant choices. Many of our neighbors have lost their jobs, their homes, and their support network.

Increased vehicular occupation raises significant issues of safety, sanitation, hunger, and health with the community. A responsible and compassionate local response to this human tragedy is needed. I call on non-profit organizations to rise to the occasion in this economic crisis by reaching out to our newly homeless neighbors.

There needs to be a place where people who find themselves living in their cars to have a safe place to sleep. Whatever non-profit chooses to help address this growing population, they need to work with the Multi-Service Center for immediate help with housing assistance and getting off the streets. This item will no longer seek exploring publicly owned property to be used as safe havens for people who live in their vehicle. We suggest any nonprofit or private entity to call it "Ports in the Storm" so it will be easily identified and communicated to the public and those in need. It has been determined there are enough private properties that are legally permissible to be used for this purposes.

Solution: Federal Stimulus Funds Can Be Used to Address This Growing Trend

The City of Long Beach was awarded approximately \$3.5 million on August 2009 in federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds specifically to be used to prevent homelessness for people currently housed, and to rapidly re-house people who have recently become homeless due to the economic challenges we face.

Of the \$3.5 million the City has sub-granted \$2,858,302 to two different agencies to provide the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) services.

We should use a portion of these funds to directly address vehicular occupation.

According to the Health Department, here is the description of supportive service activity that the funds will provide:

The City of Long Beach (the "City") plans to use HPRP funds for both homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities. The City has allocated funds to two sub recipient agencies, while retaining a portion of the HPRP funds for homelessness prevention activities, case management and HMIS data collection and evaluation. Together, these three agencies are expected to serve a total of 355 households, preventing homelessness for 300 households and ending homelessness for 70 households. (Please note that households may potentially qualify for and receive both homelessness prevention AND rapid re-housing assistance under this program. The City and its partner sub recipients are working to coordinate HPRP resources and stabilize the households as effectively as possible to minimize duplication in effort.) This will be achieved by providing a combination of financial assistance and services to families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless.

RECOMMENDATION

A) Recommendation to respectfully request that the City Council to adopt the following three strategies to address homelessness and vehicular occupation in conjunction with the city current "Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program" (HPRP)

Prevention: Assist people who are within three months of being evicted, and could be at risk of being homeless. This includes:

- Identify the issuance of utility shut off notices in order to assess households that may be at risk for losing their housing. (Long Beach City Gas and Oil Department & Water Department)
- Provide rental and utilities assistance for this target population. (The City of Long Beach is currently contracting with Catholic Charities to assess households for eligibility for the Homeless Prevention component.
- Provide case management and support services to address issues that may link the household as at risk of homelessness. (This is linked to rental and utilities assistance.)

Outreach: Reach out to people who are living in vehicles on the streets of Long Beach in order to identify who they are, what their needs are, and how to connect them to services and housing. This includes:

- Since law enforcement is typically the first responders, provide law enforcement with Pocket Guide Resource Directories that list services at the city's Multi-Service Center. Also, neighborhood and business associations.
- Begin to track the incidence of Vehicular Occupancy to learn about who is living in their vehicles and what their needs are.
- Support current city street Outreach teams to regularly canvass neighbors reaching out to people living in vehicles.
- Assign an existing Outreach staff person at the City's Multi-Service Center to assist in coordinating and strategizing outreach to people living in vehicles.

Rapid Re-Housing: Refer people in vehicles to Beyond Shelter located at the Multi-Service Center to access services and housing for people already homeless and living in vehicles. This includes:

- "Outreach" as described above.
- Link people in vehicles to services at the city's Multi-Service Center. Services such as employment, case management, health care, mental health care, food, etc.
- Provide people with housing locator assistance, rental assistance and move-in costs for 6 months. This would be linked with intensive case management and employment placement services.
- Provide people with direct access to emergency and transitional shelters for people who do not qualify for Rapid Rehousing Program.

This adopted strategy allows for the City of Long Beach to immediately serve and house people who are living in vehicles as a first priority.

Notes:

- Policy outline assisted by Joel John Roberts CEO of PATH Partners
- Policy outline assisted by Kraig Kojian CEO of DLBA
- Private Property allowing people to sleep in cars & naming private sites "Ports in the Storm". John B. Greet Journalist LBPOST.COM
- Per the State of California, Employment Development Department's (EDD), *Monthly Labor Force Data for Cities and Census Designated Places (CDP)*, the PRELIMINARY September 2009 unemployment rate for Long Beach [City] is 13.9%.
- The information is available in the excel spreadsheet for Cities & Sub-County Places, <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/allsubs.xls>, which available on the LaborMarketInfo - Unemployment Rate & Labor Force webpage, <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?pageid=1006>.