



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve



R-16

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Date: August 14, 2018
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District *SP*
Councilman Daryl Supernaw, Fourth District *DS*
From: Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District *AL*
Subject: Request for Report on Beach Enforcement

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council is requesting that the City Manager work with Homeless Services Department, Police Department, Mental Evaluation Units, HEART Team, Quality of Life Officers, Marine Patrol, Public Works, and Parks Recreation and Marine Department to report back on how the City can better address or enforce beach violations as well as the associated impacts it has on our beaches and residents. This should include: possible ordinance changes to improve the enforceability of violations of beach hours; added methods of preventing alcohol and drug use on our beaches through the City municipal code and through changes to current enforcement practices; and approaches to minimize trash, human waste, food waste, and large-scale littering on our beaches.

INTRODUCTION:

The beaches of Long Beach are some of our most significant amenities. Our stretch of coastline is used by residents as well as visitors for recreation year round. Whether you are swimming, exercising, bike riding, building sand castles, playing volleyball, kite surfing, or just enjoying the sun and sea breeze, our beaches have something for you.

However, there have been growing concerns from many neighborhoods about the usage of our beaches. Homelessness in Long Beach as well as throughout the state continues to be a major issue that is difficult to solve and causes increasingly extreme and emotional responses from people on all sides of the topic.

Recently several City departments including the Police, Parks, Recreation and Marine, Public Works, and Homeless Outreach conducted a



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coordinated effort to provide assistance to those beginning to construct encampments on the beach by providing services to those interested and willing to get their lives back on track, and enforcement for those who refused services or were found breaking other more significant laws. It is anticipated that similar efforts will be conducted on an ongoing basis moving forward to stop large-scale encampments like those we have seen in many parts of Orange County and Los Angeles. The last thing the City of Long Beach wants is to follow down the path Orange County has gone where they ignored encampments for so long that when they finally did act, it spurred legal action and a much more significant problem.

Long Beach has a long record of providing those experiencing homelessness with wide-ranging and in-depth care and assistance for those interested in getting housing, rehabilitation, job training, or even just a bed for a night. Long Beach has been designated time and time again as a model for how cities should approach homelessness and have recently been allocated additional funding from the state to do even more.

Also, Long Beach has consistently enforced violations on our beaches, but with more and more people using our beaches for living or camping, which it is not meant for, we need to see continued efforts to better manage these growing issues.

Not only is camping on the beach an ordinance violation, the activities that often occur on the beaches cause major concerns. There is trash and human waste, there are food containers, and alcohol, large scale littering, and many additional activities that alienate recreational beach goers from taking advantage of activities commonly enjoyed at the beach.

Additionally, we must look realistically at the fact that there are serious concerns about the frequent use of drugs like heroin and methamphetamines among those camping on our beaches and frequent issues around mental health, crime, and safety that occur out of sight of most residents and not easily responded to by our police due to the fact that our beaches are not set up for long term or overnight camping, or easy access for law enforcement patrol.

This issue was once again highlighted recently when during training a junior lifeguard stepped on a used syringe on the beach.

The City Council has voted to move forward with a number of items that would play a role on many of these topics including efforts to reduce opioid



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addiction,¹ a request for a comprehensive approach to homelessness,^{2 3} opportunities for homeless work programs,⁴ an ordinance on bike chop shops,⁵ developing a new bike registration program,⁶ expanding cleanup efforts citywide,⁷ hiring homelessness response HEART teams,⁸ and progress toward a new year-round homeless shelter.⁹

The City Council has shown itself to be active and solution oriented with important health and safety issues related to homelessness and another step is necessary to continue that progress. The City Manager should work with City staff in our Homeless Services Department, Police Department, Mental Evaluation Units, HEART Team, Quality of Life Officers, Marine Patrol, Public Works, and Parks Recreation and Marine to report back on how the City can better address and enforce violations of beach camping proactively as well as the associated impacts it has on our beaches and residents.

Finally, beaches need a specialized approach. Beaches, unlike other locations in our City, are typically further away from residences and more difficult for emergency response to get to putting those on the beach after hours at greater risk due to lack of access and a lack of people to call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency or a crime. If we were able to more effectively enforce the current hours of operation and reduce instances of overnight beach camping, we could reduce these potential issues from leading to significant harms to individuals and to the city. Additionally, our beaches need a unique approach that is unlike other areas of the City because of the

¹ <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5480091&GUID=93216511-C9AB-47139219-CE0B1A15A72E>

² <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5165526&GUID=6A20DA30-3463-4E13845A-9C3A3AFC5AB8>

³ <http://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/city-manager/media-library/documents/memos-to-themayor-tabbed-file-list-folders/2017/december-18--2017---city-strategy-for-addressinghomelessness-and-community-quality-of-life>

⁴ <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5723823&GUID=A25A9CCB-6583-4A3191E9-8C33328761DB>

⁵ <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5787394&GUID=57E4A757-20E2-4B16BDF2-C898A631D666>

⁶ <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5247477&GUID=89686B3F-11FE-48A18F6E-6618A42B5132>

⁷ <http://longbeach.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5294817&GUID=DAE9450B-8E58-4687B20A-49FCF8426F3C>

⁸ <https://lbpost.com/life/with-a-heart-lbfd-s-new-team-aims-to-help-curb-homelessness-one-call-at-a-time/>

⁹ <https://www.presstelegram.com/2018/06/20/long-beach-secures-12-million-in-state-funds-tohelp-homeless/>



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common practice of going barefoot at the beach, and laying, digging, and playing in the sand that necessitates more attention placed on maintenance than is needed in parks, sidewalks, or other public areas of the City. So, a unique approach is warranted to confront the number of issues that continue to be a concern and undermine the quality of our beaches by making residents feel alienated from part of the City's namesake due to safety concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact as a result of the recommended action.