



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Date: May 23, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District *SP*
Councilman Dee Andrews, Sixth District *DA*
Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District *AA*

Subject: Need for Comprehensive Strategy Identifying Opportunities to Address Homelessness and Community Quality of Life Concerns

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council requests the City Manager to work with the following departments to prepare a report on the specified areas relating to homelessness and residential quality of life in the City of Long Beach. The report should summarize the data and identify a multi-departmental strategic approach to address the listed topics. This report should include the expected funding required to effectuate a citywide strategy to address homelessness and residential quality of life issues associated with homeless and transient activity. The report should be returned to the City Council no later than 120 days from today's date.

Health Department:

- (a) Data on the number of staff that makes up the homeless outreach team, and any information on number of regular contacts and a breakdown of the results of that contact including acceptance and refusal of services.
- (b) Evaluate the possibility of staffing the automated phone message system to provide follow up with homeless individuals or residents who call with questions or to report specific needs.
- (c) Data on the effectiveness of the MET teams including; the number of current officers in this position, their duties, the number of contacts they make on a typical workday and information regarding placement of homeless individual in city sponsored services or programs including; their duties, the number of contacts they make on a typical workday and information regarding placement of individual in city sponsored services or programs and other services sponsored by non-profit organizations.
- (d) Report on efforts to develop and implement a citywide campaign to inform and educate the homeless, or those in danger of becoming homeless, as well as the general Long Beach public of the programs and services available to help with short, medium, and long-term homelessness solutions. The citywide campaign should

include consistent messaging with a logo or slogan and educational information highlighting city services and donation options. This material can be disseminated to local businesses in print form, as well as residents via social media and other digital modes. This report should include the budget needs associated with a campaign and the feasibility of including this messaging on Big Belly trashcans, bus stops, billboards, public service announcements, and other areas in public spaces.

- (e) Report on efforts to develop and implement a citywide campaign to educate residents about donation options that support the goals of long-term sustainable assistance to the homeless population, and report on nationwide and regional efforts to encourage residents and businesses to donate in ways that have the biggest impact and benefit for the homeless population.
- (f) An overview of how many rehabilitation and detox beds are needed to adequately manage the need in Long Beach.
- (g) Report on partnerships with other entities, such as CSULB to study the reason individuals in need of services regularly refuse services and what changes can be made to the city's outreach efforts to account for these factors.

Police Department:

- (a) Data on the effectiveness of the current Quality of Life officers including; the number of current officers in this position, their duties, the number of contacts they make on a typical workday and information regarding placement of homeless individual in city sponsored services or programs.
- (b) An analysis of the staffing and financial resources that would be needed for the Quality of Life teams to sufficiently address their delineated goals and responsibilities consistently throughout the city.
- (c) An estimate of the time it would take to have sufficient trained and qualified staffing resources for the competent performance of the Quality of Life function.
- (d) An overview of common law enforcement responses to quality of life issues and the related ordinance or penal code violations. This summary should include an overview of the legal law enforcement options and common methods of addressing violations. An overview of why one method might be selected over another should be included in this analysis.
- (e) A summary of useful policing tools and tactics that have resulted in homeless people accepting and being placed into long-term services.

Fire Department

- (a) Data regarding the HEART team's success at connecting homeless individuals with city services and long-term supportive programs.
- (b) An evaluation of what resources would be needed to add more HEART teams throughout the City for a one-year period of time.
- (c) An analysis of whether the addition of more HEART teams could address both the needs of the homeless and the quality of life issues that homelessness presents.

- (d) An analysis of the present use of the HEART team and if it justifies an expansion of the program.
- (e) Research and report on the opportunities for HEART units to transport individuals to alternate destinations more specific to their individual needs.
- (f) The Feasibility of HEART units being certified to become dispatch units available in extreme circumstances.
- (g) Information on any additional strategies utilized by Fire Departments across the region or the state in addressing homelessness or quality of life issues.

City Prosecutor's Office

- (a) Description of the existing citywide strategies for handling crimes associated with homelessness.
- (b) Update on the use of court orders, including orders issued by judicial officers to stay away from a specific crime location, an assessment of the effectiveness of the use of court orders, and, if effective, what resources would be needed to improve this strategy.
- (c) Report on current court diversion and alternative sentencing programs, including programs designed to assist persons with mental illness and drug addiction challenges.

Public Works/Parks, Recreation and Marine

- (a) Research on what other municipalities in the nation have explored in regards to job skills, training and service opportunities for the homeless;
- (b) Whether developing a pilot program designed to engage the homeless in a community beautification or improvement project in exchange for some type of benefit is a feasible option for the City of Long Beach.
- (c) The resources or non-profit partnerships that would be required to implement such a pilot program.
- (d) Feasibility of creating collection, inventory, and storage teams to work together with other departments making it easier for City staff to efficiently provide services to those with a large number of belongings, and easier for individuals to accept services knowing they will not be abandoning their belongings.
- (e) Evaluation of ways to more effectively manage the growing encampments that develop frequently.

Economic Development, BIDs, Workforce Development, and Other Community Resources

- (a) Feasibility of partnerships with Non-Profits and City departments like Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Marine to offer short-term, as needed hourly maintenance and/or project assistance.
- (b) Identify people most likely to become homeless due to financial difficulty and offer proactive assistance in financial management, skills training, programs/services etc.

- (c) Feasibility to offer incentives to BID businesses to employ homeless, previously homeless, or threatened with homeless individuals.
- (d) Feasibility of tracking individual services provided to understand trends and evaluate successes and opportunities to improve effectiveness.
- (e) Applicability of Social Impact Bonds and pay for success models in addressing homelessness.

I-Team/Technology Services

- (a) Potential of developing an app based database of daily updated available beds for shelter, and temporary housing as well as rehab, detox, mental health, and any other local programs and services that focus on providing assistance to homeless people in order to simplify the process of getting someone, who is willing to accept services, the assistance they need.
- (b) Feasibility of calls for emergency services more efficiently being connected to homeless services when emergency response is determined to not be necessary.
- (c) Possibility of developing a multi-departmental and multi-organizational database that tracks individual contacts and services received with the goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness of services.
- (d) Report on other potential technology based approaches to improve and expedite providing of services to those in need and methods of addressing community concerns that have been applied in other municipalities.
- (e) Include in report the cost and feasibility for potential technology based approaches.

OVERVIEW:

This collection of departments represent those most significantly impacted by homeless issues on a daily basis. Each plays an important role in confronting this widespread complex topic and is a necessary partner in working to limit homelessness and its effects.

The Long Beach Health Department has a very robust homeless outreach program, which serves as a model for the region. One thing that is often repeated by members of our City homeless outreach team is that the goal of homeless outreach is to encourage long-term sustainable change, rather than short-term assistance. Toward that end, the report from the Health department should focus on that goal.

The Long Beach Police Department plays an important role in homelessness. Although, it is not illegal to be homeless, many of the activities or unintended consequences associated with homelessness can be. LBPD has made special commitments to help connect homeless people with the needed services and continue to be a key partner in this issue and are frequently the first city entity to interact with an individual experiencing homelessness.

The Long Beach Fire Department launched the HEART program with support of Councilmember Pearce as well as the entire City Council. Based on the updates the City Council has received the HEART program has been tremendously successful in connecting those in need with long-

term sustained assistance. A report from the Long Beach Fire Department should include updates on that and a number of additional areas of potential increased focus on the homeless population.

The Long Beach City Prosecutor's Office is tasked with making a filing determination and prosecuting violations of the municipal code and misdemeanor violations of California law and can play an important role in breaking the cycles that lead to homelessness. They are uniquely poised to encourage individuals to accept services and programs that lead to long-term positive life changes.

Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Marine interact daily with homelessness and a number of issues around that greater topic. With this in mind their practices and abilities to approach this topic are important.

Economics, Businesses, and Community Resources play a special role in addressing this pressing problem. There are partnerships throughout the nation who have embarked upon creative ways to engage the homeless population and empower them to improve their lives.

I-Team and Technology Services has the opportunity to become an essential partner in addressing the widespread issues around homelessness in a modern forward thinking way.

Long Beach, like many cities throughout the region, is experiencing trends in homelessness presenting challenges to multiple departments throughout the City. At this point in time, the City of Long Beach has not adopted a long-term strategic plan regarding the issue of homelessness. It is clear from a review of the City's efforts over the past two years, however, that multiple departments and City leaders have been instrumental in identifying possible solutions to address issues associated with housing, outreach, and quality of life issues for our residents. Council members and city departments who have taken steps to address these issues from a policy standpoint should be commended. There remains, however, a significant void in terms of long-term planning and strategy in terms of a citywide approach to homelessness. This item seeks to orient where this void can be filled through developing improved approaches based on reports on available data and feasibility assessments of new opportunities.

There is no doubt that the issue of homelessness extends beyond the duty of any single department within an urban city like Long Beach. In terms of quality of life issues, the perception by many residents is that the issue is one of enforcement, which would fall to law enforcement authorities. While this argument may sound persuasive, the reality is that enforcement of existing laws is only one aspect of the issue. However, others would argue this is a Health Department issue, which is also insufficient, as the topic includes issues well beyond only Health Department programs and services. As is also the case with it being related to housing, economics, mental health, and other areas. The truth is they are all right as this is a complex multidimensional issue spanning national trends, societal shifts, cultural ideology, state law, education, and countless other topics.

With the passage of Measure H in Los Angeles County and the increased focus on this issue statewide, viable solutions are more likely now than ever before. The City of Long Beach has thus far been very active in engaging in the necessary dialogue and tackling the complex issues surrounding homelessness. Conversations led by our Vice Mayor on housing for those in need and support from our Housing Authority staff all play a vital role in our strategies to solve the issue of homelessness. However, focused and creative solutions for those experiencing homelessness or threatened with homelessness must be addressed in addition to the quality of life issues that residents experience every day should be included in the strategy and analysis. Thus, the spirit of this item is to engage in a holistic approach to the issue of homelessness and residential quality of life.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no significant financial impact for the preparation of a report, as the scope of the information requested falls within the data collection capacity of the specific departments. Additional resources and/or expertise may be necessary for the implementation of the recommendations in the report.