



## Legislation Text

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Recommendation to continue the local emergency caused by conditions or threatened conditions of homelessness within the City of Long Beach, which if not corrected, constitute an imminent and proximate threat to the safety of persons and property within the City; and

Receive and file an update on the emergency declaration and associated activities and provide any additional direction to City staff regarding the emergency. (Citywide)

The City of Long Beach (City) has designated significant resources to address homelessness in Long Beach. Since 2020, more than 530 new interim housing units have been developed. The City opened the first year-round Atlantic Bridge Community Shelter, secured three hotels along with the County of Los Angeles (County), and recently purchased the 78-bed Luxury Inn and more than 30 modular shelter units. The City also implemented three Restorative Engagement to Achieve Collective Health (REACH) teams, increased the number of outreach staff and call takers from 4 to 27, expanded hours for weekend outreach, began conducting localized interdepartmental response, partnered to provide mobile health care services, and doubled Police Department Quality of Life teams. In 2023, the City has implemented mobile Multi-Service Center (MSC) outreach teams, will launch a mobile mental health and substance use treatment van, and will continue to focus on mental health prevention and treatment access.

The City continues to have approximately 3,300 people experiencing homelessness throughout Long Beach, which is a 77 percent increase since 2017 and a 62 percent increase from 2020 to 2022. Of these 3,300 people, approximately 2,300 are unsheltered. The City and local community-based organizations provide approximately 1,300 interim shelter beds, and most of these shelters are operating at capacity, leaving few options for those currently without shelter.

### **Declaration of the Emergency**

On January 10, 2023, the City Council proclaimed the local emergency, in accordance with the provisions of Long Beach Municipal Code Chapter 2.69. This item will be reviewed every fourteen (14) days until the City Council terminates said local emergency or amends requirements for reporting frequency. A local emergency must be terminated at the earliest possible date as the conditions warrant.

### **Action Taken in the Past Two Weeks**

Over the past two weeks, the City emergency structure has been established and below is a

summary of the major items worked on. Supporting information is included in Attachment A.

- Announced Safe Parking location via referral by the Multi Service Center (MSC) for those experiencing homelessness, including restrooms, security and lighting and access to services.
- Met with LA County Supervisor Hahn to discuss Los Angeles County support of Long Beach homelessness efforts.
- Approved \$13 million in one-time funds to support homelessness emergency response.
- Announced second winter shelter location at Silverado Park.
- Announced location that provides people experiencing homelessness and currently living in recreational vehicles (RVs) with sanitation and water-filling services.
- Announced Mayoral Community Forum with local housing providers for February 22, 2023.
- Selected firm to design, build and install tiny homes for people experiencing homelessness.
- Shared list of resources available to community for addressing issues related to homelessness.
- Held fifth livestream update with Mayor Richardson and Police Chief Wally Hebeish.
- Finalized letters in support of state and federal proposals for more homeless services and housing funding.
- Met with state legislative budget staff to review options for additional direct funding to large cities for homelessness.
- Set up meetings with LA County leadership and regional partners through the Gateway Cities COG to strategize regional engagement on the homelessness emergency.
- Held meetings with regional partners such as LA County, LA Metro, and regional cities to discuss partnership opportunities to provide more resources and services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Submitted two letters of support related to legislative bills related to homelessness: SB 24 (Feinstein) would provide additional federal dollars to support local homeless services and affordable housing efforts; and SB 91 (Umberg) would streamline indefinitely the conversion of motels into transitional and interim housing.
- Launched Housing Authority information line, receiving 242 calls and sending out 137 emails in the first five days (2/10 - 2/14).
- Engaged with the County of Los Angeles on their plans for Measure H funding to expand resources for Long Beach to prevent homelessness and provide services.
- Held meeting with Senator Lena Gonzalez's office to discuss potential solutions that would make Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention funding more equitable for Long Beach.

- Continued the evaluation of properties citywide (both public and private) that could be temporarily used or acquired to further support the local emergency.
- Expanded locations across the City where people can donate items for people experiencing homelessness and developed a website where non-profit organizations can request items.
- Continuing to design notification system for people experiencing homelessness so they are aware of when service opportunities are available.
- Launched Community Partnerships Interest Form where community members or groups can express an interest in supporting those experiencing homelessness, with 20 responses received from partners willing to contribute food, clothing, job training, community outreach and education and possible service sites.
- Placed donation bins for items for people experiencing homelessness at all City library locations and the Boys and Girls Club (3635 Long Beach Blvd) where donations can be dropped off during operating hours.
- Planned for next possible locations and focus areas for Mobile Access Center (MAC) and coordinated efforts, which will be finalized in the coming weeks.
- Actively developing the Community Partner Roundtables with the goal being to host several citywide convenings in March 2023.
- Created the initial version of the data dashboard, tested with staff working groups and made recommended updates.
- Created list of potential grants/funds to pursue.
- Received new staff members including 1 Public Health Nurse, 2 Case Managers, 5 Outreach Workers.
- Began asset mapping of after-hours bed availability, mental health support and shelter resources.

### Questions from January 24, 2023

At the last hearing of this item, there were several questions from the dais. Some were answered in person, and the following is a list of questions staff are working on a response to and their status.

- **What type of resources is the City prioritizing when discussing Measure H funding with the County?**
  - o Response: The City is advocating that the County provide a proportional share of Measure H funding to the City to support our homelessness efforts. This could include funding for eligible Measure H programs and services (sobering centers, housing models, additional beds, etc.)

- **What are stakeholder outreach plans?**
  - Response: The Community Engagement Working Group is one of the established working groups focused on engaging partners to assist people experiencing homelessness in the Long Beach community. This group is creating stakeholder outreach plans that identify potential partners who could offer programs, services, supports for people experiencing homelessness and creates a plan to reach out to them to encourage partnership and aligning of their resources and programs.
  
- **What are the current staffing needs to support the City's homelessness efforts?**
  - Response: The biggest need is Public Health nurses who are a critical part of the City's REACH and MAC team. Additionally, staffing related to case management and outreach have also been difficult to fill, but the City has been able to bring on one Public Health Nurse, two Case Managers, and five Outreach Workers in the past two-week period.
  
- **How can we organize Safe Parking programs to be a safe space for families and undocumented individuals who need services?**
  - Response: A Safe Parking program will be available to anyone experiencing homelessness including families and undocumented individuals via referral from the MSC. The Safe Parking site will include outreach workers and access to services along with referrals to County family services and hotel vouchers.

### Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on February 21, 2023 on some of the areas of focus for the next two weeks. Topics will include:

- Complete improvements and bring the second Winter Shelter online.
- Finalize letters to state and federal partners outlining the City's requests for support to address the homelessness emergency.
- Launch public-facing dashboard.
- Plan a drive thru donation drop-off event to support people experiencing homelessness.
- Continue to staff up the Homeless Services Bureau to address case management and public health nursing needs.
- Engage clergy workgroup and continue implementation of the stakeholder outreach and engagement plan.
- Plan long-term schedule of locations and focus areas for Mobile Access Center.
- Work to identify emergency shelter locations to be in place after winter shelter program

ends.

- Continue identifying partners who will offer after-hours bed availability, mental health support and shelter resources.
- Explore implementing a change to the CDBG Security Deposit Program to now include rental assistance for households that cannot pay their rent due to emergency expenses.
- Research all grants with homelessness connection that the City has received in the last several fiscal years, to identify if those grants are viable to pursue again.
- Further development of the emergency response efforts through the nine identified workgroups.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Anita Lakhani and by Budget Operations and Development Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on February 16, 2023.

City Council action is requested on February 21, 2023, in accordance with the Long Beach Municipal Code requirements for the review of the local emergency. In order to report back every two weeks and to allow time for updates with the actions of the past two weeks, the item will generally be released on the Supplemental Agenda with a presentation with the latest information provided to the City Council and community during the meeting.

The full fiscal impact is unknown at this time and will be based on the work required and projects implemented to respond to the homelessness crisis. As the Citywide strategy is developed, and funding is identified, staff will return to the City Council with fiscal impacts and requests for appropriation. This recommendation will result in significant staffing impacts beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to affect Citywide staffing workload and will cause priorities to shift due to this emergency. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

THOMAS B. MODICA  
CITY MANAGER