



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0199, Version: 1

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 continued and below is a

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

- Attended a community meeting to discuss the proposed second Winter Shelter at Silverado Park. After receiving community input, it has been decided to explore alternative solutions to address the homelessness crisis, and City staff has committed to community engagement prior to proceeding with any future plans.
- Coordinated set-up of 60 warming beds at MSC to offer shelter during inclement weather at night from February 26 to March 5 with potential for limited extension if night-time temperatures remain cold.
- Hosted a public forum with Mayor to encourage housing providers to lease up with people assisted through the Housing Voucher and Emergency Housing Voucher programs. Approximately 50 owners/property managers attended.
- Held the sixth livestream update with Mayor Richardson, Public Works Director Eric Lopez, and Parks, Recreation and Marine Director Brent Dennis; and, the seventh livestream update with Mayor Richardson and Homeless Outreach team member Joel Reynoza.
- Launched applications for Visual Improvement Program (VIP) Grant.
- Convened a summit with legislative delegation office staff and local partners, where staff provided updates on the City's homeless services, outreach, and advocacy priorities.
- Met with LA Voice on February 21, 2023 to discuss faith-based collaboration opportunities.
- Participated in a meeting with the Gateway Cities Mayors and City Managers to discuss efforts to prevent and address homelessness throughout the region.
- Met with County Chair Hahn and CEO Davenport to discuss the City's priorities for the homelessness emergency.
- Met with neighboring Continuum of Care (CoC) Cities-Glendale and Pasadena-to brainstorm a plan that would make Measure H funding more equitable for CoC Cities.
- Metro moved to initiate a discussion with Long Beach and county homeless service providers to create a homeless service hub in Long Beach along with the agency's A Line route.
- Developed potential grants and funding tracker available to entire team.
- Added Scherer Park Community Center to the list of locations accepting donations for people experiencing homelessness.
- Launched the Community Partnership Interest Form in Spanish, Tagalog, and Khmer to elicit support from community partners in our efforts to address homelessness across Long Beach.
- Finalized the first iteration of the public facing dashboard.

- The internal call center at Housing Authority focused on conducting outreach to local housing providers to encourage participation in the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) and Housing Choice Voucher programs received 994 calls sending out 740 emails since February 10, 2023.
- Announced new locations for the Mobile Access Center (MAC) in North and East Long Beach.
- Submitted proposal for the second round of the Encampment Resolution funding.

Question from February 21, 2023

At the last hearing of this item, there was one unanswered question from the dais. Some were answered in person, and the following question has a response below:

- **Can the homeless resources listed on the website be listed in the reference in the Go Long Beach app?**
 - o Response: Yes, a banner will be placed atop Go Long Beach with a link to the homelessness page. The verbiage is currently undergoing translation to all of the language access languages before the banner and link are published.

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on March 7, 2023, on some of the areas of focus for the next two weeks. Topics will include:

- Launch the text notification system to provide real-time information and connection to service locations such as the daily location of the Mobile Access Center.
- Complete design of extensive community outreach and engagement process for homeless services locations and launch engagement efforts.
- In partnership with the City team, the Mayor will begin hosting a series of community round table sessions with every council district represented, to have conversations about how partners can collaborate within the emergency response efforts and support short-term and long-term solutions to addressing homelessness.
- Plan an Interfaith convening of faith organizations from across Long Beach who are committed to supporting the efforts of not only the emergency response, but ongoing after the emergency has been lifted.
- Plan a drive thru donation drop-off event to support people experiencing homelessness scheduled for Saturday, March 18, 2023.
- Work to identify potential emergency shelter locations as well as locations available for when the winter shelter program ends.
- Perform outreach, announce location of next Safe Parking Program, and begin

installation.

- Complete RV Dump Station installation.
- Follow-up with LA County on request to support emergency.
- Continue evaluating potential Airport and Port of Long Beach properties that can support additional homeless services, including but not limited to a Safe Parking Site or Safe RV Parking Site.
- Continue evaluating other properties citywide (both public and private) that could be temporarily used or acquired to further support the local emergency.
- Continue to conduct enhanced engagement with housing providers to boost participation in Housing Voucher Program.
- Host the first of four virtual information sessions for property owners and landlords to educate them on different aspects of the housing choice voucher process.
- Continue identifying partners who will offer after-hours bed availability, mental health support and shelter resources.
- Continue researching 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.
- Continue to staff up the Homeless Services Bureau to address case management and public health nursing needs.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Anita Lakhani and Budget Operations and Development Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on March 1, 2023.

City Council action is requested on March 7, 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