



Legislation Text

File #: 22-1158, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to work with Health and Human Services and Technology and Innovation Departments to provide an updated report within 90 days on the feasibility and possible implementation strategies to develop a City of Long Beach specific mobile and web-based application for City staff and City of Long Beach residents who work with or interact with those experiencing homelessness and/or addiction or other mental health issues that provides updated, real-time data on bed availability at shelters, rehab, detox, medical detox, and other types of public, private, and non-profit beds. The mobile and web-based applications would provide additional information to City of Long Beach employees and residents about services such as food pantries, showers, or locations to get ID vouchers.

On August 20, 2019 the City Council requested the City Manager to evaluate the feasibility of working with Get Help, or a similar service, to develop City-specific mobile and web-based applications (apps) for City staff and Long Beach residents who work or interact with people experiencing homelessness and/or addiction or other mental health issues and report back. The apps would provide updated, real-time data on bed availability at shelters, rehab, detox, medical detox, and other types of public, private, and nonprofit beds. The apps would also provide additional information to City employees and residents about services such as food pantries, showers, or locations to get ID vouchers.

On March 21, 2021 our Health and Human Services Department provided a report on this request. The report detailed efforts made to evaluate the feasibility of this proposed program and work with an app developer, however found that the program was not able to be implemented at that time due to reporting limitations of service providers.

Given the ongoing and pressing nature of the homelessness crisis facing Long Beach, and the recent increases we have seen in nearly all categories of homelessness, a renewed effort should be made to develop useful programs and technology to efficiently get those willing to accept services seamlessly into the help needed. Therefore, the development of a real-time app providing resources to city staff, nonprofits, and individuals could represent a significant impact in leveraging technology, and existing resources to assist those struggling with homelessness.

The City is committed to confronting this problem head on and does this through the hard work of countless City departments ranging from the Health and Human Services Department, to Police, Fire, Public Works, and Parks, Recreation and Marine Departments, to the City Prosecutor, and many others. Long Beach has made major strides to develop creative approaches to address not only issues faced by individual people suffering from homelessness, but also the quality of life impacts our community feels as a result of

homelessness.

However, one of the difficult issues for our Homeless Outreach Team, Quality of Life Officers, and REACH units is finding beds that are available when someone is finally willing to accept the services they need. It is documented that for a person struggling with homelessness to accept services, they need to be contacted for outreach an average of 17 times. This outreach is essential and is the most important part of getting people off the streets and back on track. So, when someone finally says “yes,” and is willing to accept the help they need, our City outreach teams need to be able to quickly know where they can take them at the push of a button to get specialized care and assistance for the individual.

Therefore, putting real-time bed availability information in the hands of emergency response teams that work with homeless individuals would cut down on the delays and better take advantage of that often short moment when someone is willing to commit to services and take those life changing first steps.

This web and mobile application-based technological approach to connecting individuals in need with services is an opportunity that the City of Long Beach should consider as we continue grappling with homelessness and its associated impacts. Making more efficient use of resources in Long Beach through the use of more agile technology can be an important way to make a significant difference in our fight against homelessness.

This item has been reviewed by Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on September 25, 2022.

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Health and Human Services and Technology and Innovation Departments to provide an updated report within 90 days on the feasibility and possible implementation strategies to develop a mobile and web-based shelter and bed finder application. The requested action is anticipated to have a moderate to significant impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a moderate to significant impact on existing City Council priorities. There is no job impact associated with this item.

Approve recommendation.

SUZIE PRICE COUNCILWOMAN,
THIRD DISTRICT

DARYL SUPERNOW COUNCILMAN,
FOURTH DISTRICT

AL AUSTIN COUNCILMAN,
EIGHTH DISTRICT