



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0087, **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 ABC 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 will include mobile Multi-Service Center (MSC) outreach teams, 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, more than 2,000 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.

- Emergency operations staffing set up, dedicating over 100 key top leaders
- Created a mission statement and focus areas for the emergency, and designated nine different workgroups
- Embedded the Equity Officer in the response to ensure equity considerations in policies, priorities, and resource allocations
- Announced the response at Billie Jean King Library and the immediate focus on the Downtown Area
- Informed all City employees about the emergency and that reassignment may be needed as disaster service workers
- Expanded the hours available for Multi-Service Center services through the introduction of the Mobile Access Vehicle
- Launch of the donation effort
- Kicked off the City's weekly update program to the community, which will be Tuesdays at 11:00 AM
- Announced the incentives available for landlords participating in the Emergency Housing Voucher program

Questions from January 10, 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. Attachment B includes additional documentation for some of these requests:

- **Add a section to the mission statement to enhance the focus on public safety.**
 - o Response: This was completed, and the mission statement was updated.
- **Can the City focus on the public safety continuum and keep at the forefront of our discussion that the City partner with all its agencies to talk about prevention?**
 - o Response: The City's response absolutely builds on the public safety continuum. Attachment C shows the various components of this concept, and all these departments are at the table as part of the emergency response.
- **Can the emergency response include an information sheet about the dashboard, to better explain the data available and what it means?**
 - o Response: Yes, this will be under development as the dashboard is created.
- **Can City staff report back on some of the demographics of homelessness,**

including information on who are getting the vouchers?

- o Response: Information on persons experiencing homelessness demographics can be found within Attachment B. Additional time will be needed to provide demographic information on those getting the vouchers.
- **Can staff include benchmark data where available around areas such as vouchers, goals for housing individuals, goals for increasing voucher use, etc.?**
 - o Yes, goal development will be part of the response as the data team gets underway.
- **Please define: “Falling into homelessness”**
 - o Response: This will be covered in the oral presentation on January 24, 2023
- **Please define: “Efforts to reduce violence”**
 - o Response: This will be covered in the oral presentation on January 24, 2023
- **Can City staff schedule a presentation on the REACH team and what it does?**
 - o Response: This will be covered in the oral presentation on January 24, 2023
- **Can the response include increasing the hours the MSC services are available?**
 - o Response: Yes, the City started that effort this week by rolling out the Mobile Access Center which for the first time has the ability to provide the majority of the services available only at the MSC out in the community. During the response we will be tracking the increased hours available for these types of services.
- **Will the response be looking at how to increase mental health services and assistance for those who need it?**
 - o Response: Yes, that will be a key component of the response to look for ways to increase services available, either through the County or other partnerships.
- **Can the emergency help us speed up the available data through the Point in Time count?**
 - o Response: The next Point in Time count will be held on January 26, 2023. Staff will look to use the resources from the emergency proclamation to help speed the time it takes to review and validate the count.
- **Can the City staff provide a list of initiatives that have been done in the past?**
 - o Response: Attachment B contains a presentation provided to the City Council on January 18, 2022 that gives a comprehensive list of past efforts and provides a good grounding for the work that was done in the past.

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on January 24, 2023 on some of the areas of focus for the next two weeks. Topics will include:

- Efforts to engage partner agencies such as Harbor, Water and Transit
- Efforts to engage educational partners such as City College, LBUSD, and Cal State Long Beach
- Efforts to engage Metro
- Efforts to engage the County of Los Angeles
- Efforts to engage the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) in a discussion of regional cooperation on the issue of regional homelessness response and service
- Work underway to plan for expanded shelter capacity and SAFE parking programs
- Launch of business partnerships through grant programs for damaged businesses
- Launch of partnerships with the Business Improvement Districts for safety, cleaning, and activation
- Further development of the emergency response efforts through the nine identified workgroups
- Development of a proposed budget to support the response effort for City Council consideration
- Approval of an Ordinance by the City Council to streamline construction projects related to homelessness response.
- Deployment of the Mobile Command Center

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Anita Lakhani and by Budget Manager Grace Yoon on January 19, 2023.

City Council action is requested on January 24, 2023, in accordance with the Long Beach Municipal Code requirements for the renewal 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