



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 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 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, 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.

- Announced second winter shelter location
- Announced location for RV dump station

- Held second livestream update with Mayor Richardson and Development Services Director Christopher Koontz and third livestream update with Mayor Richardson and Economic Development Director Bo Martinez
- Launched new Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) Grant awards to support sidewalk activation, special events, and clean and safe initiatives
- Established a Field Command Center to coordinate planning and services for the downtown area to provide immediate and critical support and resources to people experiencing homelessness
- Published a homelessness column, written by Kelly Colopy, in the Press-Telegram
- Launched Visual Improvement (VIP) Grants available for small businesses impacted by crime and vandalism
- Held Point-in-Time (PIT) Count on January 26, 2023 to count and survey people experiencing homelessness in our community which helps to understand the scope of homelessness, define existing resources available, and identify gaps
- Received \$4 million from Senator Gonzalez for funding for upgrades to support the City's Multi Service Center
- Awarded \$6.1 Million in Funding to Two Developers for New Affordable Rental Housing
- Updated City homelessness website with new information on programs and services supporting people experiencing homelessness
- Finalized eight letters to send to County of Los Angeles, LA Metro, and local partners requesting support to address the regional challenge of homelessness
- Submitted proposed \$11.91 million budget to support the response effort for City Council consideration
- The Mayor, Health Director and City Attorney toured the winter shelter located at Community Hospital.

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.

- **How does the community know who to call related to homeless services? How can Councilmembers call in to report hotspots that need attention?**

- o Response: While the City has phone numbers for emergency and other services for residents and people experiencing homelessness, staff will explore preparing a document that captures this information in a clear and user-friendly format. This will also include information about how this will be prepared and shared in multiple languages.

- **Can the City provide a map of RV sewer dump stations?**

- o Response: Now that a location has been identified, we will work to those who need it.

- **Can the City's dashboard data include information on additional permanent housing and how the City is doing in this area?**

- o Response: The Development Services Department will share the 2022 Housing

Element Report which includes new and affordable housing starts. Additionally, the Department produces an annual memo for the City Council on housing production, which is produced in April. This memo will be produced in April 2023 and the Department will plan to present this information to Council in conjunction with bi-weekly progress information the City's emergency.

- **Can the City explore ways to reduce the impact of gas rate increases?**
- o Response: The City Council took action on February 1, 2023 to create an Emergency Price Spike Rebate Program,

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

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

- Further development of the emergency response efforts through the nine identified workgroups
- Complete preparations required to bring the second winter shelter online within three weeks of announcement
- Finalize letters to state and federal partners outlining the City's requests for support to address the homelessness emergency
- Work to set up meetings with regional partners such as LA County, LA Metro and regional partners to discuss opportunities.
- Engage 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
- Announce SAFE Parking site for vehicles that will create safe parking locations to reduce impacts on neighborhoods
- Continue evaluating properties citywide (both public and private) that can be temporarily used or acquired to further support the local emergency
- Expand locations across the City where people can donate items for people experiencing homelessness and develop a site where non-profit organizations can request items
- Design notification system for people experiencing homelessness so they are aware of when service opportunities are available
- Plan for next locations and focus areas for Mobile Access Center and coordinated efforts
- Launch the initial version of the data dashboard
- Begin formation of key stakeholder outreach plan
- Begin formation of the clergy workgroup and stakeholder engagement plan
- 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 by Budget Analysis Officer Greg Sorensen on February 2, 2023.

City Council action is requested on February 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. On the February 7, 2023 City Council agenda, the City Council will be asked to approve one time funding of \$5.4 million in the General Fund, \$4 million in Measure A, and \$2 million in Tidelands, which when combined with \$510,000 in redirected Long Beach Recovery Act grant funds for business supports totals \$11.91 million in support for this effort. 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