

May 23, 2023

NB-27

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

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)

DISCUSSION

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, enhanced the 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 3,447 people experiencing homelessness throughout Long Beach, which is a 4.6 percent increase from 2022, the smallest increase Long Beach has reported since 2019. For reference, homelessness increased 7 percent from 2019 to 2020, and increased from 62 percent from 2020 to 2022 (the 2021 Count was canceled due to the pandemic). Of these 3,447 people, 2,456 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.

The Mission of the Emergency:

To reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness in the City and the region by increasing housing opportunities and by enhancing current initiatives that provide field-based outreach, engagement, and supportive services while maintaining the safety and security of the people experiencing homelessness, the general public and staff, and improving overall public safety for the entire community.

The Everyone Home Long Beach Strategic Plan leads with the following statement of possibility: The experience of homelessness in Long Beach is rare and brief when it occurs. The Mission, goals and actions outlined in the local homeless emergency are aligned with the Everyone Home Long Beach Plan.

Actions Taken in the Past Week

In the past week, the City emergency structure has taken several actions and below is a summary of the major items worked on. Supporting information is included in Attachment A.

Increase access to services

- Completed outreach for Safe Parking at South Shore Boat Launch scheduled to open on Monday, May 22nd. Individuals using the Queensway site will be invited to transition to the new site.
- Held livestream update with Mayor Richardson and Restorative Engagement to Achieve Collective Health (REACH) Supervisor Melissa Mojica

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

- Continuing to explore translation options for Homelessness Dashboard
- Scheduled for Thursday, June 22nd the Interfaith Convening with faith-based organizations across the City who are committed to supporting the efforts of not only the emergency response, but ongoing after the emergency has been lifted

Build capacity to address homelessness crisis

- Held follow-up meeting with Long Beach Transit to discuss potential partnership

opportunities

- Met with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Deputy Assistant Secretary Monterrosa and discussed the need for additional federal resource to assist with our homelessness emergency while touring the Century Villages at Cabrillo

Increase interim and long-term housing access

- Worked to identify an ongoing emergency shelter site
- Worked to identify potential Homekey sites for state application

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on May 23, 2023, on some of the areas of focus for the next two weeks that contribute to the progress of the short-term goals. Topics will include:

Increase access to services

- Continue partnership conversations with LA County Department of Health Services and LAHSA
- Increase outreach and education regarding availability of the RV Sanitation and Water Filling site
- Finalize location for an alternative Safe Parking site after Queensway ends on May 21st
- Housing Authority will continue to work to update its Housing Choice Voucher List

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

- Plan the June 22nd Interfaith convening of faith organizations

Build capacity to address homelessness crisis

- Continue evaluating potential Airport and Port of Long Beach properties that can support additional homelessness services

Increase interim and long-term housing access

- Continue to conduct enhanced engagement with housing providers to boost housing access
- Work to identify a long-term emergency shelter site
- Review sites for a potential Project Homekey application

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Anita Lakhani on May 18, 2023 and by Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on May 17, 2023.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on May 23, 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

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.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER

Attachments: A – Supporting Documentation on Actions Taken in the Past Two Weeks

Select Language ▼

ATTACHMENT A



PRESS RELEASE

City of Long Beach
Public Information Office
411 W. Ocean Blvd,
Long Beach, CA 90802

5/12/2023

Press Release # 051223-2FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Long Beach Now Offering Evening Mental Health Therapy Programming to People Experiencing Homelessness

City of Long Beach Joint Information Center
562.570.NEWS
JIC@longbeach.gov

Long Beach, CA – The City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) Homeless Services Bureau is now offering evening mental health therapy programming for people experiencing homelessness in Long Beach, including those who are unsheltered and those staying in congregate or non-congregate shelters in Long Beach. This new offering is in addition to existing mental health services currently offered during business hours and includes scheduled 45-minute phone therapy sessions, available weekday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m.

“We know many people experiencing homelessness are in need of some form of mental health support,” said Mayor Rex Richardson. “Everyone deserves an open path to access and receive mental health services, and these evening services will further support our efforts in bridging the service gap for these community members.”

People experiencing homelessness, sheltered or unsheltered, can schedule a 45-minute phone therapy session with licensed and associate mental health clinicians by completing a form [online](https://www.bit.ly/MentalHealthEveningsLB) at www.bit.ly/MentalHealthEveningsLB, at the Multi-Service Center or directly through their case manager.

The Homeless Services Bureau and City partners participating in the program are promoting this free mental health service to community members experiencing homelessness through outreach, on-site shelter care teams and Multi-Service Center case managers.

In addition to the evening phone therapy sessions, the City continues to identify ways to expand mental health services to sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. According to the City’s Point-In-Time Count conducted on Jan. 26, 2023, 34.7% of people experiencing

unsheltered homelessness reported having a serious mental illness, and 31.8% report having a substance use disorder. Enhancing equitable access to mental health services is crucial.

The City is taking a number of other steps to increase access to mental health services for people experiencing homelessness, including convening a mental health advisory group; increasing access to physical and mental health services for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by adding a third REACH team with extended hours; deploying a mobile therapy van with a mental health clinician and a substance use counselor to engage people at encampments, provide short-to medium-term therapy and allow people to access longer-term treatment services for mental health and/or substance use; and pursuing opportunities to support the addition of specialized beds for recuperative care and step-down following behavioral health hospitalization.

For more information on the City's efforts to reduce homelessness in Long Beach, people may visit longbeach.gov/homelessness and follow @lbhealthdept and @longbeachcity on social media and follow the hashtag #EveryoneHomeLB.

For more news, pictures, videos and announcements of what's happening in Long Beach, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

REQUEST TO ADD AGENDA ITEM

Date: May 19, 2023

To: Monique De La Garza, City Clerk

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: Request to Add Agenda Item to Council Agenda of May 23, 2023

Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 2.03.070 [B], the City Councilmembers signing below request that the attached agenda item (due in the City Clerk Department by Friday, 12:00 Noon) be placed on the City Council agenda via the supplemental agenda.

The agenda title/recommendation for this item reads as follows:

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)

Council District	Authorizing Councilmember	Signed by
1	Mary Zendejas	(Digital – attached email)
2	Cindy Allen	(Digital – attached email)
5	Megan Kerr	(Digital – attached email)