



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0403, 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.

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 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.

The City identified the following metrics to evaluate through the state of emergency:

Homelessness Emergency Metrics

The following Homelessness Emergency Metrics were provided in the Proclamation with some clarification in terminology:

- Decrease number of persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Increase housing placements
- Increase starts on new affordable housing options
- Increase temporary and permanent housing units
- Increase outside aid through access to mental health and substance use beds
- Decrease disproportionality in which Black, Indigenous and Pacific Islander persons experience homelessness
- Decrease number of persons that die in unsheltered situations
- Decrease number of persons falling into homelessness
- Increase intergovernmental (regional) partnerships to address the homeless crisis
- Increase multi-jurisdictional (and multi-departmental) efforts to address violence on or perpetuated by people experiencing homelessness

An additional metric was added by City staff:

- Increase speed of delivering critical projects addressing homelessness

Homelessness Emergency Goals

To address the City's homelessness challenges, the City has been working on the following immediate, short-, medium- and long-term goals. These goals have been organized into four categories: increase access to services, engage community in data and planning, build capacity to address homelessness crisis and increase interim and long-term housing access. Outlined below are the list of goals that the City seeks to accomplish in alignment with the Homelessness Emergency Metrics:

Increase access to services

Timeframe	Goals
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Immediate	• Increase access to services through Mobile Access Center • Open temporary Safe Parking program • Open RV Sanitation and Water Filling Site • Launch text notification system to provide real-time information and connection to service locations
Short	• Provide business support services • Increase access to mental health services throughout City • Open long-term safe parking and safe RV parking
Medium	• Identify location and operational funding for Recuperative Care • Collaborate with Metro hub to support referral efforts • Partner with LA County to increase mental health and substance use disorder treatment service access
Long	• Identify and implement prevention strategies and investments

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

Timeframe	Goals
Immediate	• Launch dashboard featuring local homelessness data • Implement community engagement and outreach process for homeless services-related efforts • Incorporate City commitments for site selection into Homelessness Activation
Short	• Improve public access data for homelessness efforts
Medium	• Update Everyone Home Long Beach Strategic Plan to include focus on effective practices
Long	• Convene regional partners for long-term prevention planning and implementation

Build capacity to address homeless crisis

Timeframe	Goals
Immediate	• Identify and apply for funding opportunities
Short	• Identify and implement operational improvements in staffing, funding, and processes
Medium	• Secure one-time Measure H/HHAP funding for local investment • Collaborate with Cities within the region to increase shelter and service opportunities • Enhance LAHSA partnership to connect people coming into Long Beach from the region to regional services • Secure one-time funding from intergovernmental efforts
Long	• Work to change the Measure H/HHAP distributions to address equity concerns

Increase interim and long-term housing access

Timeframe	Goals
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Immediate	• Open Winter Shelter • Create Landlord educational campaign and outreach, including launch of outreach line
Short	• Lease up all Emergency Housing Vouchers • Implement ongoing interim shelter site • Formalize additional contracts with motels to take motel vouchers • Establish process for warming centers during cold weather beyond winter shelter program
Medium	• Open Luxury Inn and Modulares • Initiate analysis and implement policy changes in zoning, affordable housing and prevention efforts • Implement tenant protection processes, resources, and education
Long	• Implement affordable housing policy • Increase affordable housing units • Ensure permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness coming from Long Beach by attaching project-based vouchers to current Homekey sites • Identify additional permanent supportive housing funding and implementation opportunities including Project Homekey

Actions Taken in the Past Two Weeks

Over the past two weeks, 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

- Enrolled more than 240 individuals in the Text Alert Program to connect people experiencing homelessness to resources and services, those interested can text keyword “HOME” to 99411 to receive updates
- Opened Sanitation and Water Filling Site for Recreational Vehicles with weekday hours of 9am - 4pm
- Received 127 Visual Improvement Program (VIP) applications thus far.

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

- Added Prevention Program data to the Homelessness Dashboard as well as refreshed the data on April 5
- Completed Mayor’s Community Roundtables

Build capacity to address homelessness crisis

- Met with Long Beach Transit to discuss ways to support homelessness emergency
- Met with Office of Mayor Karen Bass and City of Los Angeles to discuss partnership opportunities
- Sent letter to federal leadership regarding the City’s priorities to address the emergency
- Engaged with consultants to identify grants to support efforts

Increase interim and long-term housing access

- Hosted community meeting at Drake Park Community Center to talk about the possibility of opening a temporary emergency shelter in the neighborhood and gather feedback

Questions from April 4, 2023

At the last hearing of this item, there were several questions from the dais. Some were answered in person, and the following questions staff have a response below:

- *What parts of Everyone Home need to be updated?*
 - o Response: There will be a full review of the plan's goals and strategies.
- *What community organizations will be eligible to receive the \$1.5 million outlined in the presentation?*
 - o Response: This has not yet been determined. More information is forthcoming.

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on April 18, 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 safe parking site and RV Sanitation and Water Filling site

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

- Plan an Interfaith convening of faith organizations from across the City who are committed to supporting the efforts of not only the emergency response, but ongoing after the emergency has been lifted
- Add data elements for the emergency to the data dashboard
- Host second drive-thru donation event at Main Health Department (2525 Grand Ave.) on April 29th from 9 am to 1 pm

Build capacity to address homelessness crisis

- Continue evaluating potential Airport and Port of Long Beach properties that can support additional homelessness services
- Continue to staff up the Homeless Services Bureau to address case management and public health nursing needs
- Continue to engage LA County on request to support emergency activities

Increase interim and long-term housing access

- Continue to conduct enhanced engagement with housing providers to boost participation in Emergency Housing Voucher Program
- Host three remaining virtual information sessions for property owners and landlords to educate them on different aspects of the housing voucher process
- Open emergency shelter location for when the winter shelter program ends
- Continue evaluating other properties citywide (both public and private) that could be temporarily used or acquired to further support homeless services housing opportunities

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Anita Lakhani and Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on April 13, 2023.

City Council action is requested on April 18, 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