



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0451, **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)

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, 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.

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

- Beginning on April 26th, Mental Health After Hours will be offered Monday through Friday from 6 to 9pm. Mental Health Clinicians will support congregate and non-congregate facilities in Long Beach.

Engage community in data, planning and assistance

- Hosted the second drive-thru donation event at Main Health Department (2525 Grand Ave.) on April 29th from 9 am to 1 pm.
- Outreach to Education Partners at LBCC, CSULB, and LBUSD to identify partnership opportunities.

Build capacity to address homelessness crisis

- Met with Speaker Rendon's staff to discuss Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) funding.
- Met with LA Metro to discuss the LA Metro Service Hub.
- Participated in Gateway Cities Council of Governments Homelessness Technical Advisory Committee to discuss regional efforts to address homelessness.
- Engaged with consultants to identify grants to support efforts.

Increase interim and long-term housing access

Received 79 new Housing Authority stability vouchers for people who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

- Opened a Temporary Emergency Shelter with 85+ beds for people experiencing homelessness.

Question from April 18, 2023

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

- *What is the updated emergency housing voucher data?*
 - o *Response: 529 people have been housed utilizing the Emergency Housing Vouchers for a 91 percent match rate.*

Focus Areas for the Next Two Weeks

Staff will provide an oral report on May 2, 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.
- Outreach to Early Childhood Education stakeholders to engage a larger Education discussion.
- Launch expanded data dashboard.

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.
- 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 26, 2023.

City Council action is requested on May 2, 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.

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APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER