

Date: May 21, 2020

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager *T.M.*

From: Kelly Colopy, Director, Health and Human Services Department *KC*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Homeless Services Bureau Transition**

Beginning June 15, 2021, the Homeless Services Division will transition to its own bureau, the Homeless Services Bureau. The Homeless Services Bureau will consist of two divisions, the Homeless Operations Division (responsible for administration) and the Homeless Programs Division (responsible for direct services). Each division will have an officer, overseen by the Homeless Services Bureau Manager, improving managerial capacity to support the growing number of staff.

This expansion reflects the City of Long Beach's (City's) high priority for reducing homelessness and increasing affordable housing, and will enable increased homeless services capacity, better coordination across departments and jurisdictions, better access and oversight to the range of new and existing funding sources, and improved flexibility to address emerging issues and solutions related to homelessness.

Strategic Alignment

The expansion of the Homeless Services Bureau aligns closely with the City's overall strategy to reduce homelessness through comprehensive services. In May 2018, the City convened the Everyone Home Long Beach Taskforce, focusing on strengthening the City's existing homeless services and affordable housing efforts and identifying innovative approaches to provide new pathways into housing and to prevent residents from becoming homeless. The taskforce produced the Everyone Home Long Beach (EHLB) Plan, which was presented at the December 11, 2018 City Council meeting. The report outlines a vision, goals, and recommendations for addressing housing and homelessness within the City. One of the major needs identified in EHLB Plan was strengthened governance (Goal 1).

Increased Capacity to Meet Direct Service Needs

At the beginning of fiscal year 2021, the Homeless Services Division had 41 budgeted FTEs. As of May 2021, the Homeless Services Bureau has added 31 new FTEs, totaling 72 FTEs with additional positions expected. This is a 76% increase in staffing in the past year, reflecting the changing landscape of direct services and increased number of facilities serving residents experiencing homelessness, made possible through new funding sources such as the CARES Act, Long Beach Recovery Plan, and the Project Roomkey and Homekey programs. The Homeless Programs Division will provide the staffing and supervision necessary to meet this need. New staff roles include a special projects coordinator focused on strategic plan implementation and housing policy coordination; mental health clinicians; public health nurses

and outreach workers for expanded street outreach; an interjurisdictional liaison to work with CalTrans and other agencies; and a pandemic response coordinator focused on managing operations at facilities and programs mobilized in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since February 2020, Homeless Services staff have supported the acquisition, mobilization, and operation of 11 permanent and temporary sites serving people experiencing homelessness. Recently acquired facilities requiring ongoing staff support include the Atlantic Bridge Community (125 beds), Project Homekey (102 beds), Project Roomkey (44 beds), Safe Parking Site (15 spots), the Multi-Service Center, and the upcoming Youth Shelter and Navigation Center. Staff are also preparing for future acquisitions and conversions of facilities in anticipation of further State and federal funding, such as the \$12 billion in homelessness funding announced in Governor Newsom's May Budget Revision.

The scope of direct services has also expanded. At the direction of the City Council, proactive outreach to people experiencing street homelessness has expanded to seven days, including weekend outreach in the Tidelands areas. Staff are developing an alternate crisis response team for low level calls for services related to homelessness, consisting of mental health clinicians and public health nurses, as well as the Homeless Court pilot program in collaboration with the City Prosecutor's Office. The opening of the year-round shelter, Project Homekey and Project Roomkey have increased shelter capacity in the City. Shelter capacity averages approximately 80 percent, providing ongoing shelter opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Long Beach Recovery Plan has allocated funds for the development of new facilities and services, such as tiny home/modular shelters, mobile outreach clinics, further property acquisition, local flexible subsidies, and a social enterprise, all of which will require further staff support. As part of the American Rescue Plan, Long Beach expects to receive at least 570 new emergency housing vouchers dedicated specifically to people experiencing homelessness, which will require staff to match clients to vouchers and housing opportunities.

Homeless Services staff also currently convene and facilitate several workgroups designed for interdepartmental and interjurisdictional collaboration around homelessness-related issues, including the Affordable Housing Workgroup, Interdepartmental Homelessness Workgroup, Outreach Workgroup, Alternate Response Models Workgroup, and Interjurisdictional Collaborative.

Increased Capacity for Financial and Administrative Support

The Homeless Services Bureau has experienced an increased staffing need associated with administering the rapidly increasing scope of local, State, and federal funding available for homeless service programs. This is reflected in the creation of the Homeless Operations Division, with dedicated administrative and financial staff who will manage and provide oversight to existing funding sources, including grants and contracts, while also applying for new funding sources as they become available.

Homeless Services has increased its budget by nearly 500% over the course of three years. In FY18, Homeless Services administered \$10.5 million in funding and in the FY21 budget, it was anticipated to administer \$52 million; however, the prioritization around homelessness has

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added more than \$17 million in additional funding to FY21, with the expectation that the homeless budget will continue to grow in the coming months. This funding portfolio includes federal resources to administer the Long Beach Continuum of Care (CoC), which also provides oversight to local, State, and federal funds, including Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Measure H, Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), and Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) dollars. The CoC administers the coordinated entry system, homelessness prevention, rapid response, housing, youth programming, and supportive services. To further align funding opportunities to meet the needs of the community, the Homeless Operations Division will support decision-making bodies such as the Long Beach CoC Board and the Homeless Services Advisory Committee.

Over the past year, Homeless Services staff have rapidly mobilized to apply and administer emergency State funding such as Project Roomkey and Homekey, which enabled the acquisition of hotels for use as non-congregate shelter. The creation of the Homeless Operations Division will enhance the team's capacity and ability to continue to focus on emerging funding opportunities, such as Governor Newsom's California Comeback Plan (\$12 billion for homelessness), the federal American Rescue Plan, and the Long Beach Recovery Plan, which will bolster existing programs and pilot innovative solutions.

The City of Long Beach has consistently prioritized reducing homelessness through comprehensive services, and the creation of the Homeless Services Bureau will enable the structure, flexibility, capacity, and resources to adapt to the increasing complexity of the issue and the myriad of solutions necessary.

Given the Mayor and City Council's dedicated focus on homelessness as a top priority, and all the new funding, the City Manager will be moving forward with creating and filling the necessary positions and will be bringing Budget adjustments to the Council in the future to account for all of the change and new funding that has become available.

Please feel free to contact me at (562) 570-4016 or kelly.colopy@longbeach.gov with any questions.

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