

Date: February 15, 2023

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Letter to Long Beach Transit regarding the Homelessness Emergency**

As part of the City of Long Beach's (City) emergency actions on homelessness, the City has sent the attached letter to Long Beach Transit requesting their partnership in addressing the homelessness emergency in Long Beach. A key barrier to housing and services for people experiencing homelessness is a dearth of transportation options. The location of resources across the city can make it difficult for people experiencing homelessness to get to the Multi-Service Center, winter shelter, and other critical services.

The City's letter to Long Beach Transit asks that they identify innovative ways to support the City's emergency efforts by identifying ways to eliminate these transportation gaps, specifically by expanding dial-a-lift transportation options for people experiencing homelessness to access services and shelter.

As a follow-up to the City's request, the City has asked to meet with staff at Long Beach Transit to identify ways to establish and fund this program. We will continue to provide updates on this request.

ATTACHMENT

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KATY NOMURA, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS

January 30, 2023

Kenneth McDonald
President and CEO
Long Beach Transit
1963 E. Anaheim St.
Long Beach, CA 90813

RE: Partnership to Address the Homelessness Emergency in Long Beach

Dear Mr. McDonald,

On January 10, 2023, the City of Long Beach declared an emergency on homelessness, and we request your support and partnership in addressing the homelessness emergency in Long Beach.

The City has designated significant resources to address homelessness, adding more than 530 new interim housing units, opening the first year-round bridge housing facility, securing three hotels along with the County for interim housing, and purchasing another 78-bed hotel and more than 30 modular shelter units. The City implemented three Restorative Engagement to Achieve Collective Health (REACH) teams, increasing the number of outreach staff and call takers from four to 27, and expanding hours for weekend outreach. We are also launching mobile Multi-Service Center outreach teams to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Despite the City's efforts, homelessness in Long Beach has increased by 77 percent since 2017, and there are approximately 3,300 people experiencing homelessness any given day. Of the people experiencing homelessness in the city, more than 2,000 remain unsheltered, and there are few options for those currently without shelter. Homelessness also disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander residents who are approximately three times more likely to experience homelessness than other populations. Furthermore, the number of people experiencing homelessness with severe mental illness has more than doubled to 1,200 people, and those with a substance use disorder has increased by 70 percent to 950 people.

Homelessness is a regional challenge, and the City cannot end homelessness alone. We have established an emergency operations structure to prioritize our actions to reduce homelessness, and we will continue to work with our local, County, state, and federal partners to provide the necessary public services to meet the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness in Long Beach. We will need your assistance to meet this emergency and direct resources to support these actions. We ask that you identify innovative ways your organization can support the City's efforts to address homelessness and partner with us on this critical effort, such as expanding dial-a-lift transportation options for people experiencing homelessness to access services and shelter.

Thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to hearing how your organization can help.

Sincerely,



THOMAS B. MODICA
City Manager

