



MAYOR **REXRICHARDSON**

December 21, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In First Act, Mayor Rex Richardson Requests City Manager to Declare State of Emergency on Homelessness

*Mayor Richardson Announces New Homelessness Dashboard and Calls for Partnerships
with Local Organizations, City, County, and Region*

LONG BEACH, CA — In his first act as Mayor of Long Beach, Rex Richardson requested City Manager Tom Modica to bring a declaration of a Citywide State of Emergency on homelessness before the Long Beach City Council at their next meeting on January 10th, 2023.

In a letter addressed to the City Manager (attached), Mayor Richardson and Downtown Councilwoman Mary Zendejas called for the City to be “all in” on addressing homelessness collaboratively and asked all nine City Councilmembers to commit to welcoming services that bring relief to those living on the streets in their districts.

In partnership with Mayor Richardson and Councilwoman Zendejas, the City of Long Beach will also unveil a new homelessness website, which will serve as a comprehensive resource for the community on homelessness. The site will combine resources into one dashboard and include links to available services, data, community engagement opportunities, and other resources intended for both persons experiencing homelessness and housed residents.

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About Mayor Richardson: Rex Richardson is a husband, father, and the 29th Mayor of Long Beach.

Mayor Richardson’s history in Long Beach is grounded in empowering communities to have a seat at the table. He believes that everyone, no matter their circumstance, deserves the opportunity to thrive. He works to change the culture of city hall to be smarter, more inclusive, and more responsive to the needs of our neighborhoods, businesses, and families while ensuring an equitable future for all.



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City Manager Tom Modica
421 W. Ocean Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear City Manager Modica,

Long Beach has long been a leader in serving people experiencing homelessness with compassion, a housing-first service-based approach, and long-term solutions. But clearly the COVID-19 pandemic, record unemployment during those dark times, and most importantly the lack of housing in all income categories has pushed more and more of Long Beach and regional residents into homelessness. Last year, our City reported a 62% increase in homelessness. While this number is significant, the number of people placed in shelter and emergency housing solutions grew by double that, a 123% increase, demonstrating Long Beach's commitment and effectiveness in creating housing solutions. But clearly, more must be done. Our City, County, and non-profit partners together in Long Beach have over 1,300 emergency and interim housing beds available to those who need our help the most, with over 500 of those shelter beds added in just the past two years. It is clear that, with resources and focus, our community has the compassion and the ability to help get people off the streets.

To be successful, we need our City to be more nimble, bringing more resources faster to those who need it the most. We need every area of the City to be "all in", with a specific commitment from each of the 9 Councilmembers to do their part to welcome services that bring relief to those suffering on our streets. We need our business community to continue to activate our business corridors, bringing people to shop and dine in our restaurants, while also supporting and embracing services to those who need our help. We need property owners willing to allow us to temporarily or permanently utilize land to open safe parking sites and build housing. We need to reengage our clergy and faith leaders, to work together to bring non-governmental resources to bear to address this moral dilemma.

We need our partner agencies, from our educational institutions to our transit agencies, Port and Water Departments to creatively look at how they can help, whether it be offering land, services, or any other support to tackle our joint challenge. And with those experiencing severe mental illness at an all-time high, we need the County to bring real, dedicated, and long-lasting resources to Long Beach and show leadership to require all cities to do their part to address both mental illness and services for people experiencing homelessness.

We must start by bringing people together with a sense of urgency and purpose. To that end, we are requesting you to bring the Mayor and City Council a declaration of emergency for the first meeting in January to speed our response to homelessness and make it a top priority for our City team. Next year, we have plans for several new solutions to address homelessness. These include the creation of a new 78 bed Luxury Inn shelter, a third REACH team which partners nurses, mental health practitioners and outreach staff together with additional Police Quality of Life Officers; expansion of outreach to evening and weekend hours; launching mobile Multi-Service Centers to bring case management and connect to

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services directly to affected communities as well as a mobile substance use and mental health treatment van; and much, much more.

But we need more speed to address this issue and a heightened sense of urgency for all our City teams and partner agencies. Our City team needs the tools to remove barriers to hiring and procurement, the ability to construct and contract quickly to build shelter, and a structure to implement solutions and speed delivery of information, data, and results. We are requesting a plan to address interim shelter needs, regional referral systems, SAFE parking plans, and identification of personnel resources and funding. This plan should include engaging our clergy, business community, and partner agencies. This plan must also address public safety concerns and support businesses and neighborhoods who are impacted by our homelessness crisis.

We expect this declaration of an emergency related to Homelessness will bring us focus and resources and create a temporary bridge to the additional services and personnel who are being brought on board to assist those experiencing homelessness, while we grow the regional response in all our surrounding cities through partnerships with those cities and of course the County of Los Angeles.

As the newly elected Mayor, and as a former Councilmember representing one of the areas experiencing significant impacts from the nation's housing crisis, we request that you bring this item to the City Council on January 10 with a plan of action for the City Council to consider.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rex Richardson

Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Zendejas", written in a cursive style.

Mary Zendejas

Councilmember, 1st District