

Date: May 12, 2025

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on the City's Response to *Grants Pass v. Johnson***

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On June 28, 2024, the Supreme Court reversed the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision in the case of *Johnson v. Grants Pass* (9th Cir. 2022) 50 F.4th 787, setting precedent that public agencies may now enforce local laws restricting sleeping and/or camping in public space, regardless of the availability of shelter options. On [August 12, 2024](#), City staff released a memo outlining the City response to this decision, a legal summary of the ruling and the City's proposed approach, including an encampment resolution strategy to address Priority Focus Areas. The memo also noted the limitations of over-reliance on criminal enforcement in homelessness response, potential challenges and unintended consequences, necessary resources, and other efforts to mitigate the impacts of increased enforcement.

As part of the next steps of the City's strategy, staff also committed to updating Mayor and City Council and reviewing the impact of the City's approach through qualitative and quantitative data. This memo represents a review of the City's approach from July 2024 through February 2025.

### **Review of the City's Response and Approach**

As outlined in the previous memo, the *Grants Pass v. Johnson* decision (Grants Pass Decision) overturned the previous legal precedent set by the 9th Circuit in *Martin v. Boise* (9th Cir. 2019) 920 F.3d 584, which ruled that enforcement of ordinances restricting camping or sleeping in public spaces without first offering adequate, available shelter options constituted a violation of the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment cruel and unusual punishment clause. While this ruling does not mandate any action by local jurisdictions nor provide additional resources or funding towards homelessness response, it does enable cities and other public agencies to exert broad discretion on enforcement of anti-camping ordinances. As a result, police officers responding to calls for service now have the discretion to enforce ordinances restricting camping or sleeping in public places.

In Long Beach, this enforcement mechanism is now used as an additional tool within a larger, human-centered response to homelessness. The City remains committed to leading with services, investing in proven long-term solutions to homelessness, which include meeting basic needs, providing supportive services, and facilitating immediate access to temporary and permanent housing. The City recognizes that widespread issuance of citations or arrests solely for violations of the City's anti-camping ordinance will do little to reduce overall rates of homelessness and could create additional barriers for people to access housing and services. At the same time, enforcement can be used as a tool to address locations where there is a

threat to public health or safety and when other solutions are not working.

The City remains committed to ensuring all residents of Long Beach have access to and use of crucial public resources, acknowledging the impact on the larger community when large numbers of people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The additional enforcement mechanism is now incorporated into the City's interdepartmental approach to resolve encampments that pose significant and persistent obstruction to use of public resources like parks, libraries, and beaches. Identified as "Priority Focus Areas," City staff utilize an intensive encampment resolution approach, including multiple days of outreach, offers of supportive services and shelter, clean-up protocols, and notification that the area needs to be vacated. Enforcement may be used as a means of dispersing encampments in priority focus areas if other outreach and service provision measures prove ineffective.

Citywide, the Police Department considers a variety of factors when taking discretionary enforcement for misdemeanor crimes, including but not limited to, associated criminal conduct, ongoing and chronic complaints. If additional crimes are discovered during police responses to violations of the City's camping ordinance, they are addressed through arrests or citations in accordance with local, state, and federal law.

The recent ruling provides an additional avenue for the Police Department to focus on criminal conduct associated with encampments and to address individuals who are in violation of this ordinance and have exhibited criminal behavior or pose a threat to public health and safety. However, police contact solely relating to violations of the City's camping ordinance will likely result in coordination with additional City departments including Health and Human Services, Public Works, Parks Recreation and Marine, and the City Prosecutor's Office. Where it is ultimately determined that a citation or arrest is appropriate for a violation of the City's camping ordinance, the City will endeavor to provide these same resources.

The primary mission of the Long Beach Police Department is to reduce crime and enhance safety in the City. The recent ruling does not impact the mission of the Police Department. While violations of the anti-camping ordinance may lead to enforcement action, the Police Department remains committed to supporting solutions that address public safety and support the ongoing efforts to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

## **Citywide Impacts**

### *Homeless Services Bureau, Health and Human Services Department*

As previously noted, the Grants Pass decision did not create any additional resources to address homelessness. Since the decision primarily impacted the City's ability to issue citations for camping in public spaces, the core services and approach of the Homeless Services Bureau and the Health Department were unchanged and remain focused on connecting people with temporary and permanent housing solutions. The Homeless Services Bureau approach includes conducting proactive outreach to people experiencing homelessness, delivery of supportive services, transition of individuals experiencing homelessness into shelter and permanent housing as quickly as possible, and prevention of all people in Long Beach from falling into homelessness in the first place. However, the

Supreme Court decision did provide additional opportunity for greater interdepartmental coordination in addressing persistent encampments, as outlined below.

The Homeless Services Bureau provides outreach across the City, both proactively and in response to community requests via phone or email. Between June 2024 and February 2025, the Homeless Services Bureau received 3,954 requests for outreach response and has provided services to 2,717 people with various field-based teams. Its model is participant-centered, emphasizing focused, repeated outreach and trust-building. To support this, the team utilizes traditional congregate shelters, non-congregate shelter like motels and motel vouchers, permanent housing, reconnecting people with family, and robust supportive services, including case management, physical and mental health care, and substance use treatment.

The Homeless Services Bureau provides intensive outreach support to areas of interest across the city, including areas with large encampments. Over the past year, the Homeless Services Bureau has coordinated intensified outreach at parks, beaches, railroad right of way, and the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Riverbeds in addition to the Priority Focus Areas discussed below. The Homeless Services Bureau has and will continue to support the overall City response, adjusting service delivery based on emerging needs.

The Grants Pass decision does not change the City's human-centered, service-first response to homelessness. The City's capacity to address homelessness has grown dramatically over the past few years. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no City-operated shelter in Long Beach. Since 2021, the City identified partnerships and funding to open the City's first year-round shelter at Atlantic Bridge Community, acquired the former Best Western hotel (1725 Long Beach Blvd) and the former Luxury Inn (6950 Long Beach Blvd) to convert to interim housing, acquired and opened a second year-round shelter at the former Rescue Mission building (702 W Anaheim), master leased motels through Project Roomkey and Encampment Resolution Funding, partnered with LA County to purchase and convert two other motels into permanent supportive housing, expanded its motel voucher program to provide further shelter, and is currently constructing a new Youth Navigation Center that will provide shelter and supportive services for Transition Age Youth experiencing homelessness. In the past four years, 457 new emergency shelter or interim housing beds have either been completed or are under construction just by the City, not to mention partnerships with Los Angeles County agencies, the US Department of Veteran's Affairs, local hospitals, educational institutions, and various non-profits and community-based organizations. Altogether, Long Beach has over 1,200 shelter beds in our Homeless Services system through the wide range of partnerships within the Long Beach Continuum of Care.

Beyond shelter, the City deploys dozens of outreach workers, case managers, public health nurses, mental health clinicians, and specially trained Police officers who work with our population of people experiencing homelessness every day to provide services, meet basic needs, and connect people to housing. The Long Beach Continuum of Care also partners with Los Angeles County agencies and various non-profit agencies to field specialized teams providing additional resources and pathways for people experiencing homelessness to receive the services they desperately need. The City launched two Mobile Access Center teams to bring services directly to people experiencing homelessness across the City and a new

unarmed Community Crisis Response Team to dispatch to calls for service that do not require a police response, adding additional capacity to deescalate situations and create solutions. Long Beach is fortunate to have such a coordinated system focused on long-term solutions, of which this additional enforcement mechanism is only one part. The authority granted the City through the Grants Pass decision offers another tool to address certain specific issues, but does not represent a paradigm shift in the City's efforts to humanely and effectively address homelessness.

### *Police Department*

As described above, the Grants Pass decision establishes an additional enforcement mechanism that now allows Police Department officers to enforce the City's ordinance restricting camping in public spaces. Officers exercise discretion in how the ordinance is applied and evaluate a variety of options in order to resolve issues, including but not limited to enforcement. Between June 28, 2024, and February 28, 2025, the Police Department reported issuing 346 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours in parks or beaches citywide. Of these, 161 citations were issued in priority areas (defined in the "Priority Focus Areas" section below) and 185 in other parts of the city.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn the Ninth Circuit's ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* has restored enforcement options that were previously unavailable to the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). Under the prior ruling, people experiencing homelessness who camped in City parks could only be cited for violating park hours if they remained in the park after hours and there was alternate shelter available. This restriction significantly limited the LBPD Quality of Life (QOL) Team's ability to address violations during regular business hours. With the Supreme Court's decision, enforcement efforts can now be conducted across all three shifts, enhancing support for City partners working to maintain public spaces.

To further address issues related to individuals who are experiencing homelessness, the LBPD QOL team has utilized Patrol officers on overtime to assist the Clean Team. Encampment clean-up efforts have frequently been disrupted by individuals who refuse services. Since the overturning of Grants Pass, the LBPD has been able to enforce applicable laws against service-resistant individuals and issue citations when appropriate. These citations provide opportunities for collaboration with the City Prosecutor's Office to connect people with services. Pre-trial diversion programs, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEADS) and Priority Access Diversion, allow for service connections as part of negotiated agreements between judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys.

Continued outreach efforts have increased awareness among people who are experiencing homelessness regarding available resources and the City's enforcement strategies, including the issuance of citations and, when legally justified, physical arrests. This awareness has contributed to greater cooperation during clean-up operations in public spaces and allows LBPD to take immediate enforcement action when appropriate, rather than waiting 48 hours and confirming availability of shelter as previously required. Additionally, QOL teams have observed that as enforcement efforts have become more effective, more people are willing to accept services.

### *Encampment Clean-ups*

Both Departments of Public Works (Public Services Bureau) and Parks, Recreation, and Marine (Maintenance Operations Bureau) are responsible for encampment clean-ups across the City. Between July 2024 and February 2025, the Public Works Department's Clean Team conducted 2,019 encampment cleanups, removing 580 tons of garbage and debris. Conducting regular cleanings of encampment areas, including disposing of debris, garbage, and waste, is crucial to ensuring the public health and cleanliness of public spaces. During that same time period, PRM conducted 359 clean-ups in Parks facilities across the City, removing 254 tons of debris.

The Grants Pass decision does not impact the overall operations or protocols associated with encampment cleanups, including the City's obligation to post 48-hour notices of cleaning, tagging, and storing any personal belongings for 90 days. Encampment clean-ups are always conducted in coordination with the Health Department, Police Department, and other relevant City and regional partners to ensure access to services and resources. As noted above, Police Department staff have reported that increased discretion to issue citations has led to greater cooperation during clean-ups. For more information on the City's Encampment Protocols, please review [this memo](#).

While the City's Encampment Protocols remain the same, PRM staff have noted that the Priority Focus Area approach, initiated in response to the Grants Pass Decision, has resulted in marked improvements in cleanliness and accessibility in the four park areas (further details below).

### *City Prosecutor*

As noted in the previous memo, increased citations for violations of the City's anti-camping ordinance could result in greater enrollment in treatment and services through pre-trial and pre-booking diversion programs, operated through the City Prosecutor's Office. The City Prosecutor's Office works closely with law enforcement agencies, service providers and the Health Department to offer diversion on low-level, nonviolent misdemeanors with a focus on quality-of-life related offenses.

For example, pre-arrest diversion is offered through the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program connecting persons experiencing homelessness to housing, substance use treatment, and mental health services. The Priority Access Diversion (PAD) program and the Rapid Diversion Program (RDP) were created to divert people who are in court into services. The 3P Neighborhood Prosecutor includes prosecutor resources to assist with problem areas within each Patrol Division, including encampments and areas with a concentration of people experiencing homelessness. In 2023, the City Prosecutor's Office developed the GUIDES App to assist LBPD Officers to access services and make referrals in the field, with follow-up by social workers. People experiencing homelessness can also be connected to housing, substance use, and mental health services in the courthouse or at the Multi-Service Center through the Homeless Court program. This coordination can be helpful for those who otherwise would not accept services and use pre-trial and pre-booking diversion as an added incentive to get connected with treatment and services.

Within the Homeless Court program, the City Prosecutor's Office has reported an increase in enrollment in services after the Grants Pass Decision, which could indicate increased receptiveness to services. In the 12 months prior to the Grants Pass Decision, only 27 people were connected to case management (2.25 per month) and 6 people were placed in shelter or housing (0.5 per month). In the 7 months since the Grants Pass Decision, 89 people were connected to case management (12.7 per month) and 37 people were placed in shelter or housing (5.2 per month). Since the Grants Pass Decision, the City Prosecutor's Office also reported an approximately 22 percent increase in citations for camping related to the decision. While these increases are related to a number of factors, these data indicate that more people are being connected with crucial services through these programs.

Some of the citywide efforts are captured in the table below:

Category	City Depts	Service Data
Engagement and Supportive Services	HSB, LBPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,954 community requests for outreach response</li> <li>• 2,717 people engaged by field-based teams and services</li> <li>• 1,442 people enrolled in emergency shelter or transitional housing</li> <li>• 416 people enrolled in permanent housing programs</li> </ul>
Encampment Cleanups	PRM, PW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,019 Public Works encampment cleanups, removing 580 tons of garbage and debris.</li> <li>• 359 Parks encampment clean-ups, removing 254 tons of debris</li> </ul>
Enforcement	LBPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 346 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours in parks or beaches citywide (161 in priority areas and 185 in other parts of the city)</li> </ul>

### Priority Focus Areas

City staff identified four areas of the City as Priority Focus Areas: (1) Billie Jean King Library/Lincoln Park, (2) Jenni Rivera Memorial Park, (3) Veteran's Park, and (4) Gumbiner Park. Each location met all of the criteria described in the previous memo, including significant and persistent obstruction of access or use of crucial, highly used public resources.

Once identified, the City's Interdepartmental Homelessness Team developed an encampment resolution model for each area, a strategy that has proved effective in humanely addressing large encampments locally and nationally. These strategies included intensified outreach, trust-building and offers of shelter and resources for those within the encampment. Through the Public Spaces Workgroup, field-based staff from multiple departments conducted case conferencing, troubleshooting, and adjusted strategy. The team also identified local, regional, and State resources and partnerships to offer long-term interim and permanent housing options for people residing within these Priority Focus Areas. The approach also included

increased clean-ups of the area to ensure public health and access. Enforcement of the City's anti-camping Ordinance through issuing of a misdemeanor citation was utilized as appropriate, after multiple attempts of outreach and offers of shelter and other supportive services proved ineffective.

The following sections summarize the approach and impact within each Priority Focus Area.

*Billie Jean King Library and Lincoln Park (200 W Broadway)*

As the first Priority Focus Area, the City team mobilized a focused, coordinated strategy. To address people sleeping in and around the area, the Homeless Services Bureau General Outreach Teams and the Police Department Quality of Life (QOL) Unit conducted proactive outreach at least twice a week, building trust, assessing and offering supportive services, and referring people to shelter opportunities, including evening outreach every Wednesday. The Health Department also deployed a Mobile Access Center (MAC) Team to Lincoln Park once a week, providing on-site access to case management and enrollment in services and shelter. These teams also partnered closely with the Library Outreach Worker at BJK Library, an existing program stationing a Homeless Services outreach worker at BJK Library three times a week.

The team also partnered with various non-City partner agencies, including LA Metro outreach staff from the nearby metro station on a weekly basis, and monthly coordinated outreach throughout Downtown with the Downtown Long Beach Alliance outreach staff. To ensure public health and cleanliness, Parks, Recreation and Marine and Public Works teams provided daily power-washing of the terrace of BJK Library and encampment clean-ups in the area twice a week, in partnership with LBPD bike teams and LBPD QOL.

In addition to this engagement and coordination, the City has made significant strides in expanding additional resources, including shelter and permanent housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness around BJK Library and Lincoln Park. In August 2023, the City was awarded [\\$5.3 million in Encampment Resolution Funding](#) from the State of California to address encampment activities in Downtown Long Beach. This program provided crucial resources to address unsheltered homelessness, including the master leasing of a 60-room motel to provide immediate shelter, additional outreach and services, individualized case management and connections to permanent housing through a rapid rehousing program. This resource proved to be foundational in quickly relocating 60 people experiencing homelessness into shelter, with case management, supportive services, and permanent housing services. The one-year program began operation in June 2024 and is scheduled to conclude by June 2025.

The team has reported significant reductions in encampment activity in the area due to the significant mobilization of resources through the Encampment Resolution Fund program, allowing capacity to move people into non-congregate shelter, as well as ongoing activation of the park area and increased enforcement. Library and Parks staff have reported a reduction in the prevalence of camping under the building eaves and negative incidents, and increased coordination among City staff have ensured that the BJK Library terrace remains clear during library opening hours.

Category	City Depts	Service Data
Engagement and Supportive Services	HSB, LBPDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 346 people engaged in outreach services</li> <li>• 173 people enrolled in emergency shelter or transitional housing</li> <li>• 27 people entered permanent housing</li> </ul>
Encampment Cleanups	PRM, PW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 37 Encampment Clean-ups conducted</li> </ul>
Enforcement	LBPDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 381 calls for service (including officer-initiated) (Lincoln Park)</li> <li>• 41 citations or arrests (Lincoln Park), including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 20 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 208 calls for service (including officer-initiated) (BJK Library)</li> <li>• 32 citations or arrests (BJK Library), including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 14 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### *Veterans Park (101 E 28th St)*

To address people sleeping and camping in Veterans Park, the Homeless Services Bureau General Outreach Teams and the LBPDP QOL Teams conducted proactive outreach once a week, building trust, assessing and offering supportive services, and referring people to shelter opportunities. The Health Department deployed a MAC team to the park once per week, providing on-site access to case management and enrollment in services and shelter. LA Metro Outreach teams were also present on site due to the park's proximity to the Willow St. Metro Station. Mental Health America Los Angeles (MHALA) teams conducted outreach to the park area. To ensure public health and cleanliness, Parks, Recreation and Marine conducted clean-ups of encampment areas twice a week.

City staff were able to coordinate additional resources for people living in Veterans Park, including transitioning 19 people living in the park into the County's Pathway Home Program, an encampment resolution program that includes non-congregate shelter in the form of motel rooms, and enrollment in permanent housing services. LA Metro's outreach team also transported clients directly to a first come, first served shelter in the area.

Overall, the team has reported a significant reduction in encampment activity due to ongoing outreach, the successful enrollment of individuals into shelter programs, and increased enforcement and staff presence in the Park.



Category	City Depts	Service Data
Engagement and Supportive Services	HSB, LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 people engaged in outreach services</li> <li>• 22 people entered emergency shelter or transitional housing</li> <li>• 1 person entered permanent housing</li> </ul>
Encampment Cleanups	PRM, PW, HSB, LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42 encampment clean-ups conducted</li> </ul>
Enforcement	LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 413 calls for service (including officer-initiated)</li> <li>• 81 citations or arrests, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 65 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Gumbiner Park (880 E 7th St)*

To address people sleeping and camping in Gumbiner Park, the Homeless Services Bureau General Outreach and LBPB QOL Teams conducted proactive outreach once a week, building trust, assessing and offering supportive services, and referring people to shelter opportunities. The Health Department deployed a MAC Team to the area once a week from August to October 2024. The LA County Department of Health Services provided physical health services onsite, including a team of nurses, which actively enrolled people experiencing homelessness into healthcare services. To ensure public health and cleanliness, Parks, Recreation and Marine conducted clean-ups of encampment areas twice a week, in collaboration with LBPB QOL and Homeless Services Bureau.

From August to December 2024, the park was closed to the public for maintenance, with the park fully cleared and secured. Parks staff performed painting, repairs to lighting and fencing, installed new benches, sanitization and graffiti removal, tree trimming, and landscape renovation. After reopening, the HSB General Outreach and LBPB QOL Teams have resumed proactive outreach in the area once a week, and encampment activity has been largely reduced.

Category	City Depts	Service Data
Engagement and Supportive Services	HSB, LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84 people engaged in outreach services</li> <li>• 17 people entered emergency shelter or transitional housing</li> <li>• 4 people entered permanent housing</li> </ul>
Encampment Cleanups	PRM, PW, HSB, LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 Encampment Clean-ups conducted</li> </ul>

Enforcement	LBPDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 130 calls for service (including officer-initiated)</li> <li>• 46 citations or arrests, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 44 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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*Jenni Rivera Memorial Park (2001 Walnut Ave)*

To address people sleeping and camping in Jenni Rivera Memorial Park, the Homeless Services Bureau and the Police Department Quality of Life Unit conducted proactive outreach two to three times per week, building trust, assessing and offering supportive services, and referring people to shelter opportunities. The Health Department deployed the Mobile Access Center to the nearby Chittick Field once per week, providing case management and outreach. The MAC also partners with Showers of Hope, which deploys mobile shower units once a week at the site providing hygiene and sanitation for people residing in the park, all while being connected to services and housing. Partner agencies, like PATH, Healthcare in Action, and Mental Health America all have ongoing clients who are accessing services while residing in the park. LA County Department of Health Services provided physical health services onsite, including a team of nurses, which actively enrolled people experiencing homelessness into healthcare services. PW has augmented parking enforcement in the area, including restricting overnight parking immediately adjacent to the park. PRM conducted clean-ups of encampment areas twice a week.

While the team has seen early positive results, particularly with the transition of 10 people into the County's Pathway Home Program, the encampment resolution strategy for Jenni Rivera Memorial Park and the surrounding areas (NAACP Park and Chittick Field) is currently ongoing. The Team is currently working with a number of people in the park to connect them to shelter and permanent housing and hopes to continue the positive improvements in the area through a combination of engagement, services, infrastructure improvements, and enforcement.

Category	City Depts	Service Data
Engagement and Supportive Services	HSB, LBPDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 140 people engaged</li> <li>• 7 people added to shelter and permanent housing queue</li> <li>• 7 people enrolled in emergency shelter</li> <li>• 1 person enrolled in Rapid Rehousing</li> <li>• 3 people entered permanent housing</li> <li>• 10 people enrolled in the LA County Pathway Homes Program</li> </ul>
Encampment Cleanups	PRM, PW, HSB, LBPDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 Encampment Clean-ups</li> </ul>

Enforcement	LBPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 169 calls for service (including officer-initiated)</li><li>• 26 citations or arrests, including<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 18 citations for camping in designated areas or loitering after hours</li></ul></li></ul>
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**Lessons Learned**

*Continue and expand interdepartmental coordination.* In response to the Grants Pass decision, City staff utilized existing interdepartmental spaces (i.e., the Public Spaces Workgroup and Interdepartmental Meetings) to coordinate staff, services, and resources between multiple relevant City departments. Both management and line-level staff from multiple departments developed encampment resolution strategies, adapted to new opportunities or challenges in real-time, and conferenced about individual cases to lower barriers to accepting services and moving into shelter, ensuring a tailored response to homelessness within areas of focus. This coordination has been instrumental in addressing these areas and will continue to be a foundational approach for the City of Long Beach.

*Maintain a consistent commitment to long-term solutions and services.* The priority focus area approach emphasized leading with services—including assessing individual needs, providing supportive services, and securing additional shelter and permanent housing—and remains the most effective way to reduce homelessness rather than simply moving people around. With all four Priority Focus Areas, the identification of additional shelter resources, particularly non-congregate shelter options, proved to be extremely impactful in resolving encampment activity. As previously noted, the City has made significant progress over the past four years, including adding an additional 450 permanent shelter beds and accelerating permanent supportive housing developments. The City currently has an additional 100 shelter beds currently under development, which should become available in the next year.

*Expand non-congregate shelter opportunities.* During encampment resolution activities, staff have noted that people living in encampments are often much more willing to enroll in shelter when that shelter is non-congregate (i.e., a private room) rather than congregate (i.e., a cot in a large room), with acceptance rates significantly higher when such resources are available. The identification of additional non-congregate shelter opportunities, such as the Encampment Resolution Funding Program and the LA County Pathway Home Program, were instrumental in significantly reducing encampment activity in all four Priority Focus Areas.

*Allow the time needed to resolve encampments.* Throughout the process, City staff recognized that prioritizing long-term solutions rather than simple relocation of encampments meant that teams needed enough time and increased focus to engage individuals, build trust, wait for shelter capacity to open, develop housing plans, and execute those plans. Once transitioned into a shelter or interim housing program, individuals need enough time to secure adequate and appropriate permanent housing, which is complicated by the limited availability of these housing options. City staff remain committed to serving people currently in shelter, assisting in getting them access to stable, permanent housing that will ensure they not fall back into homelessness.

## Ongoing Challenges

*Resources and staffing.* While effective, a true encampment resolution model is resource-intensive, requiring coordination of multiple City departments, focused and repeated outreach and trust-building, additional interim housing resources (preferably non-congregate shelter like motel rooms), additional permanent housing resources, staffing for clean-ups and ongoing enforcement, and available capacity for supportive services like case management, physical health, mental health, and substance use services. It is not coincidental that the success of the four identified Priority Focus Areas was often directly related to the securing of external resources, such as the State's Encampment Resolution Funding and the County's Pathway Home program. City Staff will continue to pursue and secure new funding, such as the State's Encampment Resolution Funds, Proposition 1, and LA County Measure A, to continue to expand the capacity to resolve encampments.

The Police Department also noted challenges with staffing and resources as demands on enforcement have increased. Consideration should be given to securing funding support for LBPD operations, as existing resources must continuously be reallocated to address service demands in open spaces, entertainment and business districts, and riverbed areas. Additional resources would allow for a more sustainable approach to addressing homelessness-related concerns while maintaining public safety and service efficiency.

Public Works has also reported challenges with staffing, noting that much of the expansion in encampment clean-up capacity has come through one-time funds like the Long Beach Recovery Act. As it stands, the department only has two budgeted FTEs funded through the General Fund for encampment and Citywide clean-up efforts.

*Shelter demand remains significantly greater than capacity.* As noted in the previous memo, while the increased enforcement mechanism could be used to compel individuals to access services and shelter who may not accept otherwise, Homeless Services staff report that interest in shelter is greater than available shelter capacity. Since the beginning of 2025, City-run emergency shelters have operated at 98 percent occupancy, and interim housing programs were at 97 percent occupancy, reflecting that only a few beds turn over on any given day. The vacancy in these statistics represents beds that have been taken offline due to repairs or the time needed to locate an individual who has been awaiting a shelter bed. On average, clients who have accessed shelter through the existing system have waited 49.4 days to successfully transition into shelter, as there are hundreds of people at any point who have expressed interest in shelter and are awaiting availability. In Long Beach's case, further motivation through enforcement will be ineffective without rapid expansion of available shelter, motel vouchers, and permanent housing capacity.

*Shortage of accessible, affordable permanent housing.* As with the wider homeless services system, the shortage of permanent affordable housing resources, such as housing choice vouchers and permanent supportive housing units, continues to limit the efficacy of the Priority Focus Area approach. The shortage of these subsidized resources is exacerbated by the overall increase in housing costs across the City. The ability to quickly transition someone in shelter into permanent housing allows for quicker turnover and expanded capacity in the shelter system, while also solving the root cause of homelessness. Unless the larger shortage

of naturally affordable housing is addressed, homelessness will remain a persistent challenge for Long Beach.

*Vehicular Homelessness.* The Police Department reports that despite improvements afforded through the enhanced enforcement capacity, challenges remain regarding individuals living in vehicles. The Police Department is unable to enforce the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) Section 10.18.040, which prohibits living in vehicles, due to similar laws in Los Angeles being ruled unconstitutional. The Police Department recommends that this law should be reviewed and updated with more specific language to enhance enforcement efforts for people experiencing homelessness residing in vehicles.

*Uncertainty at regional, state and federal agencies and funders.* As outlined above, securing additional external funding and resources was crucial in significantly impacting persistent encampments. Given current and future uncertainty in the availability of funding due to local and State deficits, and potential Federal cuts to social services and funding for people at risk of and experiencing homelessness, as well as policy changes that further exacerbate systems that drive people into homelessness, the future ability to expand our system to better address these issues remains unpredictable. City Staff continue to prepare for these possible cuts and changes through local funding sources, such as LA County Measure A and Proposition 1.

## **Next Steps**

Unless additional policy direction is provided by the Mayor and City Council in an agendaized meeting, City Staff will continue to implement and expand the above approach and lessons learned. This approach is in alignment with the law and best practices that resolve homelessness rather than merely addressing symptoms, incorporating enforcement as only one option in a larger service system. Staff will continue evaluating potential additional locations to designate as Priority Focus Areas as current encampments are resolved and pursue the necessary resources. For example, the City was recently awarded \$11 million in the third round of the State's Encampment Resolution Funding to address encampment activity along the LA Riverbed.

For more information, please contact Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager, at (562) 570-5116 or [Teresa.chandler@longbeach.gov](mailto:Teresa.chandler@longbeach.gov).

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MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK  
DEPARTMENT HEADS