



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee

Recommendation Number: (20160729-001): Recommendation for

Budget Funding for the Homelessness Outreach Street Team (HOST)

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) is to collaboratively address the quality of life issues of all residents in the downtown Austin community through the swift, creative sentencing of public order offenders.

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the cases scheduled by the DACC Case Managers involve defendants who are experiencing homelessness. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, 13,270 cases were filed in the DACC. 9,456 of these cases involved 1,634 defendants experiencing homelessness, over 70% of the cases filed.

WHEREAS, in the last “point-in-time” count, the Ending Community Homelessness Organization (“ECHO”) determined that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness increased by 20% from the previous year.

WHEREAS, the new Homelessness Outreach Street Team, known as HOST, is a partnership of the Austin Police Department, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Austin Travis County Integral Care (Integral Care), the Downtown Austin Alliance and the DACC. Together, these organizations are proactively reaching out to individuals living on the streets to help them connect to the services they need to help them get back on their feet and so that they can reach their full potential.

WHEREAS, the DACC is an integral part of the continuum of care provided by an array of local non-profits, and substance abuse and mental health providers and the DACC has committed a full-time case manager, office space, and a vehicle to support the HOST program, and numerous participants have accessed DACC services because of the HOST program.

WHEREAS, HOST is one piece of the larger effort to move individuals from homelessness to improved well-being and housing stability. The purpose of HOST is to identify individuals who are homeless, learn what challenges they face and work to connect them to services such as medical and behavioral health care, case management and housing, thereby reducing potential crises and harm to the participants and the community.

WHEREAS, HOST launched on June 1st as a pilot project focused on downtown and west campus within the boundaries of the Colorado River, Lamar Blvd., 29th Street and IH-35. To link individuals to essential services, HOST works collaboratively with a wide range of organizations including Caritas of Austin,

Downtown Austin Community Court, Front Steps, Salvation Army, Trinity Center and Lifeworks, among others.

WHEREAS, collaborating agencies diverted existing personnel and resources to create the new team. The success of the team depends, in part, on the availability of services and housing being available for individuals engaged by HOST. As more individuals are engaged and service needs identified, the more capacity that will be needed within the social service provider community. The expansion of permanent supportive housing is essential to the team's success and reducing homelessness.

WHEREAS, the goal of the pilot is to collect data and test the effectiveness of HOST before expanding to the wider community. In the first two months, HOST has connected with 200 individuals. Outcomes expected from HOST include reduced EMS transports, emergency room visits, and jail bookings, generating significant savings for the community and taxpayers. Increased case management, social service usage, medical care, behavioral health services, housing assessments and connections to housing will help individuals improve their well-being and work toward reaching their full potential.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee encourages the Austin City Council to support funding in the upcoming budget cycle to continue the HOST pilot program, assess the viability and effectiveness of the program, and to scale it to meet the needs of the wider Austin community as appropriate.

Date of Approval: July 29, 2016

Lori Renteria (Sponsor), Sara W. Clark (Co-Sponsor)

Record of the vote: Unanimous, Cardona-Beiler abstaining

Attest: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renteria", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large loop at the end.



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and housing, thereby reducing potential crises and harm to the participants and the community.

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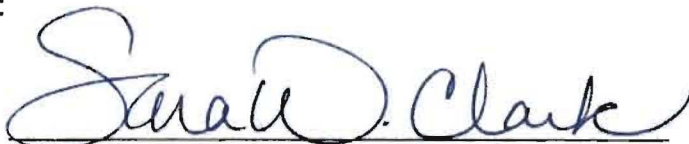
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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee supports including funding in the upcoming budget cycle to continue the HOST pilot program, assess the viability and effectiveness of the program, and to scale it to meet the needs of the wider Austin community as appropriate.

Date of Approval: July 29, 2016.

Record of the vote: unanimous, with Cardona-Beiler abstaining

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sara Wilder Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sara" being the most prominent.

Sara Wilder Clark

Chair, Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee