DOWNTOWN AUSTIN COMMUNITY COURT ADVISORY BOARD

March 23, 2018 AT 7:45 AM
CITY HALL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, ROOM 1101
301 WEST 2ND STREET
AUSTIN, TEXAS

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS:

Brittain Ayres	Tanisa Bernard
Darilynn Cardona-Beiler	Andrew Cates
Sara Clark, Chair	David Courreges
Jason English	Lea Downey Gallatin, Vice Chair
Ann Howard	Gary Ponder
Lori Renteria	

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: The first five (5) speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

1. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

2. **CITIZEN/CLIENT TESTIMONIALS and EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT ("ESG") HOUSING UPDATE: Individuals sharing first-hand experience regarding the challenges associated with access to housing.**

   a. Testimonials (ICM)
   b. ESG Housing Update

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

   a. Introduction to Rhonda Patrick, executive director of the Sobering Center of Austin & Travis County (Clark/Renteria);

b. Update from the Budget/Funding Recommendations Working Group, followed by discussion and possible action on their recommendations (Cardona-Beiler/Howard/Gallatin)

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update, Discussion and Possible Action on Homelessness Assistance Audit Series (Clark/Cates);

b. Update, Discussion and Possible Action on Attendance of Advisory Board Meetings (Clark/Gallatin);

c. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on Homelessness Outreach Street Team ("HOST") pilot program (Cardona-Beiler/Clark);

d. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on the Sobering Center of Austin & Travis County (Renteria/Clark);

e. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on Downtown Austin Community Court Facilities (Clark/Courreges);

f. Update, Discussion and Possible Action on rental assistance grant opportunities. (Cardona-Beiler/Clark);

g. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on City Council Resolution 20160811-037 concerning jailing individuals for failing to pay Municipal Court fines and Stakeholder Group on Fair Treatment of Indigent Defendants (Clark/Gallatin).

h. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on Community Court data and statistics (Cates/Clark).

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. Meeting locations are planned with wheelchair access. If requiring Sign Language Interpreters or alternative formats, please give notice at least 2 days (48 hours) before the meeting date. Please call Susan Requejo at Downtown Austin Community Court, at (512) 974-1233 or susan.requejo@austintexas.gov, for additional information; TTY users route through Relay Texas at 711.

For more information regarding the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board, please contact Susan Requejo at (512) 974-1233 or susan.requejo@austintexas.gov.

DACC ADVISORY Board	REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES	Friday, Jan. 19, 2018

The Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) Advisory Board convened in a regular meeting on Friday, January 19, 2018 in Austin, Texas.

Sara Clark called the meeting to order at 7:45 a.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Sara Clark (Chair), Lea Downey Gallatin, Brittain Ayres, Ann Howard, Darilynn Cardona-Beiler, Jason English,

Staff in Attendance: Michael Coffey, Pete Valdez, Susan Requejo, Jeremy Myers, Jennifer Sowinski, Dahlia Martinez, Martha Chapa, Rebeka Martinez, Robbie Hanley, Robert Kingham, Caitlin Purcell, Chris Anderson, Sean Martin

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
   The minutes from the meeting of November 17, 2017, were approved on a motion by Board Member Brittain Ayres and seconded by Board Member Lea Downey Gallatin. The motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

2. **CITIZEN/CLIENT TESTIMONIALS**

   A. Homeless/formerly homeless individuals shared first- hand experiences regarding challenges and barriers associated with access to housing. An Emergency Solutions Grant housing update was provided to the board. Testimonial provided by a client of the ESG program.

3. **OLD BUSINESS**

   A. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on Homelessness Outreach Street Team ("HOST") pilot program (Cardona-Beiler/Clark). No discussion or action taken on this item.

   B. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on the Sobering Center of Austin and Travis County (Renteria/Clark). No discussion or action taken on this item.

   C. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on Downtown Austin Community Court Facilities (Clark/Courreges). No discussion or action taken on this item.

   D. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on rental assistance grant opportunities (Cardona-Beiler/Clark). No discussion or action taken on this item.

Emergency Solutions Grant Rapid Re-housing Update

As of 3/1/2018:	
Individuals currently engaged in DACC ESG services*	12
Individuals currently engaged in DACC ESG services who are on the DACC frequent offenders list	1
Individuals who have entered housing since January 2013	84

*Currently engaged in DACC ESG services denote clients who are actively receiving housing stability case management, housing location services, financial assistance, and/or DACC ongoing resources.

City of Austin

Intensive Case Management

DACC has six Case Managers, six of whom are licensed master level Social Workers or licensed Professional Counselors and a UT Intern who is working on her Masters in Social Work. As of January 31, 2018 DACC had 57 active clients and a waitlist of 100 clients, 15 of whom are frequent offenders. During January, 2018, DACC Intensive Case Managers assisted in attaining housing for two client's, one of whom was number 261 on our frequent offender list, and made 15 referrals to our rehabilitative services which include residential treatment, transitional housing and counseling. Since January 2013, DACC has housed 242 formerly homeless and chronically homeless individuals. We are collaborating with ECHO on referrals for clients ready to enter Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing.

Homeless Outreach Street Team – HOST

We have a dedicated DACC Intensive Case Manager on HOST and provide the HOST team with office space, access to the DACC van and access to DACC funded program resources.

Individuals that had a contact with HOST - 89

Contacts with HOST clients – 190

Total Needs met during January 2018 – 93

- Coordinated Assessment -19
- Shelter/linkage to housing services -9
- Mental Health Evaluation and Treatment -15
- Substance Abuse Services - 1
- Medical Care - 11
- MAP Cards - 6
- Basic Needs - 4
- Transportation - 4
- Identification Document - 11
- Benefit Linkage - 10
- Referral to APS - 1
- Navigation and Case Management -0
- Miscellaneous - 0
- Legal - 1

- Employment - 1

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) - Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH)

DACC is continuously working on enhancing intensive Case Management programing by implementing best practices including Critical Time Interventions, adding services and working collaboratively with community agencies. Various staff members have been trained in completing the Coordinated Assessment, Medical Assistance Plan applications and SOAR. Community First and DACC are collaborating on housing opportunities and rehabilitative services for our clients. Staff is working on providing expanded day programing to include a weekly basketball group, Life Skills training and a nutritional/cooking class. These enhancements are available to all DACC clients that are currently housed or who are working with a case manager to acquire permanent stability.

Our new ESG Case Manager, Nancy Pounds, started November 13, 2017. We currently have 12 ESG clients. Since December 2017, we accepted five referrals through the ECHO referral process. Three have been enrolled in the DACC ESG program, one was not interested in services at this time and one we were unable to locate. Since the inception of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH) in March of 2013, 100 clients have been assessed and entered the program. To date ESG RRH case manager(s) have cultivated relationships/partnerships with over 90 potential apartments to house clients that meet the prescribed housing criteria. DACC ESG program collaborates with the COA Communicable Disease Unit (CDU), Front Steps and ECHO housing team with location services for all identified homeless clients within the ATX/Travis County area.

Community Service Restitution (CSR) Statistics - Fiscal YTD (October 1st, 2017 to January 31st, 2018)

- Number of CSR hours scheduled in DACCP = **2,895**
- Number of Community Service Restitution hours completed by defendants scheduled @ DACC = **6,092***
- Number of Community Service Restitution hours Supervised by DACC and completed by Travis County Probationers = **4,081***
- Monetary value of total CSR hours **(10,173)** completed = **$127,162.50 ($12.50 per hour)**
- Number of CSR hours completed by frequent offenders = **1,624**
- Total number of square footage completed for graffiti abatement, ARR, Code Enforcement, PARD, other COA departments and citizen/stakeholder requests **7,290,065**
- Total number of sites serviced by DACC work crews for graffiti abatement, ARR, Code Enforcement, PARD, other COA departments and citizen/stakeholder requests = **656**

DACC FY 2018 Top Ten Offenses

Top ten offenses (Homeless)

167	Sitting or Lying Down on a Public Sidewalk or Sleeping Outdoors
117	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
74	AGGRESSIVE SOLICITATION
45	CAMPING IN A PUBLIC PLACE
42	PARK CURFEW VIOLATION
31	PUBLIC INTOXICATION
28	CONSUMING ALCOHOL IN A PUBLIC STREET
28	PEDESTRIAN WALKING AGAINST LIGHT
19	PEDESTRIAN IN ROADWAY/CITY ORDINANCE
17	PEDESTRIAN ON ROADWAY

Top ten offenses (Non-homeless)

|	
294	PUBLIC INTOXICATION
143	Sitting or Lying Down on a Public Sidewalk or Sleeping Outdoors
116	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
66	PARK CURFEW VIOLATION
59	DISORDERLY CONDUCT - FIGHTING
55	CAMPING IN A PUBLIC PLACE
54	Volunteer Case
48	CONSUMING ALCOHOL IN A PUBLIC STREET
39	MISREPRESENTATION OF AGE BY MINOR
36	MINOR CONSUMING ALCOHOL

Current Frequent Offender Count: 356

- Case Count for previous Month – **December** 2017 = 219
- Case Count for Month – **January** 2018 = 215
- Case Count Fiscal YTD FY18 (Oct 01 2017 to Jan 31, 2018) = 1463
- Case Count Previous Fiscal FY17 (Oct 01 2016 to Jan 31, 2017) = 1620

- Frequent Offender Case Count for previous Month – **December** 2017 = 41
- Frequent Offender Case Count for Month – **January** 2018 = 59
- Frequent Offender Case Count Fiscal YTD FY18 (Oct 01 2017 to Jan 31, 2018) = 398
- Frequent Offender Case Count Previous Fiscal FY17 (Oct 01 2016 to Jan 31, 2017) = 516

- Homeless Case Count for previous Month – **December** 2017 = 54.
- Homeless Case Count for Month – **January** 2018 = 65
- Homeless Case Count Fiscal YTD FY18 (Oct 01 2017 to Jan 31, 2018) = 481
- Homeless Case Count Previous Fiscal FY17 (Oct 01 2016 to Jan 31, 2017) = 646

iTEAM HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH BACKGROUND
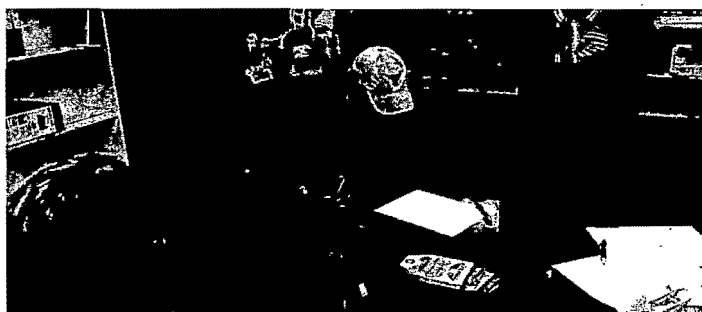
The iTeam conducted over 120+ interviews and conversations with people experiencing homelessness in Austin and with service providers. They gather over 4000+ data points and have synthesized the data into these key takeaways.

RESEARCH KEY TAKEAWAYS

When people enter into the homeless system, they are likely to fall into these 3 pathways. One person can experience all 3 pathways in their journey.

🌀 Deteriorating Path

⟳ Relapsing Path

↗ Resilient Path

People are deteriorating in a complex system. The inefficiencies and complexities of the system are making people sicker. That combined with continued housing shortages leave "the relatively stable" on a path of deterioration.

Services struggle to support behavior change, often resulting in relapse. There's little focus on teaching new behaviors, bridging new relationships, or widening opportunities. Teaching new behaviors is often not prioritized because providers are constantly managing crisis and must address immediate needs.

Despite barriers, people are resilient. In spite of barriers, some efforts clicked together to change someone's situation. This could be due to providing services in a new way, offering new services, service availability and alignment, or people self resolving through their own network and means.

It's not a hierarchy; humans have many other needs that aren't being met.

The system and services needs to enable and build relatedness, competence, and autonomy for both providers and persons experiencing homelessness.
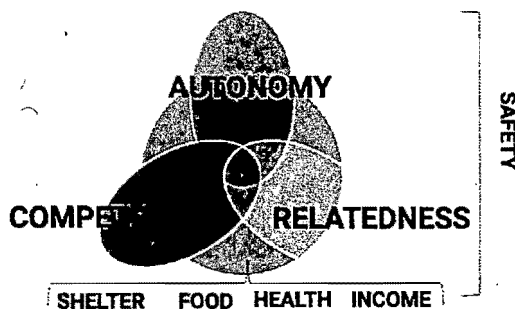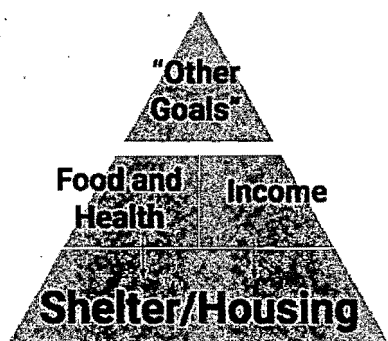
*Competence: Confidence in skills, freedom from demeaning evaluation, positive feedback. **Relatedness:** Feeling seen & heard, social connections, understanding others, having a place in the world. **Autonomy:** Feeling a sense of agency, feeling in control of your life, power to make your own decisions.*

(draft)

Opportunity

With the Deteriorating Path and Relapsing Path, we've created **a high cost system**, but there is hope. **Solving for dignity and self-determination** will make people more Resilient, and ultimately **impacting the bottom line**. To reduce cost for the system and improve people's outcomes, here is criteria to keep in mind when **building new services** and **improving existing services.**

SERVICE DESIGN AND EVALUATION CRITERIAS	INSIGHTS
PROVIDER COLLABORATION ☐ **Tools for collaboration amongst providers must be accessible and universal** ☐ Partnerships include shared responsibility and clear roles ☐ Front-end client facing processes and back-end provider facing workflows should be easy and efficient ☐ Facilitate intentional and formal collaboration between different agencies ☐ Clearly defined requirements and pathways to other services ☐ Have a supporting governance structure ☐ Support personal relationships between providers ☐ **Interventions should consider of the 'before and after' support services and make bridges to those supports**	*In the absence of collaboration tools, service providers' informal relationships keep the formal system alive.* *Healthcare interventions fail when there are unavailable supporting services.*
SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY ☐ **Easier to access than drugs** ☐ Readily available interventions for people ready to achieve change ☐ Obvious and easy to navigate ☐ Increase flexibility of services and requirements (ie. time constraints, required paperwork and documentation, etc.) ☐ Information should be easy to remember and easy to share ☐ **Must work for people with mental health disorders** ☐ Readily available services, no waitlists ☐ Offers longer duration of care for stabilization ☐ Follow-up support for health maintenance and medication ☐ **Fit around the demands of a full-time job** ☐ Operation hours that do not conflict with work hours ☐ Service eligibility that does not disqualify someone after gaining a small income	*People are turning to readily available substances to numb challenging realities and trauma.* *Success comes when clients are ready and services are available, but both sides struggle to align.* *Internal and external barriers compound to make people with mental health challenges sicker.* *Financial stability for the working individual is unattainable when services and jobs are at odds with each other.*
ADDRESSING CURRENT SERVICE GAPS ☐ Storage for belongings ☐ Employment opportunities that bridge to sustainable income and career growth ☐ **Provide outlets where people can find peace and**	*Some people stay homeless or forfeit services rather than leave their family, street family, or partners behind.* *When the system prioritizes serving physical needs,*

escape challenging realities
- ☐ Provide alternative ways to fill voids ·
- ☐ Build up sense of daily purpose
- ☐ Teach new coping mechanisms
- ☐ Provide opportunities for learning new behaviors
- ☐ **Build in support for social, emotional, and mental needs**
- ☐ Offer support help for achieving goals that are relevant to clients, whether or not it directly aligns to providers' focus on housing
- ☐ **Be inclusive of families and communities, not just individuals**
- ☐ Connect people to supportive relationships and networks when trying to make change in their lives

people's emotional, mental, and social needs go unaddressed, giving harmful sources the window to step in.

Learning new behaviors helps prevent relapse, but providers must prioritize managing immediate crises over teaching.

Successful behavior change can be dependent on breaking away from street community, but change is hard without social support.

Again and again, people are exposed to destructive behaviors while healthy role models are rare.

With limited housing, people need support for building capabilities so that they can achieve other goals and stay motivated.

EARLY INTERVENTIONS
- ☐ **Provide resources for the entire spectrum, not just the most vulnerable**
- ☐ Provide access to services so that people with a medium-level of vulnerability do not get worse
- ☐ **Include efforts to repair relationships, providing mediation and reconnection with family**
- ☐ Identify and address vulnerabilities points where people might relapse

The system works for the two extremes ends of the spectrum, leaving the people in the middle to deteriorate.

Many people become homeless when their families break down and the difficulties of repairing these relationships lead to a repeat for the next generation.

LEVERAGE STRENGTHS AND CAPABILITIES
- ☐ **Measure and leverage people's capabilities**
- ☐ Support personal relationships between providers
- ☐ Leverage people's sharing instinct to maximize the spreading of information
- ☐ Leverage people's family units to provide support
- ☐ **Create ways to uncover and connect to latent resources**
- ☐ Facilitate relationships between people experiencing homelessness with the broader community

People's relationships with the broader community allow them to access untapped resources.

Without direction, people rely on the sharing of street knowledge to keep each other alive.

SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- ☐ **Create safe street and service environments**
- ☐ Leverage the community's largest outreach force to connect people to health and social resources.
- ☐ Reduce criminal background barriers
- ☐ Stop criminalizing homelessness and poverty
- ☐ Ability to identify and address predatory practices ·

Police frequently have the wrong tool for the job, but are constantly being called upon to intervene.

(DRAFT)

(Draft)
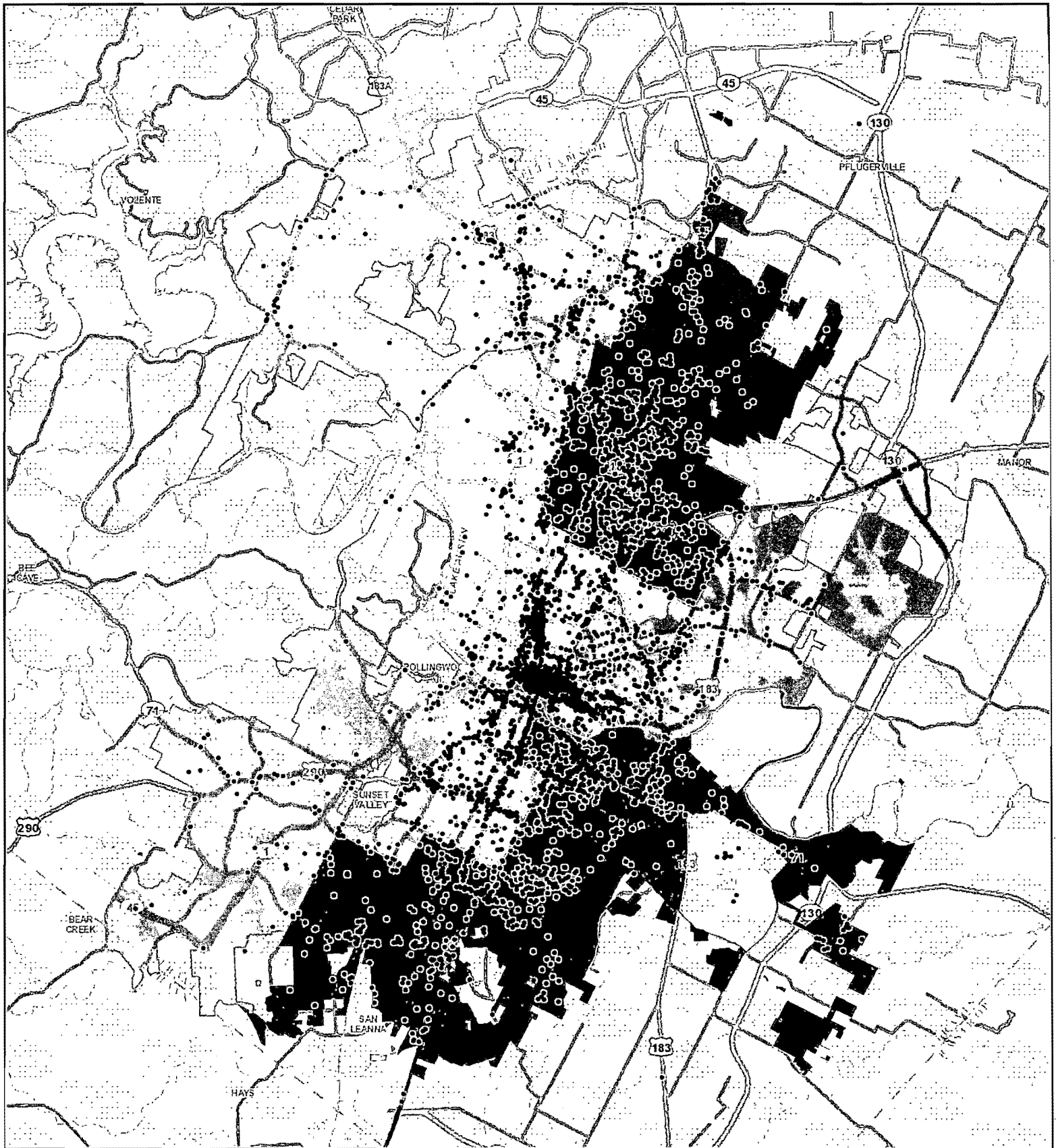
Public Intoxication Arrests, 2014-16

Date Saved: 8/2/2017
Created by: AP 7657

12,500   6,250   0   12,500 Feet

This map was created by the Planning and Research
Analysis Unit of the Austin Police Department for the
sole purpose of the geographic display of crime.
No warranty is made with regards to its accuracy
or completeness.
Map was created using ESRI ARCGIS ArcInfo 10.3.1.
Data is projected using North American Datum 1983,
Texas State Plane Central. Units are measured in
US. Feet. Data sources: Austin Police Department,
City of Austin Corporate GIS.

PLANNING AND RESEARCH ANALYSIS UNIT

SOBERING CENTER

SERVING AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY

Why Do we Need One?

- Alcohol Use is a Problem.
  - 47% of Texans age 18-44 binge drink (25% 12-29)- 4 more drinks at a time
  - 197,728 18-44 year old binge drink and 19,547 18-24 year old
  - 8% report chronic alcohol daily use (33,655)
- Public intoxication is a crime.
  - As of 12/31/2017 Travis County Jail had 2,676 arrests for public intoxication.
  - According to the Municipal Court, Public Intoxication is the #1 offense for non homeless persons accessing the court.
  - Austin EMS reports they receive multiple calls a day related to public intoxication that result in transport to an emergency room. They attribute 6 calls a day to the ARCH/SA area.
- Public intoxication places people and property at risk.
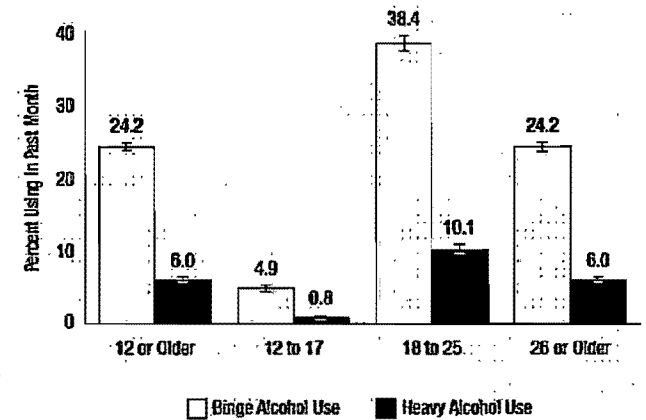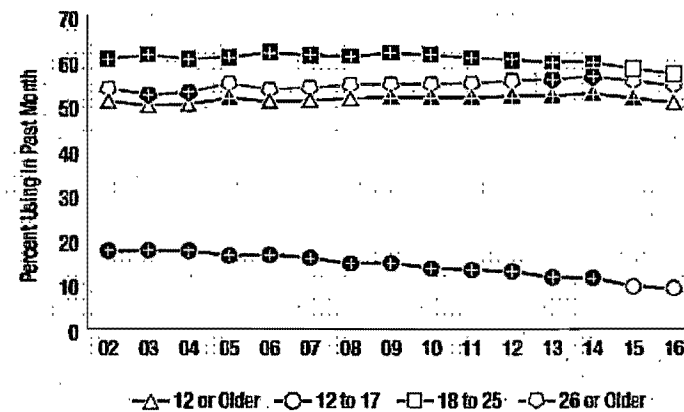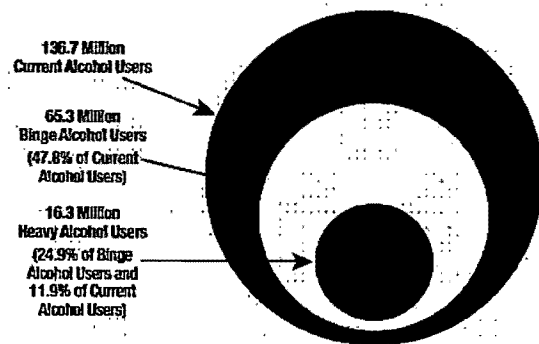 - 10 of the 17 leading causes of death are related to excessive alcohol use.

136.7 Million Current Alcohol Users

65.3 Million Binge Alcohol Users (47.8% of Current Alcohol Users)

16.3 Million Heavy Alcohol Users (24.9% of Binge Alcohol Users and 11.9% of Current Alcohol Users)

Percent Using in Past Month

70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0
02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

—△— 12 or Older —○— 12 to 17 —□— 18 to 25 —○— 26 or Older

Percent Using in Past Month

40 30 20 10 0

| 12 or Older | 12 to 17 | 18 to 25 | 26 or Older |
24.2 / 6.0 | 4.9 / 0.8 | 38.4 / 10.1 | 24.2 / 6.0

☐ Binge Alcohol Use   ■ Heavy Alcohol Use

Figure 42. Numbers of People Aged 12 or Older with a Past Year Substance Use Disorder: 2016

No Past Year Substance Use Disorder 249.3 Million People (92.5%)

Past Year Substance Use Disorder 20.1 Million People (7.5%)

Alcohol	15.1
Illicit Drugs	7.4
Marijuana	4.0
Misuse of Prescription Pain Relievers	1.8
Cocaine	0.9
Methamphetamine	0.7
Heroin	0.6
Misuse of Prescription Stimulants	0.5

0 5 10 15 20
Millions of People
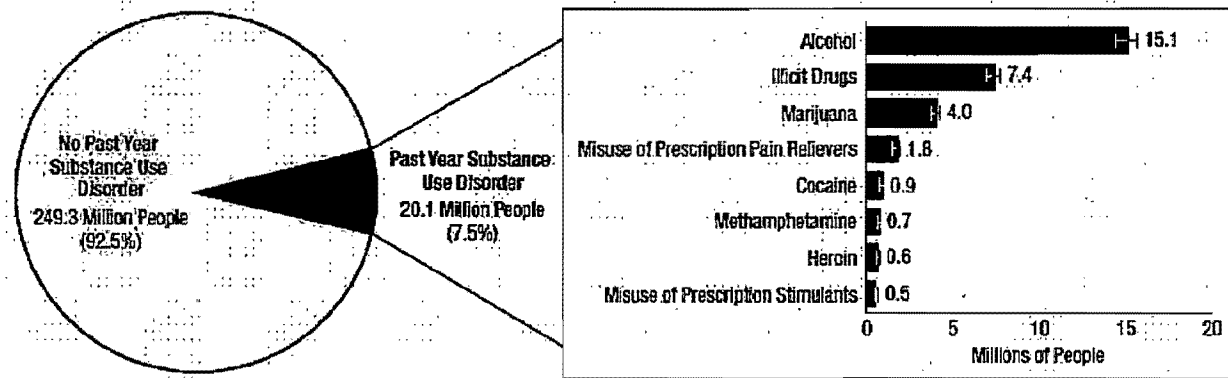
Costs
- Booking and Jail Costs to the County
- Police officer time and costs to the City
- Removal of officer from patrol
- Individual financial costs
- Criminal Record for low level offender
- Higher burden for impoverished, homeless, student, young adult and other groups
- When too intoxicated for booking have to transport to ER, exponentially increasing costs to Jail, EMS, PD, and ER.
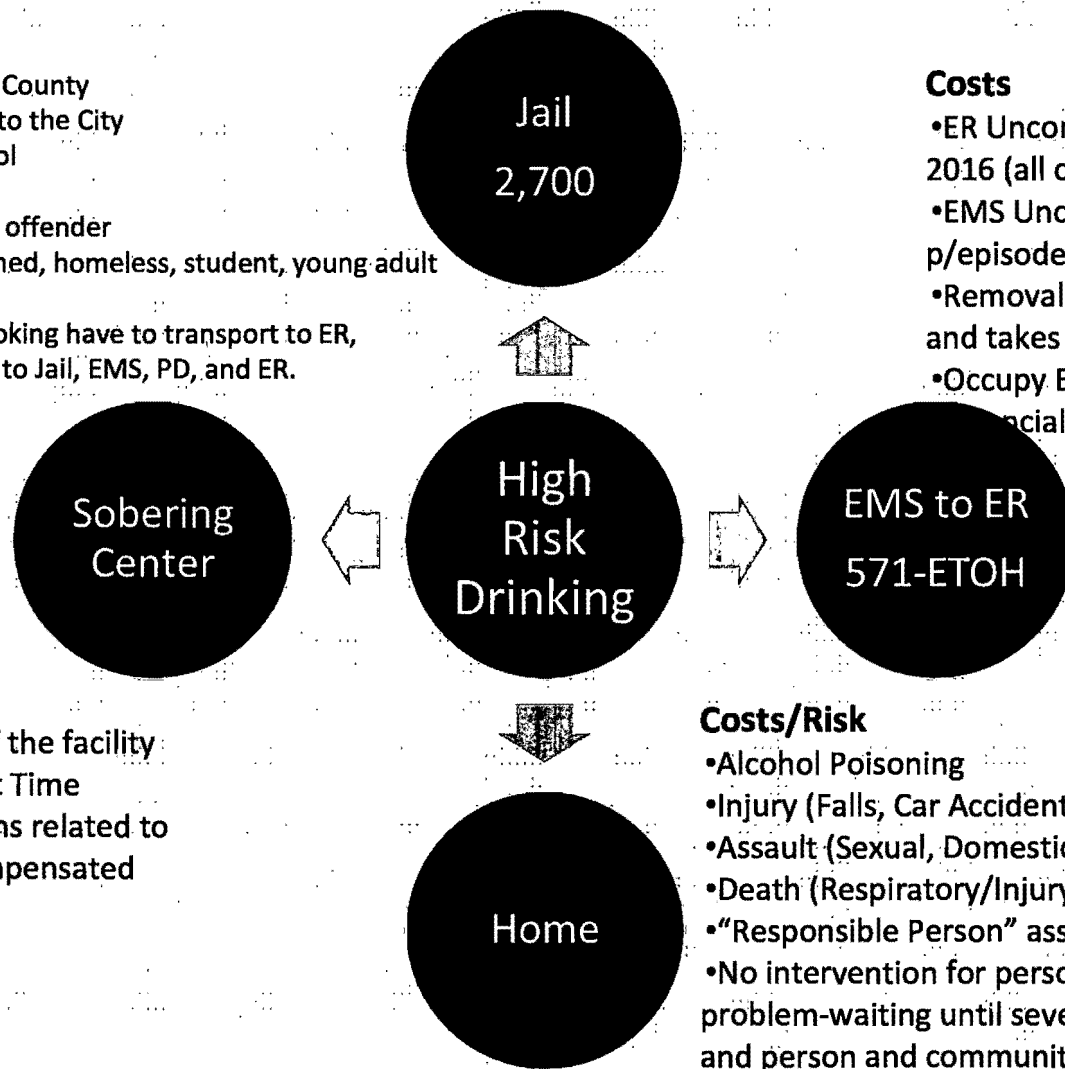
Costs
- ER Uncompensated Care-$116mil total 2016 (all costs)
- EMS Uncompensated Care- $876 p/episode
- Removal of a mobile intensive care unit and takes Medic off the street
- Occupy ER bed and personnel
- ...cial Costs to Individual

Jail
2,700

Sobering Center

High Risk Drinking

**EMS to ER 571-ETOH**

Home

Costs
- Operating costs of the facility
- EMS/PD Transport Time
- Revenue reductions related to court fines and compensated care.

Costs/Risk
- Alcohol Poisoning
- Injury (Falls, Car Accidents)
- Assault (Sexual, Domestic Violence)
- Death (Respiratory/Injury/Aspiration)
- "Responsible Person" assumes liability and risk
- No intervention for person with emerging problem-waiting until severe when cost to treat is great and person and community damage has been done.

Public Intoxication Arrests
2012-2016. Provided by Austin
Police Department.

The area in the red circle is
downtown Austin, UT area, an
other areas of entertainment.
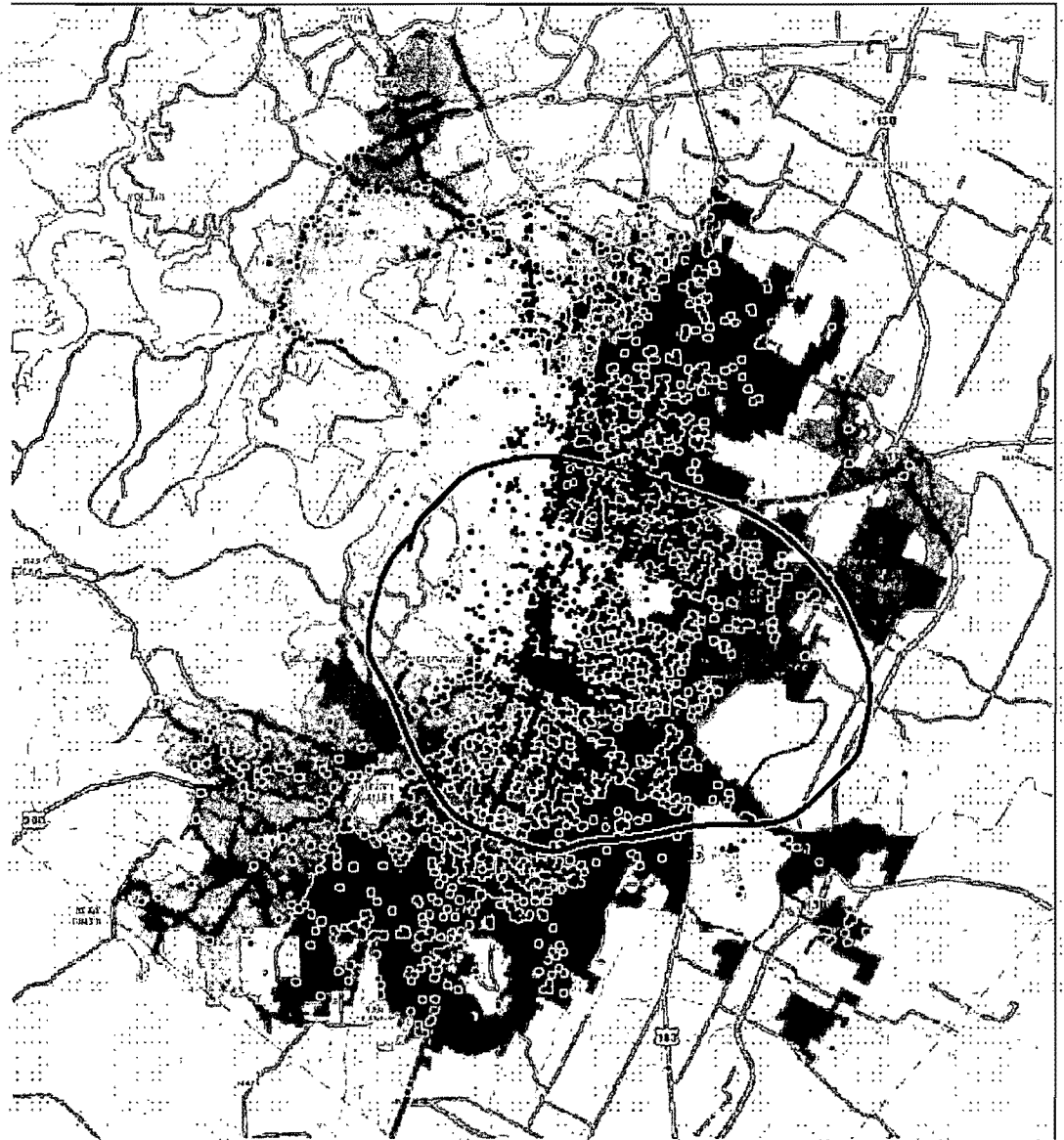
Facts About Alcohol

Hangover

Poisoning

Headache

Sensitivity to light and noise

Irritability

Decreased attention span

Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea

Fatigue or weakness

Muscle pains
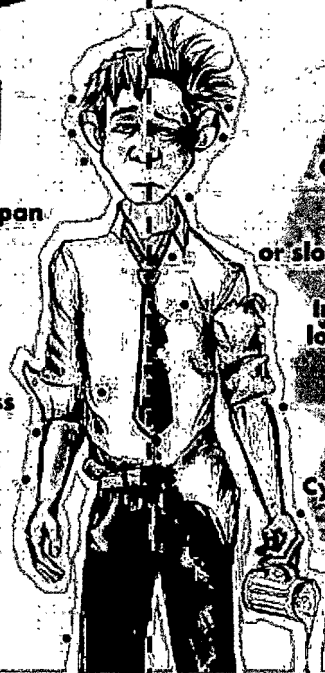
Potential seizures

Confusion or stupor

Continuous vomiting

Difficulty breathing or slower breathing rates

Increased heart rate, lower blood pressure

Low body temperature/chills

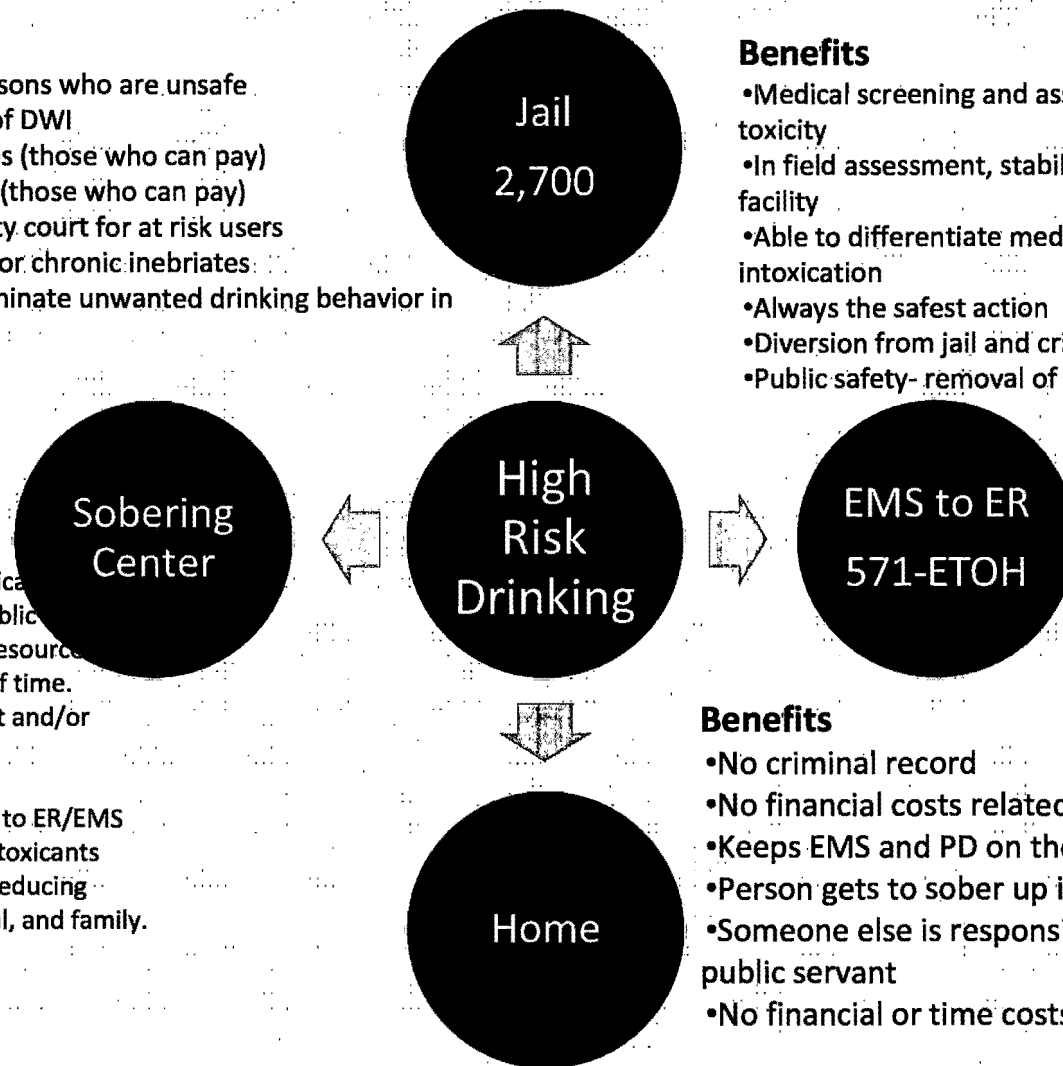**Cyanotic (blue-tinged) skin around lips, nail beds, etc**

Benefits
- Public safety- removal of persons who are unsafe
- Public safety- eliminate risk of DWI
- Revenue- Court fees and fines (those who can pay)
- Revenue- Defense attorneys (those who can pay)
- Intervention through specialty court for at risk users
- Access to intensive services for chronic inebriates
- Consequence learning to eliminate unwanted drinking behavior in otherwise law abiding citizens

Benefits
- Medical screening and assessment for potentially dangerous toxicity
- In field assessment, stabilization and transport to medical facility
- Able to differentiate medical/psychiatric/injury from intoxication
- Always the safest action
- Diversion from jail and criminal justice system
- Public safety- removal of unsafe/unwell persons from public

Benefits
- Public Safety- removes unsafe intoxic[...] public without removing essential public [...] and public health personnel and/or resourc[...] from the field for extended periods of time.
- Reduces costs/risks to/for intoxicant and/or responsible party when sent home.
- Frees up jail space and time
- Reduces uncompensated care costs to ER/EMS
- Creates intervention point for HR intoxicants before the problem become severe-reducing overall costs to community, individual, and family.

Benefits
- No criminal record
- No financial costs related to jail, citations, or medical
- Keeps EMS and PD on the streets and on patrol
- Person gets to sober up in their own bed and home
- Someone else is responsible for them other than a public servant
- No financial or time costs to jails/ER/EMS

Jail
2,700

High
Risk
Drinking

Sobering
Center

EMS to ER
571-ETOH

Home

What is a Sobering Center

- Sobering Centers are public facilities where individuals can safely recover from acute intoxication.

- Sobering Centers offers a refuge from the streets and a safe place for chronic public alcoholics to sober.

- Sobering Centers are often utilized as an alternative to jailing and emergency rooms.

What's Our Mission?

The mission of Austin Travis County Sobriety Center is to enhance public health and public safety by providing an alternative to the emergency room and jail for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up and, where appropriate, provide a safe environment to initiate recovery.

Branding
1. Getting the word out about the Sobering Center
2. Culture Video

Education
1. High Risk Drinking
2. Danger and Options
3. Targeting information to the "responsible person"

Outreach
1. Law Enforcement
2. Emergency Medical Services
3. Jail Intake
4. University students and groups
5. Bars and Pubs

Community Engagement

Intake

Paramedic

- Medical evaluation for individual transported by law enforcement- Medic-Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Neuro, Gastro
- Warm handoff and transfer of care w/medical assessment for EMS transport
- Assess BAC- calculate sobering time (BAC/20mg/dl)
- Utilize telehealth contact with ER as need for case consultation
- Monitor high risk intoxicants while sobering
- Crisis Intervention for those with emotional lability

SBIRT

## Sobering

Qualified Mental Health Professional

- Substance Abuse Disorder Screening
- High Risk Drinking Screening
- Brief Intervention-Problem Identification
- Referral-Problem Identification
- Treatment- Service Connection, Service Coordination, Service Collaboration
- Medical- Evaluate dehydration prior to D/C and withdrawal potential, refer to medical as needed.

Recovery Support Specialist

- Safe Monitoring- Control Center and 1:1
- Ongoing medical evaluation by Medic-Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Neuro, Gastro
- Connection with ER via video conferencing or phone
- Comfort Care- Clean up, hydration, snack
- Emotional Support and Compassion
- PES contact and evaluation if needed (MCOT)
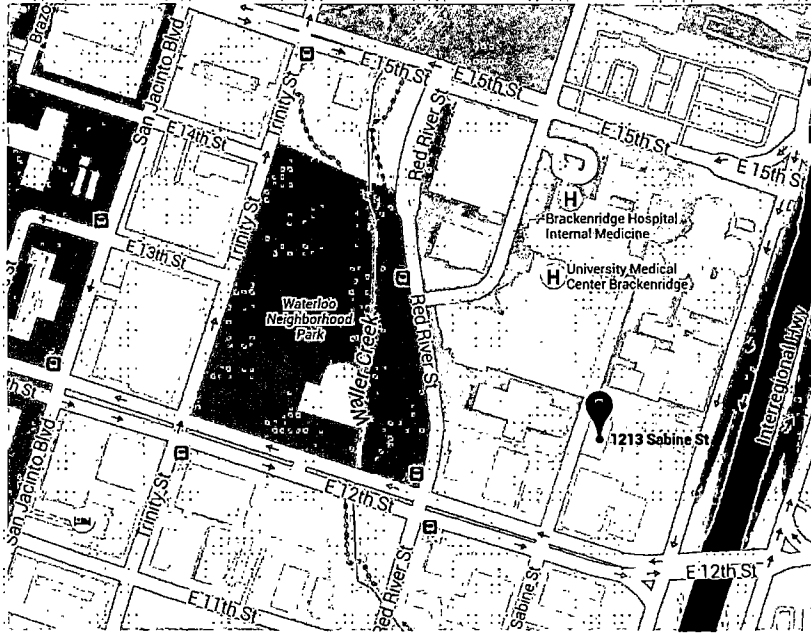
1213 Sabine St.

Current site of the Travis County Medical Examiner's Office building.

Open 24/7 and staffed with emergency medical personnel, recovery specialist, behavioral health navigators, and security.

ANTICIPATED USERS

75%
one-time users
- College students
- Convention goers
- Festival attendees

25%
repeat users
- Alcohol addicts who are homeless and unemployed
- Alcohol addicts that have other critical health care needs and mental health diagnoses

40 Sobering Cots- 32 for men and 8 for women Facilities will have showering facilities for men, women and transgender persons. Will be able to provide clean clothing. Hydration will also be provided.
ALL SERVICES ARE VOLUNTARY
No one will be held against their will.

When is all this happening?

Renovations of Building- February 2018-June 2018
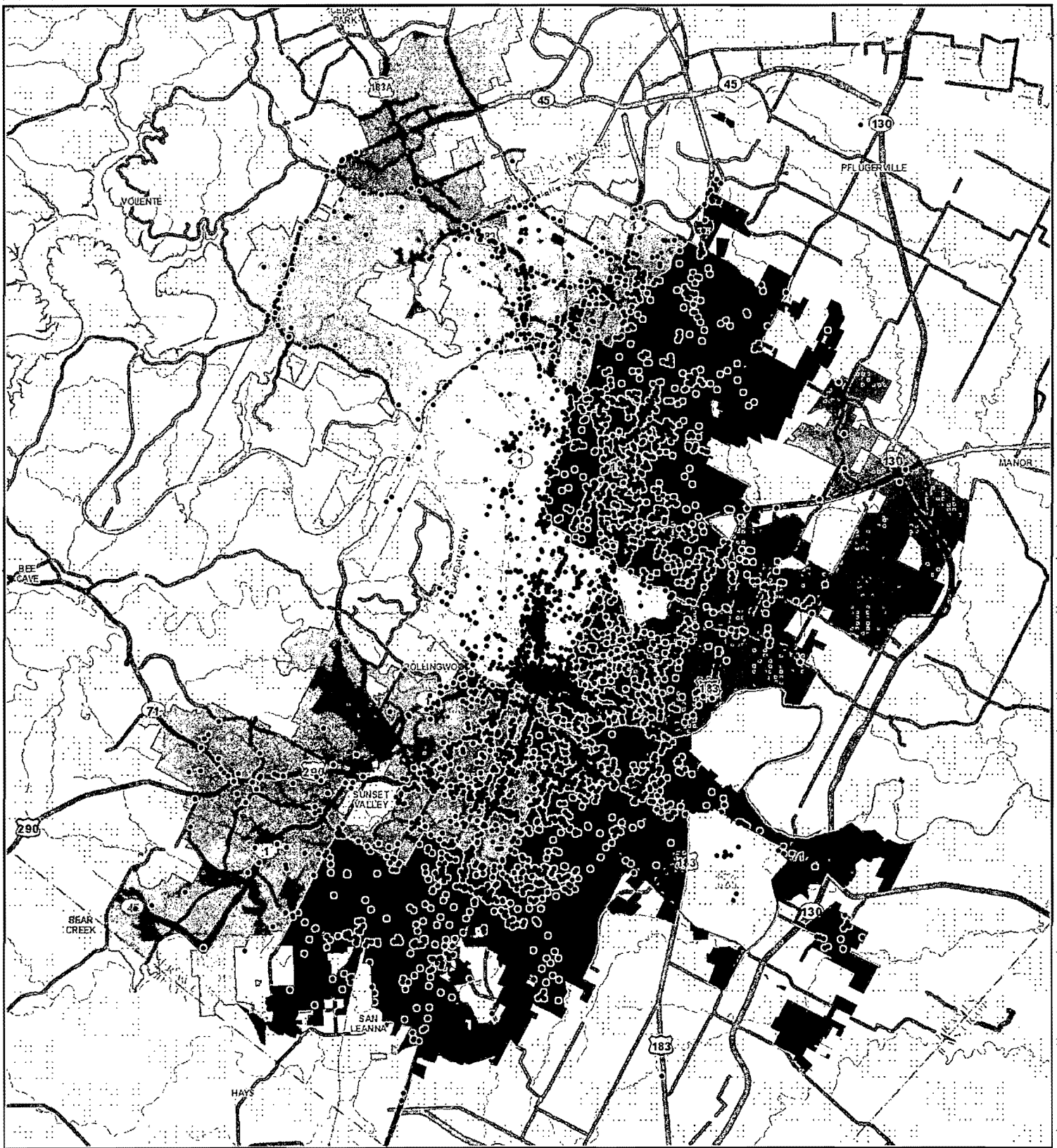
Staffing and Move In- July 2018

Soft Opening- August 2018

Fully Capacity Operations- October 2018

www.soberingcenter.org

Rhonda G. Patrick, LCSW, MPA
Executive Director

rgpatrick@soberingcenter.org

Public Intoxication Arrests, 2014-16

PLANNING AND RESEARCH ANALYSIS UNIT

AUSTIN TRAVIS COUNTY SOBRIETY CENTER LOGIC MODEL

Population Needs	Resources (Inputs)	Program Components (Activities)	Outputs (Objectives)	Outcomes (Goals)
Overriding Issues • Binge Drinking resulting in PI/ER • Ind place self and/or others in danger when intoxicated • Precontemplation-SOC • PD off street • Turn away at jail • Utilization of EMS for non-emergency situations • Utilization of ER for non-emergency conditions.	**Project Staff** • Administration w/clinical leadership Paramedic Recovery Support Specialist SBIRT-MSW **Major Collaborators** City of Austin Travis County APD ATCEMS PPD UTPD UT Center for students in recovery UT administration UT Parent group Other university groups (TSU, SE, HTC, ACC) Business community Social service providers (ATCIC) Treatment providers Recovery Community	**Service Delivery Context** • Compassionate, Accepting, Respectful, Empowering • Medically Safe Monitoring • SBIRT & Motivational Enhancement Approaches • Gender/Cultural Awareness/Competency • Continuous (24/7) **Outreach, Recruitment & Education** Austin Police Department Other Travis County Police Departments ATC/EMS ER's Seton/Central Health ATCIC University Student Education (UT/TSU) Jail/TC Sheriff	**Persons Accessing Sobering center** # LE Transports #EMS Transports **Clients Receive Sobering** # that are admitted for sobering **Substance Use Disorder Identified** # of persons screened for SUD	**Process Goals** • Total # of Unduplicated Client Served • Total # of Community Presentation • Total # of Stakeholder Contacts • Total # Referral Pledges • Total # of high risk drinking intervention referral • Total # SUD screenings. • Total # Brief Interventions.
Service Barriers • No empirically tested model • Culture of LE frontline-ignore, redirect, or jail-dependent on resources and situation • Culture of EMS-Triage, stabilize & transport • Entertainment culture • Youth culture that perpetuates risky drinking • Service Gaps across continuum • No ID of emerging problems to deploy BI	**Grant Funding** **Staff Training** CRR- 46hr EMS- FA/CPR CPI-Crisis Intervention **Evaluation** University or Med School Collaboration	**SBIRT-Screening, Brief Interventions, and Referral to Treatment** • Starts at time of access-intake-gathering information to determine circumstances. • SUD screening as beginning to sober • Brief Intervention regarding substance use behavior and risk • Service Linkage • Follow-Up **Down Stream Services Development** • Substance Abuse Services- DSHS Funded, Medicaid, and Private – pay and scholarship beds • HIV testing, preventive education, referral • Harm Reduction/Brief Intervention • Intensive Case Management **EBP & Outcomes Monitoring & Feedback** Program Evaluation- CCT of program Design	**Persons identified with SUD referred for appropriate services** # Brief Interventions # Persons accept help card # of persons that allow SBIRT to make referrals and consent to follow-up **Persons identified with SUD successfully linked with appropriate services** # Motivation Interventions # persons agree to service plan # of persons that allow SBIRT to coordinate services and link with service professionals # consent to follow-up until linked with services #respond to follow and service coordination **Chronic Homeless EMS Utilization Decrease** # PEH who utilize sobering center instead of ER or Jail	**Client Outcomes** • Number of publicly intoxicated individuals who sobered sufficiently to reduce risk to self and other • Reduction in jail bookings • Reduction in ER admissions • Increase in referents who meet PI standard. • Increase in person with knowledge of sobering center, it's purpose, and how to access. • Increase in number of persons who screen as high-risk substance user and who accept referral for intervention.

Audit Report

Homelessness Assistance Audit Series: City Policies Related to Homelessness

November 2017

City ordinances that limit or ban camping, sitting or lying down in public spaces, and panhandling may create barriers for people as they attempt to exit homelessness because they can lead to a criminal record or arrest warrants. Even if a citation does not result in a criminal record, it does not appear to be an effective means of connecting that individual to the services they need, nor is it an efficient use of City resources.

Lastly, other U.S. cities have faced lawsuits challenging the enforcement of similar ordinances. In some of those cases, rulings against the cities have been based on conditions that also appear to exist in Austin.

Contents

Cover: 7th Street, Office of the City Auditor.

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine if City ordinances align with City efforts to achieve desired outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
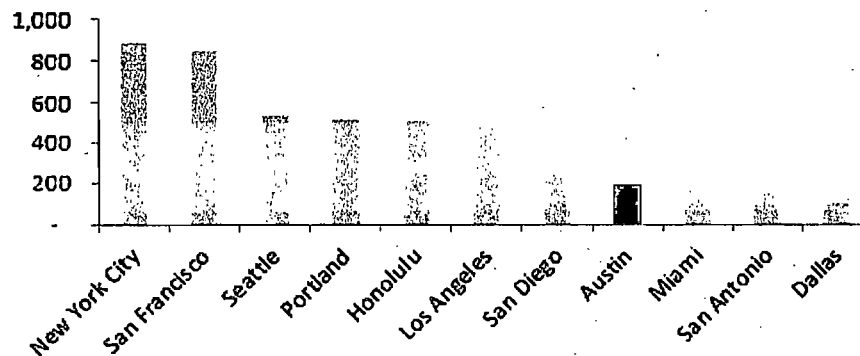
Due to the complex nature of the topic, we plan to evaluate the City's homelessness assistance efforts in a series of audits. Future reports are planned to analyze coordination of the City's homelessness assistance efforts, how the City allocates resources to address homelessness, and the outcomes of these efforts. This report is the first in that series.

Background

More than 7,000 people used homelessness assistance services in 2016, a 14% increase since 2013.

One day each year, Austin's Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) coordinates a count of the City's homeless population. This annual "Point in Time Count" is required for communities that receive funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2017 count identified a total of just over 2,100 people experiencing homelessness in Austin, which is similar to the results of previous counts.[1] However, ECHO noted in its 2017 "Needs and Gaps" report that more than 7,000 people used homelessness services in 2016, a 14% increase since 2013. When compared to the counts done by other cities in 2016 (as shown in Exhibit 1), Austin had more people experiencing homelessness per capita than other large Texas cities. However, Austin's count was significantly lower than several other cities that received Federal funding in 2016.

Exhibit 1: 2016 Rate of Homeless Per 100,000 People in Select U.S. Cities


SOURCE: OCA analysis of Point in Time counts conducted by various Continuum of Care organizations, September 2017

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[1] The count identified 832 people sleeping in shelters, 834 unsheltered people, and 370 people in transitional housing.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty reviewed municipal codes in 187 cities to identify ordinances that relate to the criminalization of homelessness. According to this analysis, Austin has three such ordinances, which are shown in Exhibit 2. Violations of each ordinance are classified as a Class C misdemeanor and can result in a fine of up to $500.

Exhibit 2: Austin City Ordinances Associated with Homelessness
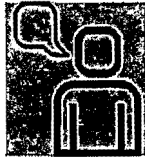
Panhandling (§9.4.13)
- Bans certain actions such as making physical contact and using obscene or abusive language and gestures while soliciting
- Bans solicitation within 25 feet of an ATM/bank or at sidewalk cafes
- Bans solicitation in the downtown area from 7pm to 7am
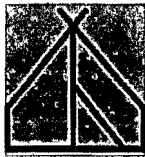
Camping (§9.4.11)
- Bans camping in public areas of the City
- Defines camping as storing personal belongings, using a tent/car as a living accommodation, and cooking
- Does not apply to permitted camping or cooking in a park
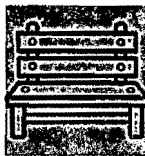
Sit/Lie (§9.4.14)
- Bans sitting or lying in parts of downtown
- Does not apply in situations such as a medical emergency, viewing a parade, waiting for public transit, or using a bench provided by a public agency or property owner

SOURCE: OCA analysis of *The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty's "No Safe Place"* report and Austin City Code, September 2017

What We Found

Summary

City ordinances that limit or ban camping, sitting or lying down in public spaces, and panhandling may create barriers for people as they attempt to exit homelessness because they can lead to a criminal record or arrest warrants. Even if a citation does not result in a criminal record, it does not appear to be an effective means of connecting that individual to the services they need, nor is it an efficient use of City resources.

Lastly, other U.S. cities have faced lawsuits challenging the enforcement of similar ordinances. In some of those cases, rulings against the cities have been based on conditions that also appear to exist in Austin.

Finding

Select City ordinances may create barriers for people attempting to exit homelessness, do not appear to effectively or efficiently connect people experiencing homelessness to services, and may increase the risk the City will be sued.

Most citations for violating the City's camping, sit/lie, or panhandling ordinances resulted in an arrest warrant because the cited person failed to appear in court.

Ordinances may create barriers to exiting homelessness.

According to data from the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) there were about 18,000 citations issued to people for violating the City's camping, sit/lie, or panhandling ordinances between fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2016. The data indicated that for about 90% of the citations, the person failed to appear in court. A warrant was issued in 72% of the cases when the cited person failed to appear in court.[2]

Many landlords and employers require applicants pass a criminal background check, and an active arrest warrant may disqualify a person from consideration for an apartment or job. Affordable housing property managers stated that a conviction for violating one of these ordinances would not automatically eliminate an applicant and that they consider criminal records on a case-by-case basis. One location's written policy stated that applications could be denied for any non-felony conviction within the past 10 years.

In addition to possibly impacting a person's ability to secure housing or employment, an arrest warrant may create additional obstacles even after someone has been housed. For example, if arrest warrants are not appropriately addressed, the cited individual may be jailed which may then increase the risk of that person losing employment. Also, the additional fines associated with a warrant may limit the person's ability to continue paying for housing and other household expenses.[3]

Ordinances are not an effective or efficient method for connecting people to services.

During interviews, some stakeholders asserted that in addition to maintaining public order, the City's sit/lie ordinance is an effective way to connect people experiencing homelessness to services. This is because DACC offers case management and rehabilitative services in an effort to

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[2] According to court staff, warrants were not issued in every case because a defendant dealt with their case before the warrant become active.

[3] State law regarding warrants for fine-only offenses was recently changed. It is unclear at this time how, or if, these changes will impact this issue.

help people exit homelessness. These stakeholders appear to genuinely care about helping people experiencing homelessness, however there is limited evidence that the sit/lie ordinance is an effective or efficient way to connect people to services.

First, DACC management asserted that limited resources prevent them from giving case management services to everyone who may need it. DACC maintains a waitlist for its case management services, and prioritizes people based on the number of citations the person has received in the past year. As a result, only people with multiple citations are typically eligible for DACC's case management services.

Second, the Austin Police Department (APD) has greatly reduced the number of sit/lie citations they issue. According to DACC data, APD wrote 63% fewer sit/lie citations in fiscal year 2016 than they did in fiscal year 2014. APD's unofficial policy is to give people 30 minutes to move before issuing a citation. Enforcement of this policy may be one of the factors contributing to the decrease in the number of citations issued by APD. If citations are a method to connect people to services, reducing the number of citations is not an effective way to accomplish this goal.

Additionally, not everyone who is eligible for case management services at DACC takes advantage of the program. According to DACC data, 65 people received more than 20 citations in fiscal year 2014.[4] DACC reported that nearly 25% of those individuals refused case management services. DACC was able to successfully provide services to some of them though. DACC reported that five of the 65 individuals are currently housed, including the most frequent offender of the sit/lie and camping ordinances.[5] We could not determine outcomes for the majority of those 65 people because we were not allowed access to data in the Homelessness Management Information System at the time of this audit.[6]

Another issue is that persons who do not address their citations at DACC may not have an opportunity to connect to case management services. Specifically, the City's Municipal Court handles citations but does not offer case management services.[7] The Municipal Court reported handling about 6,300 citations for violations of the three ordinances between fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2016.

Beyond considering the efficacy of enforcing these ordinances as a method for connecting people to services, this process is not efficient and may not be the best use of City resources. As shown in Exhibit 3, enforcing these ordinances includes APD issuing citations and holding hearings through DACC or the Municipal Court. This may involve a trial, monitoring of community service activities, and processing fines.

The Downtown Austin Community Court maintains a waitlist for its case management services.

Nearly 25% of cited individuals refused case management services.

Persons cited outside of the Downtown Austin Community Court's jurisdiction do not have the same opportunity to connect to case management services.

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[4] These 65 individuals received a total of 2,592 citations for camping or sitting/lying in fiscal year 2014, an average of 40 per person.

[5] This person received more than 120 citations in fiscal year 2014 alone.

[6] The Homelessness Management Information System is managed by ECHO.

[7] The Municipal Court may refer people to DACC.

As noted earlier, this process results in only a small percentage of people actually receiving case management services.

Finally, enforcing these ordinances increases what the City pays to Travis County to hold people experiencing homelessness in jail. Under an interlocal agreement, the City reimburses Travis County around $6 million per year for jail services. DACC frequently uses jail time served as credit towards the fine associated with the citation. Between fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2016, DACC credited defendants nearly $600,000 for jail time served.[8]

Exhibit 3: Citing People Experiencing Homelessness is Not an Effective Way to Connect Them to Services
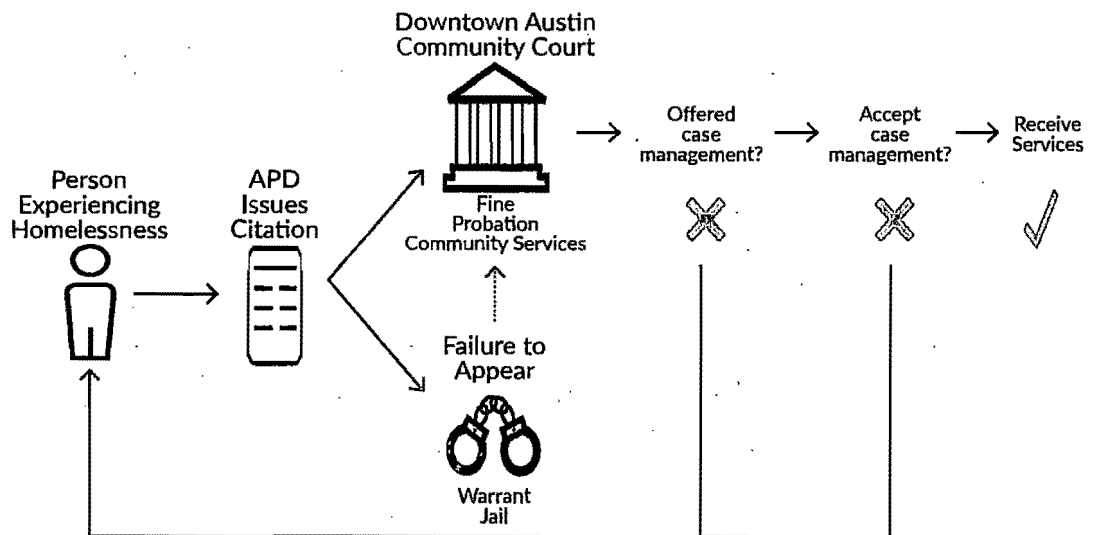
SOURCE: OCA analysis of the City's process for handling violations of the panhandling, sit/lie, and camping ordinances, September 2017

Ordinances increase the City's legal risk.

Cities around the country have faced recent lawsuits related to their camping ordinances.[9] The basic premise of these suits is that when homeless shelters are full, people experiencing homelessness have no way to comply with the ordinance because there is nowhere else for them to go.

In August 2017, a U.S. District Judge ordered that the City of Houston temporarily halt enforcement of its camping ordinance because Houston's emergency shelters were full. In his decision, the Judge wrote that enforcing the ordinance would cause people experiencing homelessness "irreparable harm by violating their Eighth Amendment right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment due to their status of 'homelessness.'"

[8] This amount is not solely attributed to cases involving people experiencing homelessness or citations for violating one of the ordinances identified in this report.

[9] Jones v. City of Los Angeles, 444 F. 3d 1118, (9th Cir. 2006); United States Department of Justice Statement of Interest filed in Bell V. City of Boise, 709 F. 3d 890, 893 (9th Cir. 2013); Temporary Restraining Order filed in Kohr et all v. City of Houston, Case Number 2:2017cv01473, filed in United States Federal Court - Texas Southern District.

Austin's camping ordinance is similar to Houston's and emergency shelters in Austin are effectively full most nights of the year. Although some shelters may report empty beds on some nights, shelter practices and policies often result in beds not being available to every person who may need one. For example, a shelter may not accept clients after a certain time, or may only serve a certain demographic.[10]

Additionally, a 2015 Supreme Court ruling has recently been used to challenge elements of panhandling ordinances in other cities. Specifically, courts have ruled against cities whose ordinances limit when panhandling can occur, or ordinances that require panhandlers to be certain distances from a particular location. Austin's panhandling ordinance includes both of these restrictions.

Since similar conditions exist in Austin, there is an increased risk that the City will be sued for enforcing these ordinances. Although this would not necessarily result in a decision against the City, defending the ordinances would result in a financial cost and possible reputation damage to the City.

Additional Observation

A major hurdle to addressing the issue of homelessness is adequate shelter capacity. This directly relates to the legal risks associated with the ordinances. Lack of capacity also impacts the ability of DACC case managers to secure successful outcomes for the people they interact with.

The City is making some efforts to address this, such as identifying City buildings that could be used as temporary emergency shelters. However, a full analysis of the City's capacity needs, and efforts to address any deficiencies that may exist, was not within the scope of this audit. The Office of the City Auditor plans to address this topic as part of future audits in the Homelessness Assistance Audit series.

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[10] Specific curfew times vary from shelter to shelter, but ranged from 6:15 pm to 9 pm for the shelters interviewed. Some shelters only serve women or families with children.

Recommendations and Management Response

1 The City Attorney should reassess the City's camping, sit/lie, and panhandling ordinances to determine what legal risk they pose to the City. Further, the City Attorney should report the results of this review to City Council.

Management Response: Agree

Proposed Implementation Plan: A memorandum to Mayor and Council Members will be sent regarding the three ordinances.

Proposed Implementation Date: April 6, 2018

2 The City Manager should work with City Council to determine if the City's camping, sit/lie, and panhandling ordinances are still aligned with the City Council's vision for addressing the issue of homelessness, or whether the ordinances should be revised or repealed.

Management Response: Agree

Proposed Implementation Plan: The City Manager designated Interim Assistant City Manager Sara Hensley to lead the overall Homelessness effort. This includes working with the City Attorney's Office to review the current camping, sit/lie and panhandling ordinances. A cross departmental team has been formed to look at all the Council Resolutions regarding Homelessness. The current camping, sit/lie and panhandling ordinances have been added to the work plan for review in the overall context. Once the information from the City Attorney's Office is received, the information will be included in the discussion as it relates to any recommended revisions or repeals. The team will produce an overall "holistic" recommendation for Council to consider as a part of their vision for addressing homelessness.

Proposed Implementation Date: April 6, 2018

3 If the ordinances are not repealed, the City Manager should identify and implement changes to make the enforcement of the City's camping, sit/lie, and panhandling ordinances more effective and efficient. Changes may include, but are not limited to:

o   Expanding DACC case management resources and ensuring that all citations involving people experiencing homelessness are handled by DACC;

o   Implementing strategies to encourage more people experiencing homelessness to accept case management services;

o   Implementing strategies to reduce arrest warrants issued in response to people experiencing homelessness who fail to appear in court following citation; and

o   Implementing strategies to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in jail for violating these ordinances.

Management Response: Agree with caveats

Proposed Implementation Plan:A City Team has been formed that is reviewing all things related to homelessness: grants, general fund dollars allocated, staffing, efforts with non-profits, education institutions and the faith community, contracts, agreements, pilot programs and Council Resolutions. The overall goal is to discover what is currently working, who is not at the table, how we can better

spend and allocate the dollars and resources, who are the most effective providers of services, what are the services most needed, recommendations related to the ARCH and how we ultimately form a "global" mission to serve our individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This is a monumental task that will hopefully align the resources to the most effective efforts in addressing homelessness.

- The Expansion of the DACC case management resources would take time, budget dollars and City Council approval. If found to be the most effective effort, additional resources will be requested.

- Implementing strategies to encourage more people experiencing homelessness to accept case management services is a tedious and long term effort. First, trust must be built and there has to be a continuum of care that follows the individuals. Every effort will be made to encourage more individuals to accept case management; however, more resources may be needed.

- Implementing strategies to reduce arrest warrants is already underway as the HOST team works to assist homeless individuals. The more successful we are aligning homeless individuals with services, the more likely we will be able to reduce the number of arrest warrants issued.

- Implementing strategies to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness that end up in jail for violating these ordinances is also difficult. Many times, they do not understand or may not have the capacity to understand the ordinance. However, if we are successful in providing more or better aligned resources to address individuals experiencing homelessness, then the number in jail should be reduced.

Proposed Implementation Date: April 6, 2018

Scope

The audit scope included the City's current efforts related to enforcement of the sit/lie and camping ordinances, as well as the results of enforcing those ordinances since fiscal year 2014.

Methodology

To complete this audit, we performed the following steps:

- Interviewed staff with Austin Police Department, Law Department, Downtown Austin Community Court, and Municipal Court;

- Interviewed local service providers and stakeholders including shelters, affordable housing providers, employers, Ending Community Homeless Commission, and the Downtown Austin Alliance;

- Reviewed court decisions from cases related to sit/lie, solicitation, and camping ordinances.

- Observed court operations at the Downtown Austin Community Court;

- Reviewed court records related to citations for violations of sit/lie, solicitation, and/or camping ordinances;

- Reviewed outcomes for a sample of 65 frequent offenders using information from Travis County jail records, internal Downtown Austin Community Court records, and the Homeless Management Information System; and

- Evaluated internal controls related to City ordinances that may criminalize homelessness.

Audit Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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The Office of the City Auditor was created by the Austin City Charter as an independent office reporting to City Council to help establish accountability and improve City services. We conduct performance audits to review aspects of a City service or program and provide recommendations for improvement.

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Audit Report

Homelessness Assistance Audit Series: Coordination of the City's Homelessness Assistance Efforts

December 2017

Addressing the issue of homelessness requires a coordinated, multi-department response from the City. However, the City only recently started to coordinate its homelessness assistance efforts and does not have a dedicated position or group assigned to this task. Several U.S. cities have created a position or agency within the City to coordinate homelessness assistance efforts. Without a coordinated effort, the City may not effectively provide homelessness assistance services, efficiently allocate resources, and may miss opportunities to aid people experiencing homelessness.

Contents

Cover: 7th Street, Office of the City Auditor.

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine if the City coordinates homelessness assistance efforts to achieve desired outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
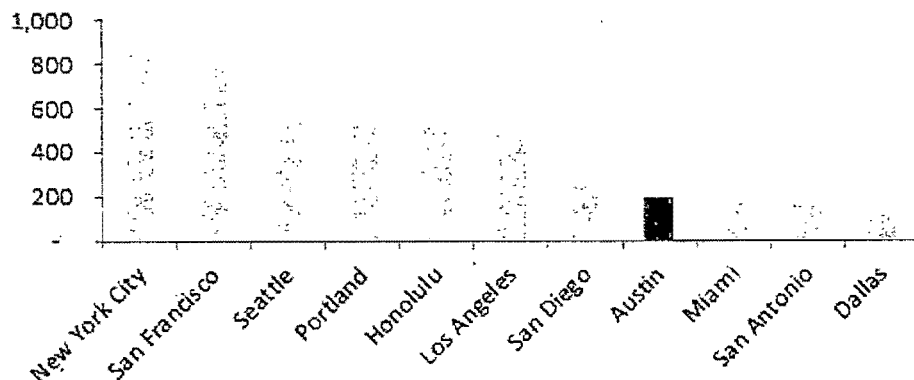
Due to the complex nature of the topic, we are evaluating the City's homelessness assistance efforts in a series of audits. This report is the second in the series. The first report, presented in November 2017, analyzed how City ordinances align with the City's homelessness assistance efforts. Future reports are planned to analyze how the City allocates resources to address homelessness, and the outcomes of these efforts.

Background

More than 7,000 people used homelessness assistance services in 2016, a 14% increase since 2013.

One day each year, Austin's Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) coordinates a count of the City's homeless population. This annual "Point in Time Count" is required for communities that receive funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2016 count identified a total of just over 2,100 people experiencing homelessness in Austin, which is similar to the results of previous counts.[1] However, ECHO noted in its 2017 "Needs and Gaps" report that more than 7,000 people used homelessness services in 2016, a 14% increase since 2013. When compared to the counts done by other cities in 2016 (as shown in Exhibit 1), Austin had more people experiencing homelessness per capita than other large Texas cities. However, Austin's count was significantly lower than several other cities that received Federal funding in 2016.

Exhibit 1: 2016 Rate of Homeless Per 100,000 People in Select U.S. Cities

SOURCE: OCA analysis of Point in Time counts conducted by various Continuum of Care organizations, September 2017.
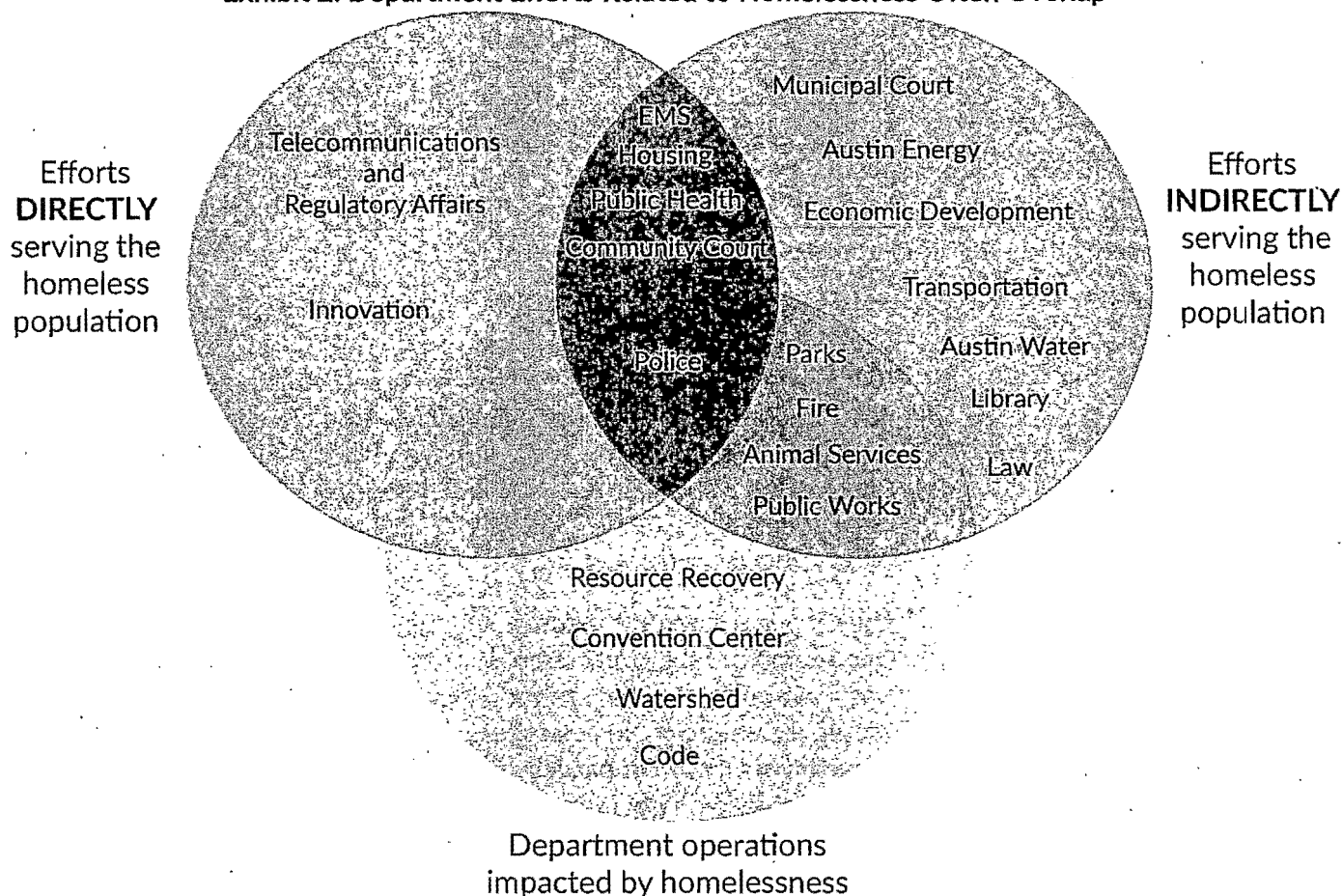
[1] The count identified 816 people sleeping in shelters, 890 unsheltered people, and 432 people in transitional housing.

At least 20 City departments have programs, activities, or services that are affected by homelessness. Generally, department efforts can be classified in three ways:

- Efforts directly associated with homelessness assistance, such as programs to connect people experiencing homelessness to services. An example is Austin Public Health, which manages contracts for homeless shelters.

- Efforts indirectly associated with homelessness assistance, such as programs for all residents that may be used by people experiencing homelessness. An example is the Economic Development Department, which provides workforce development training that is offered to all residents, but which may be used by someone experiencing homelessness.

- Efforts associated with the impacts of homelessness. An example is the Watershed Protection Department, which deals with the impact of homeless camps on creeks.

In many cases, a department's efforts will fall into more than category, as shown in Exhibit 2 below.

Exhibit 2: Department Efforts Related to Homelessness Often Overlap

Efforts **DIRECTLY** serving the homeless population

Efforts **INDIRECTLY** serving the homeless population

Municipal Court
EMS
Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs
Housing
Austin Energy
Public Health
Economic Development
Community Court
Innovation
Transportation
Police
Parks
Austin Water
Fire
Library
Animal Services
Law
Public Works

Resource Recovery
Convention Center
Watershed
Code

Department operations
impacted by homelessness

SOURCE: OCA interviews with sample of City departments and analysis of the City's homelessness assistance efforts, October 2017.

What We Found

Summary

Addressing the issue of homelessness requires a coordinated, multi-department response from the City. However, the City only recently started to coordinate its homelessness assistance efforts and does not have a dedicated position or group assigned to this task. Several U.S. cities have created a position or group within the city to coordinate homelessness assistance efforts. Without a coordinated effort, the City may not effectively provide homelessness assistance services, efficiently allocate resources, and may miss opportunities to aid people experiencing homelessness.

Finding

The City does not have a position or agency to coordinate its homelessness assistance efforts, resulting in reduced effectiveness and efficiency and potential missed opportunities to aid people experiencing homelessness. However, limited coordination efforts are underway.

Addressing the issue of homelessness requires a coordinated, multi-department response from the City. In recent years, several other cities have created an internal position or group to coordinate homelessness assistance efforts. As shown in Exhibit 3 below, this ranges from a single position to an entire department.

Exhibit 3: Examples of How Other Cities Coordinate Homelessness Assistance Efforts

City	Method of Coordination
San Diego	Mayor's Senior Advisor on Homeless Coordination
Dallas	Homeless Commission
San Francisco	Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

SOURCE: OCA analysis of practices in peer cities, October 2017.

Although the Imagine Austin plan calls for the City to "coordinate between all the organizations providing services to the homeless community to maximize the efficacy of limited resources," Austin does not have a dedicated position or group to coordinate homelessness assistance. The City also lacks a comprehensive strategic plan to guide City efforts. The City created a strategic plan for homelessness in 2004, which has since been updated by ECHO.[2] However, ECHO does not have the authority to direct City activities.

The City does coordinate some activities, but these are limited in scope. One example is the Homelessness Outreach Street Team (HOST). This was a pilot program that started in June 2016 to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness. It is a partnership between some City departments and third parties involved with homelessness. However, it is mainly focused on public safety issues in the downtown area. Additionally, the City Manager recently created a team to develop a Homelessness Action Plan. This group has identified several tasks to accomplish, including identifying current City services, gathering data related to

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[2] In 2010 ECHO published its "Plan to End Community Homelessness", which states that is an update on the City's 2004 plan. ECHO also published a draft report in September 2017 which outlines actions to end homelessness.

homelessness, and evaluating homelessness contracts. However, this team does not have dedicated resources. City staff's participation on this team is in addition to their regular job duties and the person tasked with leading the team is currently serving in an interim role.

Coordination is necessary because many City departments (as shown in Exhibit 2) are involved with, or impacted by the issue of homelessness. This includes departments with efforts that directly assist people experiencing homelessness, efforts that indirectly assist them, or have efforts related to the community impacts of homelessness.[3] Few departments reported that they had training or guidance for staff about how to interact with people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, departments often reported that they were not collecting data related to the impact of homelessness on their department operations.

At least 20 City departments are involved with or impacted by the issue of homelessness.

The lack of a coordinated effort to deal with the issue of homelessness results in many issues for the City. It creates inefficiencies, such as multiple departments that manage contracts for homelessness assistance. It can also lead to ineffective operations. As an example, Austin Resource Recovery has cleaned downtown alleys for a number of years. This results in water containing human waste being washed into downtown creeks. This impact was only recently identified and the department indicated that they are now working with the Watershed Protection Department to mitigate the impact of these cleaning efforts.

A lack of coordination can also lead to missed opportunities to aid people experiencing homelessness. For example, locating social workers from Austin Public Health in libraries could result in the ability to connect more people experiencing homelessness to services. City programs to assist low-income residents may also be used to identify people at risk of losing their housing. This may allow the City to help them avoid becoming homeless. Lastly, external entities working on homelessness may have difficulty connecting with the appropriate resources within the City.

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[3] Appendix A includes a list of department identified by the audit team as having homelessness assistance efforts. It is not meant to be comprehensive.

Recommendations and Management Response

1

The City Manager should designate a position within the City whose primary responsibility is coordinating the homelessness assistance efforts in Austin. This position should:

- Develop a strategic plan to address homelessness, and
- Coordinate City department's efforts related to homelessness.

Management Response: Agree

Proposed Implementation Plan: Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager is currently coordinating the City effort, leading a multi-department team.   Sara has recently borrowed a staff member to assist with the work related to the Homelessness efforts. However, this person is also working with Sara on the Graffiti Initiatives as well. The overall strategy will be to request a full time position through the 2018-19, Budget Process, that will have a primary a responsibility of coordinating homeless efforts.

The City's Homelessness Team is mapping current efforts, both within City departments and among external stakeholders. We are identifying funding sources, needs, and critical gaps in services as well as leveraging the findings from the City Auditor's Homelessness Assistance Audit Series. Once we fully understand the current state, we can begin to develop a three (3) to five (5) year strategy. The overall goal is to assess the City's role and align resources to ensure that the most significant impact supports the City's Strategic Planning efforts.

The City Team will work with stakeholders to develop and implement comprehensive and coordinated approaches to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness in Austin. Approaches will include the prevention of homelessness, support for recovery from homelessness, and delivery of services in coordination with external agencies, including a near-term solution to alleviate health & safety issues in the downtown area. The City will leverage and improve on the use of data, technology, and human-centered design while encouraging improvement and innovation across sectors. In addition, we will highlight recommended objectives that tie to the Strategic Plan.

Tasks:
The following is a draft list of near-term tasks the City Team will undertake as part of the strategy implementation. This is in addition to the ten (10) homelessness related resolutions that are under review and action plans being developed.

- Task 1: Define and map current services across the City of Austin, (COA) including those provided by city and county agencies, non-profit stakeholders, and the faith community;

- Task 2: Leverage mapping and engagement per Task 1 to define COA role in prevention, recovery, and delivery of services;

- Task 3: Define scope and performance criteria for contracts supported by the City to address homelessness. Performance criteria will align with the indicators and metrics developed as part of the Strategic Planning effort;

- Task 4: Assess costs and benefits associated with concentrated service delivery (downtown core) compared to a dispersed service delivery model through community providers;

- Task 5: Work with stakeholders to develop and expand on common database/data set, and technologies for accessing information, (including option for mobile technology).

Proposed Implementation Date: October 1, 2018

Appendix A: List of Department Efforts Related to Homelessness Assistance

Department	Effort
Animal Services	• Treating and housing pets of people experiencing homelessness • Assisting other departments who interact with homeless populations
Austin Code	• Responding to complaints about abandoned properties and debris
Austin Convention Center	• Ensuring the safety and satisfaction of convention attendees
Austin Energy	• Providing utility payment assistance
Austin Fire Department	• Responding to medical emergency calls • Responding to structure fires where the structure may be being used by people experiencing homelessness • Responding to fires at homeless camps
Austin Police Department	• Enforcement of laws and ordinances • Participating in HOST • Assisting other departments who interact with homeless populations
Austin Public Health	• Managing contracts related to homelessness assistance • Providing health services to low-income residents
Austin Public Library	• Operating library facilities
Austin Resource Recovery	• Keeping public spaces clean and hygienic • Cleaning streets and alleys
Austin Transportation Department	• Reducing pedestrian death and injury on roadways
Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services	• Responding to calls related to medical emergencies • Participating in HOST
Austin Water	• Providing utility payment assistance
Downtown Austin Community Court	• Providing case management services to people experiencing homelessness • Providing judicial services to residents
Economic Development	• Managing contracts for workforce development training
Innovation Office	• Administering the Bloomberg Innovation Grant
Law Department	• Prosecuting cases in Downtown Austin Community Court and Municipal Court
Municipal Court	• Providing judicial services to residents
Neighborhood Housing and Community Development	• Managing contracts related to homelessness assistance • Managing affordability programs
Parks and Recreation Department	• Cleaning City parks • Operating recreation centers
Public Works	• Cleaning streets and alleys • Installing temporary toilet facilities
Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs	• Managing contract to provide technology training at the ARCH
Watershed Protection	• Keeping the creeks and watersheds clear of debris and clean

Scope

The audit scope included the City's current efforts to coordinate homelessness assistance.

Methodology

To complete this audit, we performed the following steps:

- Interviewed staff with multiple City departments;
- Researched practices in peer cities;
- Attended meetings for HOST and the City's homelessness task force;
- Reviewed documentation related to department programs and activities;
- Evaluated City programs for people experiencing homelessness; and
- Evaluated internal controls related to the City's coordination efforts.

Audit Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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The Office of the City Auditor was created by the Austin City Charter as an independent office reporting to City Council to help establish accountability and improve City services. We conduct performance audits to review aspects of a City service or program and provide recommendations for improvement.

Audit Team
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Copies of our audit reports are available at
http://www.austintexas.gov/page/audit-reports

Alternate formats available upon request

TEMPLATE FOR BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: (YYYYMMDD-XXX)

Recommendation for Budget Funding for the Downtown Austin Community Court

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. The Court seeks to hold people responsible while also offering help to change behavior; and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the cases scheduled by the DACC Case Managers involve defendants who are experiencing homelessness. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, _____ cases were filed in the DACC. _____ of these cases involved _____ defendants experiencing homelessness, over ____% of the cases filed; and

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

WHEREAS, the DACC is an integral part of the continuum of care provided by an array of local nonprofits, and substance abuse and mental health providers. The DACC specializes in the criminal justice aspects of addressing the needs of and barriers facing these most vulnerable Austin citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Austin that cannot find housing or a safe place to spend the night without waiting days, or even weeks; and

WHEREAS, Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) is a coalition of service providers is collaborating in an effort to address the urgent lack of shelter beds and housing; and

WHEREAS, during the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the DACC's case managers were unable to connect #_____ individuals in need to these greatly needed programs and services due to service capacity ; and

DRAFT (DCB)

WHEREAS, the DACC has requested additional resources in order to meet the increasing demand for programs and services to assist Austin's most vulnerable citizens in stabilizing their lives to the benefit of the entire Austin community;

WHEREAS, that coalition is advocating with the City of Austin to dramatically increase resources to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the DACC's request for additional funds to increase its case management capacity and housing resources to continue providing needed services to its clients and the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to fund solutions to address homelessness in Austin.

Date of Approval: _____

Record of the vote: (Unanimous on a 7-0 vote, 4-3 vote with names of those voting no listed)

Attest: _____

(Staff or board member can sign)

TEMPLATE FOR BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: (20180323-001)

Recommendation for FY19 Budget Funding for the Downtown Austin Community Court

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. The Court seeks to hold people responsible while also offering help to change behavior; and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the cases scheduled by the DACC Case Managers involve defendants who are experiencing homelessness. Since October 1, 2016, 7986 cases were filed in the DACC. 3585 of these cases involved 698 defendants experiencing homelessness; 45% of all the cases filed; and

WHEREAS, in the last "point-in-time" count, the Ending Community Homelessness Organization ("ECHO") determined that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness increased by ___% from the previous year; and

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. The DACC specializes in the criminal justice aspects of addressing the needs of and barriers facing these most vulnerable Austin citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Austin that cannot find housing or a safe place to spend the night without waiting days, or even weeks; and

WHEREAS, Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) is a coalition of service providers collaborating in an effort to address the urgent lack of shelter beds and housing; and

WHEREAS, Since FY 2017, DACC's case managers have been unable to connect 118 individuals to these greatly needed programs and services due to service capacity ; and

WHEREAS, the DACC has requested additional resources in order to meet the increasing demand for programs and services to assist Austin's most vulnerable citizens in stabilizing their lives to the benefit of the entire Austin community;

WHEREAS, that coalition is advocating with the City of Austin to dramatically increase resources to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the DACC's request for additional funds to increase its case management capacity and housing resources to continue providing needed services to its clients and the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to fund solutions to address homelessness in Austin.

Date of Approval: _____

Record of the vote: _____

Attest: _____

(Staff or board member can sign)

City of Austin

Downtown Austin Community Court

Michael A. Coffey
Judge

Peter Valdez III, LMSW
Court Administrator

Address: 719 East 6th St., Austin, TX 78701
Mail: P.O. Box 13464, Austin, TX 78711
Phone: (512) 974-4879
http://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-court
E-mail: comcourt@austintexas.gov

1. For a board to meet and conduct business, a quorum must be physically present.

2. A member may not call or Skype into a meeting.

3. Unfilled positions do not change the requirement for a quorum.

4. For an 11-member board, six (6) members must be present.

5. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the start time, action cannot be taken and the meeting is cancelled.

6. If at any time during a meeting, a quorum is no longer present, the meeting must end "due to loss of quorum".

7. Board Members must utilize their City of Austin email address when conducting business relating to their role as a board member.

8. City code states that a "board member automatically vacates the member's position if the member is absent for three consecutive regular meetings or one-third of all regular meetings in a rolling 12-month timeframe".

9. Attendance records are applicable to only regularly scheduled board meetings.

10. The board member must notify the staff liaison if the member will not be in attendance. Excused absences include:
    a. Board member illness or injury;
    b. The illness of or injury to a member of the board member's immediate family;
    c. Active military service;
    d. The birth or adoption of the board member's child, for 90 days after the birth or adoption.