



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members  
**FROM:** Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager  
**DATE:** October 18, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Update Regarding Public Safety Investments

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on [Council Resolution 20180412-027](#). The resolution directed the City Manager to “determine the best use of limited public safety dollars amongst potential public safety investments with the goal of improving public safety over the next five years.”

My [memo of May 10, 2018](#) to Council described the approach to addressing the Resolution:

Year 1: Utilize the City Manager’s FY 2019 budget process and Council’s Strategic Direction 2023 to determine what investments should be made in the first year covered by this Resolution.

Years 2-5: Conduct an assessment to determine what improvements/efficiencies can be accomplished during years in the short term. Obtain a broad overview of social services contracts managed by City departments as well as external partners such as Travis County in order to identify those services that have a beneficial impact on public safety efforts based on outcomes. This will inform budget proposals for FY 2019-20 (Year 2).

Since May 2018, the public safety departments have initiated a number of efforts to meet the directives of the Resolution. The attachments describe the following responsive public safety investments: (1) Council-approved FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20 investments; and (2) initiatives to improve service delivery that will result in a positive impact to public safety outcomes.

Efforts to identify future public safety investments will be part of the respective budget development processes for Years 3 through 5.

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Executive Team  
Chief Brian Manley, Austin Police Department Police Chief

Chief Joel Baker, Austin Fire Department Fire Chief  
Chief Ernesto Rodriguez, Austin/Travis County EMS Chief  
Stephen Elkins, Chief Information Officer  
Dr. Mark Escott, Medical Director  
Mary Jane Grub, Austin Municipal Court Clerk  
Jose Guerrero, Interim Watershed Protection Department Director  
Pete Valdez, Downtown Austin Community Court Administrator  
Cora Wright, Austin Code Department Director

Attachments:

- (1) Public Safety Investments: FY 2018-19, FY 2019-20
- (2) Initiatives to Improve Service Delivery

# Public Safety Investments

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## Council-Approved FY 2018-19 investments

- **Sobering Center: \$1.7 million.** In partnership with Travis County, the City funded the Sobering Center operations 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, when appropriate, provide a safe environment to initiate recovery.
- **Austin Police Department (APD) Community Policing: \$5.7 million.** Council approved funding for 33 police officer positions as part of the progress on the recommendations of the Matrix Consulting Group study, "[Final Report on Community Policing](#)".
- **First response to mental health incidents: \$75,000.** The City contracted with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to conduct a study on how first responders might ensure a person experiencing behavioral crisis receives clinical care as soon as possible. Based on the [recommendations from the study](#), staff initiated several pilot projects in preparation for budget proposals for FY 2019-20.
- **Services to accommodate additional HOST team referrals: \$1.2 million.** Council approved this additional funding for the Downtown Austin Community Court, which provided for four additional case managers and \$794,000 for social service contracts.

## Council-Approved FY 2019-20 Investments

This section describes investments listed by Strategic Direction 2023 (SD23) Indicators and Departments

### Safety: Fair Administration of Justice

#### Austin Police Department (APD)

SEXUAL ASSAULTS INVESTIGATIONS: APD will use the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant of \$3.0 million to support the investigation of sexual assault cases. In addition, Austin Public Health will also provide related services by allocating a total of \$358,000 toward survivors of domestic violence, victimization prevention, and support for youth who are exposed to violence.

CONTRACT FOR EVALUATION OF THE PROCESSING AND INVESTIGATION OF REPORTED SEXUAL ASSAULTS: [Council Resolution 20190131-077](#) directed the City Manager to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of how reported sexual assaults are investigated and processed, including why a number of reported cases do not proceed to prosecution within the criminal justice system. To perform this work, the City will contract with a nationally recognized, nongovernmental

entity with expertise in this area. On September 19, 2019, Council approved staff's request to negotiate and execute a contract with Police Executive Research Forum D/B/A PERF, to provide a comprehensive evaluation of reported sexual assaults, in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000. The project team is comprised of PERF, Women's Law Project, and Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College. The Department is committed to this pursuit and will identify and utilize budget savings in FY 2019-20 to ensure funding is available for the project.

**DNA LABORATORY-RELATED CONTRACTS:** APD will continue to send DNA sexual assault kits and other DNA-related items to external laboratories at a cost of \$2.6 million for FY 2019-20, including a \$1.0 million increase.

**CRISIS RESPONSE AND VICTIM SERVICES:** APD will allocate \$3.3 million toward victim services, which include responding to the psychological and emotional needs of victims and their families, as well as community members and first responders experiencing trauma. The FY 2019-20 budget will increase the number of victim services counselors from 30 to 32 with an emphasis on immediately responding to sexual assault incidents and assisting survivors in the initial interactions of an investigation. APD will also increase training for counselors working in the community.

**CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM STIPENDS:** APD continues to concentrate on training and awareness when encountering individuals who may be experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Included in FY 2019-20 is \$147,000 to increase the number of mental health stipends by 70 for sworn police officers, bringing the total funding to \$487,000 and the total number of stipends to 232.

**FUNDS FOR FAIR AND IMPARTIAL POLICING TRAINING:** APD will provide fair and impartial policing, de-escalation, and disability awareness training for APD officers. \$50,000 in ongoing training funds are included in the budget, an increase from \$10,000 in the previous year.

**POLICE BODY WORN CAMERA MAINTENANCE FUNDING:** Fair and equitable treatment for all people who have encountered the City's police enforcement and judicial processes is a key Council indicator. Body worn cameras for sworn personnel are one mechanism used to preserve these principles. The FY 2019-20 budget includes over \$2.0 million in total funding, including an increase of \$872,000, to maintain cameras purchased over the last two years, bringing the total number of body worn cameras used by the Police Department to over 1,900.

### **Austin Code Department**

**CODE CITATION ISSUANCE EXPANSION:** The Case Review and Escalation Division (CRED) unit of the Austin Code Department (ACD) advances non-compliant property owners who fail to correct local property maintenance, land use, and nuisance code violations through administrative

hearings and court. This phase is considered involuntary enforcement. Progressive enforcement actions including extended hours and weekend enforcement, as well as increased short-term rental (STR) enforcement have resulted in quicker Code response times, now operating seven days a week, and a subsequent increase in citation issuance and the number of cases escalated for judicial action. This increased workload has compounded the number of cases and the number of days required for administrative hearings from one to three full days per week. The FY 2019-20 CRED budget is \$1.6 million and includes 10 positions. Two new positions were added in FY 20 to address the expanded administrative hearing workload. With these resources, the waiting period for cases to be heard will decrease from 4 months to 3 weeks and result in an estimated 650 additional cases being heard by an administrative hearing officer by FY 2020-21.

**SHORT-TERM RENTAL HOST COMPLIANCE CONTRACT:** Over 2,800 short-term rental (STR) licenses were issued in FY 2018-19, an increase of over 1,300 since FY 2015-16. Third-party services were acquired as a pilot last fiscal year to expand department capacity for online search and identification of unlicensed STR operations. The vendor estimated that there are likely 10,000+ STR operations in Austin. Funding for a \$200,000 contract is included in the FY 2019-20 budget to expand capability to identify properties reportedly operating without an official license and/or advertising over the STR occupancy limit. The goal of enforcement of these cases is to achieve greater STR property owner compliance with applicable codes, and to optimize timely and full payment of hotel occupancy tax revenue owed to the City of Austin and State of Texas.

## **Safety: Timeliness and Quality of Emergency Response**

### **Austin Police Department**

**POLICE STAFFING POLICY:** Included in the FY 2019-20 budget are 30 new police officer positions. This signifies year two of the APD's five-year staffing plan and brings the total sworn personnel to 1,959. The total annual cost for 30 officer positions is \$3.4 million plus \$0.2 million for equipment. APD anticipates seeing continued improvement in the amount of time that can be committed to effective community policing with the addition of these officers.

**9-1-1 CALL CENTER TRAINING:** Council added one-time funding of \$50,000 for overtime to backfill for call takers to receive behavioral health training related to the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (Meadows) recommendations regarding first response to mental health incidents. The goal of the recommendations is to ensure that 9-1-1 callers who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis are diverted to mental health clinicians as early as possible.

### **Austin Fire Department**

**DEL VALLE AND TRAVIS COUNTRY FIRE/EMS STATIONS:** In May 2018, City Council approved [Resolution 20180524-035](#) directing the City Manager to develop an expedited six year timeline to

fund, construct, and staff five permanent fire stations in the areas of greatest need. These stations will include EMS assets as well. The first two stations are located in Del Valle and Travis Country. With a total project budget of \$15.0 million, the Del Valle station has begun construction and is expected to be complete in the summer of 2020. The Travis Country station is in the land acquisition phase. Staff will return to City Council on October 31, 2019 for approval to purchase land in the area. The FY 2019-20 budget includes 28 sworn personnel and ongoing funds to operate one Fire unit and one EMS unit at the Del Valle station for three months, aligning with the anticipated opening date of June 2020. At the direction of City Council, the second Fire unit, with an additional 16 Fire personnel, will join the station in October 2020. The full year operating and maintenance cost for this station is \$4.6 million. The City Council redirected funding from the proposed Command Technician program and delayed one Fire unit originally scheduled to operate at the Del Valle/Moore's Crossing station until October 2020 to fund a temporary fire station in the Del Valle area. At a one-time cost of \$1.2 million, the temporary station will begin to operate in October 2019. When complete, these stations are expected to reduce emergency response times in the outer areas of the city difficult to reach from current locations.

AUSTIN-BERGSTROM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (ABIA) FIRE RESPONSE: ABIA has experienced increased passenger enplaning and deplaning, and significant facility expansion over the past several years with concomitant challenges, particularly in emergency response. The FY 2019-20 operating budget includes funding for six additional firefighters dedicated to the Aircraft Firefighting and Rescue unit located at the airport. Sworn positions responsible for fire response at the airport are authorized as part of the AFD budget and funded by the Aviation Department, resulting in no impact to the General Fund.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT: In FY 2019-20, \$232,000 is included to upgrade the AFD's records management system to allow for better management of all incident reports and a majority of AFD's performance measure data.

#### **Austin Fire Department and Austin/Travis County EMS**

DISPATCH EQUITY AND OPTIMIZATION EFFICIENCY STUDY: To conduct a comprehensive review of the equity and efficiency of Fire and EMS services, \$250,000 in one-time funding is incorporated into the FY 2019-20 budget. A multidisciplinary team will determine a scope of work and select a consultant to review dispatch times, ISO ratings, station locations, and the timeline for bringing on new stations.

### **Austin/Travis County EMS**

COMMUNITY HEALTH PARAMEDICS: Council added \$790,000 and 7 sworn EMS positions to support the Meadows report recommendations regarding first response to mental health incidents.

### **Downtown Austin Community Court**

EXPANDED MOBILE CRISIS OUTREACH TEAM (EMCOT) FUNDING: EMCOT services are provided by Integral Care to divert individuals from jail bookings and emergency department visits. The FY 2019-20 budget includes \$1.1 million to fund this service. Council added an additional \$602,000 to expand the program from ongoing General Fund revenue in support of the Meadows report recommendations.

## **Safety: Quality and reliability of critical infrastructure**

### **Watershed Protection Department**

FLOOD RISK REDUCTION: The Local and Creek Flood Reduction units with the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) has a budget of \$3.6 million and employs 28 positions to reduce existing flood hazards to protect lives and property. Included in this total are four new positions to support flood risk reduction efforts and to provide design capabilities for the small projects program in the amount of \$339,000. The small projects program will implement infrastructure repair and replacement projects for more locations throughout the city. Furthermore, a \$1.3 million grant is anticipated for cost increases related to the purchase and demolition of single-family residences in the Bayton Loop and Burrough Cove area.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATERWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM: Managed by WPD, this program provides on-site maintenance services to property owners and other affected citizens to save lives, reduce flooding, repair erosion, and improve the quality of storm water. Using a budget of \$24.4 million, 174 staff work to address these safety-related concerns. Included in this total are four new positions and \$1.2 million to enhance customer service response times for the inspection of infrastructure, vegetation management, debris removal, small repairs, and storm response. By ensuring adequate customer service related to routine inspection and maintenance, these positions will improve the efficiency of larger-scale construction, rehabilitation, and repair activities.

LITTLE WALNUT CREEK – FLOOD RISK REDUCTION FROM METRIC TO RUTLAND: WPD is providing additional flood relief to residents in neighborhoods along Little Walnut Creek, from Metric Boulevard to Rutland Drive, by constructing a creek bypass system under Mearns Meadow Blvd. This capital project is scheduled to begin construction in FY 2019-20, with expected spending of \$2.7 million.

**UPPER ONION CREEK FLOOD RISK REDUCTION BUYOUTS:** This capital project addresses properties at risk of flooding in the Pinehurst and Wild Dunes areas of Upper Onion Creek. A feasibility study has been completed and concluded that acquisition of flood prone structures in this area is the most effective strategy for reducing flood risk and protecting residents and properties from the threat of flooding. The total capital budget for Upper Onion Creek buyouts is \$82.5 million, with planned spending in FY 2019-20 of \$33.5 million. As of July 2019, nine properties have been acquired. This is in addition to the Lower Onion Creek Buyouts of \$78.7 million which have no planned spending next year.

**WEST BOULDIN CREEK – DEL CURTO STORM DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS:** WPD plans to spend \$1.6 million in FY 2019-20 to alleviate flooding of several roadways and buildings within the South Lamar neighborhood area. This project is scheduled to begin construction of an upgraded storm drain system in FY 2019-20.

### **Safety: Emergency preparedness and recovery**

#### **Austin Fire Department**

**WILDFIRE PREVENTION:** Proactive wildfire mitigation efforts continue with a total of \$3.4 million and 20 positions in the FY 2019-20 budget. Council redirected \$877,000 of funding from the proposed Command Technician program to expand preparedness activities through 3 new civilian positions to enhance community engagement and a \$600,000 increase in fuel mitigation contract funding. AFD applies innovative solutions to address this priority, such as computer tablets to collect data in the field to track wildfire risks, utilizing robotics and drone technology to aid in wildfire rescue, and conducting wildfire assessments. The Community Outreach unit also provides public education to children and young adults to encourage fire prevention habits.

### **Economic Opportunity & Affordability: Ending homelessness in Austin**

#### **Austin Code Department**

**TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR TENANT RELOCATION:** The ACD FY 2019-20 budget includes \$1.6 million in one-time funding for temporary rental housing assistance to eligible tenants who are subjected to uninhabitable or dangerous residential conditions. In such cases, code enforcement action is required against property owners who fail to correct unsafe living conditions or provide alternative safe housing for impacted tenants within a reasonable and safe time period. It is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain rental properties to code. Therefore, property owners will be required to reimburse the City for all expenses related to temporary tenant relocation. This funding will also be available to eligible residents who are dislocated due to natural disasters and other eligible compromised structural life-safety emergencies.

**Downtown Austin Community Court**

SERVICES TO ACCOMMODATE ADDITIONAL HOST TEAM REFERRALS: Council approved funding for two additional case managers and supporting costs, and \$475,000 for social service contracts, for a total of \$771,000.

**Government That Works for All: Condition/quality of City facilities & infrastructure and effective adoption of technology**

**Austin Police Department**

MOUNTED PATROL FACILITY: The Mounted Patrol Facility will house and provide training space for the horses that support police officers who patrol Sixth Street and the downtown area, providing security and crowd control. Planned spending of \$6.1 million is expected in FY 2019-20. Additionally, \$38,000 in one-time operating funds is included in this budget to replace 16 saddles for this unit.

**Austin Fire Department**

FIRE DEPARTMENT LOCKER ROOM PROJECT: The locker room and restroom improvements will address existing gender inequities as well as other facility upgrades. Expenses to date on the first five phases total \$12.3 million. The sixth and final phase will continue in FY 2019-20 with planned spending of \$10.6 million. The total funding for all phases for this project is \$31.4 million and is expected to be substantially completed by January 2023.

**Austin/Travis County EMS**

EMS FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS: In FY 2019-20, ATCEMS plans to spend \$7.7 million on critical facility improvements, including vehicle bay expansions and building renovations on ATCEMS stations 1, 5, 7, 10, 13, and 33. The facilities will also be upgraded to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and fire code requirements.

**Municipal Court**

MUNICIPAL COURT FACILITY LEASE: A long-standing challenge confronting the Municipal Court has been the insufficient space and poor condition of the existing court facility. Total lease costs included in the FY 2019-20 Budget for the new Municipal Court building located at 6800 Burleson Road are \$2.8 million. The facility is over 96,000 square feet and will house over 170 employees spanning the Austin Municipal Court main courthouse, the Cherry Creek substation, and the Criminal Prosecution Division of the Law Department. At the direction of Council, the new facility will incorporate a childcare space. The facility will contain five courtrooms, one more than the current courthouse. Municipal Court expects to be fully moved into the building in early spring of 2020.

**Communications and Technology Management Department**

COMBINED TRANSPORTATION, EMERGENCY, AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (CTECC) PUBLIC SAFETY UPGRADES: FY 2019-20 aids public safety technology with a total overall investment of \$24.2 million, an increase of \$1.6 million. This budget includes \$4.2 million in further critical replacement and lifecycle management of public safety infrastructure, including data center infrastructure and storage for in-car video and public safety systems

GREATER AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY REGIONAL RADIO SYSTEM (GATRRS) CAPITAL UPGRADES: The GATRRS program manages the two-way voice radio infrastructure that supports public safety communications for Austin Police, Austin Fire, ATCEMS, and other public safety and public service agencies throughout Austin and Travis County. Phases 5 and 6 of the current lifecycle effort includes the replacement of repeaters and antenna systems at all sites. Completion of the lifecycle project is scheduled for calendar year 2020. As a result of the rapid commercial and residential development in Austin and Travis County, the GATRRS Program will begin a coverage restoration effort in FY 2019-20 for a total cost of \$25.5 million, with funding provided by the City and regional partners. The coverage restoration effort will add additional tower sites to ensure the radio system coverage will continue to meet the communication needs of our public safety and public service users as our region continues to grow.

PUBLIC SAFETY TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES: The FY 2019-20 budget includes \$7.4 million for the Communications and Technology Management (CTM) wireless program to replace 350 public safety hand-held or mobile radios, 350 mobile data computers, and other critical public safety vehicle equipment.

# Initiatives to Improve Service Delivery

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## **Austin Police Department**

The Department is working with the **Sobering Center** to evaluate the impact of its services on the amount of time to drop someone off at the Center in lieu of an arrest which should allow officers to return to their assigned areas. During the last three months of 2018, APD diverted approximately 46% of all Public Intoxication (PI) arrests to the center and in 2019 APD has diverted over 60% YTD.

Following [Council Resolution 20180614-073](#), APD continues to meet with the Freedom Cities Working Group to address disparities within the criminal justice system. In November 2018 and again in January 2019, major revisions were made to APD's **Cite and Release Policy**. APD has and will continue to report on the impact of these changes to Council on a quarterly basis. During the first quarter on 2019, these policy changes resulted in a 59% decrease in criminal misdemeanor arrests.

## **Austin Fire Department**

The Austin Fire Department started the **Red Angels Program (RAP)** in October 2018 to address the needs of community members who use the 9-1-1 system for non-emergent events. AFD's Community Outreach RAP Team engages residents around home safety, community cohesion, health initiatives, and flood and wildfire preparedness, and provides information on community services and conducts basic wellness checks for blood pressure, glucose, pulse, and respiration rate.

## **Austin/Travis County EMS**

ATCEMS evaluated the impact of a **Paramedic Response Unit (PRU)** on response times in a less densely populated area. A PRU is a single paramedic equipped with Advanced Life Support equipment, supplies, and medications in an SUV response vehicle. The first phase of the test of a PRU proved to be a highly effective care delivery method that had an immediate 2% reduction in response times. A second test is being planned in an area with a high population and high utilization rate. The focus of the second test will be to evaluate the impact on system workload levels, personnel resilience, and deployment of personnel with higher clinical capabilities. ATCEMS is testing this model as a potential method to expand the ATCEMS system to keep up with community growth at a cost that is much lower than adding ambulances and crews. This could potentially lower the EMS system's cost of growth, improve deployment strategies, improve personnel resilience, and increase care delivery capabilities.

**Collaborative Care Communications Center (C4)** is an extension of the ATCEMS 911 Communications Center that focuses on connecting available community resources to persons experiencing homelessness. The center will provide a single point of contact for HOST members, paramedics, fire fighters, police officers, sheriff deputies, park rangers, city workers, social workers, mental health workers, case managers, and many others to create a collaboration point for coordinating services. Issues such as finding a clinic with an available appointment, identifying funding sources for medications, and many other needs can be managed through a single point of contact. The center is staffed by Community Health Paramedics and a collaboratively staffed position to answer calls, update databases, provide information, connect service providers, and coordinate service delivery.

ATCEMS has established a **lockbox service** to manage 100% of payment deposits. The lockbox enables the department to save staff time involved in processing payments. Next, the department is testing a scannable lockbox that will automatically upload payment data to individual accounts in the ATCEMS billing system thereby saving even more processing time and increasing service delivery efficiency.

ATCEMS is preparing to launch a test using a **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Inventory Management** system to gain full visibility of its asset inventory. The department is evaluating the RFID system to determine its effectiveness at tracking assets from purchase to final disposition. The focus of using RFID for asset and inventory management is to gain full visibility of the inventory of supplies and assets through the supply chain to the ambulance. A working RFID system could potentially improve accountability for inventory.

#### **Office of the Medical Director (OMD)**

OMD initiated adjustments to the ATCEMS/AFD response configuration to **improve alignment of resources assigned for each call**. Two areas were identified as targets for reconfiguration: (1) Motor Vehicle Crashes (MVCs) where no injuries were identified; and (2) “lift assists” where no injuries were identified and the caller simply was requesting for the patient to be moved. In both of these call types, the ambulance was removed from the initial response and only AFD is being sent. This intervention has resulted in returning unit hours to the ATCEMS department which allows them to more efficiently respond to other emergencies.

Currently, OMD, ATCEMS, and AFD have components of clinical oversight located in three different locations. OMD has proposed to move its office to the Ed Bluestein campus to **develop a “task force” model for clinical operations and oversight** of the ATCEMS System to better coordinate and more efficiently manage clinical operations across the EMS System Departments (OMD, ATCEMS, and AFD).

The Public Safety Training Center Health and Safety Task Force was convened to **address Heat Related Emergencies (HRE)** occurring at the training facility and has developed policy recommendations to mitigate the risk of these emergencies for our public safety personnel and cadets.

The Public Safety Active Shooter Task Force was convened to develop evidence-based policies related to management of victims of active shooter situations and ensure that the City of Austin public safety departments have a unified casualty management system.

#### **Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC)**

DACC's community service restitution work crew program has experienced an increase in requests for assistance with homeless encampment clean-ups. DACC adjusted internal resources so that the work crews can be responsive to the needs of other City departments and the community.

In addition, enforcement associated with Class C misdemeanors has declined significantly since 2015, so DACC is utilizing clerical resources to assist the community service program with duties such as work order triage and performance outcome data entry.

In FY 2019-20, DACC is planning to pilot a work crew program associated with the Court's program garden which provides an array of vegetables and chicken eggs, all of which are donated to local social service agencies that provide meals to homeless individuals. The pilot program will utilize clerical staff to supervise individuals that are interested in completing their community service hours specifically at DACC's program garden.

And finally, DACC is also planning to train clerical staff to assist with case management duties such as verifying community service hours, data entry and creation of electronic clinical client files.