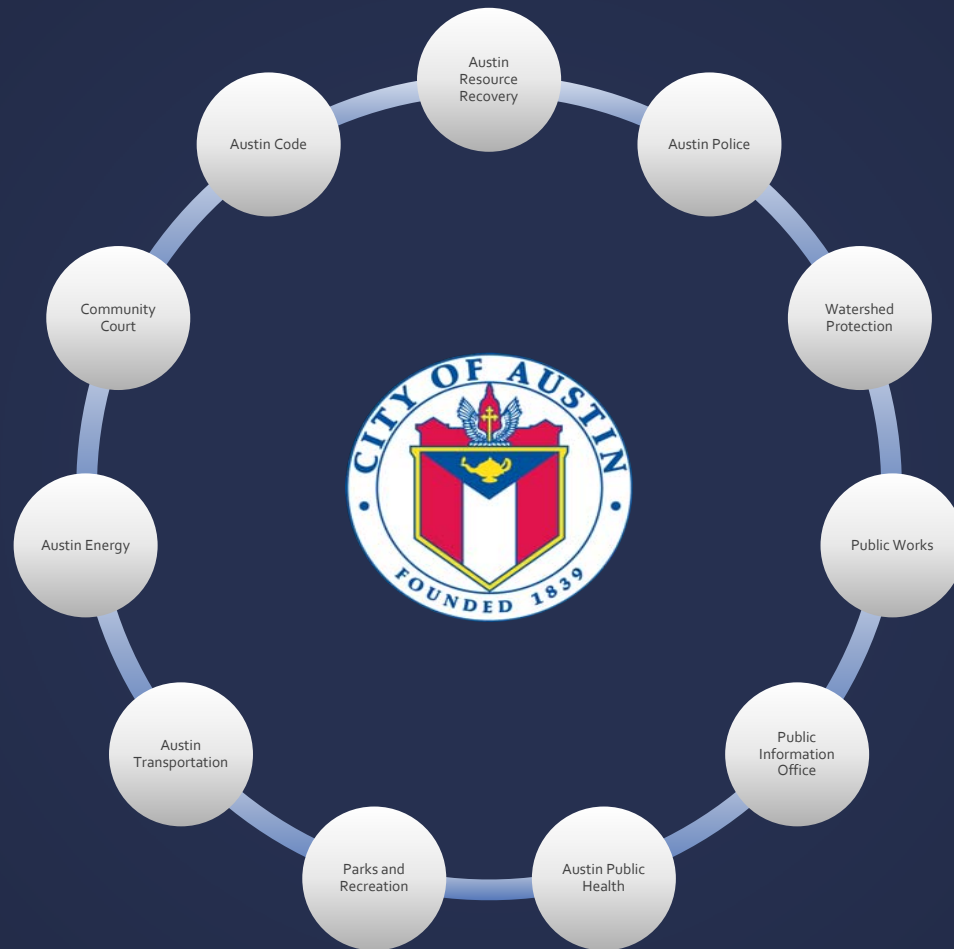




# City of Austin Homelessness Encampment Cleanup and Storage





# Background

In an effort to more efficiently manage activities related to homeless encampments, the City Manager's office (Austin TX) created a new vision for organizing activities related to homelessness. Under this vision, several new objective or task areas were created. One of those objective areas, Encampment Cleanup and Storage, was established specifically to address perceptions of blight associated with homelessness. The lead department for this objective area is Austin Resource Recovery.

An additional tasking within this objective area is to explore development of a program to store the personal effects of individuals experiencing homelessness.

The overarching goal of the Encampment Cleanup and Storage team is to establish a unified response and to standardize protocols, methods and procedures.

# Activities

- Underpass Cleanup
  - Public Works
    - Cleaning at 61 designated locations
- Encampment Cleanup
  - Public Works
  - Watershed Protection – Impact or priority based
- Bulky Items
  - Austin Resource Recovery
    - Typically performed in conjunction with cleanups

# Activities

- Litter
  - Austin Resource Recovery
  - Nightly citywide
- Violet Bags
  - Austin Resource Recovery
  - Bags collected
- ARCH Cleanup
  - Multi-Agency
  - Weekly (New)

## Activities (Cont.)

- PARD
  - Encampment Abatement
  - Litter
  - Trash
- Community Courts
  - Encampment Abatement

# Changes

- City Manager created Encampment Cleanup and Storage tasking
  - Violet Bag – 2 x weekly
  - Over/Underpass - 2 x monthly
  - ARCH Cleanup - weekly
  - Inspection element created
  - Tools Developed

# Results and Associated Information

- Calls received by 311 related to homelessness
  - September: 467 | October: 415
- ARCH Cleanup, November 5<sup>th</sup>
  - Removed 3,260lbs (1.6 tons) of debris, litter and trash
- Watershed Protection
  - Conducted 37 cleanups across 11 sites; 24 tons removed (Mar. – Sept., 2019)
  - Engaged 400 people; 152 received outreach services
  - Twenty-one people connected with The Other Ones Foundation
- Public Works
  - Servicing 61 sites monthly
  - Collected 54.4 tons of material (Aug. – Oct. 2019)





## Definition of Personal Items

Personal Property: An item that is reasonably recognizable as belonging to a person; has apparent utility in its present condition and circumstances; and does not pose a health and safety risk or a potential health and safety risk (which includes any item that poses an environmental or fire risk, or a potential environmental or fire risk). Examples of personal property include but are not limited to identification, personal papers and documents, functional tents, tarpaulins, bicycles, radios and other electronic equipment, eyeglasses, prescription medications, photographs, jewelry, crutches, wheelchairs. Building materials such as wood products, metal, pallets, or rigid plastic left unattended in a cleanup area will generally not be considered personal property, although a case by case determination will be made for each item found. The relevant staff member will determine whether an item is personal property, and in cases when the status of an item cannot reasonably be determined in the staff/contractor's staff member's judgment, based on the totality of the circumstances, the staff member will treat the item as Unattended Personal Property under this rule.

# Procedures, Protocols and Tools

- Public Works Procedures
  - Procedures document
- Watershed Protection
  - Encampment Assessment Tool

 <b>PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT</b> <b>POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES</b>			
<b>SUBJECT:</b>		CITY OF AUSTIN UNDERPASS CLEANUP OPERATIONS AND SERVICES	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>		NOVEMBER 4, 2019	
<b>ORIGINATING DIVISION:</b>		OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR	
<b>DIRECTOR APPROVAL:</b>		RICHARD MENDOZA, P.E., DIRECTOR	
<b>REVISIONS:</b>		NOVEMBER 1, 2019	
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>		JAMES M. SNOW, CCP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS ENTERPRISES	
<b>NO:</b>		PW-OPS-BU-01	
<b>APWA PRACTICE(S):</b>		No	

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## 5.1 Expectations Regarding the Handling of Unsafe Items and Mixed Items

- 5.1.1 Staff members have no obligation to handle, set aside, or leave at the site after cleanup, any Personal Property item that poses a health and safety risk, or is reasonably expected to pose a health and safety risk (for example, wet clothing or bedding materials).
- 5.1.2 Staff members have no obligation to handle, separate from any other item, set aside, or leave at the site after cleanup, any Personal Property item that contains inside it an Unsafe Item (for example, a needle-strewn tent) or that is mixed, combined, commingled, or intertwined with an Unsafe Item, if handling and separating items cannot be done safely. If staff cannot safely separate an Unsafe Item from an otherwise safe Personal Property Item, then will consider the Personal Property Item to be an Unsafe Item, and safely remove both items for disposal.

## 5.2 Expectation and Guidance for Outreach of Services

- 5.2.1 Public Works will coordinate with EMS, Community Court, and Integral Care to afford opportunity to reach out to individuals that reside beneath the underpasses and provide them information, health checks, and other services during the temporary displacement.
- 5.2.2 Services provided by EMS, Community Court, and Integral Care will focus on the individuals that have been temporarily displaced during the cleanup. The City's Public Works Department and its contractor are not involved in the provision of these services.

## 5.3 Post Services / Reporting

- 5.3.1 Once cleanup services are complete, the cleanup team will move onto the next site for the day.
- 5.3.2 Public Works will provide a weekly report to the Homelessness Work Group on the upcoming cleanup activities and the cleanup activities that have taken place.
- 5.3.3 Public Works will provide a monthly summary report of services and key metrics to the Homelessness Work Groups.

## 6.0 Attachments

- 6.1 Attachment #1 – Public Works Communications Plan for Underpass Cleanups
- 6.2 Attachment #2 – Example Monthly Schedule
- 6.3 Attachment #3 – Example 72 Hour Notice

### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process and establish responsibilities for cleanup of the public right of way areas underneath state-owned/TxDOT-managed bridges and overpasses in Austin, where homeless encampments are located. This protocol also provides direction to the agencies involved in inspecting and cleaning the areas.

The primary goal of the cleaning process is to help ensure the public right-of-way is as clean and safe as possible for all residents. The City does not have a goal to remove any individuals who may be camping at underpass locations.

### 2.1 References

- 2.2 City of Austin Code Chapter 9-1 (Abandoned Property and Vehicles); Section 10-5-42 (Littering Prohibited); and Section 10-5-26(A) (Emergency Abatement)
- 2.3 Public Works Communication Plan (*Attachment 1*) for Underpass Cleanups

### 3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 **Personal Property:** An item that is reasonably recognizable as belonging to a person; has apparent utility in its present condition and circumstances; and does not pose a health and safety risk or a potential health and safety risk (which includes any item that poses an environmental or fire risk, or a potential environmental or fire risk). Examples of personal property include but are not limited to identification, personal papers and documents, functional tents, tarpaulins, bicycles, radios and other electronic equipment, eyeglasses, prescription medications, photographs, jewelry, crutches, wheelchairs. Building materials such as wood products, metal, pallets, or rigid plastic left unattended in a cleanup area will generally not be considered personal property, although a case by case determination will be made for each item found. The relevant staff member will determine whether an item is personal property, and in cases when the status of an item cannot reasonably be determined in the staff/contractor's staff member's judgment, based on the totality of the circumstances, the staff member will treat the item as Unattended Personal Property under this rule.

*Treatment under this Protocol: See Unattended Personal Property, Unattended City-Provided Bag*

- 3.2 **Staff or staff member:** The terms staff and staff member are interchangeable and refer primarily to both the city staff as well as employees of the City of Austin and its Public Works Department, the City's cleanup contractor and any subcontractors.
- 3.3 **Unattended City-Provided Bag:** A bag provided by the City before cleanup (whether directly by a city employee or by the City's cleanup contractor on behalf of the City) (which may be referred to as a "BE Safe / BE Seen Bag") for individuals to place any personal property items and that has been left unattended in the cleanup area after the time for the cleanup, as stated in a notice posted in accordance with this protocol.

# Encampment Assessment for Removal Prioritization

The purpose of this assessment protocol is to establish consistency in the standard which the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) prioritizes encampments for removal. An encampment that is located within WPD maintenance jurisdiction is prioritized for removal based on two sets of criteria:

- 1) Flood Risk - Staff will evaluate whether the location is at risk for flooding and presents safety hazards for camp residents and the potential for camp debris to affect stormwater conveyance downstream.
- 2) Water Quality Impacts – Staff will evaluate the waterway channel (“creek walk”) and the surrounding area (“riparian walk”) for potential water quality impacts from encampment activities and condition.

For each assessed encampment, the highest score from the Flood Risk or Water Quality evaluations is used to assign a final prioritization score between 1 (lowest priority) and 5 (highest priority). Resources allocated for encampment removal and cleanup work are deployed according to prioritization scores.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Observers:\_\_\_\_\_ Start Time:\_\_\_\_\_ End Time:\_\_\_\_\_

Location (address, tract name, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Attach area map showing creek centerline, 2-ft topo, COA fully developed 100yr floodplain, CWQZ, dated aerial and scale.

## RESULTS

Flood Risk Score:	Creek Walk Score:	Riparian Walk Score:	Encampment Score: (select highest score from three categories at left)

Total estimated assessment time (prep\_\_\_\_ + field \_\_\_\_\_ + travel \_\_\_\_\_ + data management \_\_\_\_ ) = \_\_\_\_

## FLOOD RISK

Determine encampment location’s hazard level to flood risk or human life safety.

Score	Description of Encampment Location related to Flood Risk
5	Evidence of anyone sleeping directly in a channel, pond, pipe, or culvert
	Greater than 50% blockage of a culvert, pipe, or channel by encampment materials
4	Located within a mapped 25-year floodplain (based on FloodPro)
	25-50% blockage of a channel, pipe, or culvert by encampment materials
3	Located within a mapped 100-year floodplain (based on FloodPro)
	Up to 25% blockage of channel, pipe, or culvert by encampment materials
	Downstream Infrastructure has potential to get blocked by encampment materials
2	Maintenance access is blocked (If work required on asset is higher priority this can be adjusted up)
	Not located in a mapped floodplain but within 50 feet of creek (applies mostly to small channels and tributaries that have not been studied for floodplain mapping)
1	Encampment materials not likely to become obstructions if the move downstream
	Located outside of a mapped 100-year floodplain

Flood Risk Score:\_\_\_\_\_ Enter this value in the results table

## WATER QUALITY

Determine encampment condition’s threat to surface water quality.  
Evaluate conditions inside the channel (creek walk) and in the riparian zone above the banks (riparian walk).

### Creek Walk - creek centerline up to top of high banks

Potential for human enteric bacteria contamination (excluding infrastructure)			
None 1	Circumstantial Evidence 4		Apparent 5
No physical/circumstantial evidence of contamination	Evidence of non-recreational use such as bathing accessories, toilet paper, etc.		Excrement, soiled toilet paper, or other evidence indicating contamination
Evidence of pollutant container litter (chemical/battery/oil/solvent/pesticide/paint/etc.)			
None 1	Present, Not Significant 3	Obvious Contribution 4	Abundant 5
No presence of containers/items that currently do, or would normally have pollutants	Several containers/items, with no apparent contribution of chemicals, but a potential of contribution of chemicals in banks past or present	Clear and present pollutant contribution from containers or items, but only a small amount such as residue	Significant amount of pollutant from a single item or small amount from many items
Miscellaneous trash (all items including above parameters)			
None 1	Present, Not Significant 3	Significant 4	Abundant 5
No litter present	Occasional items throughout, but there are no pockets of accumulated litter and appears to only be from upstream sources	Litter is not contiguous but is evident throughout OR – very little litter throughout but with a few small pockets of accumulation	Litter is contiguous throughout OR – several large pockets of accumulation

Creek Walk Score (add total from all three categories and divide by three): \_\_\_\_\_ Enter this value in the results table.

### Riparian Walk - from top of banks to within 100 feet of banks, and within 100 feet of tributary drainages

Potential for human enteric bacteria contamination (excluding infrastructure)			
None 1	Circumstantial Evidence 3		Apparent 4
No physical/circumstantial evidence of contamination	Evidence of non-recreational use such as bathing accessories, toilet paper, etc.		Excrement, soiled toilet paper, or other evidence indicating contamination
Evidence of pollutant container litter (chemical/battery/oil/solvent/pesticide/paint/etc.)			
None 1	Present, Not Significant 2	Obvious Contribution 3	Abundant 4
No presence of containers/items that currently do, or would normally have pollutants	Several containers/items, with no apparent contribution of chemicals, but a potential of contribution of chemicals in banks past or present	Clear and present pollutant contribution from containers or items, but only a small amount such as residue	Significant amount of pollutant from a single item or small amount from many items
Miscellaneous trash (all items including above parameters)			
None 1	Present, Not Significant 2	Significant 3	Abundant 4
No litter present	Occasional items throughout, but there are no pockets of accumulated litter and appears to only be from upstream sources	Litter is not contiguous but is evident throughout OR – very little litter throughout but with a few small pockets of accumulation	Litter is contiguous throughout OR – several large pockets of accumulation

Riparian Walk Score (add total from all three categories and divide by three): \_\_\_\_\_ Enter this value in the results table.

# Thank you

Ken Snipes, Director  
Austin Resource Recovery