

PARKS & RECREATION RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

Presented by: Lucas Massie, Assistant Director and Kimberly McNeeley, Director
September 2020 Parks and Recreation Board Meeting





Dedicated Resources

Staffing Levels

- PARD has one FTE (full-time employee) dedicated to PARD specific efforts associated with homelessness
- PARD Park Rangers assist the single FTE with specific efforts associated with homelessness

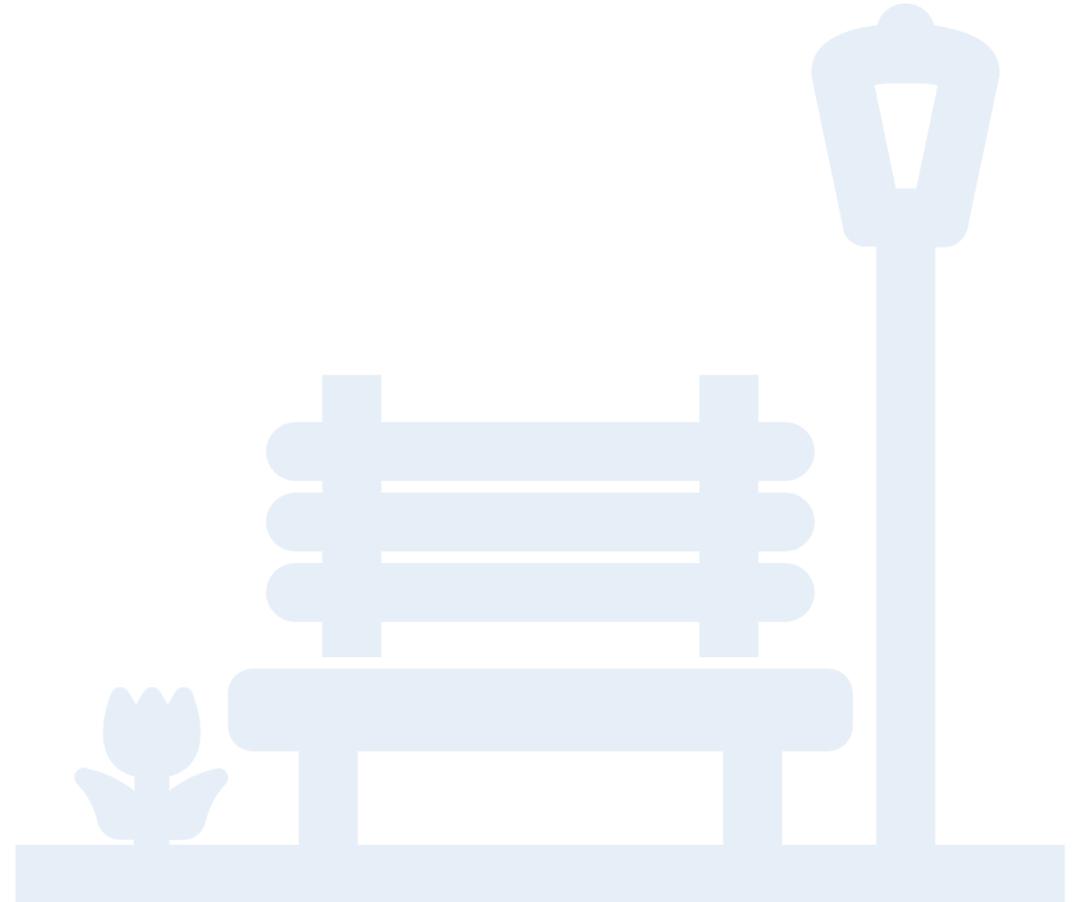




Dedicated Resources

Service Partnerships

- Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) which assists with connection to resources, including medical, mental and substance abuse counseling and housing
- Pathways for Transitions to Housing (PATH) which assists with connection to resources, including medical, mental and substance abuse counseling and housing





Dedicated Resources

Workforce First Program

- The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) administers Workforce First, which is an alternative employment program, where individuals are offered the opportunity to work in service of the community as an alternative to panhandling
- As PARD's cleanup contractor, TOOF abates encampments through assignment and direction of staff





Dedicated Resources

City-Wide Coordination

- Watershed Protection Department (WPD) which we coordinate with to manage encampments and keep our waterways clean
- Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) which provides funding and storage assistance for encampment cleanup efforts





Code and Enforcement

Code & Ordinance

- City of Austin Parks and Recreation
Department Park Rules, Section 22.
Camping and Overnight Use
- City of Austin Code Ordinance § 8-1-11
(B) A person may not fish, camp, or use a specific area in a public recreation area between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. without an approval





Code and Enforcement

Code & Ordinance

- City of Austin Code Ordinance § 8-1-11
(G) A person may not remain in a public recreation area if the person is advised that the person's behavior is disruptive and the person is instructed to leave the property by supervisor of the department
- City of Austin Code Ordinance § 9-4-11 –
Camping and Obstruction in Certain Public
Areas

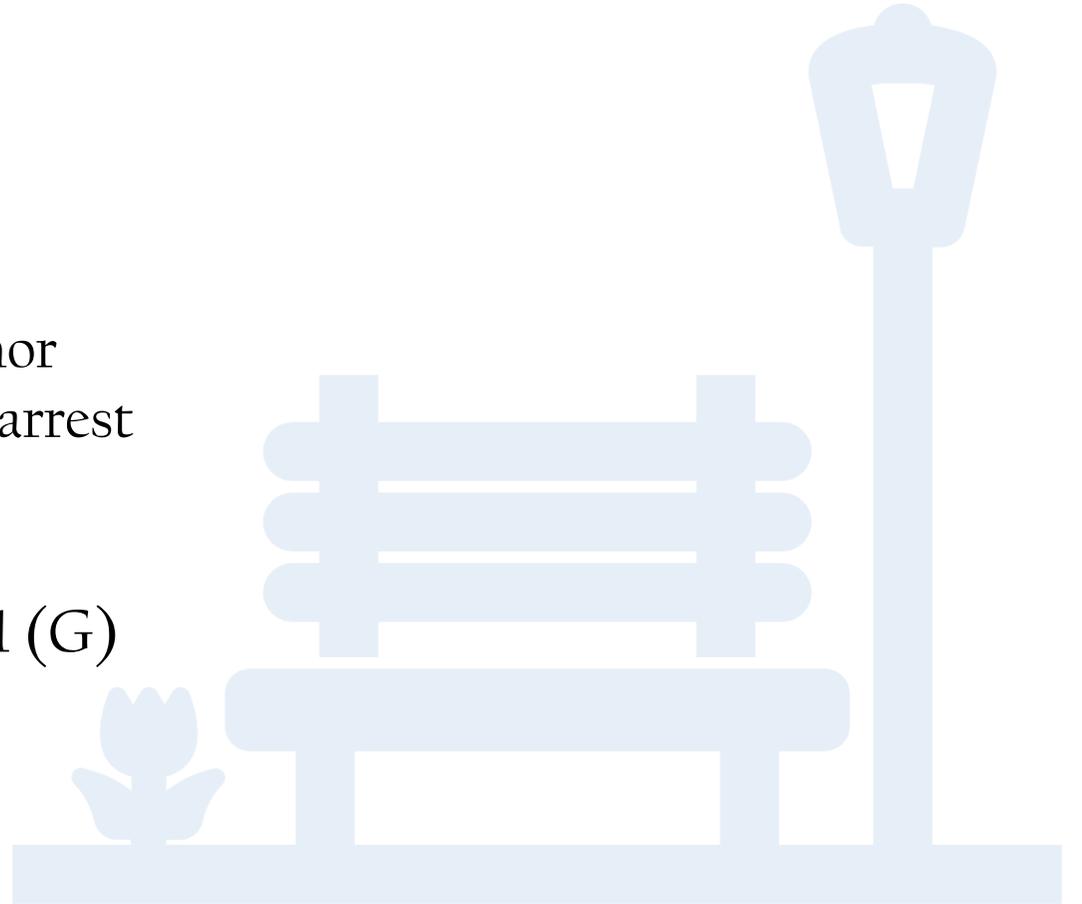




Code and Enforcement

Enforcement

- Curfew Violation § 8-1-11 (B)
 - Law enforcement issues a Class C Misdemeanor ticket for violating park hours. (Can result in arrest if individual refuses to leave at that time)
- Disruptive Use/Inclusive Use Violation § 8-1-11 (G)
- Criminal Trespass Violation
 - CTN Form A: Requires three warnings before issuance effective on the sixth day (1 year)
 - CTN Form B: Requires one warning before issuance and is effective immediately (1 day)





Code and Enforcement

Challenges

- 292+ Park Facilities covering 17,409 acres of property
- Program staff and resources
- Encampment Strategy
- Housing options





Visitation and Data Collection

Visitation

- Site visits are assigned via 311 reports or directly reported concerns
- Site visitation and conditions are recorded via Park's GIS tracking application
- Sites are prioritized based on conditions
- Service providers are notified via email to initiate service request

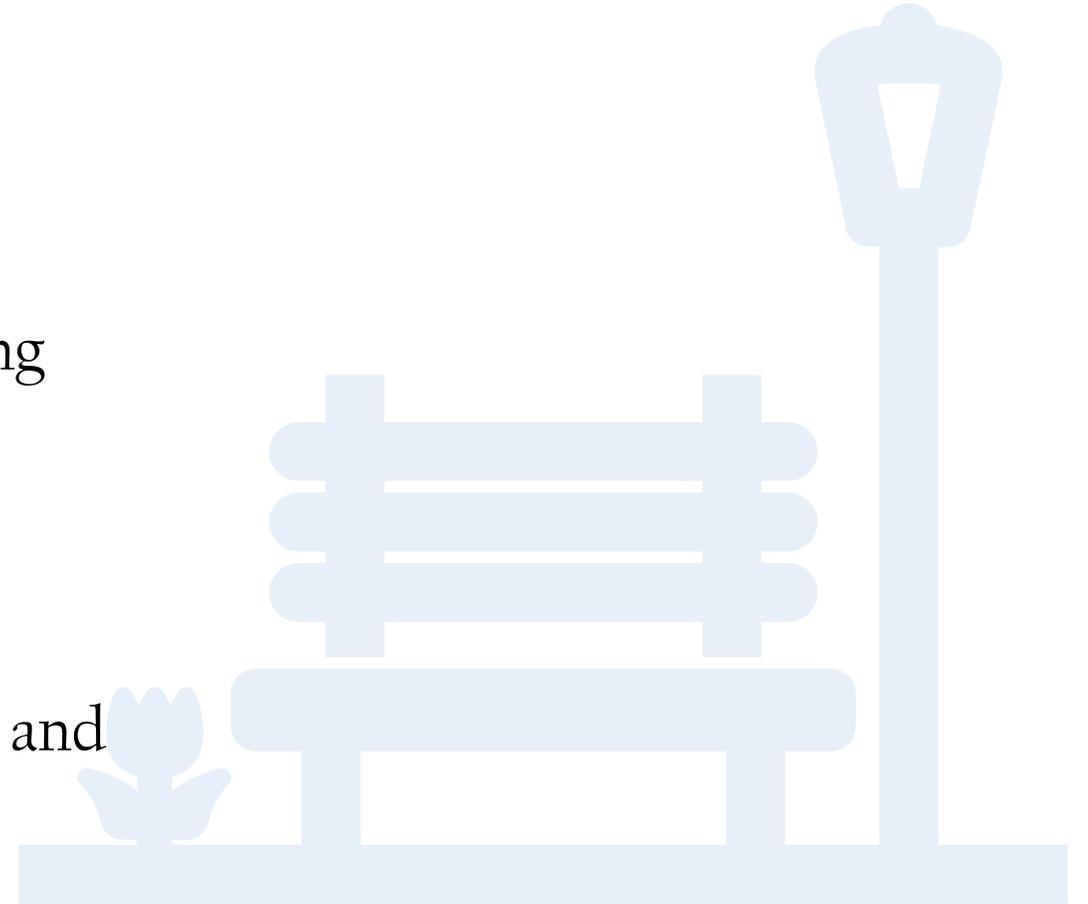




Visitation and Data Collection

Visitation

- Resources are provided upon request, including trash bags and sharps containers
- Abandoned campsites are abated by TOOF
- Low priority sites are managed by PARD staff and service providers
- High priority sites are targeted for removal, working with service providers and law enforcement

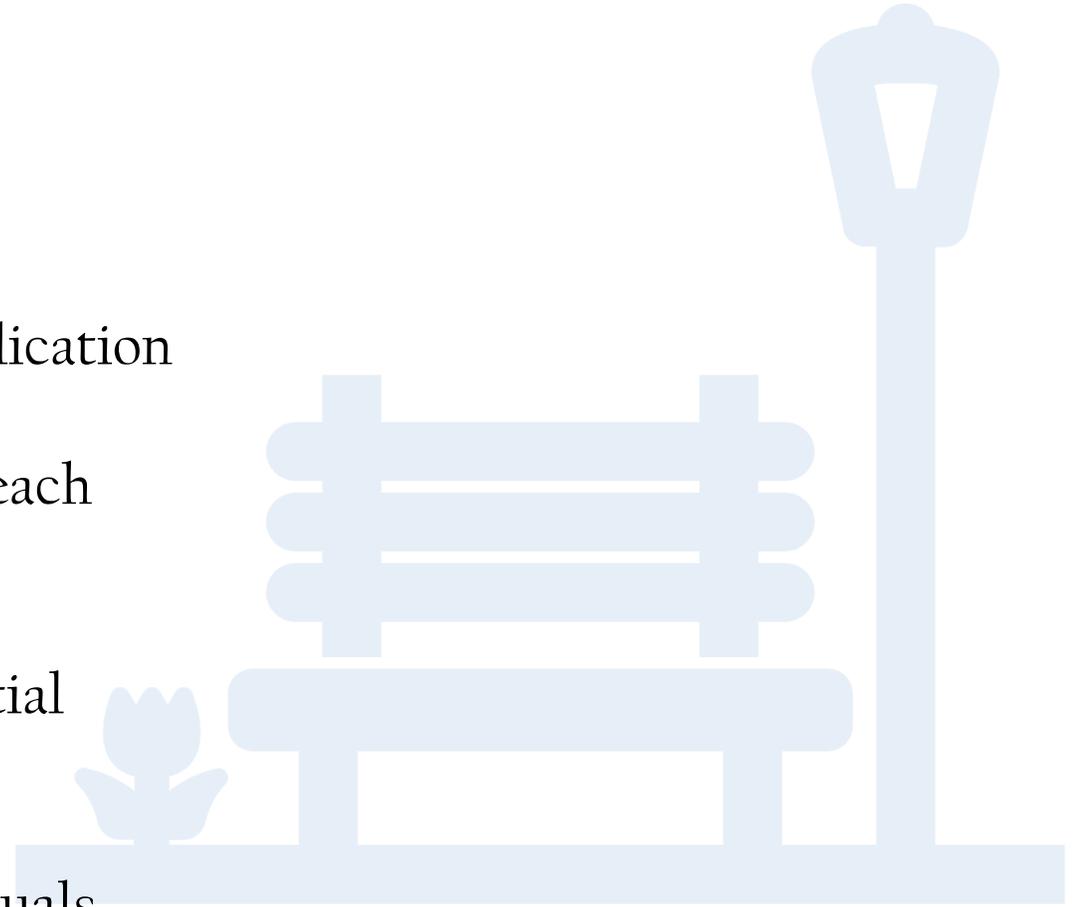




Visitation and Data Collection

Data Collection

- 311 reports require manual entry into tracking application
- System follows each encampment “lifespan” with each response and visitation
- Service request email to HOST automatic after initial site review submittal
- Data tracking includes location, number of individuals, current prioritization, service provision, follow-up visitation, and photographs





Visitation and Data Collection

Prioritization Levels

Encampment Removal Prioritization Matrix Summer 2020			
Response Level	Activity	Examples	Communications
5	Immediate Threat to Others, Health and Safety	Immediate threat to themselves or others, major sanitation concerns, obvious illegal behavior, violent behavior and open lewd conduct.	Immediate communication HOST or other provider, eviction and 9-1-1 as needed.
4	Impacting access to parks facilities or amenities; in an unsafe area; causing damage to facilities or the environment.	Individuals or encampments in close proximity to playgrounds, recreation facilities, doorways; in or adjacent to creeks; removal of canopy, degradation of managed natural areas; sanitation issues; improperly disposed hypodermic needles, blocking ADA accessible amenities, camping in playscapes or directly on trail, impairing inclusive use	Eviction notification, communicate with HOST/service providers for near term visitation, and work with APD for eviction plan for eviction after notice is given- best outcome is the eviction notice results in self resolving
3	Adjacent to residences or parks amenities.	Encampments adjacent to private residence and/or rec centers, trails, or other amenities but not impeding or disrupting access	Eviction notification, communicate with HOST/service providers for near term visitation, and work with APD for eviction plan for eviction after notice is given- best outcome is the eviction notice results in self resolving
2	Clean, safe camp. None of the above.	Manage in place low priority for removal	Notify encampment of park rules and communicate with HOST/service providers of encampment conditions and needs
1	Abandoned Camp	Clean camp, revegetate if needed.	Email to TOOF



Questions?

