



# Sanctioned Encampment Strategy Update

City Council Work Session

July 27, 2021

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# Briefing Topics

- Homeless Strategy Division Overview and Priorities
  - Community Partnerships & Planning
  - Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
  - HEAL
  - Crisis Resources
- Potential City Designated Encampment Locations
  - Zoning Status
  - Permitting Options
  - Community Engagement
- Summary and Conclusion



## Community Partnerships & Planning

- Summit to Address Unsheltered Homelessness
- ECHO/City of Austin Collaboration Team
- Emergency Housing Vouchers: Housing Authority of the City of Austin, Housing Authority of Travis County, and ECHO
- Redesign of the Pay for Success collaborative PSH project



# Permanent Supportive Housing

- PSH Pipeline Working Group
- Over 400 capital development units in AHFC pipeline
- Multiple other projects in pre-development by private developers
- Commitment of \$6.5M to support PSH services
- This month
  - Espero Austin at Rutland (Caritas/Vecino Group): August 9<sup>th</sup> groundbreaking
  - Closing dates for two hotel acquisitions

# Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link (HEAL) Initiative



- Resolution passed February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Phase I: four encampments in northwest, south, central, and east Austin.
- Interim shelter and connection to long-term housing
- Focus on voluntary compliance for site clearance
- HSD to recommend prioritization for future encampments
- ~ Six-month timeline to plan, contract, and execute

# Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link (HEAL) Initiative



- HEAL Collaborative
  - Coordination & community engagement – Homeless Strategy Division
  - Outreach via HOST and PATH teams
  - RRH via Family Eldercare and Integral Care
  - 75 rooms of new bridge shelter at Southbridge (former Rodeway Hotel) opened by HSD staff in mid-June, now operated by Front Steps
  - ECHO, Downtown Austin Community Court, Austin Resource Recovery, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Austin Public Library
- Terrazas Library, Ben White/Menchaca underpass sites completed June/July
- Final two sites will be completed as bridge shelter is available



# Shelter Capacity Update

- Congregate Shelter
  - City staff are in contact with Front Steps, Salvation Army, and Austin Resource Center for Homelessness (ARCH) to determine the safest way to restore lost capacity of ~ 250 beds for single individuals.
  - Progress will be influenced by fluctuating COVID-19 risk levels, rates of vaccination among shelter guests, and practical opportunities for risk mitigation at each facility.
- Southbridge Shelter
  - Opened on June 15, 2021
  - Residents for this site were relocated from Terrazas Library & Ben White
  - Facility is at approximately 90% capacity (69 of 75 rooms)
  - Currently single occupancy



## Background

On May 6, 2021, Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20210506-070, directing the City Manager to provide information and analysis regarding possible sanctioned encampments for people experiencing homelessness in the City of Austin.



## Potential City of Austin Property for Designated Encampments

The following two sites meet most of the criteria and provide the accommodations needed for a temporary City designated encampment.

Site 1: 3511 Manor Road

Estimated cost for Site 1: \$1,331,100

Site 2: 4011 Convict Hill Road

Estimated cost for Site 2: \$1,668,300



# Zoning Status and Options

Site 1 – 3511 Manor Road

Property zoned GR-V-NP. Zoning established in 2002 and V added in 2008.

Site 2 – 4011 Convict Hill

Property zoned SF-6-CO. Zoning established in 2020.

## Zoning Options

- A campground is not permitted as a temporary use exempt from zoning.
- The existing zoning on both sites does not allow a campground use. A rezoning to CS-General Commercial Services would be required.
- Rezoning process generally takes 3 to 6 months, includes notification to adjacent property owners, and public hearings.



# Permitting Options

The properties require a Land Status Determination and possibly platting. The standard platting process would take up to 4 months. A full Site Plan application is necessary (~ 6 – 12 months is the standard) and requires a Civil Engineer.

## Site 1 - Manor Road

- Site Plan Exemption recommended (approximately 1 month)
- LDC § 25-5-2 Site Plan Exemptions must be amended to include language specific to the temporary encampments structures, otherwise a full Site Plan is required.

## Site 2 - Convict Hill

- Located within the Barton Springs Zone which does not allow Site Plan Exemptions.
  - The Barton Springs Zone overlay has additional regulations to protect water quality and allows minimal impervious cover (15%).
  - Modifications to the Save our Springs ordinance require a super majority vote at City Council.



## Permitting Options (continued...)

- Pre-fabricated units require certification through the Texas Industrialized Housing and Building program unless assembled on-site to allow for inspections. Structures must have a permanent foundation which may consist of tie-downs.
- Fire access and building separation requirements must be met.
- DSD can provide a standard Building Plan Review process to run concurrently with the Site Plan or Site Plan Exemption process. Permitting and inspections will be prioritized by City departments.

# Community Engagement



If Council opts to continue exploring sites for use as temporary encampments, engagement would include the following:

- **Informational process** - Provide information to clarify community understandings of the proposed project under Council consideration.
- **Consult** - Listen to community feedback to better understand challenges and opportunities from the community perspective.
- **Provide a feedback loop** – Report back on the City’s understanding of the community feedback and provide opportunities to clarify the collective meaning.

Requires two (2) additional communications staff dedicated to this effort and a minimum of 6 months to perform adequate engagement.

# Designated Encampment and Complimentary Efforts



## Continued Exploration of Designated Encampments on City Owned Property

- Minimum 6 months for zoning, platting, site plan, & other permitting
- Community Engagement: 6 months and recommended 3 FTEs
- TDHCA approval will be required, as per HB1925
- Additional funding is required

## Complimentary Efforts to Increase Crisis Bed Capacity

- Ongoing monitoring of opportunities to restore capacity at congregate shelters
- Exploration of other bridge shelter sites, including former ProLodges
- Assertive pursuit of community partnerships and funding leverage
- Increase in permanent housing resources

# Discussion

