



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

The mission of the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board (“Board”), according to article 2-1-130 of the City Code, is to “advise the Downtown Austin Community Court on policy and operational issues and advise the council on the policies and operations of the court.” The purpose of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) is to collaboratively address the quality 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.

1. Describe the board’s actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board’s mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

During the reporting period (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021), the Board met (6) times. Due to the Public Health Emergency’s health and safety recommendations, all meetings were held via videoconferencing however, they were posted to and open to the public. Our primary actions during these times were educational.

- The Board received regular updates from DACC staff concerning homelessness efforts including the status of operations during COVID-19, and the necessary adjustments needed to address the changing needs of individuals served and DACC’s staff during the pandemic. Updates were provided regarding Rapid Rehousing efforts, virtual hearings, Terrazas temporary relocation, DACC facility updates, Violet Keep Safe Program, emergency shelter redesign efforts, budget changes and development opportunities.
- Dianna Grey, Homeless Services Strategy Officer offered updates on the HEAL initiative and City efforts to address homelessness.

- Vella Karman, Homeless Services Division Manager presented a summary of Barb Poppe's Austin Investing for Results Report.
- Ramesh Swaminathan, Managing Engineer of Watershed Protection, presented on ordinance changes, implementation, and enforcement strategies surrounding public space management initiatives and homeless encampment strategies.
- The Office of Real Estate presented on efforts to assist the DACC find a new location.
- Lastly, the Board discussed at length during meetings the strengths and challenges of the Coordinated Entry System and the barriers impacting housing placement in the City of Austin. Preston Petty, ECHO's Coordinated Entry Program Director provided an update on Coordinated Entry prioritization strategies to support individuals experiencing homelessness access housing.

Recommendations and Other Actions:

Throughout the year, the Board asked for information necessary to provide educated advice to DACC staff and reviewed information submitted in response to the Board. On March 12, 2021, the Board approved Recommendation No. 20210312-002A, in support of the following recommendations:

- For more than 7 years, the DACC has operated without adequate space for its operation. The DACC does not have adequate space at its main location. To sustain service provision, the DACC needs to locate a new facility and temporarily equip case management staff with the ability to work out of a fleet of vehicles, the community, and from their homes.
- Funding for case management fleet vehicles. DACC is in need of more case management fleet vehicles and funding to rent vehicles from the Fleet Department until any new fleet vehicles arrive. Additional fleet vehicles will support the community-based work provided by the case management team.
- Sustained funding for six grant funded COVID-19 case managers. These case managers are essential to support the needs of individuals at the City of Austin's funded Protective Lodges.
- Funds to continue the Violet Keep Safe Program.
- Funds to continue the Homeless Health and Wellness collaborative with Integral Care and the Downtown Austin Alliance.
- Funding to augment DACC's case management capacity to support the needs of 266 individuals experiencing homelessness on DACC's current waiting list, provide additional triage case management to support walk ins, and additional triage and case management capacity to support the Terrazas Branch Library staff.
- Additional social service dollars to include funding for client rental assistance.

2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

The Board's actions during this reporting period comply with the Board's mission statement. All the educational aspects of our meetings, described above, were designed to enable us to understand the policy and operational needs of the Court, so that we may give informed advice to the Court with regards to Court policies and operations. Our recommendations to staff and leadership were built upon the knowledge learned and offered in support of the policies and operations of the Downtown Austin Community Court.

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

The Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board goals for the upcoming year include:

- Work with City Council to identify a new permanent location to relocate Community Court to support the expanding needs for space to accommodate Community Court's staff, programming needs and its increased scope.
- Continue to learn about, monitor, and support the implementation of evidenced based practices to address issues of race, gender identity, equity, access to care, recidivism and homelessness.
- Continue to work with Community Court to assess and advocate for system redesign and funds to address the complex needs of the people served by Community Court.

Respectfully submitted,

Darilynn Cardona-Beiler

Darilynn Cardona-Beiler, Chair