



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION 20210802-002a

Date: August 2, 2021

Subject: Recommendation to cease citations and arrests of persons experiencing homelessness

Motioned by: Nelly Paulina Ramirez

Seconded by: Rebecca Bernhardt

Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that City Council, Mayor, and City Manager Spencer Cronk direct the Austin Police Department cease the citations and arrests set forth by the Responsible Public Space Management Plan unless the diversions being offered to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness include a housing option. We also recommend the city invest \$1.2M in funding to support non-profits like Austin Mutual Aid to house at least an addition 450 of our unhoused neighbors in hotels or alternative housing for a month while the HEAL initiative acquires more temporary housing. And finally, we recommend Council and the Mayor, direct City Manager Cronk to identify city owned land that can be used as a temporary legal encampment for the remaining sites that do not currently fall into the HEAL Initiative.

Description of Recommendation to Council:

Whereas the objective set forth by the Responsible Public Space Management Plan is to safely and humanely relocate persons camping in a public area, in a manner that preserves human dignity and respect while promoting voluntary compliance.

Whereas the Public Space Management Plan set forth by APD currently allows for citations of our neighbors experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Whereas the Public Space Management Plan set forth by APD will allow arrests of our neighbors experiencing unsheltered homelessness starting August 8.

Whereas housing options are not being provided to all experience unsheltered homelessness.

Whereas citations and arrests directly impede our unhoused neighbors' ability to secure housing independently.

Whereas the threat of citations and arrests may cause those experiencing unsheltered homelessness to seek shelter in even higher risk areas where flooding and wildfire put them in even more danger.

Therefore, The Public Safety Commission recommends that:

- City Council, Mayor, and City Manager Spencer Cronk direct the Austin Police Department cease the citations and arrests set forth by the Responsible Public Space Management Plan unless the diversions being offered to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness include a housing option
- the city invest \$1.2M in funding to support non-profits like Austin Mutual Aid to house at least an addition 450 of our unhoused neighbors in hotels or alternative housing for a month while the HEAL initiative acquires more temporary housing
- Council and the Mayor, direct City Manager Cronk to identify city owned land that can be used as a temporary legal encampment for the remaining sites that do not currently fall into the HEAL Initiative.

Rationale: The Public Safety Commission believes that citations and arrests are at odds with both the City of Austin's plan to end unsheltered homelessness and APD's objective to safely and humanely relocate persons camping in public areas.

Vote:

For: 7 (Commissioners Gonzales, Ramirez, Webber, Bernhardt, Hausenfluck, Lewis, Austin)

Against: 1 (Commissioner Kiracofe)

Abstain: 0

Absent: Commissioner Lane and Commissioner Sierra-Arevalo

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*

Janet Jackson
