

A scenic view of the Austin skyline at dusk, featuring several tall skyscrapers with illuminated windows. In the foreground, a concrete bridge with arches spans the river, and many people are kayaking on the water. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE

Downtown Commission Homelessness-Mental Health

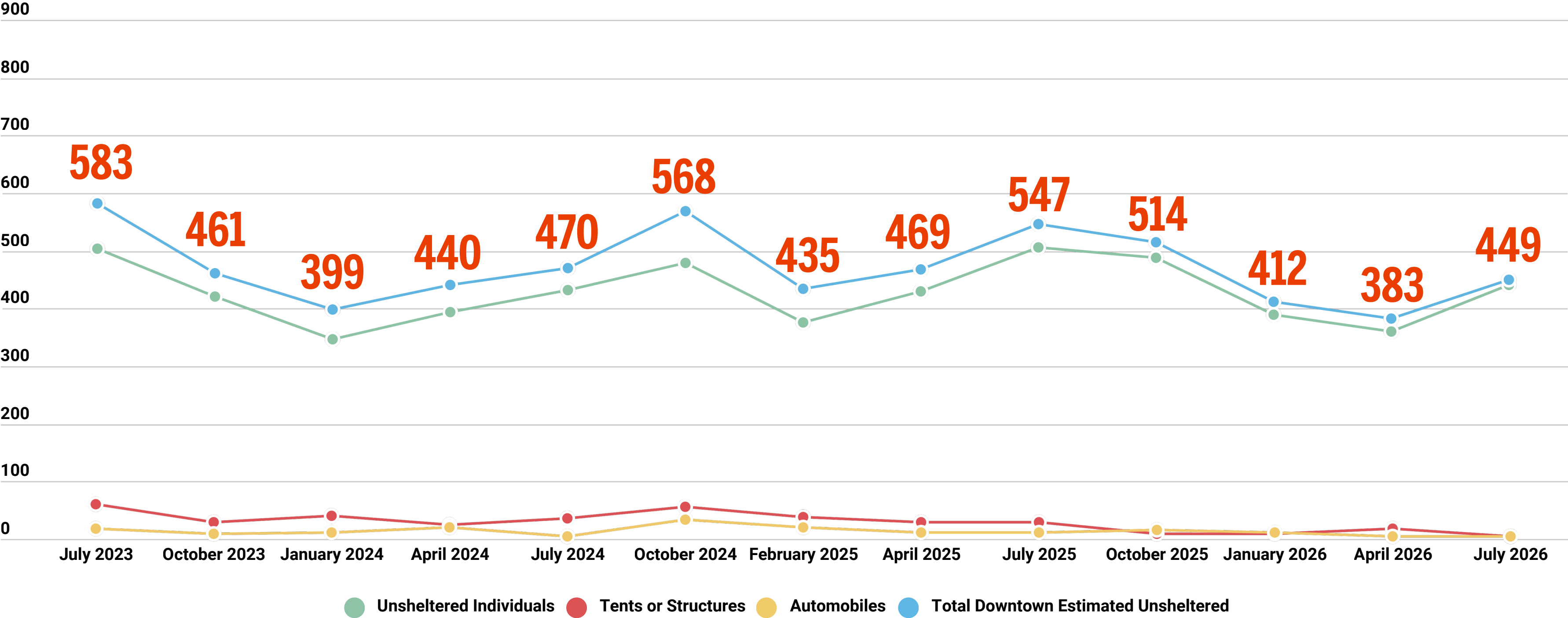
October 21, 2026



Overview

- **Introduction**
- **Policy Statements: the Why**
- **Strategy Overview: the How**
- **Advocacy strategy outlines & timelines**
- **Accountability tracking & metrics**
- **Next steps**

Total Downtown Estimated Unsheltered Homeless



Source: Downtown Austin Alliance, July2026

DIRECT FUNDING BY DAA

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

- Community First! Village (\$2M/10 yrs.)
- HEART Outreach pilot (\$161K)
- Trinity Ctr. Family Reunification (\$120k 10/21 to-date)
- Caritas 60/60 Campaign (\$60K)
- Rathgeber Family Center (\$100K)
- Terrace at Oak Springs (\$150K)
- Caritas PSH pilot (\$125K)
- Integral Care Healthcare for Homeless (\$155K)

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



ISSUES & EGGS

October 15, 2025 &
September 15m 2026

- Judge Andy Brown, Travis County
- Jeff Richardson, Integral Care
- Lisa Davis, APD
- Meris Herold, APD
- Carrie Rogers, CoA



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

April 16, 2026 Government Relations
Council Meeting

- John Howard, Dell
- Liz Schoenfeld, LifeWorks Austin
- David Gray, City of Austin
- Matt Molica, ECHO



OPPORTUNITY AUSTIN

June 9, 2026 Policy Council
Meeting & September 2026
Investor Meeting

- David Gray, City of Austin
- Matthew Molica, ECHO
- Dr. Patrick Lee, Central Health

Position Statement 1:

The Downtown Austin Alliance supports sustained investment in emergency shelter capacity, permanent supportive housing, and diversion programs that move people from downtown streets into stable housing and care.

Why it matters:

- Downtown's long-term health depends on improved public order and people experiencing homelessness having access to shelter, services and housing.**
- Crisis care and enforcement alone do not reduce homelessness.**
- Coordinated entry points, appropriate levels of care and coordinated release, as proposed by the No Wrong Door initiative, are essential.**
- This position aligns with the 2023-28 Strategic Goal and this Policy Statement's commitment to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness, and balances the enforcement and treatment positions.**

Position Statement 2:

The Downtown Austin Alliance supports expanding funding for psychiatric crisis care beds, step-down beds, and long-term care.

Why it matters:

- The number of people in need of crisis care and step-down services continues to outpace available beds and services.**
- People are not getting the care they need and are discharged to the streets after a “quick fix” – only to cycle through the system repeatedly.**
- This reduces the burden on first responders, emergency response and criminal justice systems, provides effective treatment alternatives, prevents discharging unhealthy people to the streets, and reduces the “revolving door” of recurring mental health crises.**

Position Statement 3:

The Downtown Austin Alliance supports expanding involuntary commitment authority to psychiatrists, physicians and their delegates.

Why it matters:

- Under the current state statute, only peace officers have authority to detain an individual for emergency psychiatric evaluation.**
- This consumes valuable law enforcement resources that are better utilized responding to emergencies in the community.**
- Research shows the current approach leads to a high percentage of individuals being detained inappropriately and suggests that clinicians are better qualified to identify individuals in need of a hold for emergency psychiatric evaluation.**
- Expanding commitment authority to include psychiatrists, physicians and their delegates can lead to faster intervention during behavioral health crises, more appropriate responses, and better protection for individuals in crisis and the community.**

Position Statement 4:

The Downtown Austin Alliance requests the Austin Police Department increase and maintain Downtown Area Command (DTAC) staffing to a minimum of 90% of approved level.

Why it matters:

- DTAC is currently the only APD sector with patrol staffing below 90% of approved staffing levels.**
- Downtown is the economic engine of the city, and the level of illegal and threatening behavior is detrimental to a thriving, vibrant economic and cultural urban center.**
- Increased police presence deters negative behavior and criminal activity.**
- 2026 Downtown User Survey findings support the need for increased police presence and enforcement.**

Position Statement 5:

The Downtown Austin Alliance requests stronger enforcement of City of Austin's panhandling ordinance (9-4-13) and sit/lie ordinance (9-4-14).

Why it matters:

- City ordinance 9-4-13 states: "Aggressive solicitation is disturbing and disruptive to residents and businesses and contributes to the loss of access to and enjoyment of public places and to a sense of fear, intimidation and disorder."**
- Enforcing ordinances protects public safety and accessibility, deters higher levels of crime, supports businesses and workers, improves public perceptions, and reinforces predictability and public space expectations.**
- This position targets specific behaviors that contribute to disorder and undermine public safety.**
- Enforcement of ordinances connects people with services offered by the Austin Community Court and does not criminalize the condition of being homeless.**

Strategy Overview

Coalition

Comms/PR

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

Board-approved Policies

Coalition Strategy

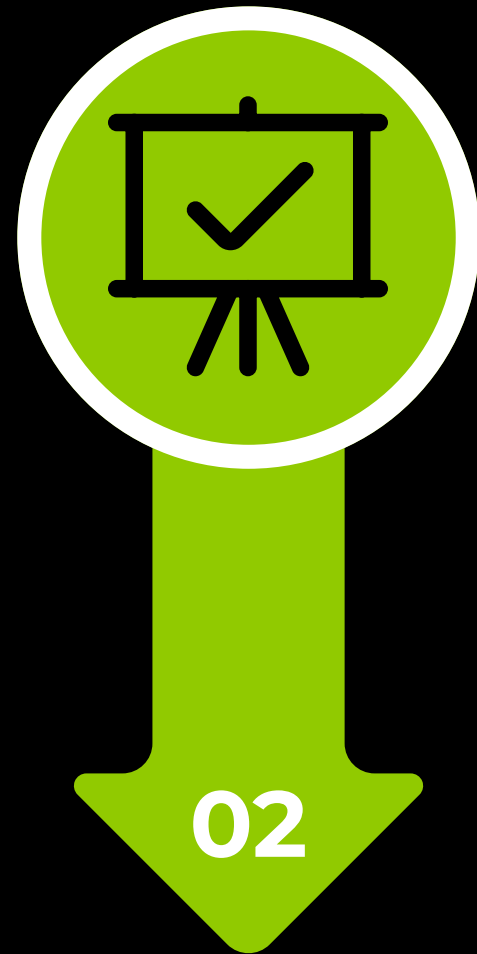
Generate a coalition of broad support among local businesses, stakeholder organizations, and statewide downtown management associations to advocate at the local, state, and federal level on issues relating to homelessness, mental health, and public safety.



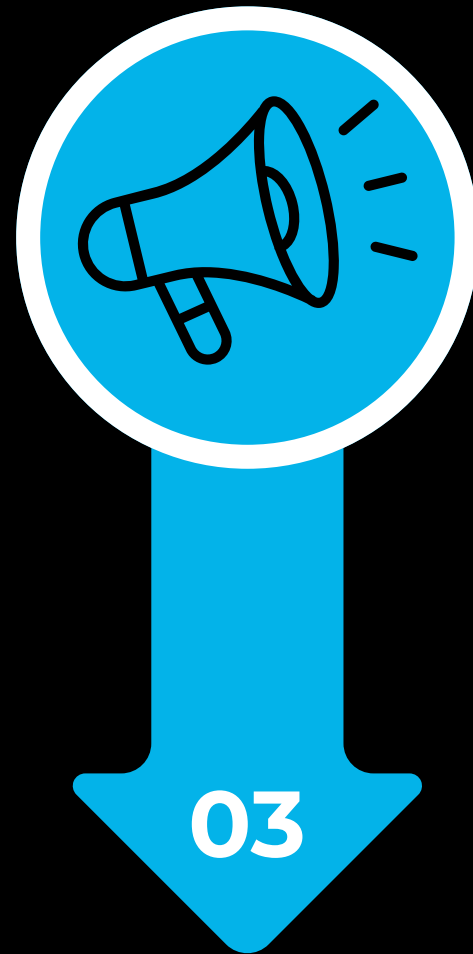
Coalition Strategy



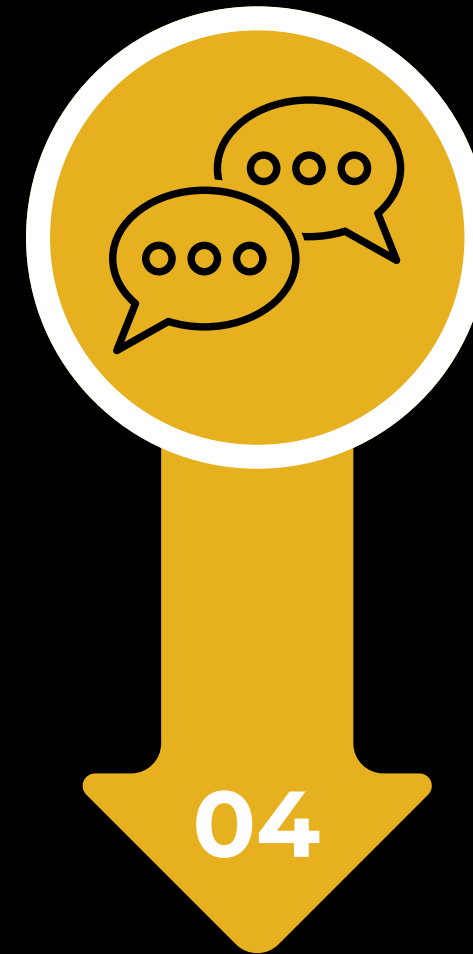
Briefings



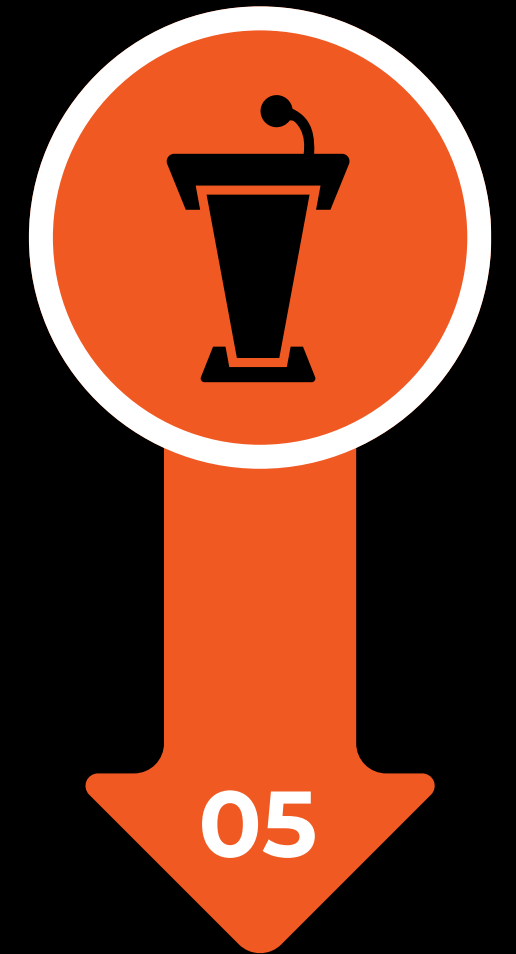
**Stakeholder
Board
Presentations**



Rollout



**Monthly
Updates**



Activation

Position Statement #1

The Downtown Austin Alliance supports sustained investment in emergency shelter capacity, permanent supportive housing, and diversion programs that move people from downtown streets into stable housing and care.

POLICIES/ ACTIONS

- City/County Budget
- MH Diversion Center phase I design
- MH Diversion pilot analysis
- SOW Resource Hub
- Planning for shelter beds
- New shelter/campus planning

TIMELINE



12/2026

12/2026

4/2027

4/2027

4/2027

METRICS

- Increase in beds & services
- Decrease in quarterly homeless counts
- Less public order complaints
- Improved surveys
- MHD Phase 2 begins

TRACKING

- PIT count trends
- ECHO PIT count trends
- Quarterly MHD trends
- Long-term DT user survey trends

Position Statements #2 & #3

Create and advance a plan to add involuntary commitment beds and expand involuntary commitment authority and funding for psychiatric treatment beds, “step-down” beds, and coordinated “hand-offs.”

POLICIES/ ACTIONS

- Legislator(s) agree to carry bills
- Bills filed
- Coalition activates
- Bills & funding passes
- Gov. signs into law

TIMELINE



11/26-3/27

01-06/2027

6/2027

6/20/2027

METRICS

- Bills & funding pass
- New crisis & step down beds in process
- # of high-utilizers DT in treatment
- Less high utilizers cycling through

TRACKING

- # of cards, testimony, emails
- # of legislator meetings
- Level of state funding
- NWD data trends

Position Statements #4 & #5

The DAA requests the Austin Police Department increase and maintain Downtown Area Command (DTAC) staffing to a minimum of 90% of approved level & requests stronger enforcement of City of Austin's panhandling ordinance (9-4-13) & sit/lie ordinance (9-4-14).

POLICIES/ ACTIONS

- Quarterly patrol at 90% or above
- Special units remain
- Visible PD presence at all hours
- Increased enforcement

TIMELINE

10/2026

10/2026

10/2026

10/2026

METRICS

- Increase in warnings & citations
- Lower calls for service
- Faster response times
- Fewer public order issues
- Visible decrease in panhandling/sitting in ROW

TRACKING

- Quarterly mtgs. w/Chief Davis
- DT crime data
- # of emails/mtgs. from coalition
- Feed back from constituencies
- DAA ambassador trends



Next Steps

**The Ask: Your Endorsement & Partnership
Board Briefings**

Other Partners

Downtown Commission

Downtown Commercial Brokers briefing

**Briefings for Social Service Boards, Crime
Commission, HOAs**

Briefing for E6th Street PID