



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Susana Carbajal, Assistant City Manager *SC*
Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager *SHH*

FROM: Richard McHale, Director, Austin Resource Recovery *Richard McHale*
Jesús Aguirre, Director, Austin Parks and Recreation *Jesús Aguirre*
David Gray, Director, Homeless Strategy Office *David Gray*

DATE: January 31, 2025

SUBJECT: **Response to Litter Abatement in Parks (Resolution No. 20240814-027)**

Resolution No. [20240814-027](#) directed Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) to provide recommendations to Mayor and City Council on how we can further prevent and abate litter in City parks including (1) how ARR can further help with abatement; and (2) how to fund those costs, including increasing the Clean Community Fee (CCF) if necessary and appropriate.

Currently, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is utilizing two full time employees (FTEs) and two temporary employees to provide supplemental encampment litter and debris abatement. Based on site assessments and conversations with PAR staff, the daily workload to address encampment litter and debris exceeds PAR's capacity with the current level of resources and equipment. There is also a backlog of work needing to be completed, including a large need to address litter and encampment debris in wooded areas where vehicle access is difficult. Staff also observed areas where illegal dumping is a recurring issue.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends for ARR to create a dedicated in-house team with the necessary staffing and equipment to perform regular encampment cleanups across the PAR park system. ARR's cleanups related to homeless encampments will occur with coordination and approval from the Homeless Strategy Office (HSO). Creating a dedicated ARR encampment team for park locations will improve response times to encampment cleanups, enhance the overall cleanliness of City parks, and help reduce public concerns related to litter in parks. Meanwhile, PAR will refocus existing FTEs to maintain non-encampment litter services and maintenance within the parks system.

ARR's recommended dedicated team for encampment cleanups at City parks will require additional staffing and on-going operational funds at an estimated cost of \$1.2 million per year. ARR will utilize

existing funds reallocated from a Citywide cleanup contract to support the dedicated in-house team. The Citywide cleanup contract will continue to be utilized by other City departments for encampment cleanup services needed at other City properties. As a result of this reallocation of funds, the CCF rate is not expected to increase at this time. ARR will first utilize temporary employees to create the dedicated team and adjust as necessary based on operational needs during the budget process.

ARR will also assist HSO and PARD in implementing the following abatement strategies:

- Through participating in HSO's weekly Homeless Encampment Management Team Meetings, ARR will work with HSO and PARD to prioritize cleanup of encampment sites.
- Coordinate with HSO, PARD, and Austin Police Department to increase outreach and enforcement efforts in parks to prevent encampments from occurring or re-occurring.
- ARR will provide on-going consultative guidance to PARD staff on other programmatic litter abatement strategies as requested and appropriate.
- ARR will include litter messaging and other initiatives in public information.

If you have any questions, please contact Richard McHale at (512) 974-4301 or Richard.McHale@austintexas.gov, Jesús Aguirre at (512) 974-6722, JesusS.Aguirre@austintexas.gov, or David Gray at (512) 974-7836 or David.Gray@austintexas.gov

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Myrna Rios, City Clerk
Corrie Stokes, City Auditor
Judge Sherry Statman, Presiding Judge
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
CMO Executive Team