

RESOLUTION NO. 20140320-051

WHEREAS, the City of Austin continues to look for creative solutions to address public safety issues related to public intoxication; and

WHEREAS, current enforcement efforts are costly to Austinites and Travis County residents; and

WHEREAS, 3,754 individuals arrested for public intoxication in 2013 were booked at the Travis County Jail; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Police Department arrested the majority of the individuals charged with public intoxication, which required substantial officer time; and

WHEREAS, the Travis County Sheriff's Office housed these individuals at a cost of \$96.71 per day in jail in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Travis County Courts appointed and paid attorneys to represent the 85 individuals charged with Class B public intoxication who were booked a total of 183 times; and

WHEREAS, hospital emergency rooms also receive public intoxicants, and serving these individuals in a non-emergency setting would be less costly and potentially more effective and would increase the availability of care for people who truly need emergency services; and

WHEREAS, the State of Texas allows peace officers to transport individuals to sobriety and detoxification facilities in lieu of jail; and

WHEREAS, adequate treatment for alcohol and drug abuse cannot be provided for these individuals in the Travis County Correctional Facility due to the short length of stay; and

WHEREAS, detoxification from alcohol is a medical procedure best conducted outside of a correctional facility; and

WHEREAS, other communities in Texas and the United States have successfully utilized sobriety and detoxification facilities; and

WHEREAS, a sobriety center provides an opportunity to divert individuals with substance use disorders to treatment, which could result in substantial savings to taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, criminal justice and health professionals have long expressed interest in exploring whether a sobriety center would serve our community; and

WHEREAS, the Psychiatric Services Stakeholders (representatives from the criminal justice system, the medical profession, Central Health, the City of Austin, Travis County, and other community partners) have convened a planning work group to analyze and evaluate opportunities associated with a sobriety center; and

WHEREAS, public and private funding may be available in the immediate

future to support a sobriety center in Travis County; and

WHEREAS, there are many outstanding questions regarding services that could be provided, the cost of building and operating a center, and the availability of funding; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to work with the Travis County Justice and Public Safety Division, the Travis County Sheriff's Office, the Travis County Criminal Courts and Prosecution, the Seton Healthcare Family, the Psychiatric Services Stakeholder work group, and other community members to develop an implementation plan and funding strategies for a sobriety center.

The City Manager shall present the implementation plan to Council prior to September 1, 2014.

ADOPTED: March 20, 2014

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk