

RESOLUTION NO. 20160512-018

WHEREAS, when dealing with individuals experiencing homelessness, traditional policing methods such as strict enforcement of local ordinances and issuing citations have been ineffective and have had little, if any, social benefit for the person experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Austin Police Department (APD) data shows that police are responding to calls around the Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) as many as 21 times per day, and EMS is responding on average seven times per day; and

WHEREAS, police homelessness outreach programs have been created in other cities throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, these outreach teams provide an alternative to traditional policing methods and connect individuals to local services such as emergency shelters, permanent housing, medical care, mental health treatment, employment referrals, valid identification documents, transportation, and donated medical equipment such as wheelchairs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Houston launched a Homeless Outreach Team pilot program in 2011 composed of one sergeant, two police officers, and one mental health professional, and the team was made a permanent program in the department after a very successful six-month pilot; and

WHEREAS, during the pilot the Houston team recognized a need for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle to transport individuals to the necessary services such as assessments, medical clinics, temporary shelter, and housing; and

WHEREAS, in early 2015, APD began exploring the creation of an interdisciplinary team based on models implemented in other cities, and APD staff traveled to Houston and San Antonio to gather first-hand knowledge about this strategy; and

WHEREAS, through conversations with Downtown service providers, the Downtown Austin Alliance, and the City's Innovation Office, the City Manager recognized that the community might benefit from an outreach strategy which includes an interdisciplinary team capable of a range of responses to individuals experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, a working group that includes city employees, social service providers, and the Downtown Austin Alliance has begun meeting to further explore a pilot program in the Downtown area; and

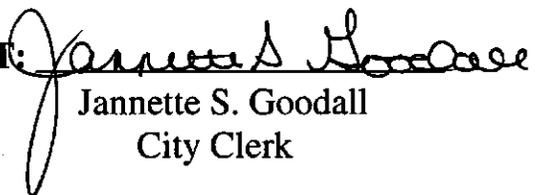
WHEREAS, APD has identified the need for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle capable of transporting individuals and their belongings to services as necessary; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority has a fleet vehicle that could meet the needs of the Homelessness Outreach Team pilot and is available for immediate use; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Manager is directed to negotiate and execute an interlocal agreement with the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority for the use of a wheelchair-accessible vehicle for the Homelessness Outreach Team pilot program.

ADOPTED: May 12, 2016

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk