



COMMISSION ON SENIORS RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation Number: (20220209-04C): Cold Weather Shelters

WHEREAS, The Commission on Seniors serves as an advisory board to the City Council concerning the quality of life for seniors in the Austin area and to help ensure older adults are productive, independent, and healthy; and

WHEREAS, Cold weather puts seniors experiencing homelessness at significantly greater risk for death and adverse health impacts including hypothermia, heart attacks, kidney problems, liver damage, frostbite, or worse; and

WHEREAS, The effectiveness of the cold weather shelter is decreased when the population it serves does not know, from night to night, whether the shelter will be open; and

WHEREAS, The Winter Storm Uri After-Action Review (<https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/HSEM/2021-Winter-Storm-Uri-AAR-Findings-Report.pdf>), shows that the City of Austin was unprepared for winter weather response, especially during Winter Storm Uri. Sixty four percent of the people who died during this storm were aged 60 and older; and

WHEREAS, As of December 2021 there was no cold weather shelter plan in place.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Commission on Seniors makes the following recommendations relating to cold weather shelter planning for the City of Austin.

- By September of each year the city shall develop and implement an annual cold weather shelter plan for the city for that a minimum includes:
 - Coordination of outreach activities prior to cold weather events to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are aware of the available options.
 - Nightly cold weather options, rather than only when the temperature falls to below freezing, are available.
 - If a temperature cut-off is necessary, raise the shelter activation temperature to a minimum of forty degrees Fahrenheit. This recommendation was made following a study of over 100 cold weather shelters in 2010 by the National Coalition for the

Homeless (https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Winter_weather_report.pdf).

- Extend cold weather shelter morning hours till 10 a.m. and provide adequate space in day centers to accommodate people who would otherwise remain outside.

Date of Approval: February 9, 2022



Record of the vote: For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Angel, Bauman, Bordie, Cagle, Garcia-Pittman, Kareithi, Lopez-Guerrero, Lugo, Temperley, Van Sickle. Against: None Absent: Nicola, Spain

Attest: _____