

RESOLUTION NO. 20180215-048

WHEREAS, the Austin Municipal Court has been operating in its current building at 700 East 7th Street since it was built over 65 years ago; and

WHEREAS, the Court processes over 300,000 cases per year and Court facilities are used by many members of the Austin community while living in or visiting Austin; and

WHEREAS, the building has fallen into a high level of disrepair, potentially affecting the health and safety of more than 150 employees working there, as well as the numerous visitors who must enter to take care of legal matters; and

WHEREAS, the physical needs of the Austin Municipal Court, as well as the geographic growth of the city and counties it serves, have far outgrown the size and location of the building; and

WHEREAS, a well-functioning, and geographically accessible Austin Municipal Court system addresses several City Council strategic priorities, including Safety, Mobility, Government that Works for All, and Economic Opportunity & Affordability; and

WHEREAS, having more than one Austin Municipal Court location would be more convenient to the public and agencies that use the Court, could reduce the carbon footprint, traffic congestion, and public costs by reducing the commutes of customers, police officers, and staff; and

WHEREAS, regional court facilities requiring less travel-time could help the Austin Police Department operationally achieve greater uncommitted time for officers, as recommended by the Matrix Report; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) serves a specific population, many of whom are indigent or experiencing homelessness, and many of whom lack access to private or public transportation and live in the downtown area; and

WHEREAS, the current location of the DACC is also in a building of disrepair, is lacking the space needed to provide adequate services, and is in a unsustainable month-to-month lease; and

WHEREAS, the DACC supports and has caseworkers working and on the Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST), and the HOST Team needs a permanent location, ideally located in the downtown area; and

WHEREAS, the DACC collaborates with many non-profit agencies in order to provide services, and co-location of these agencies with DACC when possible would promote successful outcomes for the indigent and homeless populations the court serves; and

WHEREAS, the DACC hears cases relating to Class C misdemeanor offenses and City Code violations that occur within specific geographic boundaries specified by Austin City Code Section 2-10-32(A); and

WHEREAS, the DACC offers a variety of options for resolving cases through alternatives to monetary fines, including supervised community service options, requiring storage space for vehicles and equipment used for community service programming; and

WHEREAS, the DACC provides case management and connection to support services with a wait list of over 100 individuals requesting services, and therefore may need additional case management staff in the future; and

WHEREAS, should the Austin Municipal Court move to a model of North and South regional locations, the DACC facility could include some limited operational uses for downtown stakeholders; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

The City Manager is directed to identify options, including leasing, building and/or buying properties for the relocation of the Austin Municipal Court, creating one regional facility serving the north and one regional facility serving the south. The locations must be accessible by transit, include parking options for employees, jurors, and the public, and take into account the need for prosecutors' access to the location.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to develop recommendations for the future use of the current Austin Municipal Court site at 700 East 7th Street.

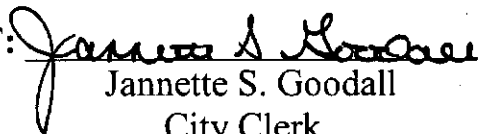
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to identify options for the relocation of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC). The DACC must be located on or near a transit line, within the geographic boundaries specified by City Code Section 2-10-32(A), include parking options for employees and jurors as well as storage space for vehicles and equipment use for community service, and include in space-planning the possibility of co-locating Austin Municipal Court windows and additional services for the populations served.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Due to the urgency of these conditions, the City Manager is directed to bring back the identified options, including work plan and time-estimates of completing each option, to the City Council no later than March 22, 2018.

ADOPTED: February 15, 2018

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk