

Constituent Briefing

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Office of Mackenzie Kelly, District 6

Item of concern: #31

Requirements: The purpose of this briefing is to highlight specific constituent comments involving a specific item on this week’s agenda. The requirements are that have been an overwhelming majority of correspondence to the district office from constituents that are voicing whether they are for or against the item number listed above.

Summation: The majority of correspondence from constituents has been against Item #31 hotel purchase in North Austin. These statements came via email and phone call from constituents that live in or around the area being discussed.



Constituent Comments

(This is a sampling of 45 constituent correspondence out of thousands)

Comment	Name	Date
We strongly object to having the hotels on Pecan Park Blvd. be used as a shelter for a variety of reasons.	Darius	1/26/21
I am opposed to the purchasing Candlewood at Pecan park! This idea make no sense as it there is no transportation, jobs, or healthcare near by. I empathize with homeless and know we have to fix the problem but this is not the solution. Plus it is also very close to schools. What good does it do to any one.. spending 9.5 million tax payer money for this is something I (the tax payer) doesn’t support! The capacity of Candlewood is 60! With same amount of money the city can house more people if proper research is done! Please pick another site and solution.	Divyansu	1/26/21
This is outrageous and dangerous to our community! Postpone this decision immediately until further solutions, that would work, are offered!	Melanie	1/26/21
Hello, I work at Fredas’s Seafood Grille, the restaurant right next to the Candlewood Hotel. I am strongly against transferring the hotel to a homeless shelter by the city of Austin. The residence and businesses are against this transfer. Homeless people is definitely something that needs to be talked about but not by putting them in this community. Thank you so much for your time.	Christal	1/26/21
Dear city council: this is regarding your purchase of Candlewood at Pecan park! Buying this property for housing homeless folks makes no sense! we oppose it cos it’s not good for our businesses and our neighborhood but that’s not it, I empathize with homeless, but putting them in an area where there is no transportation, no access to health services, no access to jobs, what good does it do to any one.. spending 9.5 million tax payer money for this is something I (the tax payer) doesn’t support! The capacity of Candlewood is 60! With same amount of money the city can house more people if proper research is done! My humble request to reconsider this for my neighborhood and community	Gayathri	1/26/21
I humbly request you reconsider your plan to purchase the Candlewood Suites located off Pecan Park Blvd as a site for homeless housing. The Candlewood suite location under consideration is adjacent to Westwood high School. As residents of the area this is the schools that our kids attend, and we are deeply concerned about the potential public safety risk that this presents. I understand that the situation is dire and the homeless require immediate support and attention. However, I am sure the city can find alternate locations that are not in the vicinity of schools.	Anuj	1/26/21

<p>Hello, I work at Freda's Seafood Grille, the Restaurant right next to the "Candlewood Hotel". I am strongly against transferring the hotel to a homeless shelter in the city of Austin. All businesses and residents are against this, it will destroy this community. We need to help the homeless, but not by putting more homeless people in this community. Reason: I consider that this is not the most reasonable area to locate them. Thanks for your time.</p>	<p>Carlos</p>	<p>1/25/21</p>
<p>The hotel site off off of Pecan Park is too close to a high school, middle school, and elementary school. A Cardinal Point solution would be more appropriate for this location.</p>	<p>Kim</p>	<p>1/25/21</p>
<p>For those whose houses touch or are in the vicinity or are in the apartments down the street with access to the park, this proposal will do extreme harm to quality of life and long-term housing value and neighborhood growth. In the proposal the only two means of "security" is a "fence" and a front desk worker, there is no call for posted police or 24/7 monitoring to keep the park and surrounding neighborhood safe where kids currently can play outside without fear of stepping on a needle or being exposed to public drug use, defecation, or the threat of being mugged. Furthermore, this location makes no sense for the QoL of the unsheltered individuals as it is not walkable to anywhere, is not near any of the medical facilities that do charity care, and has very limited public accommodations besides said park. This doesnt help the homeless, it just hides them from public view while also damaging the quality of life, safety and home value for thousands of middle class and working class people from all backgrounds who like their neighborhood as it is where the door can be unlocked and there is no petty crime.</p>	<p>William</p>	<p>1/26/21</p>
<p>I am writing with my plea for your assistance for all of District 6. My husband and I were your avid supporters during both elections because our district needs your leadership to change how the city of Austin is promoting the homeless issue. My most recent concern is the homeless shelter on Pecan Park Blvd and the proximity to schools in the area. 1. Noel Grisham Middle School is only 1.2 miles away. I would like to point out that the school districts expect a Kindergartener to be able to walk to school if the school is less than 2 miles away, so school bus service is not provided. Yet, the City Council proposes a homeless shelter only 1.2 miles away. 2. Westwood High School Baseball fields. Please note that the Westwood High School baseball fields (and also extra parking for students) is only 0.3 miles away. Families with children come to these fields for baseball, softball and other practices. 3. Westwood High School is across the street from the Westwood Baseball Fields. Do you agree that our children should be a high priority for this city? I firmly believe that this location is to close to schools. Furthermore, I am opposed to my tax money being used to house individuals who need rehabilitation who are unwilling to be rehabilitated. Why allow anyone to live rent free and continue on their chosen path that will only destroy themselves and others? Why is drug testing not mandatory to live rent free? Why is drug rehabilitation not mandatory to live rent free? To whom are these people accountable to if they are going to live on tax money? I firmly believe that one choose to live with no financial responsibilities, then one gives up the freedom that is found by living independently and must be accountable for their actions. In our society, actions have consequences. (Unless you choose to be homeless in Austin, then you get to live rent free and do whatever actions please you at the time.)The current course of the city of Austin Council is to the detriment of our city and our children. If the council disagrees with my point of view, I plea that concern for our children will move them to change the course of this shelter. It is my concern, that a tragedy will need to occur before eyes are opened. Thank you</p>	<p>Sarah</p>	<p>1/26/21</p>

<p>Do not purchase a hotel to house Austin's homeless population at 10811 Pecan Park Blvd. This puts the community and its children at extremely high risk. The location is in very close proximity to Westwood High School, Grisham Middle School, and Anderson Mill Elementary School. I live in District 6 where this proposed purchase and subsequent action would take place, and it will be very detrimental to our community. My hope is that the council actually listens and heeds the community's input rather than taking its usual course of action and ignoring it because you on the council mistakenly feel that you know best for everyone, and we simply do not understand the goals and have misinterpreted the possible negative outcomes. In this case, the risk to the children is simply too great to proceed.</p>	Peter	1/26/21
<p>I am writing to you regarding the proposal of using the Candlewood Hotel on Pecan Creek to be used for housing the homeless. I am very much against this because it is right next to Freda's Restaurant, where I dine frequently. Also, it is very close to Westwood HS baseball field. This is a danger to our community. Even though there are "Homeless Camps" nearby, there are more as you travel south on 183. The city needs to find accommodations closer to where these camps are in abundance. Please help us to have a safe community. I appreciate your consideration.</p>	Millie	1/26/21
<p>Title above says it all--am thoroughly disgusted by your decisions. Adler finally admitted banning the camping ban isn't working, but now wants to transfer the problems you've exacerbated by moving them near the suburbs? Shocking that living under overpasses and tracking urine and feces everywhere is dangerous and not beneficial for the homeless population nor the general public. When will common sense enter into council and mayoral decisions? Adopting California policies will result in increased crime and ruining neighborhoods we and our kids can feel safe in. We have already lived through this nightmare in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, thus we opted to move to Austin years ago. Your decisions affect the long term, not just the short term. Between constantly wasting taxpayer \$, forcing annexation of our neighborhood, increasing the homeless population, defunding the police, creating dense housing zoning and putting in an underground railway, we in District 6 feel completely alienated! We are independent moderates and understand something has to be done, but these issues are why egocentric, constituent ignoring Flannigan was voted out of our district. Our understanding is that a large camping ground already built for the homeless isn't fully occupied. How does buying hotels in NW Austin near suburban housing and retail establishments guarantee anyone will want to live there either? We work hard to raise our family and pay our taxes and now we have to worry about increased crime and the value of our home decreasing. REINSTALL THE CAMPING BAN IMMEDIATELY for all of Austin! Although Governor Abbott isn't ideal, we are 100% behind him on this issue of cracking down on COA and forcing the ban be reinstated or absolving us of any further wasted tax increases. Fast forward 20 years--do you want to be the city that people are moving away from or that businesses shun? All the CA tech firms coming in now can move out later if their management and employees don't feel safe here. Please learn from California's mistakes--stop emulating them.</p>	Aylin	1/26/21
<p>This is regarding your purchase of Candlewood at Pecan park! Buying this property for housing homeless folks makes no sense! we oppose it cos it's not good for our businesses and our neighborhood but that's not it, I empathize with homeless, but putting them in an area where there is no transportation, no access to health services, no access to jobs, what good does it do to any one.. spending 9.5 million tax payer money for this is something I (the tax payer) doesn't support! The capacity of Candlewood is 60! With same amount of money the city can house more people if proper research is done! My humble request to reconsider this for my neighborhood and community! Look Northwest to the Seattle metro for anecdotes, and you will observe unintended consequences of the concept of smaller, micro homeless shelters spread across the metro: 1) Collective capacity of micro centers is never enough. As such, the effect is that those who get cut off in the first come first serve queue every night end up in tent encampments in that local area, road sides, under freeway overpasses and bridges, and then they squat there until forcibly removed.</p>	Priyank	1/26/21

<p>2) Those that squat then loiter and beg (sadly) and many spend the money they receive on alcohol and tobacco, as well as defacate and urinate anywhere (it happened in folks' open backyards too), and petty crime rises too. 3) as encampments and squatters grow in volume, more homeless humans will flock to those areas to anchor too in perception of free sanctuary (birds of a feather flock together)The city is better off investing tax dollars into a high capacity set of facilities (large apartment complexes or high rises in a particular area) for homeless housing "coupled" with programs to incentivize/rehabilitate/support these people to find jobs and spend their new limited income on basic necessities, including graduating to low cost permanent shelter. "Where" will always be a question in a mature city...but that can be resolved if there is a solid plan. Its not that tax dollars cant be reinvested in social support programs. But in the PacNW it was a "revenue spending problem" where tax dollars are spent to buy small housing facilities....and then nothing else. Nothing to help an individual improve their own respective economic situation besides free temporary shelter. It was a case of a mis-judgement in use of taxpayer revenue. Buying a 60-person (there are way more homeless people than that) candlewood hotel purely purposed as a temp shelter (assuming that is what it is) in suburbia is just diffusing the problem into the entire metro area. It is not resolving the fundamental issue.</p>		
<p>I am objecting to the idea of using the candlewood suites as a homeless shelter. We already have homeless people under the bridges. Our professional complex which is down the street has many doctors offices. This is not a safe environment for our patients and staff. Our complex has already had things stolen and vandalism. Please reconsider this use of a hotel to homeless shelter</p>	Raj	1/26/21
<p>This hotel should NOT be a place for the homeless to transition. This hotel is located by residential properties (mine being one of them). I am afraid this would attract more homeless people in this area which would increase drug deals, thefts, etc.... This hotel is also located next door to a long time restaurant Freda's. Having homeless people hanging around the restaurant would make me not want to go there. I believe there could be hotels along IH35 that could be for the homeless that would not be next to residential areas that could be suitable. Please vote this option down. I appreciate your time.</p>	Rhonda	1/26/21
<p>This is literally 1 block from my office. As it is, we get infiltrated with homeless people leaving trash on our property, attempting to steal electricity by plugging into our outside outlets, stealing items not bolted down, I can't begin to imagine what the introduction of an even larger population of these individuals roaming the area is going to be like. Will they be in our parking lot panhandling our patients? Will they be looking in people's cars for items to steal? Vandalism? This is not the location for this effort. We are hard-working, tax paying citizens and small business owners. Buy a plot of land in Del Valle, set up some tents and relocate them there. Provide some skills and training services, provide some mental health services, but don't jam them into a thriving business and residential community.</p>	Scott	1/26/21
<p>I herein cordially request that you please delay your vote on the purchase of the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Boulevard to allow this community more time to review your plans.</p>	Connie	1/26/21
<p>Do you data on other cities that have done this and to what degree was it successful? I live very close to Candlewood Suites and am concerned about several things. Does it draw more crime to our area, petty crime has certainly increased in our area in the past two years. Who cleans up after them or does the area become another eye sore for our community and a huge investment of our dollars. Are these homeless Austin residents or are they coming in from other areas?</p>	Joan	1/26/21
<p>Please delay the vote to purchase the Hampton Inn to give the surrounding community time to review the plan for the property.</p>	Eddie	1/26/21

<p>Although I am very much in support of acquisition of motels to house this increasing homeless situation in Austin, I do feel the location of such motels/hotels should be scrutinized in order to protect the area surrounding them. This is a huge retail location, eateries/shops/businesses abound and are surrounded by family oriented neighborhoods with schools. Children in this area walk to/from school often, play in our parks, residents use the walking paths, etc. My employer is located on Pecan Park, only an overgrown lot between our parking lot and this Hampton Inn. I do not feel this is the best choice Austin could make. Frankly, you all should've thought about this problem before you started supporting every homeless person in the State of Texas.</p>	Katie	1/26/21
<p>We were recently made aware of an agenda item of the Austin City Council that is up for vote tomorrow (1/27) to approve the City's purchase of the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Boulevard for use as a facility to help house homeless individuals. We certainly understand City Council working to address the homeless situation in Austin, however since this proposal has arisen so quickly, the surrounding neighbors, including us at 10700 Pecan Park, have not had time to understand what the plan entails and any potential impact to local businesses and residents. We are asking that the City Council delay the vote to provide us neighbors the opportunity to learn more specifics on the plans for this facility.</p>	ShiAnn	1/26/21
<p>I am requesting that the City Council delay the vote on the purchase of Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Blvd. We just became aware that this is an agenda item for tomorrow's meeting (1/27). My office building is very close to the Hampton Inn. By delaying the vote, it will provide us neighbors the opportunity to learn more specifics on the plans for this facility to help house homeless individuals. We would like to learn more about the potential impact to local businesses and residents.</p>	Allyson	1/26/21
<p>I am requesting that you delay the vote on this purchase to allow more time for the community to review your plans.</p>	Mary	1/26/21
<p>I was just made aware of an agenda item of the Austin City Council that is up for vote tomorrow (1/27) to approve the City's purchase of the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Boulevard for use as a facility to help house homeless individuals. The growing homeless population in Austin has been an issue and I understand the City Council's urgency to address the homeless situation in Austin, however since this proposal has arisen so quickly, my surrounding neighbors and I, have not had time to understand what the plan entails and any potential impact to local businesses and residents. I respectfully ask that you delay the vote to provide neighbors and the local community the opportunity to learn more specifics on the plans for this facility.</p>	Denim	1/26/21
<p>Hi City Council, please delay the vote on Wednesday 1/27/21 in regard to using the Hampton Inn and other hotels on Pecan Park for homeless or low income housing... to provide us neighbors the opportunity to review and learn more specifics on the plans for this facility. Thank you!</p>	Courtney	1/26/21
<p>Good afternoon I work at 10700 Pecan Park, I have for almost 7 years. I typically leave after dark, very late at night. I would very much like some additional information as to all of the specifics prior to any vote on the upcoming purchase of Hampton Inn.</p>	Chris	1/26/21
<p>Request that you table agenda item to allow public more time to review specifics of this project.</p>	Arturo	1/26/21
<p>Please delay this vote, as we have not had time to review the plans and the impact that it may have on local residents.</p>	Dee	1/26/21
<p>I am an employee in the area and have concerns regarding the future purchase of the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park road to house the homeless. I am requesting that the city delay the vote until the necessary information regarding this project can be acquired. Thank you for your consideration, have a nice day.</p>	Jordan	1/26/21
<p>Delay the vote to purchase Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Blvd to allow more time for the community to review the plans.</p>	Victoria	1/26/21
<p>I was recently notified of your intent to purchase the Hampton Inn to help with homeless individuals. Since the community just learned of this I would like to ask that you consider postponing the vote to allow the residence near by to review your plans.</p>	Brandy	1/26/21

I would ask the vote be tabled to allow the neighbors time to hear to understand the plan the city has in completing this transaction.	Duane	1/26/21
Please delay voting as this was a sudden event that I have not gathered information on yet.	Steven	1/26/21
I am requesting that the City Council delay the vote to allow more time for the community to review the plans and details of this purchase. Multiple businesses and residents of nearby neighborhoods will be impacted and sufficient time to review all of the information and possible ramifications of this purchase are needed and deserved.	Jonna	1/26/21
Please delay the vote utilizing the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Blvd, allowing more time for the community to review the plans.	Lisa	1/26/21
Would you please consider a delay in the vote to allow for more time for the community to review your plans to use the Hampton Inn to house the homeless community.	Katherine	1/26/21
Please delay the vote to allow for more time for our community to review the plans	Missy	1/26/21
This is a request to please postpone the vote on the purchase of the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Boulevard. Our Community needs more time to understand the specifics so that we can plan accordingly.	Mirela	1/26/21
Please delay the vote on purchasing the Hampton Inn on Pecan Park Boulevard to provide us neighbors the opportunity to learn more specifics on the plans for this facility. There has not been enough time between when this was announced and the vote for us to truly understand the plans and the effect it will have on our neighborhood.	Reesa	1/26/21
We need to delay the vote to provide us the opportunity to learn specifics for this facility. We have not had sufficient time to understand the plan and potential impact to residents.	Heather	1/26/21
I am writing to request a delay this vote on 1/27 so the community has time to review all the data & plans.	Sarah	1/26/21
I was just recently advised that a hotel near me will be purchased potentially to house homeless individuals. While I feel that approaching the homeless crisis is very important, I do not believe we have had time as local neighbors in this area to review the plans in this purchase. I ask that you please consider delaying this vote until the necessary individuals have their due time to review all items.	Kris	1/26/21
I currently reside less than 5 miles from this and work even closer to this Hampton Inn. The crime in my apt complex has gone up and the number of homeless people under the overpasses as I go to and from work has gotten worse. While I see y'all are trying to do something about it... what exactly is it? Is this going to invite more crime opportunities to my apartment? Is this going to be a center where COVID can spread rapidly? Am I going to encounter more beggars and homeless people at every light stop on my way to work, to where I feel even more uncomfortable? I'm asking for a delay in vote for y'all can provide more information to us locals who live and work very close to this.	Delaney	1/26/21
Please delay vote of purchasing Hampton Inn on Pecan Park. This is very close to my neighborhood and i am VERY concerned it will de-value our property and need time to research.	Rachael	1/26/21

Conclusion: Based on review of the total constituent correspondence that has come in to date, 2/10 (20%) support item #31 and 10/2 (80%) oppose. The majority of the opposing constituents would like more time for discussion and input on the project.

