



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager *S.H. Howard*

FROM: Dianna Grey, Homeless Strategy Officer *Dianna Grey*

DATE: August 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Designated Encampments, Resolution No. 20210506-070

On May 6, 2021, Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20210506-070, directing the City Manager to provide information and analysis regarding possible designated encampments on City of Austin property for people experiencing homelessness. This memo summarizes the briefing provided to Mayor and Council on July 27, 2021 by Dianna Grey, Homeless Strategy Officer.

Since the May 6th resolution, multiple staff memos and briefings have been provided in relation to this resolution. On July 19, 2021, staff provided a [memo](#) to Council that identified the two city-owned sites that met most of the established criteria for a designated encampment. Staff reported that continued efforts to establish a designated encampment on either site would require extensive community outreach and engagement, additional staffing and operational funding and the following:

- Zoning, platting, site plan, & other permitting
- Application to and approval from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, as required by HB1925.

Complementary Efforts to Increase Crisis Bed Capacity

In addition to carrying out Council-directed analysis regarding potential designated encampments, Homeless Strategy Division staff has continued aggressive efforts to increase crisis bed capacity for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Austin:

- The Southbridge Shelter, a former hotel with 75 guest rooms, opened on June 15, 2021, and is now operating at approximately 90% occupancy. Homeless Strategy Division staff transferred daily operation of the shelter to Front Steps on July 19th.

- This week, Homeless Strategy Division staff will initiate operations at the Northbridge Shelter. This City-owned former hotel was previously being utilized as a COVID-19 Protective Lodge and is slated for eventual conversion to permanent supportive housing (PSH). It will be utilized as 65-room shelter while the PSH design and financing are being solidified.
- Assertive pursuit of community partnerships and funding leverage.
- HSD continues to monitor opportunities for the restoration of beds at congregate shelters. While the community's current COVID-19 risk level does not allow for safe restoration of bed capacity, HSD will continue to work closely with APH and the Medical Authority on this front.
- The City and its community partners are sustaining efforts to increase the pace and volume of permanent housing placements.

Next steps

Given the timeline, substantial staff effort and financial resources necessary to pursue the creation of a designated encampment on either of the two identified City-owned properties, staff requests direction from Council before initiating any further activity related to community engagement, rezoning, application for state approval, or operational planning. Staff will continue to work toward the creation of additional shelter beds or alternatives in the community. We look forward to receiving further Council direction regarding this resolution.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Anne Morgan, Interim Deputy City Manager
CMO Executive Team
Kimberly McNeeley, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Ken Snipes, Director, Austin Resource Recovery
Adrienne Sturup, Interim Director, Austin Public Health
Rosie Truelove, Director, Housing and Planning Department