



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 2/1/2017

In Control: Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Human Services and San Antonio Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley and Chief William McManus

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Update on Comprehensive Homeless Plan and Panhandling

SUMMARY:

An update on the Comprehensive Homeless Plan and Panhandling

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) will present an update on the Comprehensive Homeless Plan that combines traditional law enforcement and social service strategies to address homelessness.

On December 9, 2015 DHS and SAPD presented the Comprehensive Homeless Plan that balanced traditional law enforcement and social service strategies to address homelessness. This briefing provides updates on both immediate and long term strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

DHS serves as the coordinating department in managing City of San Antonio homeless initiatives and investments. This includes oversight of homeless investments; participation in the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) Continuum of Care; coordination of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; and homeless policy research and analysis. The Police Department plays a key role in the plan by maintaining a team that focuses on connecting homeless to services and housing, reunifies them with family or places them in the criminal justice system.

The San Antonio Police Department works in collaboration with area non-profit organizations, the business community and neighborhoods throughout the City to formulate strategies and implement programs that address the underlying issues that contribute to homelessness and panhandling. In addition to the continued efforts of the IMPACT Team, which has made 1,324 contacts with homeless Downtown and in the surrounding area since October 2015, the SAPD is working on the following initiatives:

- **Point in Time Count**

On January 26, 2017, the SAPD provided logistical support for the Point-in-Time count which is a one-day project to complete a survey of the homeless population in the San Antonio area. Representatives from multiple agencies, including the SAPD, participate in the planning and execution of this effort which is critical to ensuring the City of San Antonio continues to receive government funding for vital resources and services for the homeless.

- **No Trespassing Signage/Criminal Trespass Agreements**

SAPD continues to encourage homeowners and businesses in areas where the homeless and panhandlers frequent to install no trespassing signage and complete criminal trespass agreements that elevate violations to a Class C misdemeanor resulting in stiffer penalties for violators.

- **Crisis Intervention Training**

The SAPD provides Crisis Intervention Training to all officers through its annual in-service curriculum. CIT is a valuable tool that provides officers with training focused on de-escalation techniques and other strategies to effectively interact with individuals that may be mentally unstable, under the influence of drugs or exhibiting behavior that makes the individual a threat to themselves or others.

- **Identification Verification**

The SAPD is currently working with Senator John Cornyn and Congressman Lloyd Doggett, respectively, to facilitate discussion with the Social Security Administration to recognize ID verification letters prepared by SAPD as an acceptable document for inclusion on its list of qualified documents. This action would allow homeless individuals the ability to apply for various government programs and services which require proper identification.

In addition to these ongoing efforts to address homelessness and panhandling, SAPD SAFE officers throughout the City continue to monitor their respective areas to identify locations where homeless and panhandlers have been observed. Officers advise residents and businesses of the importance of installing signage and consistently reporting individuals so that SAPD can respond. As part of its ongoing commitment to community policing, the SAPD also coordinates clean-ups to address community concerns and enhance quality of life and works with Haven for Hope staff to provide program information to prospective clients.

City investments support strategies to maintain the effective end of veteran homelessness and address chronic homelessness through targeted investments in transformational services including shelter, food, counseling, street outreach, mental health, and rapid re-housing. As a part of these continued efforts, DHS coordinates with SAPD, SARAH, Centro San Antonio, local homeless, non-profit, and faith based service providers, and multiple City departments.

ISSUE:

On December 9, 2015 DHS and SAPD presented the Comprehensive Homeless Plan that balanced traditional law enforcement and social service strategies to address homelessness. This briefing provides updates on both immediate and long term strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

The immediate action strategies implemented include: the creation of a police/mental health outreach team (IMPACT); safety improvements to the Haven for Hope Prospects Courtyard; effectively ending Veteran homelessness; redesign of the local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and implementation of the Charitable Feeding Policy.

Progress towards longer term initiatives include: realignment of resources to focus on Chronic Homeless, prioritization of Housing Subsidies and development of supportive housing; and the expansion of mental health and substance abuse treatment.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.