

Department of Environmental and Health Services

Dallas Homeless Consortium
“Downtown Subcommittee” Report

DOWNTOWN HOMELESS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

To make Downtown Dallas a place where residents, businesses, visitors, services and homeless can coexist in a safe and healthy environment.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Subcommittee was created in September 1999 by the Homeless Consortium to review the issues relative to homelessness and the impact on the downtown area. The committee was made up of representatives from the business community, social service providers, formerly homeless persons and residents of downtown. The committee was chaired by Mike Anderson, Operations Manager of Neiman Marcus Downtown. The Downtown Subcommittee solicited responses to a quality of life survey from those concerned with homelessness in the downtown area. Based on the survey results, the subcommittee broke into three work groups to develop short-term and long-range recommendations in the following three areas:

Resource And Enforcement Management

- < Enforcement of existing ordinances relating to criminal offenses
- < Police presence in the area
- < Location and extent of lighting in the downtown area
- < Sanitation services in the downtown area

Political Issues

- < Public restrooms
- < Street feeding

People Issues

- < Extended hours for homeless services
- < Services for special needs groups-mentally ill, exoffenders, substance abusers, minority males

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS - COMPLETED IN 12 MONTHS OR LESS

- Assignment of a full time staff person dedicated to the implementation of these and other recommendations regarding homelessness in Dallas.
- Increase police presence downtown to handle growth and support special initiatives.
- Access grant funding for police overtime.
- Maximize communication among DPD, DART Police, Dallas Ambassadors, Downtown Security Assn., etc.
- Develop downtown neighborhood crime watch projects and signage and continue ICP programming.
- City of Dallas should develop a Downtown Dallas Lighting Plan.
- Address DPD identified “hot spots” in need of additional lighting.
- Coordinate with Downtown Improvement District for purchase of additional trash containers.
- Schedule additional trash pick-ups by City of Dallas Sanitation Department as needed.
- Install dumpsters in key areas utilized for homeless feedings.
- Begin dialog with state and local agencies regarding the use of public property for storage of personal property by homeless persons
- Establish and enforce street feeding guidelines that address food safety and sanitation issues.
- Develop printed brochure of street feeding guidelines and a plan to distribute and inform the public of the guidelines.
- Support private attempts to coordinate feedings.
- Enforce ordinances against littering.
- Add trash cans and increase frequency of trash collection in certain areas.
- Utilize existing public facilities (currently supervised and maintained) as public comfort stations. Extend current hours and maintenance budgets as needed to provide necessary services (Proposed sites are in the Appendix)
- Enforce laws that prohibit public urination and defecation.

- Provide longer service hours by extending the hours of operation at the Day Resource Center and the Stewpot.
- Develop an “Assertive Case Management Unit” and a computerized intake and tracking system. The unit will coordinate with DPD and other social service agencies and is supported by DPD.
- Initiate ongoing dialog with parole and probation to address the large percent of ex-offenders in the homeless population.
- Review options for substance abusers other than City Detox

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS - COMPLETED IN 12 to 24 MONTHS

- Create a Safe Haven Program for the mentally ill.
- Apply for additional transitional housing grant funding to assist single males and females.
- Develop a five year plan to address homelessness in Dallas.
- Support a three to five year plan addressing deployment of officers in the CBD unit.
- Develop a public/private partnership to install a video surveillance system to enhance law enforcement efforts.
- Add emergency telephones throughout the CBD.
- Revise current City of Dallas policy that requires developers to finance installation and 20-year maintenance of new lighting to provide City funding for maintenance and energy expenses.
- Include a comfort station location in long term plan for the Arts District, any proposed City Center TIF garage, and in the new arena development area.
- Investigate feasibility of coin/token operated automatic public toilets for future use and development (most have advertising component to offset cost of installation and operation).