

City of Austin Clean City Strategy

Pride in our City

Everyone deserves to live in a clean City. A clean city speaks to hope, it speaks to dignity, for all of our community members and visitors. The City of Austin strives to create pride in our community by administering cleanup programs across multiple departments working to keep our city clean and all residents safe. The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to keeping our parks clean, are stewards of our natural resources, and protect our ecosystem. Watershed Protection Department is dedicated to protecting lives and property by reducing erosion and keeping our streams and waterways clean. Resource Recovery is devoted to serving our neighborhoods and all of our neighbors, and the Public Works Department maintains our infrastructure including our roadways, bridges, and overpasses. The City of Austin is also working collaboratively with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to maximize our resources and address as many areas as possible.



Public Works

Public Works contracts with outside crews that provide once-per-month cleanup services at 34 locations across the city. The department adds or deletes sites based on 3-1-1 calls, information or observations by City staff, or through the collaboration with TxDOT. Public Works continues to add sites and increases frequency of cleanups as needed. TxDOT contracts with the same crews to perform cleanups at 17 locations.

If there are residents experiencing homelessness at the site, crews will not remove individuals from these locations—only debris and unattended items. Public Works posts signage at cleanup sites 72 hours of advance to give notice that crews will be coming. Prior to and at the time of cleanups, “be safe – be seen” bags are provided to individuals to store any personal belongings. The cleaning process includes the removal of general solid waste and debris only from directly under bridges in the designated locations.

Watershed Protection

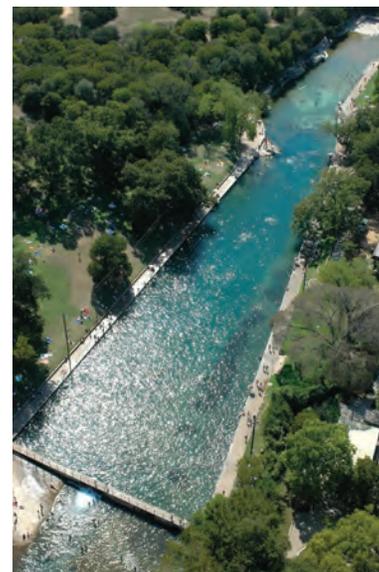
Watershed Protection assesses homeless encampments on Watershed Protection lands or drainage infrastructure. The department conducts cleanups when there are significant flood or water quality risks. Cleanups are generally conducted through a contractor. The department also makes an effort to connect residents of the encampments to social services prior to a cleanup.

City Landholding Departments

Departments with publicly accessible land are endeavoring to keep dangerous areas cleared of encampments. Non-dangerous areas still do not allow encampments; a process for contacting and supporting those experiencing homelessness is in place, while also ensuring public spaces are safe and accessible for all.

Austin Resource Recovery

Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) is expanding to meet the cleanup needs for the City of Austin. The department provides on-demand cleanup support for other city departments, and daily downtown litter abatement activities, in addition to providing its core services of curbside collections street cleaning, and brush and bulk collection. Austin Resource Recovery is also taking 3-1-1 homeless calls, tracking the information, and prioritizing cleanup areas.



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Austin Resource Recovery

Storage Support for our Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness: For those experiencing homelessness, simply being able to store belongings can be life-altering. Access to storage bins allows those experiencing homelessness to safeguard important documents that can be hard or expensive to replace, as well as protect sentimental items and keepsakes, which can't be replaced at all. Everyday activities are difficult or impossible for anyone who has to protect their belongings around the clock.

Single-Site Storage Facility: A best-practice for providing storage for those experiencing homelessness is using a warehouse that can hold "curbside cart" containers for storing belongings. Each cart is assigned to an individual. The City is evaluating several successful models across the U.S. to support development of the Austin storage program. ARR has conducted a site visit to HealthSouth parking garage to determine if it is a suitable site until a long-term facility is built or acquired. If it is determined a suitable site, we anticipate a late March start date. Costs to secure the site, program management, and operation are still under review.



Current Storage Cart Support: ARR has provided 144 carts to the ARCH to support personal storage. Purple carts have been acquired and designated exclusively for personal asset storage. The designated color establishes a unique identifier that will be easily distinguishable for the designated purpose, which we believe will be a first in the United States.

Citywide Lockers: Creating smaller storage opportunities in strategic locations around the City of Austin will require a lower level of support and provide convenient access. These units will be similar to gymnasium or travel center lockers, and most likely will require some form of staff oversight or third-party support. The City is currently working to acquire a set of low-cost lockers to pilot this option.

Encampment Cleanup Storage: The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) has purchased a shipping container to store unattended personal items found in City parks. The container will be located at the PARD facility at the Nash Hernandez building adjacent to Lady Bird Lake. The container will also be available to other City departments as space permits. ARR is providing the carts for storage.

Working together

Violet bag: The Violet Bag Project provides designated violet bags to homeless encampments to help keep the area clean and focuses on encampments with high volumes of trash. Individuals within the homeless community are encouraged to use these bags to collect garbage for pick-up by Austin Resource Recovery twice a week. Users have expressed appreciation for the ability to keep areas cleaner and safer. The project has been well received in its seven locations and will be expended to three more in the coming weeks.



Workforce solutions: The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD), Austin Public Health, in partnership with The Other Ones Foundation and Family Eldercare, created Workforce First. Workforce First's purpose is to offer people experiencing homelessness extremely low barrier employment opportunities as an alternative to panhandling as well as to pave pathways to stable employment and housing. Participants are given transportation to and from work sites, lunch, and counseling services, and have collectively removed 50 tons of trash from green spaces. The program also provides mobile outreach, job training, connection to banking and saving services, and access to social services.

Homelessness Initiative - Clean City Strategy

For more information please visit: austintexas.gov/homelessness
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