

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1803
By: Wilson
Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In February of 2021, the Austin City Council announced a plan to purchase a hotel in southern Williamson County where the city will relocate homeless individuals from Austin's central business district. The plan was set in motion without notifying Williamson County officials, or detailing how the City of Austin intended to provide necessary support and resources such as health care, transportation, mental health services, job training programs, or security. In order to address the growing homelessness problem in Central Texas, more coordination is needed between cities and counties to ensure that appropriate resources and programs are available to individuals in need. A regional approach is necessary as it is not possible for any city to simply export their problems to another area without addressing the root of the problem. H.B. 1803 seeks to remedy this situation by requiring county approval of a proposed purchase or conversion by a municipality of a property to house homeless individuals.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1803 amends the Local Government Code to prohibit a municipality from purchasing a property to house homeless individuals, or converting the use of a property owned by the municipality to enable the property to house homeless individuals, unless the commissioners court of the county in which the property is located approves a plan that describes the following:

- the availability of local health care for proposed new residents, defined by the bill as homeless individuals the municipality intends to house at the purchased or converted property;
- the availability of indigent services for proposed new residents;
- the availability of reasonably affordable public transportation for proposed new residents;
- local law enforcement resources in the area of the property; and
- what steps the municipality has taken to coordinate with the local mental health authority to provide for any proposed new residents.

The bill requires a municipality to respond to any reasonable requests for additional information made by the commissioners court regarding the proposed property purchase or use conversion.

H.B. 1803 requires a municipality that intends to purchase or convert a property to house homeless individuals to take the following actions:

- post notice of the proposed use of the property at the property not later than the 61st day before the proposed date of purchase or conversion; and
- publish notice of the proposed purchase or conversion of the property for 10 consecutive days in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the property is located, with the first day being not later than the 61st day before the proposed date of purchase or conversion.

H.B. 1803 applies only to a municipal purchase or use conversion that is not final on the bill's effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.