

**SUBJECT:** Requiring county approval of some city property purchases or conversions

**COMMITTEE:** Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 5 ayes — Cortez, Holland, Gates, Minjarez, Slaton

4 nays — Bernal, Campos, Jarvis Johnson, Morales Shaw

**WITNESSES:** For — Bill Gravell and Cynthia Long, Williamson County; Rupal Chaudhari; Freda Cheng; Marc Duchon; Bianca Ramirez; Laura Templeton; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ender Reed, Harris County Commissioners Court; Marcia Strickler, WilcoWeThePeople; Baldev Chaudhari; Ronald Cheng; Frances Musgrove)

Against — Warren Burkley, Austin Justice Coalition; Jo Kathryn Quinn, Caritas of Austin; Rachel Cohen-Miller, Disability Rights Texas; Walter Moreau, Foundation Communities; Eric Samuels, Texas Homeless Network; Christel Erickson-Collins; Matt Hull; Alicia Weigel; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kendra Garrett, Austin Justice Coalition; Alexa Aragonz, City of Arlington; Brie Franco, City of Austin; Tammy Embrey, City of Corpus Christi; Jamaal Smith, City of Houston, Office of the Mayor Sylvester Turner; Christine Wright, City of San Antonio; Aaryce Hayes, Disability Rights Texas; Dick Lavine, Every Texan; Amanda Williams, Lilith Fund; Matthew Lovitt, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Carisa Lopez, Texas Freedom Network; Madeline Kennedy, Thrive Youth Center; Nicholas Bach; Caroline Duble)

**BACKGROUND:** It has been suggested that more coordination is needed between cities and counties to address the growing problem of homelessness in the state. Some have called to require that municipal plans to buy and convert properties to house homeless individuals account for necessary support and resources for the proposed residents of the purchased or converted property.

**DIGEST:** HB 1803 would prohibit a municipality from purchasing or converting a property to house homeless individuals unless the commissioners court of

the county in which the property was located approved a plan that described:

- the availability of local health care for proposed new residents, including access to Medicaid services and mental health services;
- 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.

A municipality would have to respond to any reasonable requests for additional information made by the commissioners court about the proposed property purchase or use conversion.

The bill also would require a municipality that intended to buy or convert a property to house homeless individuals to post notice of the proposed use at the property no later than the 61st day before the proposed date of purchase or conversion and, beginning no later than that day, publish notice of the proposal for 10 consecutive days in a newspaper of general local circulation.

HB 1803 would apply only to a municipal purchase or use conversion that was not final on the bill's effective date. The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.