



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Teri Castillo, District 5 Councilmember
COPIES TO: Erik Walsh; City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk; Andrew Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT: DART Cost Recovery CCR
DATE: February 27, 2024

Issue:

I would be grateful for your support in ensuring Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART) properties do not continue to drain limited City of San Antonio (COSA) resources by requesting staff develop a policy which –

1. creates a comprehensive fee structure for all DART properties to be paid until the property is brought into full compliance; and
2. directs the entirety of those fees toward the COSA Relocation Assistance Fund, so the City can assist more families transition to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Background:

The objective of this request is to establish a comprehensive fee structure which ensures DART properties are held responsible for maintaining the safety of their structures, thus reducing the necessity to rely on municipal services to uphold the safety of the property and the surrounding neighborhood.

DART investigates properties which have a minimum two-year documented code and/or criminal history. Because of DART-involved properties, residents can encounter safety concerns related to drug, gang, and/or other criminal activity. Furthermore, health and safety issues frequently emanate from these properties, which lead to negative perceptions about an entire block or neighborhood. As a result, families move away, businesses close, vacant properties increase, and overall investment decreases.

The issue lies in the significant allocation of City resources toward DART properties, which frequently prove to be a burden on municipal resources. These properties commonly exhibit multiple public safety issues and illegal activities, necessitating city intervention to alleviate concerns within the surrounding neighborhood. The City Attorney's Office must lead a team consisting of the San Antonio Police Department, Code Enforcement, Neighborhood and

Housing Services, the Department of Human Services, Animal Care Services, Metro Health, and TABC to address DART properties.

Multifamily properties can also be subject to DART whenever the owner fails to keep their property safe. Families must then relocate to another property, and in cases where a family is financially unable to relocate, they can apply for and receive relocation assistance through COSA's Relocation Assistance Program. Under current COSA practice, families impacted by DART are eligible for two months of rent and deposits along with other non-housing resources. Relocation assistance funds, which can also include rental assistance, are scarce in nature given limited annual funding, San Antonio's affordable housing crisis, and an increase in eviction judgements post-pandemic.

COSA and its taxpayers should not shoulder the burden for the harmful inaction of others. So, I ask that COSA take steps to protect the health, safety, and welfare of San Antonio residents by requiring property owners with properties investigated by DART pay a required fee until their property is brought into full compliance. The fees collected should then be placed into the Relocation Assistance Fund.

There is precedent for such a policy. The City of Dallas codified a monthly fee structure for properties with habitual criminal activity. The enrolled properties continue to pay a fee until the property is brought into compliance. There is also local precedent for the assignment of paid fines to specific causes/funds. In Section 20-109 of the City Code, a portion of Code and Animal Care related fines are directed to compliance assistance accounts for Development Services and Animal Care Services, respectively. Similar language can be used to direct fees specifically from DART properties into the Relocation Assistance Program as part of this policy request.

This request is limited to DART properties and is not intended to, nor should it include low-income homeowner occupants with minor reoccurring violations who are unable to afford to bring their property up to code.

Submitted for Council consideration by:

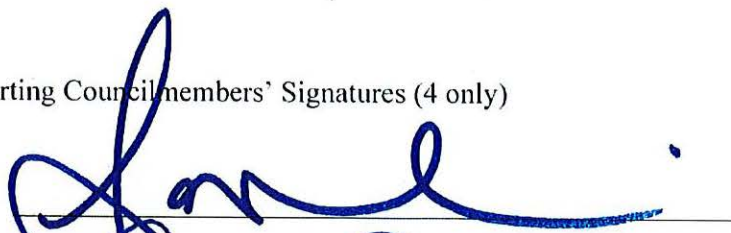


Councilmember Teri Castillo, District 5

Supporting Council members' Signatures (4 only)

District

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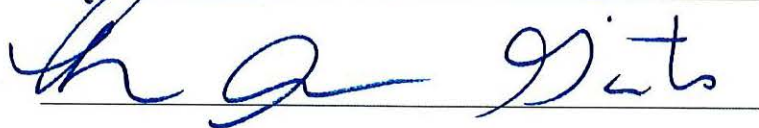
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