



Austin Police Association
"Serving Those Who Serve"

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Austin City Council Members,

As it currently stands, the Austin Police Department routinely floats around 500 officers short of our former staffing levels. Thanks to your efforts and that of city staff, we are moving towards the ratification of a long-term contract between the Austin Police Association and the City of Austin. A crucial part of this contract is a modernized hiring process to select the best and brightest to join our ranks. Once this contract is ratified, we are confident that the Austin Police Department's recruiting division and training academy can get us closer to the department's staffing goal.

Getting the best and brightest to defend and serve this great city requires a nationwide search. As a result of this nationwide search, we frequently have officers uprooting their families and moving cross county. The uncertain nature of starting a new job and an 8-month training academy makes some recruits hesitant to take the final step. If the City of Austin were able to offer housing to these officers, it would help to relieve the stress of the relocation and allow recruits more time to consider where they want to live before moving here permanently.

Another consideration is that officers who are laterally transferring into APD's training academy frequently take a drastic pay cut while they are cadets. Offsetting the cadet salary with provided housing would bolster recruiting efforts of those who are further along in their careers with other agencies and hesitant to take such a drastic pay cut by being a cadet. It also would have the added benefit of addressing the affordability questions that many potential recruits look at when deciding whether to come to Austin or not as a cadet.

Other agencies are also considering similar housing programs, including in the Central Texas area, which will make the potential candidate market even more competitive. Item 23 on today's agenda would help Austin avoid falling behind the curve and look towards progressive solutions to continue to address our staffing and recruiting crisis.

For these reasons, the Austin Police Association supports Item 23 as well as any program that helps us attract the best applicants who will meet our standards to become one of Austin's Finest.

Respectfully,

Michael Bullock
President
Austin Police Association