The Way Home

Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, at 3:30pm
1. Meeting Introduction
   □ Call to order
   □ Update on Steering Committee seats
     • Sara Rogers to replace Melissa Quijano on behalf of Pasadena Community Development Department (standing seat)
     • Don Titcombe departing as the Local Non-Government Funder (At-Large seat)
   □ Roll call

2. Discussion & Approval of:
   □ October Minutes

3. Business Agenda:
   □ New At-Large Representative(s) Recommendations & Votes
     • Resolution(s) to come
   □ Provider Representative Election Reminder

4. Meeting Wrap-Up:
   □ Public Comment Guidelines Reminder & Public Comment
   □ Closing Remarks from Mike Nichols, President & CEO, Coalition for the Homeless
   □ Meeting Adjourn
     • Next Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022

5. Additional materials: Recent notable news coverage of the work of The Way Home.
Recognition & Introduction of Steering Committee Members:

Recognition of:

• Don Titcombe, Local Non-Government Funder – Rockwell Fund, Inc.

• Melissa Quijano, Fixed Position – City of Pasadena Community Development Department

Introducing:

• Sara Rogers, Fixed Position – City of Pasadena Community Development Department
Roll Call & Ice Breaker

• As your name is called, please let us know you’re here and turn on your camera (if you haven’t already done so).

• As well as answer one of the following festive ice breakers:
  • Which holiday tradition is your favorite?
  • As a child (or now), did you visit Santa at the mall and take pictures?
  • Do you like watching Christmas (or holiday) movies? If so, which is your favorite?
  • Would you rather do an activity in the snow (e.g., snowboard, ski, snowball fight) or stay inside in the warmth?
  • Do you decorate your home and have a Christmas tree? If so, when do you start decorating?
  • If you don’t like this holiday season, tell us why!
## Attendance

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Strategy Oversight Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Oct. 21 at 1pm (Strategy oversight meeting)

Click here to view the meeting packet.
Click here to view the meeting recording.

1. Meeting Introduction
   - Call to order
   - Recognition of Tom McCasland, Daphne Lemelle, and Scott Rule
     - Pg. 3 of the meeting packet and 6:36 of the meeting recording
   - Introduction to Marc Eichenbaum and Dr. Martin Negron
     - Pg. 3 of the meeting packet and 9:25 of the meeting recording
   - Roll call & Ice breaker
   - Open Steering Committee Seats
     - Nominations Committee
       - Pg. 6 of the meeting packet 23:25 of the meeting recording
       - Purpose: To recommend candidates to fill the position of At-Large and Consumer representatives and the slate of officers annually.
       - Call for members: Nakia Sims and Gregory Dread volunteered
     - At-Large Positions
       - Pg. 8 of the meeting packet and 37:55 of the meeting recording
       - There are currently four (4) At-Large vacancies
       - Official public call for At-Large representatives open
     - Upcoming Provider Representative Election information to be shared at the Provider Input Forum, currently scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021 at 9am.
       - Pg. 9 of the meeting packet and 43:09 of the meeting recording

2. Discussion & Approval of:
   - September Minutes
     - Pg. 10 – 11 of the meeting packet and 44:45 of the meeting recording
     - Approval moved by Mark Thiele, seconded by Gregory Dread, all members were in favor and the motion passed.
   - FY21 NOFO Project Ranking Approval
     - Pg. 12 – 18 of the meeting packet and 45:45 of the meeting recording
     - 2021.Resolution 5: FY21 NOFO Project Ranking approved with 11/12 email vote
       - 11 voted to approve (only needed 7 to pass)
       - 1 did not vote
       - 4 ineligible to vote

3. Business Updates:
   - FY2021 NOFO CoC Competition Update
     - Pg. 19 – 25 of the meeting packet and 47:00 of the meeting recording
   - Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP) Update
     - Pg. 26 – 40 of the meeting packet and 1:19:15 of the meeting recording
CoC Steering Committee

Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021, at 1pm

- CCHP 1.0 & 2.0
- Communications/PR Update
  - 1:44:28 of the meeting recording
  - Results of the RFP
  - CCHP Press conference

Pause for break

4. Strategy Oversight Meeting Agenda:
   - Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) Award Announcement
     - Pg. 44 – 45 of the meeting packet and 1:48:38 of the meeting recording
     - Workgroups being developed – interested parties should contact Caybryn Southern at csouthern@homelesshouston.org.
   - Domestic Violence (DV) System Update
     - Pg. 46 – 52 of the meeting packet and 2:03:02 of the meeting recording
   - System Performance Measures Update
     - Pg. 53 – 57 of the meeting packet and 2:37:30 of the meeting recording
   - Action Plan Updates
     - Pg. 58 – 73 of the meeting packet and 3:06:30 of the meeting recording

4. Meeting Wrap-Up:
   - Public Comment Guidelines Reminder & Public Comment
     - Pg. 74 – 75 of the meeting packet and 3:23:40 of the meeting recording
   - Meeting Adjourn
     - Next Meeting: Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021
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At-Large Representative Recommendations
The Way Home Steering Committee voting period is OPEN for one (1) Provider Representative seat. Among other duties, Provider Representatives are people who work for organizations that provide services (including housing services) for people experiencing homelessness.

Provider Representatives represent two types of direct service providers, and either representative can represent either type (i.e., we do not necessarily need one of each):
- Crisis Response System (includes emergency and transitional shelter, homeless prevention, outreach, navigation, coordinated access, day services and crisis response services).
- Permanent Housing (includes permanent housing provision (PSH/RRH) and/or services for people in permanent housing).

Who can vote?
- Any agency/organization that is a current member of The Way Home Continuum of Care (agency/organization must be in good standing).
- The CEO/ED or other senior staff may vote on behalf of their agency. Please note: Each agency is entitled to ONE vote.

How to vote:
- View the 2022 - 2023 Provider Representative Candidate Materials packet.
- After reviewing the candidate materials, please rank the candidates starting with your most desired applicant (1 being your favorite) and email your agency’s response to Caybryn Southern at csouthern@homelesshouston.org.
  (Please note: Agency votes will be tallied by the Coalition but will remain private.)

Deadline for voting is Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, at 3pm.
Public Comment Guidelines

• **Duration of comment:** 3 minutes. This time limit will be identified with a visible timer shared on the screen, followed by the speaker being muted when the 3 minutes is complete.

• **Timing of comments:**
  • A speaker whose subject matter relates to an identifiable action item of business (i.e., action item and/or resolution) on the agenda will have the opportunity to speak during the course of the meeting, when it is time for the steering committee to deliberate on that item.
  • A speaker whose subject matter does not relate to an identifiable action item of business will have an opportunity to speak during the Open Public Comment portion at the end of the meeting.

• **Signing up to make a public comment:**
  • Speakers may request to make a public comment prior to the meeting. All requests must be submitted to the lead agency at SCquestions@homelesshouston.org by 12:00 PM (Noon), the day of the meeting.
  • Speakers may also request to make a public comment during the meeting by using the Q&A feature or chat function in the virtual meeting software.
  • In either case, in their request, the speaker must inform the lead agency of which action item they wish to speak about by citing the resolution number, if applicable. If a specific resolution number is not cited, comments will be saved for the Open Public Comment portion of the meeting.

• **Authority of the Chair (or Vice Chair):** The Chair will call upon the lead agency to assist with public comments. The Chair has the authority to open and close the public speaking portion of each action item on the agenda to ensure the meeting continues to move along at a reasonable pace.
• Speakers will be called upon in the order in which they signed up. Others will be offered an opportunity to speak following.

• Please use the “Raise Hand” function and wait to be called upon if you did not sign up to speak prior to the meeting.

• When called upon please introduce yourself and your organization (if applicable).
Thank you!

Happy Holidays and see you all in the new year on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022, at 3:30pm!
At the southern corner of downtown, underneath the tangle of freeways where I-45 meets I-69, Monday night was filled with quiet anticipation. Housing was coming.

In the encampment called home by roughly three dozen, Steven Dennis couldn’t sleep. Regina Tut talked of her excitement. A man named Angel wondered if he could finally start anew.

And as the morning broke, balmy and clear, there they were: Staff from a collection of groups working to serve the homeless were raising a white canopy a few yards from the double row of tents sheltered beneath I-45. Housing navigators and case managers setting up at tables and folding chairs underneath. A van from Metro that would drive people to a converted hotel, where they’d live until connected with permanent housing, pulling up at the side of the block.

Since more than $65 million in COVID-related funding has poured into Houston and Harris County’s coffers, they have worked in tandem with a number of partners to ramp up the housing units...
available to move people out of homelessness. As they’ve done so, they’ve picked up the pace at which homeless encampments are being “decommissioned” — the group’s term for offering the residents of a camp permanent housing, then clearing the site, usually with fencing, to prevent the camp from reforming. The process provides a way out of chronic homelessness to the many who choose housing and the services that go with it, a dislocation to the smaller group who do not.

The ultimate success of Houston’s encampment strategy could have rippling effects across the country. Cities including Austin and Dallas are seeking to emulate Houston’s program, said Marc Eichenbaum, special assistant to the mayor for homeless initiatives; others, including Denver and Spokane, Wash. are watching closely.

Tut, an Army veteran who walks with a cane, paused on Tuesday morning outside the encampment, which had already begun to shrink. She smiled. Her eyes crinkled, then suddenly welled with tears.
Downtown District’s cleaning crew clears trash from under I-45 where tents set up by unhoused people were located before getting set up in apartments, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021, in Houston.

Marie D. De Jesús, Houston Chronicle / Staff photographer

“I don’t know why I’m crying,” she said. “They’re doing an awesome job… Change is scary, even if it’s for the good.”

A few yards away, another woman was crying for a different reason. She intended to stay on the street — “Jesus was homeless” — and someone she was close to was readying to go. (She eventually decided to follow.)

Out of the 35 people who were living in the encampment when outreach began, 22 decided to take the offer of housing, according to the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston and Harris County's data. The others simply moved elsewhere. That ratio was a bit unusual, said James Gonzalez, the director overseeing the coalition’s work at the site. The other encampments where the Houston-Harris County Homeless Encampment Response Strategy has been carried out since the beginning of the pandemic saw between 85 and 90 percent of people choose housing, he said.

Houston, the coalition and their partners began moving people out of encampments in 2018 and has since distilled the process into a manual that has attracted the attention of cities across the nation. Houston, once called out in 2011 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the size of its homeless population, has since more than halved the number of people without homes in Harris and Fort Bend counties to 3,800 in 2020 from 8,500, even
As the overall population in those two counties grew 16 percent. For every person housed, taxpayers save approximately $4,800 because the unhoused population’s emergency medical and incarceration costs are so high compared to the cost of housing and supportive services, according to a 2017 study from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

But since 2016, the homeless count in the counties has plateaued. People were becoming homeless as quickly as the Houston area could house them.

Then came COVID — and with it, a sudden influx in funding to help battle the pandemic’s health risks to the homeless population. Part of the funds went toward a program renting units from landlords searching for a secure stream of income. The new units, where residents have access to case workers and other services, allowed partnered groups to pick up the pace of moving people out of camps.
Teresa Eddins, a resident on the couch in her room at the city’s first Navigation Center, a revamped hotel that temporarily houses homeless displaced from decommissioned tent encampments Friday, Nov. 19, 2021 in Houston, TX. The center provides housing, meals and other social services as the homeless transition from the street to permanent housing.

Michael Wyke / Contributor

The groundwork for moving day at the Pierce and Chenevert streets encampment had started roughly three weeks before. SEARCH, a nonprofit which had already been doing outreach with the camp, began getting residents comfortable with the idea of moving into housing and drawing up lists of the documents each person needed to get in order before they could apply. Everyone needed an ID, but many had lost theirs or had them stolen; housing programs also need verification of homelessness, and some need a verification of disability. Each document would take time to obtain.

Then, the day people began moving into housing, workers quickly tied yellow numbered tags to the tents, creating a temporary address system of sorts they could use to track who had moved out into housing. Under the white canopy, Steven Dennis sat talking to a housing navigator who filled out paperwork with his income, veteran status and health conditions. When they finished, he leaned back and held his arms up in the air as though crossing a finish line.

“I’m tired,” he said, as he swung his messenger bag filled with documents over his shoulder. “I’m excited, too… I’m trying to get my life back.”

At the tents, some sat back and watched the proceedings; others sorted through what they wanted to keep, put into storage or throw...
away. Although a controversial 2017 Houston ordinance
criminalized both camping and possessing too much property in
public, those packing said the city had imposed no property
limitations on their move. Boots, a fleece hat, deodorants and a
portable fan were packed into bags and carried away. After a man
walked away from the tent he called home, flashing the peace
symbol at the people who remained, the tent was picked up by a
cleaning crew and crunched into the back of a garbage truck.

Eichenbaum said the city plans to clear all of its encampments, but
the current bottleneck is housing. “We don’t do this if we don’t
have places to put them,” said Ana Rausch, vice president of
program operations for the coalition. “There’s no point.”

While the city was able to quickly secure apartments for its
program while the need to social distance lowered demand for
dense living arrangements, it is now competing with an influx of
renters who entered the market as vaccines became widely
available this summer. The coalition employs a landlord
engagement team which is calling landlords and trying to sell them
on the program, in part by dispelling fears of perceived risks
(Gonzalez argues that having rent guaranteed and a case worker
on hand offers more of a safety net than a landlord has with a
normal tenant). Nonetheless, the number of units joining the
program have slowed.
Shatina Mcmillian, right, a Harmony House social worker, works with one of the residents at the city’s first Navigation Center, a revamped hotel that temporarily houses homeless displaced from decommissioned tent encampments Friday, Nov. 19, 2021 in Houston, TX. The center provides housing, meals and other social services as the homeless transition from the street to permanent housing.

Michael Wyke / Contributor

In response, the city contracted with a hotel to turn it into what it’s calling a navigation center — a place where people moved out of an encampment can live, along with pets and loved ones, while they await their permanent housing. (San Francisco pioneered the strategy in 2015.) While the current navigation center is temporary, the city has a plan to build a long-term one in Fifth Ward west of U.S. 59.

Before the coalition and its partners began using COVID funding to move people into housing, it had decommissioned two camps in four years. Since December 2020, they’ve decommissioned about eight, Rausch said. As of Tuesday, she said the coalition and its partners had moved 134 people into housing out of encampments with COVID funding. The funds have also been used to help more than 5,000 less visible homeless individuals, including people living in shelters or cars.

By noon on Tuesday, the number of tents had fallen by maybe a
quarter. The following day, it had dropped another quarter. Some of the people who remained had already taken the bus to check out the navigation center before coming back to finish sorting their things. By Friday, nothing was left but the trenches people living there had dug to channel water away from their tents.

After the coalition and its partners clear a site, their policy is to have the Houston Police Department come by daily to make sure new people do not settle in the space. Those working at the site said they hoped it would eventually be fenced off, as other former camps have been.

An unhoused man tags his belongings before getting transported to an apartment after living in a tent beneath I-45, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021, in Houston. Organizations like BakerRipley and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County set up canopies and chairs to help unhoused population fill up paperwork for an apartment.

Marie D. De Jesús, Houston Chronicle / Staff photographer

At the Navigation Center on Friday, bags of possessions sat
outside waiting to be laundered or placed in a box hot enough to kill any stowaways before coming inside. Case workers sat in the lobby, which residents used as a common area. A snack table laden with cookies, oatmeal and fruit lined the back of the room; board games, magazines and a television were on the other wall. A shipment of frozen meals — fare such as breaded fish with butternut squash — had just arrived.

Outside, Holly Menges walked her puppy, Mexikana, who had her eye infection treated and is now up to date on shots. Joseph Luiz fist pumped Preston Witt, chief services officer of the group running the Navigation Center, then took his bike out for a ride. Teresa Eddins had a smoke, then went back to her room. A garden of palm cuttings and a baby avocado plant grew in Dixie cups along the window.

“When I (first) came in here,” she recalled, sinking into a plush sofa next to a king-sized bed, “I felt like I was in heaven.”

This story has been updated to correct the name of James Gonzalez.

rebecca.schuetz@chron.com;

twitter.com/raschuetz
How close is Houston to ending homelessness? Closer than you think.

Mike Nichols

5-6 minutes

The local homeless response system in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties, called “The Way Home,” has housed more than 24,000 people since 2012. And our data show that once people are housed, they remain housed: Of the clients housed in the past two years, over 90% have maintained stable housing or have not returned to homelessness.

We attribute our collective success to a number of factors, among them: collaborative leadership and buy-in among local elected officials and local direct service provider agencies; a strong reliance on good data to drive decision-making; and an emphasis on prioritizing the most vulnerable for access to those programs first. We follow Housing First, a nationally recognized best practice that involves providing housing to people with no preconditions (e.g., sobriety) and then offering voluntary supportive services to help them maintain their housing.

Perhaps the most important key is our community’s commitment to investing all available homelessness resources toward permanent housing with supportive services. HUD defines permanent housing as “community-based housing without a designated length
of stay in which formerly homeless individuals and families live as independently as possible.”

Our local homeless response system offers two types of permanent housing: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) that is prioritized for our most vulnerable people and has no length of time limits, and Rapid Re-housing (RRH) that is targeted for those who fell into homelessness recently and is shorter-term in length.

There are three key components to permanent housing in our community: (1) rental assistance, (2) case management and other voluntary services, and (3) a physical housing unit. A small number of our community’s permanent housing programs are in apartment complexes dedicated to our clients, sometimes called “single site” properties. The majority of our permanent housing programs though are located in fair market apartment units at any apartment complex willing to partner with The Way Home, referred to as “scattered site.”

This means that the homeless response system is dependent on the creation of affordable apartment units because those properties are the ones most willing to work with the system and direct service partners who are implementing permanent housing programs. In fact, a barrier we’re facing right now is that we urgently need more one-bedroom, all-bills-paid apartment units to continue to house our clients.

**So how many housing units do we need?**

Earlier this year, the Coalition released [The Way Home’s Community Plan to End Homelessness](https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/). To produce the plan, we studied the gap in available housing resources for single adults,
youth, and families experiencing homelessness. The single largest gap we found was a shortfall of 1,900 units of permanent supportive housing for single adults and youth. In other words, this means with 1,900 affordable apartment units, we could effectively end homelessness in Houston.

The federal funding for COVID-19 relief presents a big opportunity. In July 2020, the City of Houston, Harris County, and the Coalition for the Homeless announced a joint, $65 million plan to use CARES Act pandemic relief funding to house as many people as possible, as quickly as possible in market rate units over two years to limit the spread of COVID-19. The Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP) is an unprecedented, coordinated effort to address homelessness in the region.

One year in, we’ve already served more than 5,000 people, but additional future investments, particularly in infrastructure, will be necessary to end homelessness for good. The need for 1,900 new units of permanent supportive housing remains. We are currently in conversation with local leaders to determine whether subsequent rounds of pandemic relief funding, like in the American Rescue Plan, can be used to invest in infrastructure to achieve and sustain reductions in homelessness.

To say that a lack of affordable housing contributes to homelessness would seem to be stating the obvious: If people can’t afford housing where they live, they fall into homelessness. But for those who don’t work on the issue, it may be less obvious that a lack of affordable housing also presents a barrier for the agencies seeking to help people get out of homelessness.

The Coalition is committed to being an advocate for the continued
development of affordable housing throughout Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties because without available, safe, and affordable market-rate apartments, we cannot provide a home for people trying to leave homelessness.

*Mike Nichols is president and CEO of the [Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County](https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/).*

*The views, information or opinions expressed in this post are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research.*
The makeshift shelter that was located on West 34th Street under the U.S. 290 overpass is no longer there, because the man staying there is in the process of moving into an apartment through the Community COVID-19 Housing Program. (Contributed photo)

A man named Joe used to reside in a makeshift shack under the U.S. 290 overpass at West 34th Street.

The two-tiered structure was assembled with scraps of wood, cardboard and plastic tarp, among
other materials, and was accompanied by belongings such as cleaning supplies, backpacks, lawn chairs and ice chests. There also was an American flag that had been erected nearby.

There were no signs of any of that late Tuesday afternoon, or of any homeless people, for that matter. Joe had accepted an offer to be housed in an apartment and was staying temporarily in a hotel, at no cost to him, according to Marc Eichenbaum, a special assistant to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner who works on initiatives to assist the homeless.

The encampment at 290 and 34th Street was “decommissioned” in early November as part of a joint effort by the city, Harris County and Coalition for the Homeless, among other organizations, to reduce the region’s homeless population – and their strain on taxpayer-funded government services – by placing them in permanent housing and cleaning up the sites where they used to stay.

“It’s the most effective way of solving the issue,” Eichenbaum said. “Everyone else just moves the homeless onto the next corner or further into neighborhoods. We’re interested in completely transitioning them off the streets so that our outreach teams, our solid waste teams, our first responders no longer have to serve that person.”

Other homeless encampments under 290, between Loop 610 and Beltway 8, also were decommissioned last month, as were encampments under the North Loop, including at its intersection with Ella Boulevard. They are among 10 sites across Houston that have been decommissioned since 2018, with eight of those having been decommissioned this year as part of the Community COVID-19 Housing Program (CCHP). It's a $65 million, two-year initiative funded largely by federal COVID relief dollars received and allocated by the city and county.

Eichenbaum and Ana Rausch, the vice president of program operations for the local nonprofit Coalition for the Homeless, said the decommissioning effort is the first of its kind in the United States and is providing a blueprint for combating homelessness for cities across the country. They also said a recent study by Harris County showed that providing housing for the homeless comes at about a quarter of the cost to taxpayers as leaving them on the streets, where they may enter the jail system or require emergency healthcare, shelter services and cleanup services.
Rausch said the encampment decommissioning initiative has housed a total of 134 people who previously were homeless, with another 55 or so in the process of being housed, pending the availability of an apartment. More than 3,800 homeless people in Houston have been housed since October 2020 as part of the broader CCHP initiative, according to Rausch.

“The outreach that we provide is really about meeting the needs of the community and making sure we connect everyone that’s living unsheltered to housing,” Rausch said. “When we were envisioning CCHP and creating that $65 million program, we knew addressing unsheltered homelessness had to be a piece of that $65 million and put in funding for additional outreach. We knew this was going to be an extraordinary opportunity to really make a dent in our unsheltered homeless population, because we had so much housing come down the pipeline.”

**Work in progress**

Rausch said getting someone from a homeless encampment to an apartment is a 4-6 week process that involves landlords and landlord engagement teams, homeless shelters, METRO, the city’s Solid Waste Management Department, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff’s Office, among others. She said the
Houston Humane Society also is a partner, having offered to house homeless people’s pets while they transition from the streets to an apartment.

Encampments are identified and prioritized based on a variety of factors, Rausch said, such as population, location, the presence of structures and criminal activity along with public safety and health hazards. People living at those encampments are offered the opportunity to receive housing and subsequent support services at no cost and, if they agree, they are registered, vetted and either placed directly into an apartment or at a temporary “navigation center,” which for now is a hotel along 290, Rausch said.

She said the majority have accepted the offer, and if they decline, outreach teams continue to try engaging them until the encampment is decommissioned, at which point they are asked to relocate.

“Having alternative housing is key,” Eichenbaum said. “We can’t decommission encampments without places for those people to go.”

Eichenbaum said city and county law enforcement monitors decommissioned encampments to help ensure they do not re-emerge, with a focus on discouraging the presence of structures and personal property. But they cannot physically force the homeless to leave, since it is legal for them to be on public property.

A survey of the local decommissioned sites along 290 and 610 late Tuesday afternoon revealed that some homeless people had returned to those areas, although their presence and that of their belongings was sparse.

“You may notice a few structures still at these locations, and that is still being addressed by homeless outreach teams,” Houston City Council member Amy Peck, whose District A includes the decommissioned sites along 290, wrote in a Nov. 17 email to constituents. “… Please keep in mind that this is a new program, and it might take a little bit of time to work out some issues going forward.”
And the effort to house the homeless along 290 did not reach every homeless person who wants to accept the offer of housing. Al Walker, who was asking for food money while sitting at the intersection of 290 and Bingle Road late Tuesday afternoon, said he had heard about the initiative and was hoping to connect with those doing outreach in the area.

Rausch said outreach teams will continue to monitor those locations. Eichenbaum said there are hundreds of other encampments across the city, and the initiative will “get to all of them in due time,” although it’s still being determined which sites will be decommissioned next.

In the meantime, at least one local resident is appreciative of the effort that has been made so far. Timbergrove resident Mike Kuchar, who is originally from Detroit, said homelessness is more widespread there, and now it’s a little less widespread in Houston.

“It doesn’t bother me, seeing a couple here and there,” Kuchar said. “It doesn’t look very good, but I don’t feel like you need to kick them off the streets and all. If you put them in housing, that’s better.”

Adam Zuvanich