



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

First Reading Ordinance for the City Council Meeting of January 12, 2016
Second Reading Ordinance for the City Council Meeting of January 19, 2016

DATE: January 14, 2016 (updated memo)
TO: Ronald L. Olson, City Manager
FROM: Susan K. Thorpe, Assistant City Manager

<p>Ordinance amending Article II Unlawful Solicitation of the Corpus Christi Code of Ordinances</p>

CAPTION:

Adopting an Ordinance amending Article II Unlawful Solicitation of the Corpus Christi Code of Ordinance to prohibit solicitation in the Central Business District, North Beach and on private property without permission; prohibiting solicitation within 25 feet of an ATM, bank, public transportation stop or outdoor dining area; Providing for severance, publication, penalty; and an effective date.

PURPOSE:

Numerous businesses and tourist facilities in the Central Business District (downtown and uptown) and North Beach have reached out to the City over the past several months regarding worsening safety and nuisance activities in their areas. They have requested the City to take stronger action against increasing levels of panhandling and aggressive behavior.

In response, City staff have drafted a proposed ordinance to address the issues, particularly in the high tourism areas of the Central Business District and North Beach. We sought input from a number of groups regarding the proposed changes. These included the Downtown Management District, Uptown Neighborhood Initiative, North Beach Community Association, SEA District, Clergy Alliance, and Homeless Issues Partnership Board. The Clergy Alliance did not support changes and preferred keeping the aggressive panhandling provisions currently in place. All other groups were overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed changes.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

It is the community's desire to eliminate the need for panhandling by providing appropriate assistance to individuals in need. Homeless service providers and the Clergy Alliance have indicated they are willing to conduct outreach to those panhandling to identify and address their needs for social services.

The Clergy Alliance indicated it is willing to empower those adversely impacted by panhandlers (i.e., business owners throughout the community) with the interpersonal skills to engage and the ability to help the people panhandling to navigate available resources to address their needs

The City is dedicated to encouraging economic development opportunities to create jobs and meaningful work for those struggling to make ends meet.

City staff have been actively working on several positive alternatives to panhandling including:

- installing specially marked parking meters so people can donate to homeless shelters
- working with local fast food chains for food vouchers to give to panhandlers instead of money,
- installing “Keep the Change” signs to encourage people to give to charities rather than panhandlers,
- creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about what panhandlers use the money for – currently airing on City’s TV channel,
- Working with the Homeless Issues Partnership to create a handout with phone numbers and addresses of free shelter and services for those in need.

The proposed revisions to the City’s solicitation ordinance will:

- ban any type of panhandling completely in the Central Business District (uptown and downtown) and North Beach
- ban panhandling on private property without the owner's consent
- ban panhandling within 25 feet of ATMs, entrances to financial institutions, bus stops and outdoor seating areas of restaurants.

The existing ban on “aggressive panhandling” will continue to apply to all other areas of the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

Leave the ordinance as is.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

None

CONFORMITY TO CITY POLICY:

Conforms to all city policies. This action is in alignment with the Homeless Solutions Vision and Strategies, adopted by City Council on August 18, 2015. Strategy #1 includes:

1. Advocate for the City to:
 - enforce existing ordinances more vigorously and enact additional Quality of Life ordinances as needed to limit or prohibit loitering, panhandling, vagrant behaviors or illegal activity.

EMERGENCY / NON-EMERGENCY:

Non-emergency

DEPARTMENTAL CLEARANCES:

Legal

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

X Operating

☐ Revenue☐ Capital☐ Not applicable

Fiscal Year: 2015-2016	Project to Date Expenditures (CIP only)	Current Year	Future Years	TOTALS
Line Item Budget		0		0
Encumbered / Expended Amount		0		0
This item		0		0
BALANCE		0		0

Fund(s): Crime Control and Prevention District

Comments:**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends adopting the Ordinance amendments.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Ordinance

Petition from North Beach Community Association

Homeless Solutions Vision and Strategies