

August 7, 2017

Mayor Steve Adler
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

RE: Support for increased Austin Police Department Staffing

Dear Mayor Adler,

The Downtown Austin Alliance supports the recommendations of the *2016 Matrix Consulting Group Report* to increase Austin Police Department staffing in the coming budget year.

As the city has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade, downtown Austin has seen significant increases in residents, workers and visitors. Despite our expansive growth, Austin consistently ranks among the nation's safest large cities; but the number of police officers relative to citizens has decreased, as has the amount of uncommitted time officers have to engage with the community to prevent and solve problems.

In response to a number of serious incidents involving out-of-town visitors, and increasing safety concerns expressed by visitors, residents and workers, the Downtown Alliance began a pilot in July 2016 paying overtime APD officers to patrol on foot or bikes during key times, during important conventions, and in key downtown locations. The pilot continues today with two Downtown Alliance-funded overtime officers working 8 hours per day 7 days per week.

These officers have had thousands of positive interactions with visitors, residents and workers – and with people violating ordinances. When the officers request voluntary compliance from people violating ordinances, people comply 98 percent of the time. This example of Community Policing helps reduce 911 calls, crimes, and crises from occurring. It creates a greater perception of safety and increased trust between police officers and the community. This program is working, but more is needed keep our citizens and visitors safe.

Austin cannot afford to lose its reputation as a safe city. We encourage the City Council to support recommendations from the Matrix Report to increase our police force to help ensure that Austin remains one of the safest cities in America.

Sincerely,

Dewitt Peart
President and CEO