

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 617
By: Schwertner
Local Government
6/11/2025
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In February of 2021, the Austin City Council announced their plan to purchase a hotel in southern Williamson County where they will relocate homeless individuals from Austin's central business district. The plan was set in motion without notifying Williamson County officials, or detailing how the City of Austin intends to provide necessary support and resources such as healthcare, transportation, mental health services, job training programs, or security.

A regional approach is absolutely necessary to address the growing homelessness problem in central Texas. Without communication between city officials, county officials, and local residents, it is impossible to ensure adequate services and support will be available for at-risk populations.

S.B. 617 ensures that before any city acquires property and relocates homeless individuals into another jurisdiction, it must provide notice and a public hearing.

S.B. 617 amends current law relating to hearing and public notice requirements regarding the conversion by a municipality of certain properties to house homeless individuals.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle A, Title 8, Local Government Code, by adding Chapter 255, as follows:

CHAPTER 255. CONVERSION OF PROPERTY FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES

Sec. 255.001. SPECIAL HEARING AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONVERSION OF PROPERTY TO HOUSE HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS. (a) Prohibits a municipality's governing body, except as provided by Subsection (e), from approving the conversion of a property under the municipality's control to provide housing to homeless individuals unless the governing body holds a public hearing not less than 90 days before the municipality begins the conversion. Requires the governing body to hold the hearing at a location within a one-mile radius of the property.

(b) Requires a municipality's governing body, not later than 36 hours before a public hearing required under Subsection (a) is held, to provide notice of the hearing by mail to each residence and business located within a one-mile radius of the property described by that subsection.

(c) Authorizes an individual who is entitled to notice under Subsection (b), if a municipality's governing body fails to comply with this section, to bring an action for injunctive relief in a district court in the county in which the property described by Subsection (a) is located to prevent the conversion of the property.

(d) Provides that, in the event of a conflict between this chapter and a provision in a municipality's charter relating to the conversion or notice of the conversion of a property described by Subsection (a), this chapter controls.

(e) Provides that this section does not apply to the conversion of a property to provide temporary shelter or housing during a natural disaster, declared state of emergency, or other life-threatening public emergency.

SECTION 2. Makes application of Chapter 255, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.