

COUNCIL AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS ITEM

TO: The Mayor and Members of City Council

DATE: June 12, 2009

COUNCIL

DATE: June 18, 2009

RE: Panhandling Meter Program

ACTION DESIRED:

Respectfully requesting this item be referred to the Public Services & Infrastructure Committee for review.

RATIONALE:

Denver and Atlanta have started a "Panhandling Meter Program" which encourages the public to put change in the homeless meters rather than give it to the panhandlers. The money collected goes to the agencies that provide services to help the homeless get off the streets. This helps members of the public who feel guilty when being panhandled direct their contributions to productive measures. It discourages panhandling because it is less profitable. Finally, it provides some funding for the social service agencies that can actually help make a difference. The cost to the city is primarily some marketing assistance to raise the visibility of the program.

Attachment

Karl Nurse
City Council

F-2



Denver's Road Home | Donation Meter Program

The Concept

The donation meter program is designed to increase awareness about Denver's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, and it is also an effort to redirect the money given to panhandlers into initiatives that provide meals, job training, substance abuse counseling, housing, and other programs for those in need. This grassroots campaign is projected to raise roughly \$100,000 per year giving the general public a constructive way to help Denver's homeless. "The donation meter demonstrates yet another innovative way in which this community is responding to Denver's Road Home and our commitment to ending homelessness" – Mayor Hickenlooper.

The First Phase

Denver Public Works along with Denver's Road Home, Leadership Denver, the Downtown Denver Partnership, Mile High United Way, rabble+rouser, and OZ Architecture worked together to make the donation meter program a reality. This group coordinated the meter design, decal messaging, printing, installation, and the \$1,000 sponsorships for individual meters, which raised \$36,000 before the meters were unveiled.

On March 5, 2007, thirty-six meters were installed at strategic downtown locations that had significant foot traffic and panhandling issues. Within the first month, 16,411 coins were donated at these various meters totaling approximately \$2,000.

It is already evident that the panhandling population is decreasing in the area around the meters, and that there is a significant increase in awareness of the issue within the downtown community.

The Second Phase

With the first round positively impacting Denver's efforts, the plan is to distribute another fifty refurbished meters in other community sectors that expressed an interest in participating. A launch for the rest of the meters is expected in early fall of 2007.

Sustainability

The Mile High United Way and the alumni of Leadership Denver will continue to coordinate annual sponsorships for individual meters, and the Department of Public Works will organize regular collections allowing the program to continue as long as it is effective. With thirty-six existing meters, plus the additional fifty meters from the second phase, we anticipate the project to generate in excess of \$100,000 per year through sponsorships and donations.

The donation meter project, in addition to its benefits for awareness and curbing panhandling, will serve as a way to provide some sustainability to Denver's Road Home throughout the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

