



Affordability and Equity

A Policy Discussion



May 25, 2016 | City of Austin, Texas



Equity and Affordability

Definitions

➤ Affordability

“The extent to which something is affordable, as measured by its cost relative to the amount that the purchaser is able to pay.”

-YourDictionary.com



➤ Equity

“The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.”

-National Academy of Public Administration



Summary of Discussion

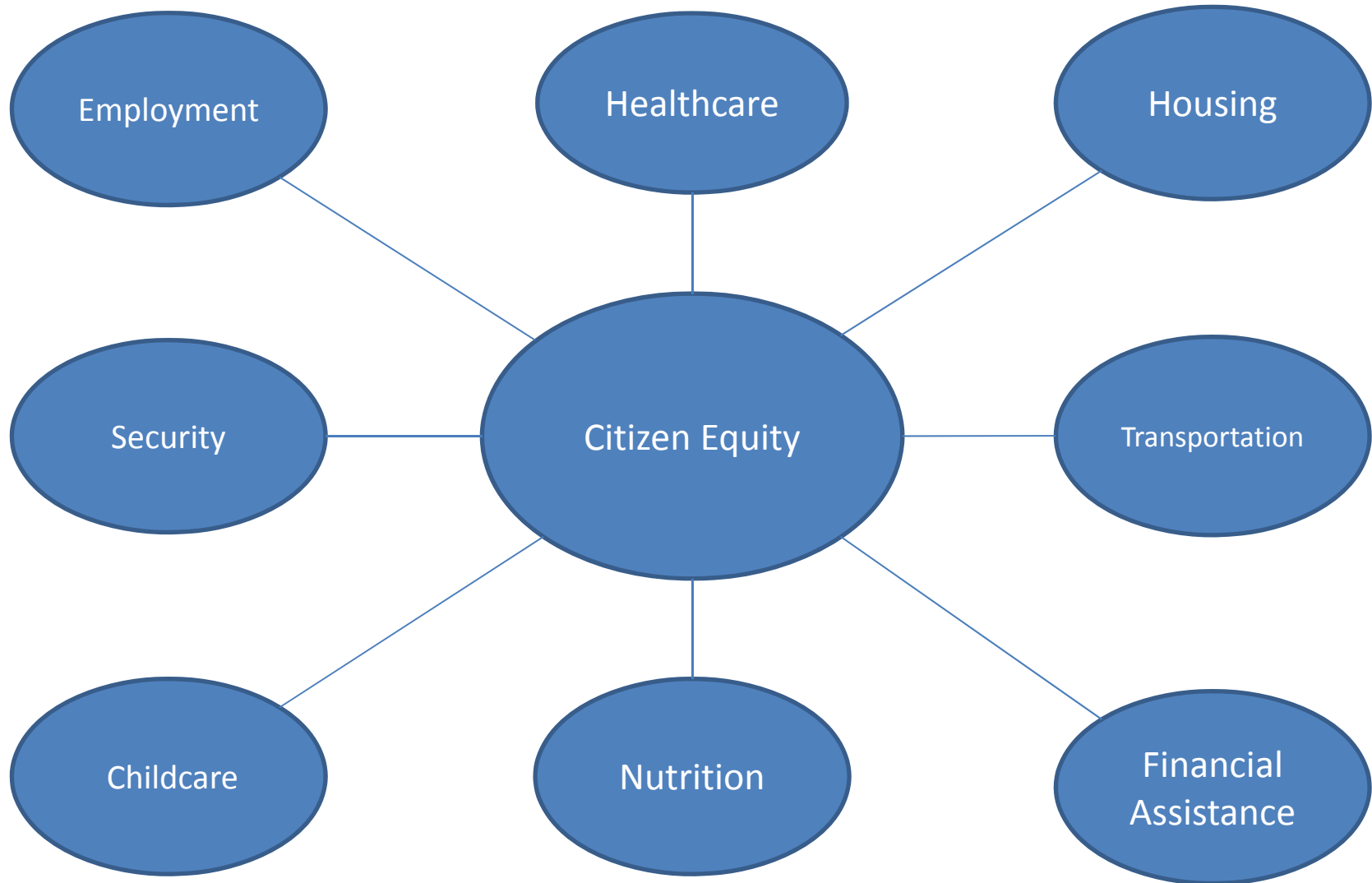
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Transportation Access
- Food Access
- Access to Child Care
- Access to Health Care

Summary of Discussion

- Assistance for Home Owners and Renters
- Partnering with Developers
- Quality of Life Initiatives
- Digital Inclusion
- Equity Office

Ensuring Citizen Equity

Challenges of Every Austin Citizen

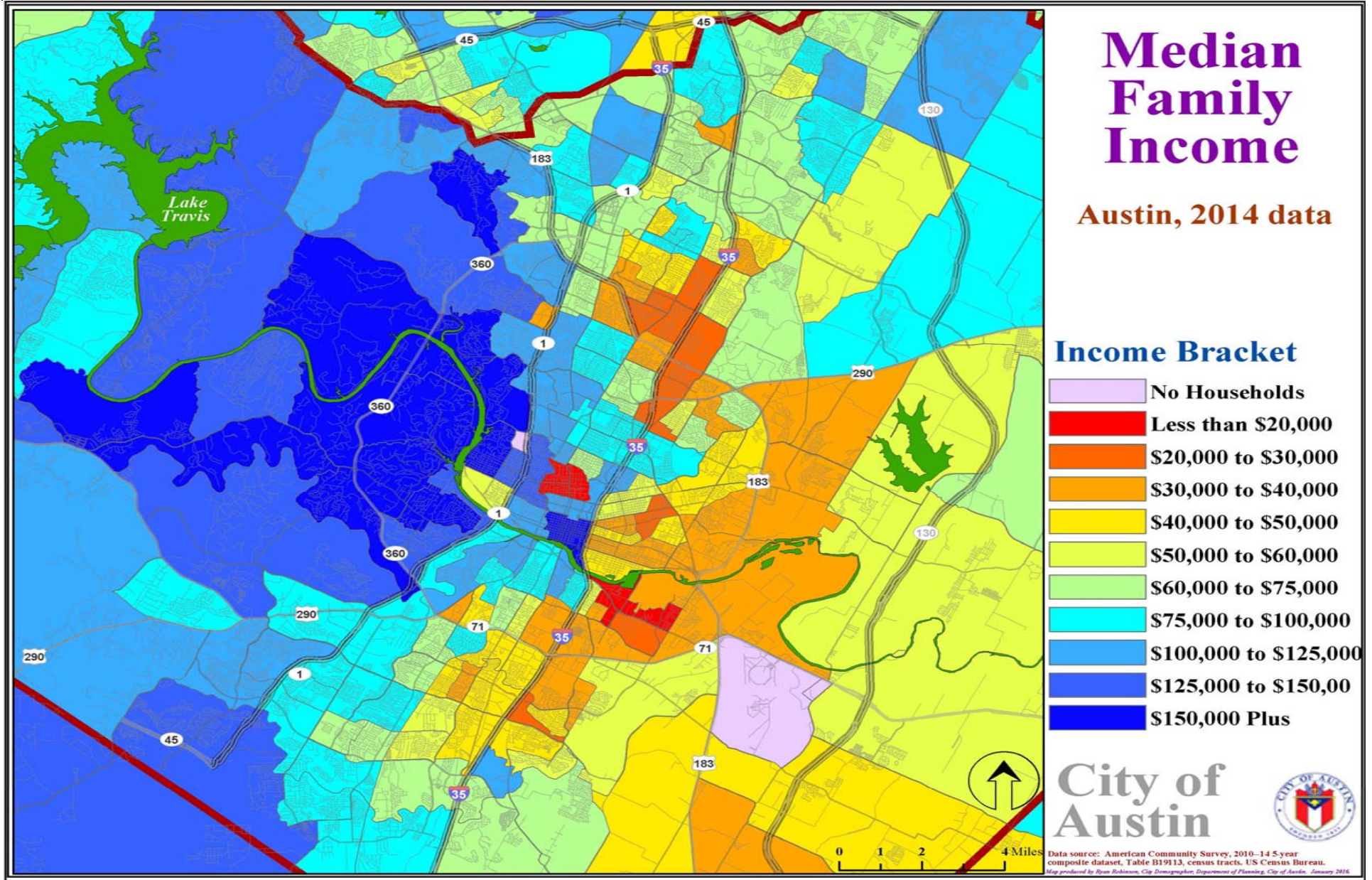


Demographic Trend

An increasingly sharp edge of affluence

- Increasingly hard edge between affluent central Texas and less-than-affluent parts of the urban region
- Austin's center of wealth has slowly migrated west of the city
- Greater burden for citizens funding services and facilities that are used and enjoyed by individuals from across the region
- Austin is becoming a more divided city

Demographic Trend



Median Family Income (MFI)

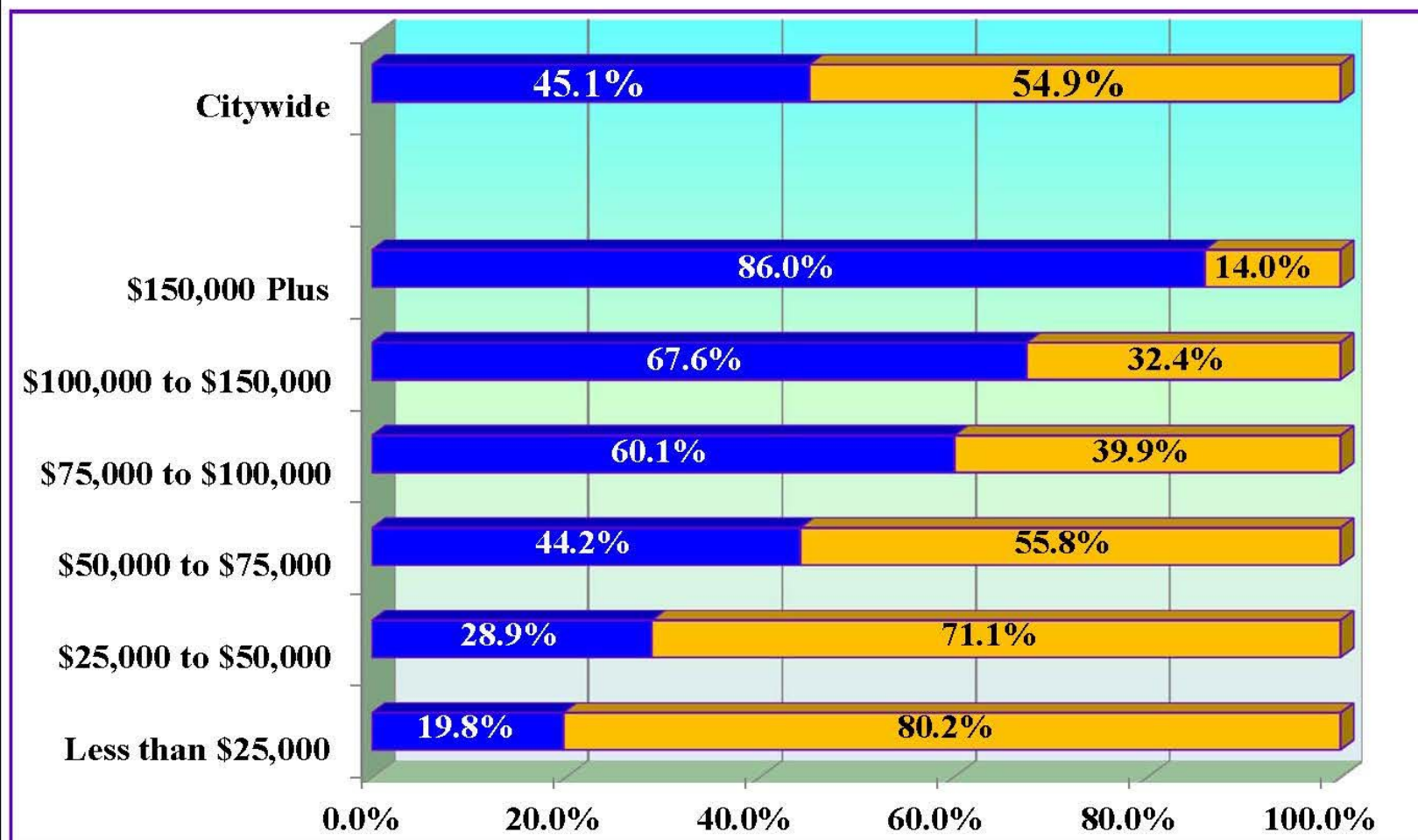
Household Budget Statistics regarding Average Costs

		100% MFI	70% MFI	30% MFI
		\$ 77,800	\$ 54,460	\$ 24,300
Category	Cost per month	% of Total Income		
Average mortgage	\$ 1,400	21.6%	30.8%	69.1%
Average child care	\$ 900	13.9%	19.8%	44.4%
Health Care	\$ 616	9.5%	13.6%	30.4%
Non-COA property taxes	\$ 338	5.2%	7.4%	16.7%
Major COA fees	\$ 219	3.4%	4.8%	10.8%
COA property taxes	\$ 91	1.4%	2.0%	4.4%
Average rent	\$ 1,276	19.7%	28.1%	63.0%

This table is intended to provide representative statistics for various budget categories for a hypothetical median income family of four.
Not all possible budget categories are represented so the figures do not add up to 100%.

Home Ownership vs. Renting

Owners and Renters by Income Bracket, City of Austin, Universe = Households, 2013 data



Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau, 2013 1-year dataset, Table B25118.

■ Owners ■ Renters

Home Ownership

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ Affordable Housing Options for Citizens

- Down Payment Assistance
- Matched Savings Account
- Housing Smarts Counseling
- Community Land Trusts

Home Ownership

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ Affordable Housing Options for Developers

- Developer Incentives and Agreements
- S.M.A.R.T. Housing
- Density Bonus Programs

Rental Assistance

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ Other programs

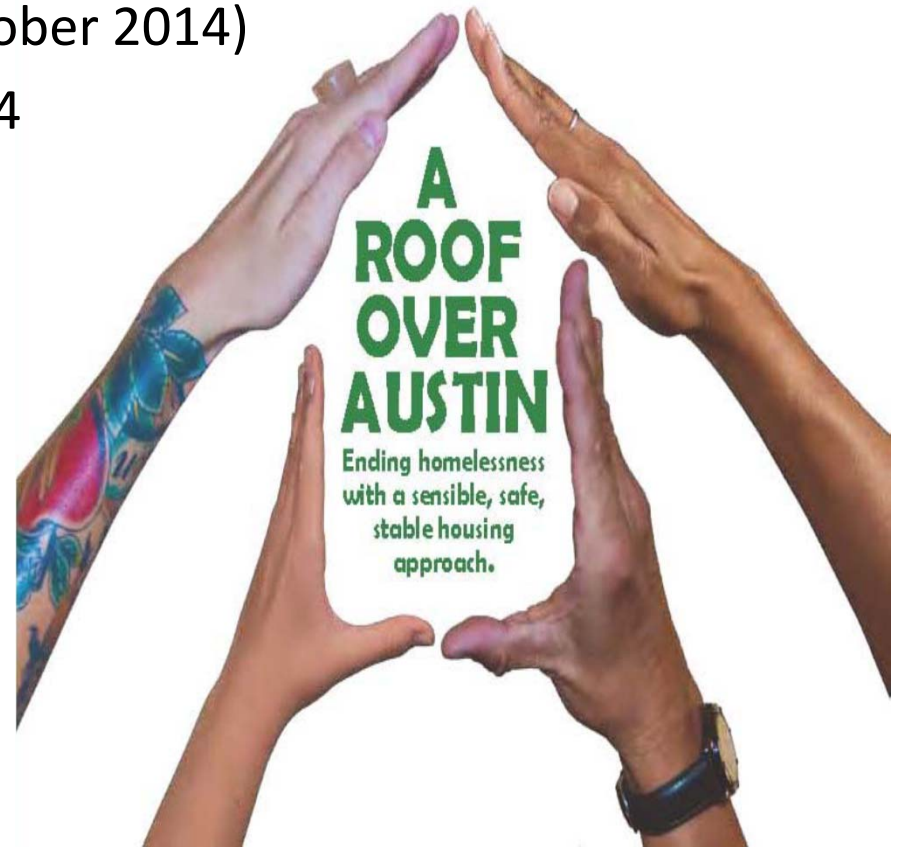
- Renter Assistance: Provides housing assistance to eligible low-income renters
- Social Services Contracts and Neighborhood Centers Assistance: Programs to assist individuals and families transition from homelessness to housing and to maintain housing
- Rental Housing Developer Assistance: Programs to assist creation of new affordable rental housing through financial assistance and Developer Incentives

Housing Assistance

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- Resolution approved March 2010
- 350 Units by 2014 (achieved in October 2014)
- 2nd Resolution approved in Fall 2014
- New goal is 400 more PSH units
- Unmet need of ~ 1000 PSH Units
- Investing in PSH results in a cost avoidance incurred in other areas such as healthcare and public safety
- 209 Units of PSH have a 96% retention rate
- Clients are either in a PSH unit or exited to other permanent housing



Transportation

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

- HHSD provides transportation vouchers for taxis to assist clients to access key services including HIV/STD Clinic, WIC, and other services
- HHSD neighborhood centers provides bus passes to assist individuals and families that meet eligibility requirements with basic needs services
- PARD provides door-to-door transportation services for seniors age 60 and older residing within the Austin city limits

Employment

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ Employment Assistance Centers

- Job searches
- Resume development and critiquing
- Interview Coaching
- Skills testing
- Offender Workforce Development

➤ Workforce Development

- Skillpoint Alliance
- Capital IDEA
- WERC Collaborative
- Goodwill Ready to Work Collaborative

➤ Living Wage policies (ordinances)

- 20160519-011 – Apply living wage to seasonal life guards
- 20160324-020 – Apply living wage to non-construction related solicitations
- 20160324-015 – Apply living wage to City Projects
- 20150910-BUD001 – Establish a new living wage of \$13.03/hour for temporary staff

Child Care

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ HHSD and NHCD funded child care programs

- Child care subsidies to low income families with parents either working or in a training program or in crisis such as homelessness
- Out of School free time programming
- Afterschool and summer care for Head Start families for working families

Child Care

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ PARD Out-of-School Programs

- Subsidizes the cost of after-school programs and summer camp 50% for all Austin residents
- In addition to the existing subsidization all participants that qualify for financial aid receive an additional 50% discount
- The Scott Johnson scholarship further discounts enrollment fees by nearly 90%
- PARD operates free, semi-structured programs for youth at strategic locations during the summer months
- In addition, youth have free access to drop-in activities in recreation centers during hours of operation

Food

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

➤ HHSD food assistance programs

- Women Infant and Children (WIC) clinics
- Fresh Food For Families distribution
- Supplemental Food Nutrition Program enrollment outreach
- Healthy Options for Elderly

➤ PARD food-provision partnerships

- Kid's Café program prepares free hot meals to youth ages 18 and under at 3 locations with commercial kitchens
- Free snacks and meals at 7 playground sites, 13 summer camps and 10 afterschool locations
- Weekend Backpack Program at Summer Camp and Playground sites
- Through the congregate meals program, PARD provides free well-balanced meals to adults over the age of 60 at eight area locations

Health Care

City programs to mitigate or offset costs

- Affordable Care Act enrollment outreach
- HHSD public health services
 - Immunizations clinics for adults and children
 - HIV/STD/TB clinic
 - Refugee clinic
 - Free community-based health screenings and education programs
- PARD offers free access to gymnasiums, pools, fitness and weight rooms, community gardens, and health promotions programs
- Clinic Services at Turner Roberts Recreation Center

Success Stories

Helping those that need it

➤ Neighborhood Centers

- Presenting challenges: affordable housing, food, clothing, school supplies for their children, transportation and employment assistance.
- Collaboration: Workforce Solutions for employment assistance
- Results: Both parents secured gainful employment and stable affordable housing. Children doing well in school

➤ Best Single Source Plus (BSS+)

- Presenting challenges: Recently evicted, large debt, criminal history and missing necessary documentation such as birth certificate.
- Collaboration: Foundation Communities for affordable housing. Best Single Source
- Results: Family secured housing, worked and saved money to pay off their debt. Children doing well in school

Building the Bridge

Affordability to Equity

- As Austin grows and costs increase, the need for services expands to more people
- Responsibility to ensure there is equal access of city programs for all
- City has initiatives to ensure access of services exist for those that need it
- Austin remains livable by providing equal access to the programs offered

Equity

Initiatives Undertaken or Underway

➤ CitizenQuality of Life Initiatives

- Purpose is to assess the overall experience of Austin's diverse communities and level of awareness and access to City services
- African American QOL report was finalized April 2008; Hispanic QOL report in June 2013; Asian American QOL study on-going
- Work continues through Boards and Commission of each initiative

➤ Survey

- Provides the City an opportunity to assess service levels and satisfaction by district

Equity

Initiatives Undertaken or Underway

➤ Digital Inclusion

- The Digital Inclusion Strategy serves as a roadmap for addressing access and adoption of digital technology in Austin
- Every Austin resident having an opportunity to be fully engaged in digital society, accessing and using digital and communications technology

➤ Planning and Zoning's Neighborhood Assistance Center

- The Neighborhood Assistance Center assists citizens involved in neighborhood associations, homeowners associations and other self-defined neighborhood organizations shape their neighborhoods

Equity

Initiatives Undertaken or Underway

➤ Health programs for targeted communities

- Contracts
- Quality of Life Expansions

➤ Equity Office

- Currently conducting town hall meetings; first one tonight
- Opportunities for citizens to offer their feedback on what they envision for the Equity Office

➤ Equity Tool

- Establish best practices criteria, definitions, and instructions for completing a Racial Equity Impact Analysis
- To be developed after Chief Equity Officer has been hired
- Will involve robust community input

Key Policy Questions

- What is the appropriate level of funding to combat poverty and rising cost of living?
- With regards to other Council priorities, where does this rank in importance?
- Are there specific areas in which Council would like to see additional investments?

Questions/Comments/Discussion

For more information, please visit:

Austin Finance Online

City of Austin - Financial Services

