



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Rosie Truelove, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

**DATE:** April 11, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Update to Resolution 20170817-053, Anti-Displacement Task Force Initial Progress Report

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Rosie Truelove", written over the "FROM:" line of the memorandum.

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Resolution No. 20170817-053 created the Anti-Displacement Task Force to review and recommend specific strategies addressing the ongoing challenge of displaced residents, businesses and cultural assets. The Resolution directed the task force to provide recommendations on:

- 1) preserving and expanding the supply of affordable housing;
- 2) controlling land for community development;
- 3) preserving and growing small businesses and cultural assets;
- 4) income and asset creation by providing needed services; and
- 5) financing strategies to provide community-specific ways to fund the other four categories of action.

Attached is a three-month progress report from the task force co-chairs.

Please feel free to contact me at (512) 974-3064 if you have any questions.

**cc:** Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Joe Pantalione, Interim Assistant City Manager

**Anti-Displacement Task Force Initial Progress Report**  
April 6, 2018

The first regular meeting of the Anti-Displacement Task Force took place December 1, 2017, and Raul Alvarez and Nefertiti Jackmon were appointed as Co-Chairs to lead the Task Force. Task Force Members have heard presentations from various experts on issues related to displacement with the expectation that the presentations will provide an accurate framework for addressing this challenging problem. A list of those presentations is below.

January 5, 2018

- Presentation and discussion on Mapping Vulnerability to Gentrification and Displacement Study (Elizabeth Mueller, Jake Wegmann, and Heather Way, University of Texas at Austin)
- Presentation and Discussion on East Austin Conservancy Research (Co-Chair Raul Alvarez)

February 2, 2018

- Presentation by the Office of the City Auditor on related past recommendations regarding gentrification (Corrie Stokes, Office of the City Auditor)
- Briefing and discussion on financial strategies to preserve and create affordable housing opportunities (Mandy De Mayo, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development)
- Briefing and discussion on the People's Plan: Six Resolutions/Draft Ordinances that Council Can Implement Now (Susana Almanza and Fred McGhee, The Poor Peoples' Campaign)

February 24, 2018 (Community Forum)

- Eric Tang (report on "Those Who Left") and Jane Rivera (People's Plan)
- City Demographer Ryan Robinson

March 2, 2018

- Discussion of Study documenting impact of tax increases on Seniors (Co-Chair Raul Alvarez)

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development staff set up a Bloomfire website as a host for relevant documents and reports which can be accessed by Task Force members and others. This site serves as a repository for research and information to support the Task Force's work. It can be viewed at: <https://antidisplacement.bloomfire.com>.

On February 24, 2018, the Task Force hosted a community forum at the Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center located in Central East Austin. Approximately 150 citizens attended; some came to share their personal stories of displacement, others came to offer suggestions to the Task Force to mitigate displacement, while others came to lend their professional skills and expertise to the conversations. The forum gave the public the opportunity to break into smaller groups to discuss three topics: preserving and expanding affordable housing, preserving small businesses, and preserving cultural and historic assets. City Demographer Ryan Robinson presented information regarding demographic changes in Austin, Dr. Eric Tang and Dr. Jane Rivera, both who served as Co-Chairs of the Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism Housing Committee, were present and discussed the recommendations of the report created by that Task Force.

Community members voiced their concerns about challenges with the structure of this community forum. Those challenges included:

- 1) The limited number of interpreters for those who do not speak English

- 2) The public wanted to voice their concerns and not hear from experts
- 3) The structure and/or format of the session was not clearly articulated

The success of the event was that Task Force members received feedback from the community and gather anecdotal evidence of the challenges being faced by Austinites as it relates to displacement. Attached is the summary of notes taken during the forum. These notes were emailed to those who attended the community forum. These notes will also be used by the Task Force to better inform their recommendations to Council.

On March 16, 2018, the Task Force held a special meeting to form working groups that they hope will help better facilitate opportunities to discuss strategies and provide actionable recommendations to Council. The current structure of the Task Force is too restrictive and does not allow members to dialogue and gather the relevant information and resources within the allotted time of their meetings. The Task Force established working groups to focus on the following four issues: 1) Preserving and expanding the supply of affordable housing for homeowners, 2) Preserving and expanding the supply of affordable housing for renters, 3) Preserving and growing small businesses and cultural assets; and 4) Developing financing strategies to fund the other three categories of action. Chairs were appointed for each working group to facilitate conversation and to act as the liaison between the working group and the entire Task Force. These working groups will report back to the Anti-Displacement Task Force by providing updates at each regular meeting. Working groups will present their recommendations to the full Task Force by July 30, 2018; the group will revise, as needed, and finalize the recommendations for the full report to City Council due in October.

During the special meeting held on March 16, 2018, the Task Force decided to defer charge #4 (i.e., recommend specific strategies relating to “income and asset creation by providing needed services . . . as a precondition for success”) for the time being until the other charges can be adequately addressed. It is our hope that articulating strategies for the other charges will make it easier to identify an effective approach to addressing the issue of “income and asset creation” for individuals and families at risk of displacement.

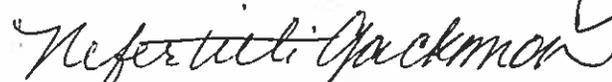
The Task Force plans to host a second community forum on June 5, 2018, in the Rundberg neighborhood. More details about this second community forum will be shared as we get closer to the date of the forum.

The Task Force expects to submit its next update to City Council in August.

Presented by:



Raul Alvarez, Co-Chair of the Anti-Displacement Task Force



Nefertitti Jackmon, Co-Chair of the Anti-Displacement Task Force

## Anti-Displacement Task Force February 24, 2018 Community Forum Notes

### ***Large Group Discussion - Citizen Communication***

- Overall Urgent Concerns of Displacement
  - Immediate Action Necessary
    - Entire group expressed the need for immediate action especially for those African and Hispanic families being displaced now
    - Citizen explains how displacement affects employment, school and transportation creating a comprehensive crisis for families facing displacement.
  - More Low-Income Housing
    - Entire group agreed that Austin needs more low-income housing not just affordable housing because those experiencing displacement cannot afford “affordable” housing
    - Citizen advocates that the City helps defend rent control housing
    - Citizen wants the affordability of affordable housing to lower to low-income families and a suspension of demolition to preserve historic land like the Austin colony
  - Better Public Communication
    - Citizen from mobile home community wants better outreach and education of City programs, policies and events as their community was unaware of this Forum or why they are being displaced
    - Citizen expresses distaste of the structure of the forum, wanting more citizen communication and less presentations which was strongly supported by the forum attendees
  - Mobile Home Communities need Attention
    - Citizen concern on mobile home displacement which pushes families away from Austin amenities are necessary like schools and hospitals, emphasizes concern of the message of exclusion to the children facing displacement and urges assistance to mobile home families that are being displaced

### ***Preserving and Expanding Affordable Housing Small Group***

- Low-income Housing not “Affordable” Housing
  - Citizen explains that affordable is not affordable to low-income communities using the example of Mueller
  - Citizen suggests that task force should confirm it meets 10% affordable house minimum on new developments
  - Citizen reminds audience that renters take up 55% and need to be considered
  - Citizen suggests creating a position to monitor who gets affordable units to ensure they fully qualify and to market these units to those who truly need them
  - Strong audience option that CodeNEXT is racist and does not help low-income

- Use Comprehensive Tools to Build Low-Income Housing
  - Citizen explains that city must use all tools even weak ones to provide low-income housing such density bonuses, restricting development, making developers pay for entitlements. Suggests banding other Texas cities together and speak to state legislature to create new tools
  - Citizen suggests providing incentives for community and universal housing
  - Citizen suggests voucher system for students along with more low-income options for students to make college more accessible
  - Citizen explains how some tools that are meant to help low-income communities are being used against them such as the 311 anonymous code enforcement. Suggests that there should be due process for these code violations so that there are options to work with violation without being evicted
  - Citizen suggests programs like houses for humanity be used, perhaps using bond money
- Use Public Land for Public Housing
  - Citizen urges city to stop using public land for private investors
- Stop Historic Land from Demolition
  - Citizen concerned of historic minority land being demolished and communities forced to move further east
  - Citizen urges moratorium on demolition
- Tax Exemptions and Fixed Household Costs
  - Citizen believes this to be the best immediate action that would help families facing displacement, especially those on a fixed income
  - Citizen complains about taxations suggesting housing taxes stay the level when purchased and assistance should focus on low-income families 30% MFI
  - Citizen sees rent, mortgage and property tax as a value of fixed household costs because these affect the affordability the most
  - Citizen suggests lowering the age of tax exemptions for city and county taxes to help more people who are struggling
- Neighborhood monitoring and maintaining housing prices to maintain affordable taxes for existing neighbors
  - Citizen explains how developers are allowed to build million dollar homes next door to \$150,000 homes which drives up taxes for the whole neighborhood
  - Citizen suggests a price cap be enforced
- Environmental impact and the Need for Green Space
  - Citizen urges city not to forget long term environmental impacts and how healthy communities need green space
- Community Outreach and Education of resources
  - Citizen explains tax exemption opportunities for certain groups such as disabled veterans but many do not take advantage of these options for lack of knowledge
  - Citizen request more transparency and outreach explaining policy
  - Mayor's Office explains deferral program, encouraging people to reach out to learn about programs and share with their communities

- Citizen explains the need for information to be translated into many languages such as Mandarin and Vietnamese
- Citizen stresses importance of educating communities on options they have to help them, explanations of CodeNEXT, homestead preservations and deferrals
- Citizen explains experiencing displacement then unfair eviction stressing the need to consider migrant worker or other special cases
- Citizen who supports CodeNEXT stresses the need for it to be explained to the community in understandable language
- Task Force member encourages a movement of working class homeowners
- Citizen suggest information on how appraisal works be communicated to citizens
- Suggestion of sending this information through direct mail
- Reserve 1% of Budget to Low-Income Housing
  - Citizen complains about racism of CodeNEXT and other city policies that spend excessive money but still fail to help the poor, suggests reserving money to solely help the poor

### ***Preserving Small Businesses Small Group***

- Focus on small businesses more than “Amazons”
  - Task Force member explains that Austin labor pool is tight
  - Citizen suggests city provide loans to small businesses in an non-competitive system so that they can survive with bigger businesses
  - Citizen questions if the city help with taxes, permitting, debt forgiveness, training for small businesses and other special programs for small businesses
- Multiuse Housing with Small Businesses and Low-Income Housing on Public Land
  - Citizen suggests “Live work play” build public housing on public land
  - Citizen suggests the city creates a workforce housing near city center
  - Want to be planned better, as traffic rises and makes problem like that example of the east 6<sup>th</sup> – can there be someone in charge of this growth – eastside red/com
- Permitting Office needs reform
- Create a Comprehensive Tool for Small Businesses
  - Citizen urges city to educate small businesses especially minorities about loans, mentorship programs, matching programs, utility help to create an incubator atmosphere
- City reserve 1% budget in beginning to small businesses

### ***Cultural and Historic Preservation Small Group***

- City Audit on Cultural Arts programs in terms of funding, equity and preservation
- More equity in funding for minority non-profit arts organizations

- Citizen who owns non-profit bookstore explains that with recent economic pressures they have to cut back on important community programs. Currently, 8% of non-profit funding goes to minorities and citizen urges for an increase in funding so minority communities can have the same opportunity for non-profit support.
- Citizen suggests we promote artists more so they can gain recognition through festivals like Compton's festivals for artists of color
- Historic preservation should not be under planning and zoning department staff and adequately trained staff for historic preservation department
  - Citizen thinks that City Council should decide on historical preservation not Planning and Zoning department. The staff for historical preservation should be stronger with better expertise and more staff, perhaps even an office that can help each neighborhood preserve their history and culture like other cities have done.
    - Other Citizen agrees and had experienced the benefits of similar program in Seattle.
    - Other Citizen suggests we look into Houston's 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward as a precedent.
    - Other city examples: Boston Landmarks Commission, San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation, City of Baltimore Equity in Planning and City of Philadelphia
- More Cultural Arts Funding with Less Barriers
  - Citizen on the board of the Mexican-American Cultural Advisory Board explains how within cultural arts funding, only 10% is Hispanic and African American and Asian together make 10% leaving minorities with a disadvantage to minority artists. Suggests that we educate minority artists on methods of receiving funding without being a non-profit so that there is a model for them to use.
- Affordable and varied performance venues
  - Citizen who dances in a small group explains that taxpaying performance spaces are not affordable or adequate for their type of performance, with suggestion for more variety and affordable options
- City reserve 1% budget to Cultural and Historical Preservation