

# City of Austin

Mayor and Council Member

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767 -1088 1000 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 200, Austin, TX 78705 (512) 974-3100 • Fax (512) 974-3161 • www.austintexas.gov/housing

DATE: April 10, 2017

TO:

FROM: Rosie Truelove, Interim Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Austin Strategic Housing Plan timeline and recommended changes

This memorandum serves to provide information that may be helpful prior to consideration of adoption of the Austin Strategic Housing Plan, slated for City Council consideration on April 13, 2017.

A number of questions have been raised about the timeline for the development of the plan and its adoption as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. A timeline of the development of the plan is attached. In addition, staff wanted to clarify that the process being followed to adopt the Austin Strategic Housing Plan as an element of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the requirements in Article X, section 5 of the City Charter, which includes the requirement for public hearing, review by the Planning Commission, and adoption by City Council.

If adopted, the Austin Strategic Housing Plan will join many other plans that are attached as elements of Imagine Austin (see Appendix G of Imagine Austin, "Attached Plans," (<u>http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/ImagineAustin/IACP amend ed2016 web appendix sm.pdf</u> and a summary of more recent amendments to add additional elements to Imagine Austin,

https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/ImagineAustin/IACP\_amend\_ments.pdf).

A change log will be available as backup to the agenda item scheduled for Council action on April 13, 2017.

NHCD staff continues to be available to meet with council offices as requested. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 512.974.3064 if I can be of assistance.

Attachment:

Austin Strategic Housing Plan Timeline

The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and will provide reasonable modifications and equal access to communications upon request.

## Austin Strategic Housing Plan Community Engagement Plan Timeline

### Initial Community Engagement to Gather Input for the Plan – Spring 2016

- 13 community conversation meetings (with Spanish translation services) held throughout the city to gather input for the Plan, which were publicized through the following methods:
  - Memos to all council members
  - Media alerts through press releases
  - Media coverage in print, radio and television
  - Notices to all email addresses in the City of Austin Community Registry
  - Announcements through Nextdoor
  - Direct emails to hundreds of individuals and organizations, including neighborhood associations
  - o City of Austin social media posts and announcements
  - Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department announcements
  - o Imagine Austin social media posts and announcements
  - CodeNEXT social media posts and announcements
- Presentations to six boards and commissions soliciting feedback for Plan
- Statistically significant survey conducted available in English and Spanish paper and online, in addition to a publicly-available survey
- Flyers in English and Spanish were distributed at libraries, and at the meetings themselves to help get the word out
- Housing Plan website included links to copies of the flyers so folks could electronically distribute to neighborhood groups, listservs or print out and distribute
- Housing Conversation Kits were available at meetings and by request so that stakeholders could conduct community meeting exercise at home

#### Community Engagement on June 2016 draft of Strategic Housing Plan – Summer 2016

- June 6, 2016 Draft of the Austin Strategic Housing Plan released
- June 6, 2016: Initial Draft Plan presented to City Council Housing and Community Development Committee
- July 12, 2016: June 6, 2016 draft presented to Community Development Commission
- Spanish and English Draft Plan Highlights one pager posted on website
- Draft Plan is available at all public libraries for review and written comments
- SpeakUP! Austin hosts the Draft Plan as a topic of discussion online
- Two facilitated public meetings on the Draft held on July 21 and August 10
- Seven targeted meetings were conducted for low-income and minority community groups in historically underserved parts of Austin
- Outreach soliciting input on Draft was advertised through City of Austin social media platforms and Spanish-language media
- Staff provides presentations at the request of various community groups
- August 9, 2016: Community Development Commission makes a recommendations on the June 6, 2016 draft plan

## December 2016 Draft of Strategic Housing Plan Released – Fall 2016 / Winter 2017

- December 5, 2016 draft of the Austin Strategic Housing Plan released with Appendix E including all public comments received and staff responses
- December 5, 2016: December 5, 2016 draft of the Plan presented to City Council Housing and Community Development Committee
- December 13, 2016: December 5, 2016 draft presented to Community Development Commission
- January 10, 2017: Community Development Commission recommended adoption of the December 5, 2016 draft with recommended changes

## Adoption Process – Winter / Spring 2017

- February 2, 2017: Presentation to Comprehensive Plan Joint Committee with unanimous support for adoption
- March 10, 2017: Notice of the public hearings is mailed to Neighborhood Registry
- March 20, 2017: Notice of public hearings published in the Statesman
- March 23, 2017: City Council briefed on the Plan
- March 28, 2017: Public hearing conducted before the Planning Commission with unanimous support for adoption with recommended amendments
- April 6, 2017: Public hearing before City Council
- April 13, 2017: Posted for potential adoption by City Council

## Staff-Recommended Changes April 10, 2017 Proposed Austin Strategic Housing Plan

Page	
Number	Staff Recommended Change
Pg. 2	Add the following text at the beginning of the document:
	By adopting the Austin Strategic Housing Plan, City Council demonstrates its commitment to implementation of the plan.
	However, every action item listed in this plan will require separate and specific implementation. Adoption of the plan does
	not begin the implementation of any item. Approval of the plan does not legally obligate the City to implement any particular
	action item.
Pg. 2	Informed by the March 31, 2017 Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequalities report, language has
	been added throughout the document to address institutional racism, diversity and integration.
	The report from the March 31, 2017 Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequalities states: "We believe
	that policies implemented by the City of Austin over time, combined with procedures created and carried out by other local
	institutions, caused people of color, particularly Blacks, to be segregated into the eastern parts of the city and limited their
	access to many things necessary for upward mobility."
	Source: <u>https://cityofaustin.github.io/institutional-racism/IRSI_Task_Force_Final_Report-Updated-4-7-17.pdf</u> , p. 17.
Pg. 2	Remove existing Executive Summary text and replace with the following:
	From 1970 to 1990, Austin was one of the most affordable cities in the country. However, Austin has rapidly become less
	affordable in the last few years for many residents, including Austinites who embody the city's character and who provide
	critical services in the community. The city's growing economy and vibrant cultural assets continue to attract businesses and
	families, creating a steady population increase. Subsidies alone cannot close the growing affordable housing gaps or provide
	households with more affordable housing and transportation choices. While Austin's affordability issues are complex,
	implementing the Austin Strategic Housing Plan can help the community address these issues in a more cost effective and efficient manner. By utilizing a multifaceted set of coordinated strategies, the City of Austin can work with partners to
	effectively address these challenges and reach our community's affordability goals.
	enectively address these challenges and react our community s anordability goals.
	In the broad community outreach undertaken to develop the Austin Strategic Housing Plan – including 30 public meetings, a
	statistically valid survey, and outreach to underrepresented groups – Austinites noted that affordability is not just defined by
	the price of housing, but also by where one lives and if one has access to daily needs and opportunities.

By aligning with the City's Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and CodeNEXT revision of the Land Development Code, the Austin Strategic Housing Plan recommends approaches to address these interconnected issues comprehensively.

The plan includes goals for affordable housing in every City Council district to ensure that there is affordable housing throughout the city. It also includes goals for the construction of 60,000 housing units affordable to households at 80% median family income (MFI) and below, and another 75,000 units for households earning greater than 80% MFI broken into specific goals for households at different income levels.

In addition, the plan includes five community values with key recommended actions the City could take to support them:

- Prevent Households from Being Priced out of Austin: Support legislation to allow flat dollar-amount Homestead Exemptions, create a preservation property tax exemption for properties to minimize displacement of low-income renters, expand the use of shared-equity ownership and other mechanisms to preserve and create ownership options for households at 80-120% MFI, and invest in preservation strategies to combat gentrification.
- Foster Equitable, Integrated and Diverse Communities: Promote strategic investments and create protections for lowincome renters by developing a strike fund to preserve multi-family buildings to retain affordable housing units, implement Austin's Fair Housing Action Plan, bolster enforcement of Fair Housing requirements, and undertake strategic land banking for affordable housing.
- Invest in Housing for Those Most in Need: Pursue future General Obligation Bonds and local fund appropriations for affordable housing, leverage low-income housing tax credits, challenge the private sector to fund affordable workforce housing, maximize the use of public properties for affordable housing, and expand housing for people with disabilities.
- <u>Create New and Affordable Housing Choices throughout Austin:</u> Use the affordable housing goals in this plan to guide policy, implement consistent density bonus programs, streamline City codes and permitting processes, better utilize land for affordable housing, revise the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program, relax regulations on affordable housing products (including cooperatives and Accessory Dwelling Units), and create a Multifamily Property Tax Exemption Program.
- Help Austinites Reduce Household Costs: Connect housing with transportation choices, increase efforts to help households to reduce utility costs through weatherization of current residences, and ensure that future housing developments are in proximity to healthy grocery stores, health care services, and social support agencies.

It is important to note that there are other issues that impact affordability - such as utilities, taxes, transportation, and healthcare costs - that are outside of the scope of this plan, and rely on the actions of other governmental, non-profit, and private entities. The Austin Strategic Housing Plan provides a roadmap for Austin to maximize the most impactful opportunities, sustainably achieve affordability goals and ensure Austin remains a great city for people with different needs, values, and incomes. Austin's greatest assets are its diversity and its people, and that is why implementing the Housing Plan to address affordability is so important for all Austinites.

p. 4	Revise as shown: A majority of meeting participants agreed that affordable housing needs to be distributed as evenly as
	possible throughout the city to reduce any concentration, and that this housing should also be connected to transit and
	schools. Another commonly expressed view throughout the engagement process was that the City should focus affordable
	housing policy on both income-restricted units and on non-subsidized market rate construction. Some residents were
	concerned that affordable housing could have a detrimental impact on the neighborhoods where they are proposed.
Pg. 11	Re-Name the section: "Equity, Integration and Diversity"
	Add the text below at the beginning of this section:
	The Austin Strategic Housing Plan affirms the work generated by Austin Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and
	Systemic Inequalities. In its March 31, 2017 report, the Task Force noted that "Austin must acknowledge the damage being
	caused by our community's continued acceptance of residential racial and ethnic segregation. The solution must begin with
	our community embracing integration and diversity as a core value." The Austin Strategic Housing Plan is intended to set the
	community on a path to achieve an equitable housing environment where integration, diversity, and inclusion are
	championed.
	Add footnote: <u>https://cityofaustin.github.io/institutional-racism/IRSI_Task_Force_Final_Report-Updated-4-7-17.pdf</u> , p. 26.
Pg. 13	<b>Revise as shown:</b> HATC serves Travis County and parts of Austin. The authority manages five housing properties totaling 105
	154 affordable units. HATC also administers eight housing services programs. The largest program is the Housing Choice
	Voucher program, with 568 vouchers and approximately 800 households on the waiting list to receive a voucher. HATC also
	receives funding through a Shelter Plus Care grant to provide 95 units for homeless families or individuals in the area. The
	Strategic Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), a separate entity from the HATC, has developed nearly 2,000 affordable units.
	Public housing authorities must create five-year comprehensive plans, as well as annual plans according to U.S. Department
	of Housing and Urban Development guidelines. These comprehensive plans encompass policies, programs, and strategies to
	help the housing authorities meet their communities' housing needs and goals. HACA's 2016 Annual Plan and 2015-2019 Five-
	Year Plan and HATC's 2016-2017 Annual Plan provide the most recent discussions of the authorities' policies,
	accomplishments, and goals. By state law, HACA's work is focused within the City of Austin while HATC prioritizes areas of
	Travis County outside of the city limits.
Pg. 16	Revise as shown: At least 75% of new housing units should be within 1/2 mile of Imagine Austin Centers and Corridors (see
	the Figure 10 map showing Imagine Austin Centers and Corridors)
Pg. 16	
	Add a new community goal: At least 25% of new income-restricted affordable housing should be in high opportunity areas.
Pg. 16	Revise as shown: Produce 100 Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units each year through 2018, with half of those units
	( <del>25</del> <u>50</u> ) being Housing First.

Pg. 16	
	Revise as shown: <u>WITHIN</u> EACH CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT <del>SHOULD CONTAIN</del> :
Pg. 17	Revise the title as shown: <u>City of Austin</u> Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Department 10-Year
	Targets.
Pg. 17	Revise as shown: 25% of affordable housing units that are created or preserved should have two or more bedrooms AND a
	preference for families with children system to provide opportunities for families with children.
Pg. 17	<b>Revise as shown:</b> 90% 75% of affordable housing created or preserved within ¾ mile of local, fixed-route transit service,
	ensuring Metro Access service for eligible persons with disabilities.
Pg. 20	Revise text under "Prevent Households from Being Priced Out of Austin" as shown: Preserve communities and combat
	gentrification through legislative changes, local policies, programs and targeted investments.
Pg. 20	Revise as shown and modify Appendix B to match: Support Legislation or other Mechanisms to Create Target a Preservation
	Property Tax Exemption to for Communities at Risk of Displacement
Pg. 20-	In section: "Prevent Households from Being Priced Out of Austin," add a new subsection: "Increase the Supply of Multi-
21	Bedroom Housing for Families with Children"
	Imagine Austin calls for a city that works for people of all ages, including families with children. The number of housing units
	available with multiple bedrooms can constrain the choices for families; however, families also consider a number of other
	factors such as schools, and the availability of family oriented services and amenities. The city should evaluate CodeNEXT to
	ensure it is providing an adequate supply of multi-bedroom housing types throughout the community, creating diverse
	housing types and unit mix. This could provide additional housing stock for families and help Austin retain families and
	support underenrolled schools.
Pg. 20-	In section: "Prevent Households from Being Priced Out of Austin," add a new subsection "Develop Programs and Policies
21	that can help Mitigate Gentrification Pressures in Historically Low-Income Neighborhoods"
	The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan defines gentrification as the process of neighborhood change that results in the
	replacement of lower income residents with higher income ones. The City of Austin should continue to focus resources on
	programs and policies that can help mitigate gentrification pressures in historically low-income neighborhoods. This includes
	undertaking equitable development strategies to create healthy, vibrant communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes
	result when intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that
	shape their neighborhoods and city. This could also include the creation of a low interest loan fund or grant for preservation
	in historically low-income gentrifying areas. Such a fund could provide a further incentive to preserve affordable housing
	stock in targeted areas with the greatest redevelopment and displacement pressures.

Pg. 20-	In section: "Prevent Households from Being Priced Out of Austin," add a new subsection "Consider the development of a
21	District Plan for Central East Austin"
	The city should explore creating a District Plan for Central East Austin focused on preservation to acknowledge the public role
	in making the area vulnerable to gentrification, and which allows long-time residents to shape goals and strategies for
	preservation.
Pg. 22	Revise as shown: Displacement is happening throughout Austin, and low-income communities in particular are at high risk of
	displacement. Austin will should make robust investments to anchor and strengthen these communities, including
	investments in new development and affordable housing preservation, and coordinate targeted investments in economic
	development, transit, and education.
Pg. 22	Rename section and modify Appendix B to match: "Foster Equitable, Integrated and Diverse Communities"
	Modify as shown: Promote strategic investments and create protections for low-income renters, households and people of
	color to address racial integration in housing.
Pg. 22-	In section: "Foster Equitable, Integrated and Diverse Communities," add a new subsection: "Support the community goal
24	for at least 25% of new income-restricted affordable housing to be in moderate to high opportunity areas."
	Add text: The City of Austin's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice states that "lack of affordable housing citywide
	exacerbates segregation created through historical policies and practices." Successfully reaching the goal to have 25 percent
	of new income-restricted affordable housing in moderate to high opportunity areas will help create more equitable,
	integrated and diverse communities throughout Austin.
Pg. 24	Revise as shown in "Add Flexibility to Occupancy limits" subsection:
	On March 20, 2014, the City of Austin amended its city code regarding dwelling unit occupancy to reduce the maximum
	occupancy limits for single family homes in certain zoning districts and for duplexes from six unrelated adults to four. The
	ordinance has a provision excluding rooming or boarding house-type settings from the limit. This occupancy change could
	raise the cost of housing for unrelated roommates since housing costs will be split among fewer occupants. The limits are
	most likely to affect the city's student population and co-ops but could also have implications for persons with disabilities
	who reside together in a group setting that is not a licensed rooming or boarding house. In this case, the city would need to
	make a reasonable accommodation to the ordinance to avoid fair housing violations.
Pg. 24	Revise as shown in "Pursue Legislation to Allow Inclusionary Zoning" subsection:
	Inclusionary zoning allows local governments to require developers to dedicate a certain portion of new housing units as
	affordable to low income residents. Texas state law limits municipalities' abilities to implement mandatory inclusionary
	zoning policies. However, the law does make exceptions for sales that are part of homestead preservation districts and for
	allowing a requirement in as part of an optional density bonus program. In addition, there is varying opinion in the
	community as to whether there is an exception that allows for inclusionary zoning for home sales in Homestead Preservation
	Districts. The City of Austin should implement inclusionary zoning as allowed and seek to expand inclusionary zoning powers
	as a means to increase the affordable housing supply in Austin.

Pg. 25	Revise as shown: It is estimated that over 1,900 affordable housing units could be created through an additional \$65 million
	in voter approved G.O. Bonds
Pg. 25	In section "Invest in Housing for Those Most in Need," add another subsection titled "Focus Federal Funds in Housing
	Investments" and update Appendix B to match.
	Add text: The City of Austin receives federal formula grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
	(HUD) each fiscal year. Federally-required five-year Consolidated Plans and annual Action Plans identify priority community
	needs and recommend use of HUD funding. Federal funding should be focused and leveraged to achieve the goals in the
	Austin Strategic Housing Plan. This includes continuing to leverage federal dollars through all available funding sources,
	targeting current and future federal assistance for housing needs.
Pg. 25	In section "Invest in Housing for Those Most in Need," add another subsection titled "Incentive Programs" and update
	Appendix B to match.
	Add text: Explore all possible mechanisms, including those requiring legislative changes, to incentivize the development of
	income-restricted affordable housing through fee waivers, including impact fees. Identify all current fees and potential future
	fees. Build upon the success of existing systems to incentive the production of affordable housing such as the S.M.A.R.T.
	Housing Program and Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning process that utilize fee waivers to produce income-restricted
	affordable housing.
Pg. 31	In section "Streamline City Codes and Permitting Processes," revise as shown: The development community has provided
	feedback that expedited review is the most important incentives to encourage them to participate This continues to be
	feedback from the development community as the most effective measure to incentivize participation in the City's incentive
	programs to create affordable units.
Pg. 32	Revise "Revise SMART Housing Program" subsection as shown:
	The City should revise consider revising the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program to both offer greater incentives to developers, and
	lengthen the affordability period.
Pg. 32	Revise the text in the "Implement Density Bonus Program for Missing Middle Housing" section as shown:
	A second type of density bonus program might be more appropriate at the edges of centers and corridors or on collector
	streets where residents are more sensitive to building height and building size. In this type of bonus program, the "density"
	could take the form of units (rather than height or bulk), allowing more units within the same size building. This program
	could effectively provide missing middle affordable units. Relaxation of parking requirements could promote affordability and
	potentially maintain neighborhood character. Economic modeling has confirmed that such programs would be financially
	feasible while also producing affordable housing benefits. Any increase in development capacity will be tied to an
	affordability requirement. Incentivize and provide additional opportunities for housing units with two or more bedrooms or
	more, particularly in high opportunity areas, potentially including incentives for the provision of affordable units with two or
	more bedrooms.

Pg. 33	Revise second to last sentence of "Relax Regulations on both Internal and External ADUs" subsection as shown: Numerous
	regulations should be relaxed The City should consider amending regulations for both internal ADUs, which are created by
	converting interior residential space into a separate unit, and external ADUs, which are separate structures.
Pg. 35	Revise as shown and update Appendix B to match: Support Legislation or other Mechanisms to Create a Multifamily
	Property Tax Exemption Program
Pg. 36	Revise as shown: Encourage development in a compact and connected manner so households of all incomes have access to a
	range of affordable housing-choices, transportation choices-and transportation options, and can easily access jobs, basic
	needs, heath care, educational opportunities, and public services. Other household expenses such as healthcare costs,
	utilities, food and telecommunications must also be considered.
Pg. 37	
	Revise fourth sentence of "Comprehensive Parking Reform" subsection to read: The City should reform consider reforming
	its parking policies to support housing affordability and access by
Pg. 40	
	Add text to "Other Tools" section: Evaluate existing and potential new impact fees for the potential to support and/or
	incentivize the production of affordable housing, and support necessary legislative changes for that use.
	Modify the graph: To show the Housing Authority of Travis County and the Strategic Housing Finance Corporation's planned
	affordable units.
	Corrections
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p. 13; Correct as shown: "leverage resources to achieve the goals outlined in this plan."

- p. 14: Correct as shown: "This will require <u>a</u> strategy..."
- p. 14: Correct as shown: "As depicted in Figure 6 above below, Move "Step 2: ...." to above the table
- p. 14: Add household size to chart
- p. 15: Delete repeated text
- p. 16: Correct spelling of "units" and "Council"
- p. 18: Correct spelling of "identified"
- p. 19: Correct spelling of "housing"
- p. 19: Re-insert footnote number
- p. 20: Correct "fund" to "funds" in box
- p. 21: Correct as shown: "One form of this, community land trust, enables eligible..."
- p. 22: Correct spelling of "designing"
- p. 22: Add comma after "relevant city departments"
- p. 23: Correct as shown: areas develops
- p. 24: Add space after "Reentry Roundtable Report:"

p. 26: In the "Success Story" box, add comma between Tax Increment Financing" and "transfers from the Capital Improvement Program" p. 26: Correct spelling of "through" and "balanced"

p. 27: Correct spelling of "for"

p. 31: Correct footnotes #16 & 17

p. 32: Correct as shown: "To augment existing staff capacity, NHCD will look to third-party vendors to assist in performing..."

p. 32: Correct spelling of "requirements" & "almost"

p. 32: Correct as shown: "One potential way to enable more people to be able to afford to afford to live..."

p. 33: Correct footnote #18

- p. 34: Correct spelling of "almost"
- p. 36: Correct spelling of "Oriented"
- p. 40: In last box, add period after "state statutes"

Correct other spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes found in the document.