

**Public Hearing
Community Development Commission
FY 2013-14 Action Plan - Community Needs Assessment
April 4, 2013**

The following does not represent a complete transcript of public testimony, and is a summary of the public testimony by NHCD staff.

Deep Affordability	
Name	Statement
Jennifer McPhail, ADAPT of Texas	ADAPT is very concerned about the lack of affordable housing for those who are extremely low income. People with disabilities tend to make up this group. There is a 70% unemployment rate for those who are disabled. These members of our community have been and continue to be forced out of Austin as a result of housing affordability. We urge you to invest in very low income projects with an emphasis on those serving persons with disabilities. We urge you to support making existing housing accessible through the ABR program. We need to allow people to age in place, whether they are in a single family home or an apartment. It is cost prohibitive for a person with less than 15% MFI to widen a doorway. We need to aggressively concentrate our funds on the growing underserved groups in the future.
Isabelle Headrick, Accessible Housing Austin	Assessing Housing Austin is a non-profit and CHDO that provides affordable housing to low and extremely low income persons with disabilities and their families. We receive many calls from people who seek to find affordable housing, are in very stressful situations, and are very discouraged with the lack of availability.
Stephanie Thomas, ADAPT of Texas, Accessible Austin CHDO	The measurements that are utilized by NHCD and HUD do not address those of us with disabilities. There needs to be a redefinition of those categories. We need to focus on the very lowest income people and evaluate the policies of the City. Home repair and ABR are critical programs and need to be funded. Housing discrimination needs to be enforced, it is a severe problem in our community. Austin is aging, as people get older they acquire more disabilities on a fixed income. I think we need housing for old and young people with disabilities.
David Clauss, American YouthWorks	The affordable housing needs of youth, ages 17-24 year olds who are out of work, underemployed, out of school with incomes less than \$15,000/year are great. There are thousands of these households today, couch surfing, doubling up in Austin, this practice will cost the taxpayers millions of dollars in the future if we don't intervene now. Lack of stable housing is one of the biggest causes of school drop out. The biggest need is for rental housing for the low and extremely low income. Affordable rent is for these groups is \$300/month. If we want these young people to succeed, affordable housing is a key component. Focus as many resources as possible on this need.
Fair Housing	
Name	Statement
Kathy Stark, Austin Tenant's Council (ATC)	ATC's mission is safe, decent, fair affordable housing through rental repair assistance programs, and a fair housing enforcement and education program. If anyone has looked at lease they are 20 pages or more and very complex. We must continue to work to ensure that exiting affordable housing is maintained and does not become substandard. The City has a huge bedbug program in rental properties, we need to look at doing something systemic to address this problem. Focus the resources for <50% and <30% MFI.

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General Obligation Bonds/SMART Housing	
Name	Statement
Stewart Hersh, Consultant	The 2006 G.O. Bonds were marketed as a supplement to Federal Funds, but they supplanted it. The voters approved the bonds for the poorest among us including women and children who were homeless. The voters did not approve the bonds for housing that lacked specific performance measures and a commitment to geographic dispersion of the funding. Please recommend funding to poorest among us who need their homes repaired, as well as safe ownership and rental opportunities, in mixed income communities, accessible for persons with disabilities, reasonably priced, transit oriented and meets Austin Energy's Green Building Standards. It seems like we are not trying to keep affordable, we are trying to become affordable. Austin is much less affordable today than it ever has been in the past 40 years.
Home Repair	
Name	Statement
Charles Cloutman, Meals on Wheels and More, and Chair of Austin Home Repair Coalition	Home repair is the cheapest way of ensuring housing affordability and keeping residents in their homes, keeping them safe, decent and sanitary. The Home Repair Coalition respectfully requests \$3M annually to repair the homes that need to be repaired, the capacity to do this is well within our capacity. We need to start doing a neighborhood approach, right now we are "shot gunning" the problem. We need to look at things block, by block. Preserve opportunities for low income homeowners that are already in these neighborhoods.
Homelessness	
Name	Statement
Jo Kathryn Quinn, Caritas of Austin	We should provide housing for people who are extremely poor. Communities across the country that are making the most progress to end homelessness are following their data and concentrating their very limited resources on the most vulnerable populations. It is politically hard to do, but it has the best results. We need to create housing first in this community for those who allow people who have experienced long term homelessness to obtain housing with very few requirements. I would also urge better collaborative planning around the ESG funds.
Ann Howard, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)	Everybody who has spoken tonight has requested that you focus on the poorest among us, the <30% MFI it is where we will make the biggest impact, helping those who are on the bubble. I think it is so exciting when we are all on the same page. We need to be aggressive, bold and put our money where our mouth is. The number one core value is deep affordability. Let's end homelessness together.
Transitional Housing	
Name	Statement
Shannon Moody, Jeremiah Program	The Jeremiah Program addresses generational poverty by serving determined single parents and their children under the age of 5. There is a need for transitional housing for families, we ask that you reaffirm funding this type of housing for the very poorest among us.

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Community Development	
Name	Statement
Rev. Al Lewis, Minister	Federal dollars are to provide resources to black community, in regards to E. 12th St. Missionary Baptist Church.
Deep Affordability	
Name	Statement
Jennifer McPhail, ADAPT of Texas	Urge to dedicate funds to serve people at or below 15% of the MFI, that is the level for someone that receive SSI. Realize this is a deep level of subsidy. Poverty isn't going away, not everyone is going to be able to increase their income, when on a fixed income. Believe housing that you can afford is a civil right. ABR program helps those with disabilities become self-sufficient. Not enough accessible housing stock. We need to ensure enforcement to prevent violations . We can do a lot of creative things, we have to find a way to ensure local funds are invested.
Albert "Sparky" Metz, ADAPT of Texas	We need more accessible housing, when I was looking for a home I would call up people and I would ask them if they were accessible and they would say yes, but when I got there I found out it was not accessible. A lot of times people do not know what you are talking about when you say accessible.
Highwa Salivetz, ADAPT of Texas	Affordable, accessible, integrated housing is a necessary thing. It is sad that in the year 2013 it is so rare. I am lucky to have a Section 8 voucher, but many are not. We need creative options to provide housing. We should keep Austin weird and accessible.
David Whitty, ADAPT of Texas	Lives in accessible housing but have lived in substandard housing for many years. Took about 3 years for the list to open up, looked every day for 60 days and every day it was gone. Fortunate that it was finally available. The 30% MFI is a reasonable figure, it should be available to those who truly need it, not those who do not. I'm glad about the ABR program, we are glad Austin does that.
General Obligation Bonds/SMART™ Housing	
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Homelessness	
Name	Statement
Ann Howard, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)	I receive emails from people that need housing every day. We need Housing! Recently Austin/Travis County was awarded \$5.1M for many different organizations and a little comes to ECHO to run the HMIS database system. HUD wants to see more coordination and collaboration. We are using this directive as an opportunity to evaluate what we're doing and see how we can improve. It is exciting to see the response from everyone. Let's figure out what we need to do to end homelessness and drive investment for the very needy, 30% MFI and below. We can make a difference of who can actually afford housing, not help those who already have housing get into better housing.
PSH	
Name	Statement
Shelly Ryan, Safe Place	Thank you for efforts to create PSH, it is crucial that it continue, but ultimately increase, especially for families that are experiencing violence in their homes and/or in their relationships. Providing this type of housing provides a safe environment for the family but also an environment for healing. Healing takes safety and basic stability in order to work. City of Austin would be giving those families the basic right to live in a violence free environment. TBRA and Child Care support services such as the Bridge Program, are important so victims can have a safe caregiver in order to make ends meet. These services are necessary in order to move forward. Most PSH units have been directed toward individuals, we encourage an increase in directing them toward families with children.
TBRA	
Name	Statement
Jay Felderman, Salvation Army	Partnership between COA, HACA and Salvation Army to provide TBRA since 1996 is funded by HOME funds, TBRA is key to keep clients out of shelters and in housing. The 12 month of housing subsidy gives clients time to work towards self-sufficiency. Currently households PIT is about 55-60 hh, # in 2012 124 households helped, 327 people 59% children. During time in TBRA reduce debt and increase skills and income. Thank city for TBRA in amount \$567,000 and like to continue.

SpeakUp! Austin - Is Austin Affordable?
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Name	Statement
Roger L. Cauvin	It is unfortunate to see "household affordability" be followed by discussion almost exclusively focusing on affordable housing. Household affordability refers to the combined cost of housing, transportation, utilities, and core living expenses. Focusing only on affordable housing encourages sprawl, which ultimately makes the city less efficient, less prosperous, and less affordable when all factors are considered.
Tom Davis	Make it an ABSOLUTE requirement on developers - with NO ways to wiggle out of it in any way, or by any means. ALL new developments MUST meet the affordable housing requirements. The city has for too long let developers buy their way out of the affordability requirements. THIS HAS TO STOP!
Stacia Bowley	The city's down payment assistance program helped many people whom I knew afford housing. So far as I know, that program has been shuttered, but I think that would bring stability back to many neighborhoods where a substantial amount of long-time renters are being evicted in favor of a tear-down or remodel that gets flipped a few times.
Shelly	Rapidly increasing rent makes it difficult to save money to move from renting into home ownership.
Dan Keshet	Housing costs are too high for everybody in this city because more people want to live here than there are homes. Programs to give individuals money for a down payment, reduced rent, etc... make a huge difference for those individuals, but only at the cost of higher prices for everybody else. The way to keep prices down is to make sure there are enough homes to go around. This will require further speeding up the permitting process, liberalizing regulations against building multi-family homes, offering more room for building by right, especially in high-demand areas like downtown, and allowing more cheaper styles of homes, such as no-parking condos. In addition, the city should reduce its focus on converting renters into homeowners. If people have the desire and financial means to become homeowners, it's a valid choice, but renters are every bit as much a part of our city, and special resources don't need to be spent to change one into the other. Especially considering that it will always be the case that those most in need of housing assistance are not good candidates for home ownership financially.
Ann Teich	For retired people, many middle class residents, many professionals (teachers, firefighters, police officers, probation officers, state workers, etc...), blue collar workers, working poor, immigrants, refugees, residents over 65, and the homeless, Austin is definitely not affordable.

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Name	Statement
Jenn G.	I bought in East Riverside in 2007 when the area was in very rough shape, because it was what I could afford as a single person working as a public sector employee, and I absolutely did not want to have a long commute. It is very difficult and distressing to me to watch the neighborhood get bulldozed on a near-daily basis right now, pushing out all of the low-income people living in the apartments, as well as their shopping and restaurants and be replaced with very high end housing that prices the long time residents of the neighborhood out. For instance, there are rents at the new Riverview Apts. up to \$7,000 per month. I bought my condo for \$63K just 6 years ago, and it is less than 1/4 mile away. Now my family is bigger and I am completely priced out of buying anything else in this neighborhood. This style of development lets all the wealthy people that can afford high rent, nice cars, high commuting costs, to live in the close-in neighborhoods and pushes everyone else further and further out of town, and it's creating a homogeneous Austin and erasing the culture that existed in this formerly working-class area. It would be SO NICE to see Austin work HARD to raise up the standard of living in the very poor neighborhoods, rather than just erase them and let new people with more money move in and take them over.
CS Symington	So much money has come into Austin from other parts of the country. People with cash, apparently lots of it, to pay for houses/real estate have driven out the locals who can no longer afford the rising taxes on our own aging properties. Developers and "flippers" add to the mix, making housing in Austin affordable only for those who haven't lived here very long at all.
Golivas	Interesting, I was looking up Artist Relocation programs in other cities around the country when this came into my email box! I work a full time job and try to work as much as I can as an artist. There is nothing affordable anywhere in town for me to be able to do my art full time. I think my only option may be to go to a town that is providing incentives for artists.
Angela Sonora	I can't really afford Austin any more and am just hanging on until I get a job some place less expensive.
Zanner	Austin IS affordable to people interested in moving here from less-affordable places (Cali, NYC, Seattle, etc...) which gives incentive to developers to build at price points beyond most people in Austin. Those high prices (along with the development/improvement) drive up the prices of ALL property in the same area, making even modest homes in central Austin unattainable for average families. We would all love to live in and enjoy central Austin, but for most people it's just not a reality. So, we push north or south to find affordable homes and spend all day burning fuel to get to and from work. Meanwhile central Austin schools are half-empty, and the people who drive the core of the city enjoy it least. I don't want to live in Cedar Park or Circle C. I'm sure it's lovely for some people. But, I moved to Austin to live IN AUSTIN.
Stacia Bowley	No, Austin is not affordable. When I bought my house two years ago, I paid just over \$100k for a "tiny house" in 78702, and my mortgage was around \$700/month. This felt like a stretch--I had friends who had established leases where \$600-\$800 paid for a 2/1. My taxes this year were so high that I considered looking for a roommate to share my house with. Shockingly my mortgage is the most affordable monthly expense for shelter. I am a teacher, and I can barely hold down my mortgage. So many people who live in central Austin work in service and non-profits, or lower-level administrative jobs at UT. These "ordinary" people can't afford to live close to where they work.

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Waleska	It is becoming increasingly expensive to live in Austin. It seems that rent goes up every year; it is pretty much a standard practice of all property management companies. In order to afford housing people have to move further away from the city adding to the commuting nightmare. In the meantime, real estate in Austin is snatched up by wealthy investors building expensive condos and restaurants. Downtown Austin a place for the wealthy and tourists.
Gramamakm	Austin is not affordable to the poor and near poor. Better services & home repair programs would help stabilize marginal neighborhoods increase the number of families who could stay in their homes. More affordable housing throughout intown neighborhoods would balance the gentrification that is occurring downtown and on the East and South sides.
Delwin Goss	I moved to Austin from the Dallas area 34 years ago. Even then Austin's housing prices were shocking and it's only gotten worse. Unfortunately there is not an easy answer. As long as people are pouring into this City the demand for housing will increase and for any one who's had even an introductory course in economics; rising demand equals rising prices. Then I look at all the issues with "affordable housing". 1) being placed in high crime, low opportunity parts of the City 2) rental as opposed to owners with roots in the neighborhood 3) investors making a guaranteed income from subsidized housing by renting instead of home ownership which everyone knows is the foundation of a livable community. As long as Austin continues to be a draw families and individuals; there aren't any easy answers. It's been this way for almost any growing and popular City for over 50 years. I don't expect things to change that much; at least not in my lifetime.
Lee Sherman	There is little to no affordable housing outside of the "crescent" where it has historically been concentrated. Focus on creating affordable housing in areas like Old West Austin, Clarksville, Tarrytown, Hyde Park, etc... which always support affordable housing as long as it is not in their back yards. Stop concentrating poverty in the crescent of inequality. Find other ways to make "housing that is affordable" instead of throwing millions of dollars at "artificially affordable housing" or subsidized housing, which is not economically sustainable.
Lee Sherman	Housing is over 50% of my income and this makes it tough to raise a family in the urban core. The property tax burden is disproportionately carried by homeowners compared to downtown property owners.
Dave Sullivan	Remove barriers to garage apartments & secondary units. Work with TCAD to provide for reduced property taxes on units used to provide below-market cost housing. Allow higher impervious cover for affordable units if there is onsite storm water capture. Allow reduced setback standards or alternative compliance to compatibility standards for affordable multifamily housing.
Roger L. Cauvin	The irony is that attaching conditions to new development discourages it, which affects the supply and demand equation. The most effective way to drive down the cost of living in Austin would be build tons of housing in the urban core - so much that the developers would have to "give it away". Concentrating it in the urban core would drive down transportation costs as well.

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Name	Statement
Grace	My taxes will soon be more than my mortgage and I bought affordable housing. My income does not keep up with these increases. I pay half my income on housing and the other fees such as water, etc... keep going up. What are we getting for these increases? I can't fix the rotting trim, worn out carpet, termite damage etc.. because of the increasing tax burden.
Jenny Meadows	We're almost being taxed out of the home we've lived in for 30 years. While our house valuation has plummeted, the land value has skyrocketed. We can't sell, and those around us can't sell. Empty lots big enough for one house are being subdivided into lots for 3-4 houses, with no yards. Urban crowding is not fun.
Zanner	Consider property tax write-offs for people who work in core city service jobs: police, AFD, teachers, non-profit staff and others so that they have a better chance of buying AND STAYING in central Austin homes.
Shelly	Tax incentives for landlords that keep renter housing more affordable?

**SpeakUp! Austin - What Community Needs are You Seeing in Your Neighborhood?
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Jenn G.	Better schools in East Austin. If the schools were equalized all across Austin, there would not be such a huge disparity from East Austin to West Austin. It is so unbelievably hard to live in East Austin and try to find a good public or affordable private school to send a child to without driving to West Austin every day. Equalize education.
Ann Teich	In the North Lamar/Rundberg/Metric/183 area, one of our challenges is to KEEP our affordable housing stock. Our area is being gentrified. The second challenge is to keep that affordable housing stock safe, healthy and attractive. We have many absentee landlords who do not maintain their rental properties (single-family dwellings, duplexes, fourplexes, eightplexes, small apartment complexes). Their property managers are often residents who are too afraid to complain about safety and health issues. Our best-kept affordable housing belongs to federally-funded organizations and nonprofits like the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (Thurmond Heights, Northgate), the San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation (Runnymede Apartments), and the Mulholland Group (The Palms on N. Lamar). The third challenge is to have a Code Compliance department that can be proactive rather than reactive and a way to process ticketed properties in a timely fashion.
Zanner	Affordable housing for families to encourage use of the great central Austin public schools; sidewalks; rental property availability that is large enough (and affordable) for families.
Gramamakm	I live downtown. The Waller Creek Project and adjacent park and Wooldridge park closings have displaced the many homeless people that called those locations home in Austin. As a result they are much more visible than previously. Downtown residents, entertainment district participants, tourists and businesses are confronted daily with our failure to address issue of not only more temporary shelters and additional support services but affordable housing for this growing part of our population. Austin planners should look at San Antonio, Portland, Seattle and other cities who have been more proactive in addressing their homeless populations.
Dan	A place for homeless people!!
Shelly	More sidewalks are needed to increase walkability in the area There is an increasing presence of homeless people
Jenn G.	Better sidewalk and bike infrastructure in East Austin, most especially the E. Riverside area. These areas are very unsafe on foot on and on bike today, even riding or walking on the sidewalks, where they exist. The East Riverside area is heavily transit dependent, yet there are many areas lacking complete sidewalks to be able to walk to the bus.
Jenny Meadows	Street repairs. Noise abatement from highways where traffic has multiplied by a factor of 5-10 in the last 10 years. The City Council members are not listening to the citizenry's cries to stop cramming more and more people into the city. Edwards Aquifer is suffering, and Austin will end up the less for the Council's short term vision.

**SpeakUp! Austin - What Community Needs are You Seeing in Your Neighborhood?
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Alex	In 78704, sidewalks are a major issue. The neighborhoods themselves have very poor sidewalks, or none at all. And busy streets like South First have narrow, craggy, sidewalks and speeding drivers. Once we have sidewalks, we can start the dialog about how to encourage development that contributes to walkable neighborhoods. It would be nice to have more first-rate groceries, restaurants, bars, and retail all within a few blocks walk.
Tim Thomas	We need better sidewalks and bike routes. We have far too many traffic fatalities. And East Riverside at Pleasant Valley still doesn't have proper ADA sidewalks. I saw a gentleman in a wheelchair just the other day sitting in the yield lane waiting for the light to change because there was no where else for him to go. Once it changed he had to drive his wheelchair on the shoulder because there's no sidewalk.
Delwin Goss	Montopolis is in need of the normal services neighborhoods West of IH 25 receive on a daily basis. We need major infrastructure improvements; sidewalks, cross walks, traffic calming devices, replacing ageing sewer lines, water lines electrical lines. Since the bonds have passed we hope to see a new community/recreation center soon. We need code compliance to shut down the back yard wrecking yards, auto repair shops, auto body shops , appliance repair shops and people operating construction companies who store and park their equipment in the residential streets and their front and back yards. We have been working with APD and TCSO but we need to keep on hammering the drug dealers, their customers and al the other criminals who come with it. We need programs to address the almost over whelming problems of domestic violence and assaults. We need an expansion of job opportunities and educational opportunities for our children and families. We need self esteem programs for children from at risk families.
Stacia Bowley	A decent grocery store in 78702. The HEB on 7th has come a long way, but the neighborhood is very much a land of little produce.
Dan	Look at Google map and see the disparity of services between West of IH 35 and East of IH 35. Search for: auto inspection stations, dog parks, etc., etc.
Lee Sherman	Property tax assistance and home repair assistance would help people remain in their homes without relinquishing ownership of their land.
Grace	Drug users need rehab and dealers need a better way to make a living and police should not get bonus \$ for arresting so many drug users while there are violent crimes being committed.

**SpeakUp! Austin - What are the Barriers to Affordable Housing?
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Tim Thomas	Anti-development sentiments and especially homeowners who are seeing massive increases in the values of their homes by opposing new development. We don't simply need affordable housing at the low end. We need tons more housing at all levels to bring prices down for everyone.
Tim Thomas	Saying "No" to developers would just make more demand for the existing housing, pricing out those very people who you're trying to protect. Look at the neighborhoods that have done a good job saying "No" to developers (like Hyde Park). You'll find there are almost no poor people living there. Look at the neighborhoods that don't say "No" to Developers like East Riverside - tons of working class housing.
Delwin Goss	The biggest problem is the free market. The cheapest land to developed is going to be in the lowest opportunity neighborhoods of Austin. There is no easy answer. As long as people are pouring into this City the demand for housing will increase and for any one who's had even an introductory course in economics; rising demand equals rising prices . Then I look at all the issues with "affordable housing". 1) being placed in high crime, low opportunity parts of the City 2) rental as opposed to owners with roots in the neighborhood 3) investors making a guaranteed income from subsidized housing by renting instead of home ownership which every one knows is the foundation of a livable community As long as Austin draws more and more families and individuals; there aren't any easy answers. It's ben this way for almost any growing and popular City for over 50 years. I don't expect things to change that much; at least not in my life time.
Jenn G.	The city's focus is on economic development and growth instead of providing basic needs to the residents who are already here. We all LOVE Austin, but Austin is doing very well economically and we should focus less on the people that we're trying to attract to the city and more on the people (and children) who are already here. The city could say no to developers, and preserve the housing that is in place and put their efforts into providing high quality education for ALL children, and for access to healthcare for ALL residents and children. Long-term, we need to educate the kids that are here, so they can be the ones to fill the city's high tech jobs in the future, rather than importing most of our tech workers from other states and countries. Those kids can make money for us as they grow and contribute to society or cost us money in police and prison services later. The all-powerful development community in Austin should be much less powerful.
Lee Sherman	Without a strong siting policy ensuring equitable dispersion of affordable housing, people living in the "crescent" will oppose further concentration of poverty in their areas.

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Angela Sonora	Where does the City want developers to build? Make it easy to put lots of housing in targeted places, instead of making development an unpredictable nightmare everywhere except out in open country. Imagine Austin says we want to be a compact and connected city with compete neighborhoods, but that is not what the codes or the development process says. Instead, neighborhoods are threatened by random developments that don't belong, because there aren't enough places to build inside the city.
Tim Thomas	The biggest barrier to affordable housing is regulation. The McMansion ordinance prevents building garage apartments, duplexes, and four-plexes where there were once single family homes. We allow neighborhoods to exempt themselves from vertical mixed use, and to oppose apartments. We need to pass legislation allowing dense housing at all costs. Allow automatic exemptions to McMansion if it will double or quadruple the number of housing units. We need to make it easier to up zone to multifamily in our neighborhoods. We can either preserve Austin's suburban-like urban neighborhoods or have affordable housing, but not both.
Gramamakm	1. Suburban voters who don't feel a community responsibility to provide affordable housing in Austin 2. The price of land in areas where city services are already available to residents of affordable housing 3. "Not in my backyard" attitudes which are sometimes justified when affordable housing is poorly executed and result in higher crime rates and neighborhood deterioration.
Ann Teich	Barriers to affordable housing: The perception on the part of many Austinites that affordable housing is unsafe, unsightly, and unhealthy. The perception that people who live in "affordable housing" are second-class citizens, undesirables, criminals, etc. Criminal backgrounds Lack of employment Unwillingness to have "affordable housing" in certain parts of town, i.e., west of Lamar and Burnet Road because of the above-noted perceptions Unwillingness on the part of some City Council members to preserve affordable housing stock because they support developers who see monetary opportunities in razing said housing and building something expensive in its place Unwillingness on the part of some City Council members to use affordable housing tools to provide incentives to developers to include affordable housing in their building projects

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Alex	Neighborhood associations are the primary barrier. These groups categorically oppose dense urban development because it is seen as ruining the "ambience" of their established urban neighborhoods. It's ironic considering that they often claim to be proponents of affordable housing. But the truth of the matter is that supply and demand are intractably interconnected. Where demand is high, like in central neighborhoods, and supply is low, then prices will be high. If you want lower prices, then you have to increase housing stock. The only other option is to reduce demand, and I'm not sure how you'd go about doing that...
Grace	Tax increases. Those who bought affordable housing need a cap on the rate they pay.
Jenny Meadows	High cost of housing in safe neighborhoods, high cost of living in non-safe neighborhoods (crime and even food and fuel costs are higher), high cost of utilities, high taxes, municipal laws that benefit the City but not the homeowner.

**SpeakUp! Austin - Where Should we Invest?
 FY 2013-14 Action Plan - Community Needs Assessment
 March 20, 2013 - April 26, 2013**

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Angela Sonora	Homelessness is growing and not being addressed. Affordable housing on school and library properties everywhere in Austin.
Ann Teich	All of the above are worthy of investment.
Gramamakm	I don't think that anyone could argue that these are not all worthy areas of investment and I am aware that the City is involved in getting more bang for our buck through collaboration with various community groups, churches and non-profit organizations. That said, there are not enough "bucks" being directed toward those issues which directly affect our most vulnerable communities and neighborhoods. Trickle down theory says that all the new tax \$ obtained through economic development adds to the quality of life in our city. And I think it does, to a point. I question the amount being directed and its impact on those at the lower end of our economic scale.
Jenny Meadows	I did not know that you did this, so my first suggestion would be to educate the entire Austin community about what you do. Make it an ongoing campaign BUT make sure it contains the facts and not fantasy. With social media being at everyone's fingertips, any wool the City tries to pull over citizens' eyes will be talked about in a heartbeat. I've had intermittent experience with the City Council over the last 30 years, and rarely have they taken time to really hear the citizens. In the last 10 years, those of us protesting something were relegated to laaaaate in the evening, and then told the session was over. That's NOT a Council that listens. Lately I've had a lot to protest, but I don't bother attending anymore. I do talk about my experience, though, and funny thing (not!), almost 100% of the people I talk with have had the same experience. Council, wake up! Listen!
Zanner	Affordable housing/increased density in the city core; assistance for critical city & nonprofit workers to offset property taxes so that they can afford to live and stay in central Austin; invest in infrastructure for the quickly growing senior population (invest now or pay later); shelter & "leg up" support for working homeless and mental health/drug treatment for homeless who need that support.
Shelly	Homelessness, Healthy Affordable Housing
Lee Sherman	We should invest in reintroducing affordable housing and economic diversity in high opportunity areas currently lacking such options.
Delwin Goss	We should quit giving away tens of millions of dollars to subsidize companies that would move here any way and instead invest that money into providing low cost, quality, energy efficient, owned housing. We need to put more money into public safety in our higher crime neighborhoods along with diversion programs for the children growing up in at risk families. Austin needs to quit it's unspoken policy of concentrating poverty and all that comes with it in certain sections of the City. Those housing properties need to be spread out through out the City. Children growing up in a low crime, high opportunity neighborhood will hopefully break that endless cycle of crime and poverty we continue to perpetuate today...

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Tim Thomas	We should invest in making permitting and zoning easier and faster. The only way to truly fix this problem is by creating tons of supply. We need to remove McMansion, especially in East Riverside. There are many large lots (many 1/2 acre and 1 acre lots) in the Riverside area that could add garage apartments with ease. Make it easier to subdivide lots. There are also many houses, duplexes, and four-plexes that have been owned by slum lords and are in need of heavy remediation or tear down. We should offer automatic up zoning from single-family to multi-family. We should also allow projects to jump to the head of the permitting line that double the capacity of the previous home/multi-family. We are never going to have enough money to subsidize apartments for all the people who need them. And subsidizes don't address the people in the median income range who are finding Austin unaffordable. The fairest thing to do is entourage tons of new supply so that prices can stabilize.
Jenn G.	I think all of these services are great, but I think the larger issue is a policy one. Austinites are being priced out of Austin because of the type of development that is occurring. I think focusing more on changing the way Austin is developed has more "bang for the buck".
Bridget	Bus stops should be made attractive, clean, and well-lit-- and should become the location of any new community services such as farmer's markets-- so that public transit will be more welcoming to both those who depend on it as well as "choice riders", thus creating a more diverse and accommodating public life within the neighborhood.