

**RESOLUTION NO. 20140410-026**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin supports affordable housing for low-income persons and provides funding to projects that meet certain requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, funds available to assist in development of low-income housing projects, including projects hoping to leverage city funds in order to receive tax credits from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), are awarded based on a variety of factors included in the Rental Housing Development Assistance (RHDA) application for financing; and

**WHEREAS**, scoring for the Competitive 9% TDHCA Housing Tax Credit Program projects is based largely on criteria within state legislation and on scoring criteria in the Qualified Allocation Plan adopted by the TDHCA board and reviewed by the Governor prior to final approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed-Income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-Oriented) Housing Policy Initiative is designed to stimulate the production of housing for low and moderate income residents of Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, the number of units built under S.M.A.R.T. housing has diminished in recent years, suggesting that the program no longer provides the benefits to housing developers that it once did; and

**WHEREAS**, outreach to housing developers who have built or considered building under S.M.A.R.T. housing may help to identify opportunities for program improvement, thus increasing participation; and

**WHEREAS**, meeting S.M.A.R.T. Housing requirements is one of the threshold requirements for a project to receive funding through the Rental Housing Development Assistance (RHDA) application for financing, and that policy requires a project to be located within ½ mile of a bus route; and

**WHEREAS**, the current language that states projects should locate within ½ mile of a bus route does not ensure that all projects funded with city dollars provide their residents access to a transit stop within a reasonable distance and through a safe, walkable route; and

**WHEREAS**, a compact, connected Austin with improved transportation options is a priority program in the City's comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, and the City's Land Development Code is being revised to reflect those community priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is also currently developing the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, which will analyze Austin's impediments to fair housing choice, such as access to transportation and walkability, and make recommendations on how to resolve those impediments; and

**WHEREAS**, there is an opportunity to receive feedback on potential changes to the transit aspect of the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Policy as the City works with the public and various stakeholders to develop the 2014-2019 Consolidated Plan which will detail how the City plans to invest its resources to meet Austin's ongoing needs for affordable housing, community development, economic development, and public services; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Council initiates a code amendment to amend the "Transit" criteria related to the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program requirements in City Code Section 25-1-703 (B) (4) to include language in the code requiring a project to be within ½ mile of a transit stop, measured by the actual travel distance, at the time the project is occupied, and requiring the route from the project to the transit stop to be accessible for pedestrians and people with disabilities.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to gather input from stakeholders including the Community Development Commission, affordable housing advocates, and housing developers on the benefits and costs to developers of building under S.M.A.R.T. housing on the effects of amending the "Transit" criteria. The code amendment process should consider distinguishing the S.M.A.R.T. transit requirements for Austin projects applying for the Competitive 9% TDHCA Housing Tax Credit Program versus other projects desiring to use City of Austin affordable housing funds. The code amendment process should also include consideration of any potential exceptions or adjustments to the ½ mile requirement. Staff should present all stakeholder feedback, and any alternative recommendations on strengthening the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program and the transit requirement, at the same time as the draft code amendment.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to consider alignment of the City's capital improvement funding, as well as how to improve coordination with Capital

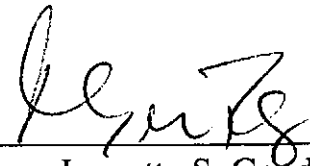
Metro related to affordable housing projects and transit stops, with this updated policy.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to bring the code amendment and any alternative recommendations to City Council by September 1, 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter.

**ADOPTED:** April 10, 2014

**ATTEST:**

 *for*

Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk