

ACTION PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

My name is Stuart Hersh, and like most people in Austin, I rent.

The Council is discussing Community Needs in conjunction with the adoption of the annual Action Plan. I want to continue to emphasize the need for housing that is safe, mixed-income, accessible, reasonably-priced, transit-oriented and Green Building. For nearly a decade, Austin has had a policy that reflects these needs called S.M.A.R.T. Housing.

Since General obligation bonds are likely to focus on rental housing for the poorest among us for the next several years, I ask that you make the balance of GO bond funds available in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This increases the likelihood that funds would be available on October 1, 2010 for applicants who are ready to go. This action increases the likelihood that GO bond funded housing developments would be completed before the community considers another bond proposition for affordable housing.

Very low income homeowners will need additional repairs to their homes after roof repairs are performed with GO bonds. I suggest that you capture the \$500,000 in repaid S.M.A.R.T. Housing fee waivers and \$500,000 in Community Development Block grant funds for Emergency Home Repairs. This \$1,000,000 would supplement the current funding level of the Emergency Home Repair Program.

HOME funds for Tenant Based Rental Assistance should be increased by \$500,000 if there is sufficient demand and organizational capacity to respond to this demand. These funds help extremely low income renters.

Finally, our S.M.A.R.T. Housing partners need comprehensive pre-submittal information as well as fast-track review in all cases if they are to become successful. This could increase our partnerships and production, which has plummeted by 78% in S.M.A.R.T. Housing over the last two fiscal years.

Continue homeownership and rental programs, but shift some of the resources to respond to the needs of Austin described above.

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Late Backup