



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Recommendation Number 20160627-5a: Impact of Gentrification on Human Rights

WHEREAS, the Austin Human Rights Commission advocates on behalf of human rights for all people in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin seeks to promote a livable city principle and to protect all of its residents from unfair displacement; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has a history of discriminatory policies dating back to the 1928 City Council resolution establishing the “Negro District,” that lead to present day racial, social and income segregation of grave proportions;

WHEREAS, as a result of multiple factors, Austin has experienced skyrocketing cost of living thereby compromising not only quality of life, but a range of human rights;

WHEREAS, East Austin’s geographical nearness to downtown and neighborhood development has pushed communities, particularly communities of color, out under the effect of urban gentrification;

WHEREAS, this Commission recognizes that while East Austin has been severely affected, the negative impact of gentrification has been felt throughout the city in areas far South and North;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin suffers from a lack of affordable, public and private housing that aggravates the effects of gentrification;

WHEREAS, the effects of gentrification are seen in the changing demographics, with recent census showing an exodus of minority communities from the City;

WHEREAS, a widely publicized study has unambiguously shown that, while Austin ranks among the fastest growing cities in the nation, it is the only growing city in the country that has suffered a net loss in its African-American population¹;

WHEREAS, numerous national and international organizations, including the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, have recognized that gentrification has a destructive impact on a spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, political and social fundamental rights enshrined in internationally recognized instruments; and

¹ Tang & Ren, 2014.

WHEREAS, unaffordable housing-cost disproportionately burdens vulnerable groups, including families with children, elderly, and disabled members;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Human Rights Commission recommends the Austin City Council to address the gentrification crisis affecting its residents as a matter affecting human rights, devote priority attention to tackle the effects of gentrification, conform all of its policies to minimize its effects, and to affirm gentrification as a human rights issue.

Date of Approval: June 27, 2016

Record of the vote: Motion by Commissioner Brown, second by Chair Davis, adopted 8-1; Commissioner Miller opposed, Commissioners Casas and Yang absent.

Attest: Jonathan Babiah