

RESOLUTION NO. 20190822-070

WHEREAS, “Uprooted,” a 2018 study of gentrification and displacement in Austin authorized by City Council identified homeowners who are most vulnerable to displacement from rising property taxes as those with the lowest income living in the most rapidly appreciating neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, housing displacement has several negative impacts on seniors including: increased difficulty in obtaining medical care because of transportation issues, and increased risk of social isolation due to disrupted ties to familiar neighbors and friends; and

WHEREAS, Economic Opportunity and Affordability was identified as one of six priority Strategic Outcomes of Austin Strategic Direction 2023, and strategy #5 specifically addresses displacement: “develop and act on recommendations to reduce the number of households and businesses displaced from Austin due to unaffordability”;

WHEREAS, volunteerism has also been shown to be an effective strategy in combating social isolation that is detrimental to healthy outcomes among seniors; and

WHEREAS, previous efforts, including the Anti-Displacement Task Force and the Right to Remain report on the Montopolis Neighborhood have indicated a potential underutilization of remedies available under state law and Council actions for reducing the property tax burden by homeowners in danger of housing

displacement; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

The City Manager is directed to provide recommendations to City Council of the most efficient and effective means of educating Austin residents about existing opportunities for seniors to reduce their property tax burden, including, but not limited to:

1. Increasing taxpayer awareness of the opportunities already authorized by law for meeting or reducing property tax obligations (e.g. tax deferrals and homestead, senior, and disabled persons exemptions)
2. Providing information about property tax exemptions and deferrals as part of city-sponsored financial literacy programs (e.g. “Families Not Flippers”)
3. Working with tax appraisal districts to develop metrics for annual reporting on the taxpayer utilization rate of available opportunities for seniors to meet property tax obligations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide recommendations to City Council for a senior volunteer program to allow seniors to volunteer as a means of offsetting a portion of their property tax burden. The recommendation should include examples of similar successful programs in other Texas jurisdictions and a proposal for a pilot program. The recommendations should be brought to the Commission on Seniors for comment prior to returning to Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

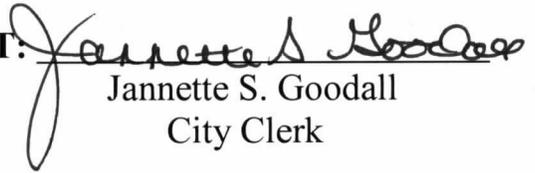
The City Manager is directed to explore the financial feasibility of increases in future budget years to the senior property tax exemption, and the effect on both affordability for the senior population and future city budgets.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report back to Council with such recommendations 180 days after Council adopts this resolution.

ADOPTED: August 22, 2019

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk