

Community Challenge Planning Grant
Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project

Exhibit 1: Abstract

Project Name	Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project
Lead Applicant	City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office
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Population of Jurisdiction from the 2010 Census	790,390
Location	Travis County, Texas
Congressional Districts Covered	TX-010, TX-021, TX-025

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot project is a proposed Master Planned, 208-acre development that will incorporate best practice strategies for energy-efficient building design, water conservation and zero waste technology and standards to create a model sustainable and livable mixed-use, mixed-income community in the Austin, Texas. The project will include completion of a Master Plan, resulting in Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning; engineering for subdivision and site planning for review and approval by the City of Austin; infrastructure construction plans and architectural design and plans for new sustainable residential and commercial development. **Through its outright ownership of this 208-acre tract of land, the City of Austin is in a unique position to mold this pilot project to be completely responsive to the grant outcomes.** The initiative will be led by the City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office (NHCD), in partnership with the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). AHFC will serve as developer of the site and as builder for a portion of the housing. AHFC will also partner with private sector builders for development of both single-family and multi-family housing. Funding for a Master Plan and predevelopment design and engineering is critical for implementing this model sustainable community.

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot project will also provide a platform for collaboration between City of Austin and other local entities with national reputations for excellence in sustainable initiatives, including the Office of Sustainability, Austin Energy Green Building Program, the Solid Waste Services Department, the Austin Water Utility, and the Pecan Street Project. This innovative collaborative will create a replicable model for communities across the country.

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Exhibit 1: Rating Factor Narrative Response

1. Rating Factor 1 – Purpose and Outcomes

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot project is a proposed Master Planned, 208-acre development that will incorporate best practice strategies for energy-efficient building design, water conservation and zero-waste technology and standards to create a model sustainable and livable mixed-use, mixed-income community in the Austin, Texas. The project will include completion of a Master Plan, resulting in Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning; engineering for subdivision and site planning for review and approval by the City of Austin; infrastructure construction plans and architectural design guidelines for new sustainable residential and commercial development. Through its outright ownership of this 208-acre tract of land, the City of Austin is in a unique position to mold this pilot project to be completely responsive to the grant outcomes. The initiative will be led by the City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office (NHCD), in partnership with the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). AHFC will serve as the master developer of the site and as builder for a portion of the housing. AHFC will also partner with private sector builders for development of both single-family and multi-family housing. Funding for a Master Plan and predevelopment design and engineering is critical for implementing this model sustainable community.

The project will also provide a platform for collaboration between City of Austin and other local entities with national reputations for excellence in sustainable initiatives, including the City of Austin Office of Sustainability, Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, Health and Human Service Department, Solid Waste Services Department, Austin Energy Green Building Program, Austin Water Utility, and the Pecan Street Project. This innovative collaborative will create a replicable model for communities across the country.

a. Purpose and Alignment with Livability Principles

The proposed project supports and furthers the six “Livability principles” outlined by HUD:

(1) Provide More Transportation Choices. Located in east Austin approximately ten miles from downtown Austin and in proximity to two other regional job centers (Highland Mall and North Burnet/Gateway), the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project will maximize transportation choices for area residents (see Appendix 1: *Map of Colony Park Area Amenities and Services*). The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) provides fixed route transit service to the Colony Park neighborhood and is committed to doing so in the future. Currently, Route #37 runs along Loyola Lane by the proposed development, and the City of Austin and Capital Metro have discussed re-routing the bus line to run through the proposed Colony Park development.

In addition, Capital Metro currently owns an existing rail line near the Colony Park development which is planned for future commuter rail service between the City of Elgin and downtown Austin (the Green Line). The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project is located less than 1 mile from land that has been purchased by Capital Metro with the intent of creating a future Green Line station, which will create an opportunity for a transit-oriented development connected to the Austin’s Central Business District and access to retail and other services without the need to drive.

The proposed development will also link the adjoining neighborhoods by providing connectivity for the existing transit route. Colony Park will also include an extensive trail and sidewalk system throughout the 200 acres linking homes with schools, parks, recreation, services and future employment centers. The development resulting from the program will provide safe, reliable and affordable transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce energy consumption and dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Development of Colony Park will also have a positive impact on the current transit route by providing through connection to the adjoining neighborhoods. The connectivity created by the development will make the route more efficient and reduce route times to the Central Business District, improving air quality and greenhouse emissions.

(2) Promote equitable, affordable housing. A primary goal of the project is to promote a racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse community at the proposed development. Currently, the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development includes a high concentration of low- and moderate-income households. Based on American Community Survey 2005-2009 estimates, the median income of the area is \$38,000, which is much lower than the City of Austin as a whole, which has a median income of approximately \$63,000. The proposed project will develop strategies to create a mixed income, mixed use, sustainable development that will preserve existing affordable housing while expanding location- and energy-efficient housing choices to increase mobility and lower combined household housing and transportation costs. The proposed development is expected to serve a broad range of incomes and create a spectrum of housing options for a diverse population mix, from supportive housing for very-low income persons to affordable rental housing for working families to homeownership options for moderate- and middle-income households.

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project will include a variety of housing choices, including both market-rate and affordable housing. All housing will meet the City's S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ (Safe, Mixed-Use, Accessible, Reasonably-Priced, Transit-Oriented and Green) criteria. Austin's S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ program has been recognized as an industry best practice for promotion of affordable housing by the National Association of Homebuilders, the National Council on Disability, the National Community Development Association, the International City/County Management Association, the Urban Land Institute, Fannie Mae Foundation, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, Homes for Working Families, the Campaign for Affordable Housing, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (receiving the Robert L. Woodson Jr. award as an exemplary tool to reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing and inclusion in the HUD Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse).¹

In addition, the City will ensure that the housing created through the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project is affordable for the long-term. Affordability periods for all rental housing developed will be 99 years. For homeownership opportunities, NHCD is exploring implementation of a Community Land Trust (CLT) model, a tool to preserve the public investment in affordability and preserve affordable units in perpetuity. The CLT will retain ownership of the land, while the homeowner owns the improvements. The City recognizes that homeownership is an important avenue of wealth creation for many low-income households. Without this type of mechanism in areas in which housing prices are increasing rapidly, the subsidy given to low-income households is lost to future residents when the house is sold. In addition, a CLT would allow the City to reach deeper levels of affordability for lower income homeowners. Shared equity tools will be utilized in the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project to ensure that the affordable housing investment yields long-term benefits for homeowners and the public.

(3) Enhance Economic Competitiveness. The City of Austin is actively exploring opportunities for private investment and economic development within the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project. The development will support job creation and small business growth in a mixed-use community that will also bring needed amenities to a historically under-represented and excluded community in the East Austin region.

The City of Austin has applied for federal funding to support an Information Sciences industry cluster facility within the development. If funded, the cluster will "insource" job training for residents of Greater East Austin to obtain the skills necessary to earn higher wages while ensuring that the Information Sciences sector can continue to grow and flourish in the Austin region. The cluster will be well equipped to provide the necessary training to those in the

¹ See Appendix 2 for a list of S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ awards and recognition as a national and international best practice.

community who are either entering into the workforce or looking to advance their careers, by providing the training necessary to create career paths within a well-documented growing technology cluster. This will not only enable the community to meet the current and future demands from the business community, but also fill an employment sector that has been steadily growing its reliance on H-1B visa applicants to fill these desirable positions.

In addition, the City of Austin is also exploring participation in the federal EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program in the census tract in which the Colony Park development is located. The EB-5 program's goal is to use foreign investment to create American jobs through an investment of \$1 million and the creation of at least 10 jobs. The Colony Park area would qualify as an EB-5 Targeted Employment Area due to its status as an area experiencing high unemployment (over 150% of the national unemployment rate).

(4) Support Existing Communities. The Austin City Council authorized purchase of the land identified as the site of the proposed development in 2001. Since then, the City has been responsive to requests made by area residents to address critical issues prior to any new housing development in the area. In response to community feedback, the City has partnered with various entities to complete construction on a new recreation center, a new elementary school, and approximately \$22 million in infrastructure improvements to Loyola Lane. While the proposed development is a new community, the Master Planning process will continue to incorporate input from residents of surrounding neighborhoods related to community benefits and needed neighborhood commercial amenities in the proposed new development. For instance, a grocery store has been mentioned as a needed amenity by neighborhood residents in past public meetings. The Master Plan will also consider partnerships for potential public services to co-locate in the Colony Park development, including a library, APD substation, health clinic, and additional parkland facilities.

(5) Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investment. The Colony Park Master Planning process and resulting development will serve as a nationwide model for the integration of sustainability policy objectives with land use planning and affordable housing development. The Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office has been recognized nationally and internationally for its S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ program, which was created in 2001 to stimulate the production of new housing that is safe, mixed-income, accessible, reasonably-priced, and transit-oriented. The City of Austin is also a nationwide leader in green initiatives, including the Austin Climate Protection Program, the Green Roof Initiative, Austin Green Business Leaders, Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, Austin Energy Green Building Program, and the Austin WaterWise Program. Austin has been selected as one of 10 cities nationally to help refine the STAR Community Index, a tool for measuring city sustainability being developed by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

In addition, the project will leverage the local knowledge developed through the Capital Area Texas Sustainability Consortium (CATS), a regional consortium of local governments and other stakeholders that was awarded \$3.7 million in funding from the HUD Sustainable Communities Program. The project focuses on a new analytic tool that will be developed by IBM in cooperation with the University of Texas to assist communities in assessing the fiscal and economic impact of different approaches for planning future development. A formal partnership between CATS and the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project will be defined in the Master Planning process.

(6) Value Communities and Neighborhoods. The proposed development at Colony Park will value and preserve the unique characteristics of the physical environment as well as the residents who live there. The land itself has a rich heritage - unlike the rocky soils of the Hill Country to the west, the rich, black loam of East Austin was ideal for the cultivation of agricultural crops. The soil gave the area a competitive advantage in cotton farming, and its black color led to its colloquial name, "the Blackland Prairie," which referred to the broad swath of farmland east of Austin. The pilot project will create a model for development patterns in East Austin that preserves the native ecosystem of that geographic area and explores the potential of the prairie landscape as a model for carbon sequestration. In a prairie, it is below the ground contained in an extensive root system of the plants that extends far below the soil

surface. By promoting conservation and restoration of open space and capture of the ecological service benefits, the model would support such activities as storm water management, natural drainage, and habitat protection.

In addition, the development will serve to promote a healthy, safe and walkable neighborhood for the residents of the proposed community and residents of existing nearby neighborhoods. The Master Plan will support connectivity through the extension of streets, walking trails and sidewalks that will link to the school and joint recreation facility as well as to proposed commercial and retail development on the site. The plan will also promote linkages between social service providers and the community. The City of Austin currently offers a host of social services to area residents at the Turner-Roberts Recreation Center located adjacent to the proposed development, including basic needs services, a Mobile Food Pantry and Fresh Food for Families food programs, and preventive health services. NHCD is committed to partnering with the City's Health and Human Services Department to assist in expanding social services to area residents.

b. Clarity of Outcomes

The following outcomes will be identified and reported on during the length of the grant period:

(1) Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a plan, code, development strategy, or project by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes, including underserved populations.

Currently, there are a significantly greater number of households in the Colony Park area that are underserved or traditionally under-represented, as compared to the City of Austin average. The percentage of minority households (87%) is much higher than the percentage of minority households in the City of Austin as a whole (50%). Furthermore, the income of Colony Park residents is much less than the City as a whole (\$38,422 as compared to \$63,431). This disparity is further emphasized by the poverty rate in the Colony Park area (18.4%), which is also significantly higher than the poverty rate in the City of Austin as a whole (6.6%).

The residents of the Colony Park area have also been traditionally under-represented in the public engagement process. Voting records show that voter turnout in the Colony Park area is consistently lower than the City of Austin as a whole over the last 5 years. One possible factor for this low voting rate is disproportionately high percentage of residents in Colony Park with limited English proficiency (8.5%). See Appendix 3 for a complete demographic profile of the Colony Park area as compared to the City of Austin.

Output: Number of unduplicated outreach contacts to area residents within the designated Colony Park planning area (defined as 2010 Census Tracts 22.01, 22.02, 22.08, 22.11, and 22.12)

Performance Measure: Number of area residents (defined as residents of the specified planning area) and number of residents meeting the definition of underserved who participate in Master Plan public meetings and community engagement mechanisms.

(2) Impact on affordability and accessibility, including increased supply of affordable housing units, access to jobs, and/or proportion of low- and very-low income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers and associated reductions in disparities between racial and ethnic groups and between income groups in these areas.

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project will include a variety of housing choices, including both market rate and affordable housing. All housing will meet S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ criteria and exceed current Green Building standards. Currently, there are approximately 912 S.M.A.R.T. Housing units in the Colony Park area, and they are all within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers. 347 of these units are single-family homes, while 565 are multi-family units (located in a total of 3 apartment complexes). There are also four

subsidized housing properties that have been funded by federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. These provide a total of 892 affordable units to the area.² While these units help to increase affordability in the Colony Park area, almost 50 percent of households in the Colony Park planning area are housing cost burdened,³ pointing to a continued need for affordable housing in the area.

In addition, the percentage of Colony Park residents with commutes longer than 30 minutes is 43 percent, compared to 29 percent of Austin residents, which points to a need both for the development of more jobs in the area (see Outcome #4), as well as an opportunity to provide additional transit choices for the residents of the development and surrounding neighborhoods to utilize to travel to downtown Austin and other regional job centers.

Output: All planned residential development will meet and exceed the criteria of the City of Austin's internationally recognized S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ Program that is safe, mixed-income, accessible, reasonably priced, transit-oriented and green. All single family construction will be visitable and a minimum of 10% of the multi-family developed will be accessible. At least 40% of the total units will be affordable to households at 80% or below median family income. The Colony Park development is currently planned to include up to 500 single-family ownership units and 250 multi-family rental units.

Performance Measure: Number of planned S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ units within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers.

(3) Energy efficiency increases and/or reductions in community energy use through community-scale energy strategies and/or green building code development.

In partnership with Austin Energy's nationally recognized Green Building program, the project team will develop community-wide standards and energy strategies that will apply to all new residential and commercial construction within the 208-acre development. As a baseline, in 2010, 722 new single-family homes in Austin were Green Building certified, which totaled a participation rate of 38%. In addition, 971 multi-family units and 2.65 million square feet of commercial space were Green Building certified.⁴ Under the current Green Building rating, estimated energy savings for single-family homes are about 1,400 kWh per home every year. For multi-family units, energy savings range from 0.471 kWh per square foot to 1.126 kWh per square foot every year.

Output: 100% of planned units at Colony Park will be minimum 3-star Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) rated.

Performance Measure: AEGB Requirements and Energy Rating Measures (see Appendix 4).

(4) Economic development, including infill development or recycled parcels of land or private sector investment along a project or corridor, or local business development and job creation.

Many residents of the Colony Park planning area have faced generational economic disadvantage due to low incomes and un- or under-employment and problems that manifest themselves in the area's high poverty and low household incomes. Job creation and small business development efforts in the proposed Colony Park development will low area residents and especially underserved area populations to achieve individual and family self sufficiency.

Output: Commercial/retail site development and infrastructure improvements that allow for new businesses and services to locate in the Colony Park development.

² Austin Affordable Housing Inventory Map. City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office, 2011.

³ Housing cost burden is defined as a household spending more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs. See Appendix 3 for a complete demographic profile of the Colony Park area as compared to the City of Austin.

⁴ Austin Energy Green Building Action Plan Annual Report, 2010, p.5.

Performance Measure: Number of persons employed in the new commercial center in Colony Park. Number of persons employed that also live in the Colony Park neighborhood.

(5) Environmental benefits, such as reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, criteria pollutant emissions, or oil consumption and preservation of recreational areas, farm land, or open space while balancing the need for affordable housing in the community.

The City of Austin is proposing to incorporate best practices in sustainability by adopting a Colony Park Zero Waste Plan. In 2009, Austin took an important step to move toward a more sustainable future by adopting Texas' first Zero Waste Plan for a community, which introduces the goal to reduce the amount of waste Austinites send to the landfill by 90 percent by the year 2040. The Colony Park Zero Waste Plan will implement Zero Waste best practices in the development of the site. Currently, the average diversion rate for City of Austin based on residential customers is 37 percent. Austin's Zero Waste Strategic Plan uses a very conservative estimate of 7.3 lbs per person per day of "waste" generated, and assumes that approximately 40 percent of that material is recyclable/reusable and 50 percent of the remaining material is compostable.

Output: All new construction, including building techniques, will incorporate zero waste diversion technology, and every household will have access to on-site recycling and composting facilities.

Performance Measure: Number of pounds of planned landfill waste diverted per year.

c. Implementation

In 2001, residents of the Colony Park area voiced concerns to the Austin City Council regarding issues such as increased public safety concerns, the presence of numerous vacant lots, and the large presence of high density manufactured housing. After a thorough evaluation, the City Council responded by proposing a plan to mitigate the adverse effects of rapid growth on the Colony Park community. This plan included the purchase of 258 acres of vacant land in the Colony Park area in May 2001. Approximately 50 acres were retained for parkland, and the remaining 208 acres were transferred to the Austin Housing Finance Corporation with the intent of creating a thriving neighborhood that offered reasonably priced housing, and various amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods. Since 2001, progress has been made to address the concerns of the neighborhood. In response to critical issues that the neighborhood association identified, the City has partnered with various entities to complete construction on a new recreation center, new elementary school, and major infrastructure improvements to Loyola Lane prior to any new housing development on the Colony Park tract. With these improvements, attention has turned to housing development and job creation.

In the past several years, market conditions and community needs for Colony Park have changed, and NHCD and AHFC are now poised to begin a Master Planning process for the 208 acres of City-owned land in the area. As mentioned previously, the City has requested federal funding from the federal Jobs Innovation and Accelerator Challenge grant to fund an information technology cluster facility within the Colony Park development. That process afforded the opportunity to gain the support of a number of community partners for the proposed development, including the City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO), Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Austin Community College, Austin Housing Finance Corporation, Peoplefund, Tech Ranch and the Austin Technology Council. Other entities were not able to sign on as official partners but have also indicated interest in future partnerships, including the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Austin Technology Incubator, Skillpoint Alliance, the Austin Entrepreneur Network, and the proposed Austin Planetarium, Science Museum, and Technology Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a goal to build a 12,000 square foot, LEED certified Planetarium, Science Museum and Technology Center in Austin.

2. Rating Factor 2 – Work Plan and HUD Policy Priorities

a. *Work Plan*

(1) Proposed Activities

Activity 1: Master Plan for the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project. (Total Budget-\$378,468)

The Master Planning process can be divided into five tasks:

Task One: The **Market Study/Economic Analysis (Budget-\$150,000)** will provide a framework for the development of a mixture of commercial and residential products in the Colony Park development. The assessment of both the current market demand and projections of future demand are critical to developing short-term and long-term strategies and evaluating the anticipated economic benefits of the development. The following tasks will comprise the Market/Economic Analysis scope of work: (1) Retail/Commercial Business Inventory and Analysis; (2) Housing (Rental/Ownership) Inventory and Analysis; (3) Determine Housing Type and Mix; (4) Market Analysis to support future business development; (5) Market Strategy; and (6) Identify potential barriers to development.

Deliverable(s): Market/Economic Analysis and Development Strategy

Timeframe: Year 1

Objective: Determine housing type and mix; Determine commercial development type and mix. Provide analysis to support business development.

Responsible Agencies: City of Austin; Austin Housing Finance Corporation; consultant

Task Two: The **Economic Development Program/Anchor Tenant Negotiations (Budget-\$50,000)** will explore partnerships with employers and other organizations with the capacity to support job creation and economic development within the proposed development. The Colony Park community has also voiced a desire to see more retail amenities developed in the area. A grocery store is often mentioned as an important amenity that the area currently lacks, in addition to other neighborhood-serving retail. Currently, this area is not defined by USDA as a food desert however; the area is a low-income, low-access area and appears to fit the definition as such. Potential partnerships for public services to co-locate in the Colony Park development, including a library, APD substation, health clinic, and additional parkland facilities, will also be considered in this phase.

Deliverable(s): Economic Development Program planning document; agreement with anchor tenant.

Timeframe: Years 1 - 2

Objective: Secure at least one commercial anchor tenant; establish targets for commercial, multi-family, and small businesses in development.

Responsible Agencies: City of Austin; Austin Housing Finance Corporation; consultant

Task Three: The **Sustainability Implementation Team (Budget-\$53,468)** will ensure the development will achieve the City's goals to maximize sustainable building and growth techniques that are used in the development process. The team will be made up of City of Austin departments and local organizations committed to the inclusion of best practices in sustainability in the development. The team will consider the inclusion of the analytic tool being created as a component of the HUD Sustainable Communities grant, as well as the Star Community Index.

NHCD and the City's Sustainability Office will convene regular meetings between all participating partners on a quarterly basis throughout the master planning process to discuss progress of the project, data gathered on output measures, and any unforeseen challenges that may arise along the way. Designated project leads from each agency will communicate on a regular basis in order to ensure smooth communication flow and to remain up-to-date on changes in best-practice techniques in each industry. This will result in a minimum of 12 meetings over the 3-year grant period.

Deliverable(s): White paper on sustainability best practices in Austin; implementation plan for partnership development in Colony Park; Colony Park Zero Waste Plan.

Timeframe: Years 1-3

Objective: Achieve best practices in sustainability in pilot project.

Responsible Agencies: City of Austin; Austin Housing Finance Corporation.

Task Four: Land Use and Roadway Plan (Budget-\$200,000). This task will finalize the Colony Park Sustainable Community Master Plan based upon the market and economic analysis. The consulting architect and engineer finalize the land use plan and prepare the preliminary roadway layout.

Deliverable(s): Final Master Plan for permitting process.

Timeframe: Year 1

Objective: Implementation of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Master Plan.

Responsible Agencies: Austin Housing Finance Corporation; consultant.

Task Five: Public Engagement Process (Budget-\$294,466). The public engagement process will run concurrently throughout the above four tasks. The budget request in this category totals approximately 10% of the total grant request, and includes funding for dedicated staff; targeted outreach to underserved populations such as ads in Spanish-language newspapers, and print and multi-media promotional materials. While innovative community engagement methods such as social media and interactive meeting technology may be considered for specific engagement objectives, the overall public engagement strategy will focus on obtaining public feedback and creating buy-in with key stakeholder groups in the Colony Park area through face-to-face interaction in settings with existing constituencies, such as neighborhood association meetings, religious events, and business organizations.

Deliverable(s): Public input on key milestones and component of Master Planning process.

Timeframe: Years 1-3

Objective: To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Responsible Agencies: City of Austin; Austin Housing Finance Corporation; consultant.

Activity 2: Entitlement and Infrastructure Planning Phase (Total Budget-\$1,186,000).

In order to implement the Colony Park Sustainable Community Master Plan a number of City development approvals will be needed to begin construction on the site. AHFC has completed significant due diligence in order to move forward with engineering and design needed for construction to begin on the site. **(Budget-\$461,000)**

Task One: Planned Unit Development Rezoning Application and Final Ordinance (Budget-\$125,000). A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is intended for large or complex developments under unified control planned as a single continuous project, to allow single or multi-use projects within its boundaries and provide greater design flexibility for development proposed within the PUD. Use of a PUD district will result in development superior to that which would occur using conventional zoning regulations. The PUD will enhance preservation of the natural environment; encourage high quality and innovative design and ensure adequate public facilities and services for development within the PUD.

Deliverable(s): Approved Planned Unit Development Zoning Ordinance

Timeframe: Year 1

Objective: Complete entitlement phase for construction.

Responsible Agencies: Austin Housing Finance Corporation; Consulting Engineer and Architect

Task Two: Colony Park PUD Development Approvals (Budget-\$600,000). This task will include all development approvals necessary to begin infrastructure construction and ultimately the construction of new residential and commercial buildings.

Deliverable(s): Approved Preliminary Plan for entire site; Approved Phasing Plan; Infrastructure Cost Estimates by Phase; Approved Phase I Subdivision Plat; Approved Phase I and 2 Construction Plans.

Timeframe: Years 2 - 3

Objective: Complete entitlement phase for construction of infrastructure improvements.

Responsible Agencies: Austin Housing Finance Corporation; Consulting Engineer and Architect

Activity 3: Sustainable Design Phase (Budget-\$1,050,000).

The Design Phase will begin with the land plan. The consultant architect and design team will work closely with the engineer to ensure the sustainable vision of the development is achieved. In addition, this phase will include architectural designs and plans for residential and commercial buildings in the Colony Park Sustainable Community, incorporating sustainability, S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ and Green Building best practices. This phase will also include landscape design guidelines for all public spaces including the trail system as well as to develop landscaping requirements for the entire community.

Deliverable(s): Design guidelines for the Colony Park development

Timeframe: Years 2-3

Objective: Creation of architectural designs for residential and commercial buildings incorporating sustainability best practices

Responsible Agencies: Austin Housing Finance Corporation; Architect

(2) Public Participation Plan

The City will make a concerted effort to target populations that have been traditionally marginalized in local planning processes, including underserved populations, throughout the Master Planning process. The City of Austin Community Development Commission (CDC) will serve as an important resource in the Colony Park public participation plan. The CDC is composed of fifteen members appointed by the city council, including seven members from historically low-income, underrepresented neighborhoods. NHCD provides staff support to the CDC and considers the commission a critical community resource in coordinating community outreach opportunities related to the Colony Park master planning process. Colony Park is one of the geographic areas represented by a member of the CDC; and that commissioner will be invited to participate and engage in all planning activities related to the Colony Park development.

This public participation plan will also include the formation of a Neighborhood focus team which will meet regularly to provide input on the proposed Master Plan and receive updates on the progress of the development. This team will include neighborhood leaders, the Colony Park Community Development Commissioner, sustainability experts and city staff. In addition, regular community-wide meetings will be held to provide opportunities for all neighborhood residents to participate and receive updates on the development.

(3) Schedule

The City of Austin is prepared to initiate eligible activities within 120 days of the effective date of the award. See Appendix 5 for a schedule of proposed activities.

(4) Other Work Plan Elements

(i) Responsible Entity

The City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Office will lead the proposed activity, in conjunction with the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). NHCD's mission is to provide housing, community development, and small business development services to benefit eligible residents so they can have

access to livable neighborhoods and increase their opportunities for self-sufficiency. As the primary administrator of four federal entitlement grants (HOME, CDBG, ESG, HOPWA), NHCD has extensive experience serving low- and moderate-income families in Austin.

The Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) is a public non-profit corporation and an instrumentality of the City of Austin. The City's seven council members serve as the Board of Directors for AHFC. The purpose of the AHFC is to carry out activities authorized by the Texas Housing Finance Corporation Act, Chapter 394, Texas Local Government Code, by providing a means of financing the cost of residential development that will provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for low- and moderate-income residents of the City of Austin. AHFC is a separate corporate entity from the City of Austin, staffed by City employees under an annual Service Agreement with the City. AHFC operations are housed in the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office.

All activities related to this proposed activity will be led by Betsy Spencer, Director of NHCD and Treasurer of AHFC. NHCD will be the primary administrator of any grant funds received. AHFC retains ownership, site control, and full development rights to the 208 acres of land at Colony Park, valued at approximately \$11 million. This will allow the City to move quickly to begin the Master Planning process and to coordinate activities in the proposed development.

(ii) Evaluation Methods

The success of this grant will be evaluated on the achievement of the outputs and outcomes outlined in Rating Factor 1. NHCD will serve as the main point of contact for all evaluation activities related to the grant. The department currently has 60 other performance measures it tracks for the 20 other programs it administers. The process is well-documented and single points of contacts are trained in this area. Grant progress will be tracked and discussed with the grant team and with the Department Director on at least a quarterly basis. NHCD will report annually on activities and measures related to the Colony Park Sustainability Pilot Project in the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), in addition to any other formats required by HUD.

(iii) Anticipated Obstacles

The City anticipates that obstacles may arise during the Master Planning process that could cause delays or extend completion of tasks. These obstacles could include:

- Lack of consensus or unclear feedback about community needs and preferences received through the public engagement process;
- Real estate market forces that may impede progress on commercial and residential construction;
- Challenges in coordinating with multiple partners who have varying objectives and funding sources.

The design of the Master Planning process, including the Public Input Process and the facilitation of the Sustainability Implementation Team, will allow for some level of flexibility in avenues in which to clarify the process and alternate methods of progress toward the achieving the identified outcomes. Furthermore, because the Austin Housing Finance Corporation has already acquired the 208-acre tract of land for the proposed development, the City of Austin will be able to mitigate obstacles associated with real estate market forces to some extent.

(iv) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

An Analysis of Impediments (AI) is an assessment of the City's laws, regulations, administrative policies, procedures, and practices as they affect the location, availability and accessibility of fair housing choice. The AI identifies recommended actions for the City to reduce barriers to fair housing. Each year, the City is required to report on the progress regarding these recommended actions in both the annual Action Plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The City of Austin conducted an AI as a component of FY 2009-14 Consolidated Plan. Four action items were identified in the 2009 AI: (1) Raise the visibility and resolution process of fair housing; (2) Conduct targeted education and programming in minority neighborhoods; (3) Continue

leading affordable housing development efforts, and (4) Continue educating the public about fair housing involving neighborhood groups.

NHCD will utilize these four action items as the basis for affirmatively furthering fair housing activities through the Colony Park Sustainability Pilot Project. These four action items are in alignment with the outcomes defined in Rating Factor 1 and will assist in promoting the primary and secondary fair housing objectives of this grant application:

Primary: Promote racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse communities; and

Secondary: Help overcome any impediments to fair housing choice related to the assisted program or activity itself.

During the AI process, stakeholders and affordable housing developers identified affordability as the primary fair housing issue in Austin. The feedback indicated that the affordable housing stock in Austin is highly limited; resulting in many low-income residents living in substandard housing or tolerating discriminatory situations for fear of not finding another affordable unit. Thus, the creation of an inclusive community designed to maximize mobility options and provide a multitude of housing opportunities and neighborhood amenities will promote fair housing choice in Austin.

In addition, NHCD will work closely with the City's Fair Housing Office to increase awareness about fair housing in all public participation opportunities related to the proposed development. In response to the action items identified in the AI, NHCD's curriculum has been updated to encompass a fair housing component for all public educational forums. NHCD sponsors more than 30 events annually including neighborhood association presentations, quarterly community forums and those hosted jointly with the Planning and Development Review Department (PDR). These educational activities serve to inform the community and provide an assessment of conditions – both public and private, affecting fair housing choice for all protected classes. In addition, information is provided about how a community's actions and decisions regarding affordable housing investment can restrict the availability of housing choices.

b. HUD Policy Priorities

(1) Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

One of the goals of this grant is to increase the skills and technical expertise of partner organizations, especially in relation to managing federal awards, financial management of funds received, and ongoing performance assessment and evaluation techniques. As the lead applicant, NHCD will act as the primary entity to educate participating partners in grant administration and management techniques to ensure compliance with federal regulations. NHCD will host at least three training sessions to all partner agencies, focusing on the goals of the Community Challenge project, outputs to be measured, data-sharing guidelines, and federal regulations in relation to expenditure of funds. A designated project lead at NHCD will also be available on an on-going basis to offer technical assistance as questions come up from partners.

NHCD will also create a designated webpage for the Colony Park Community Challenge project, which will be located on the current NHCD office webpage (www.austintexas.gov/housing). This webpage will include a blog directed at both participating partners and the general public with updates on progress made at the development site. This blog will be updated at a minimum of a monthly basis, which would result in 36 updates over the 3-year grant period. As output measures become available, it will also include regular data reports for the sustainability techniques implemented on-site. This webpage will also house the federal regulations, forms, and other relevant information for this grant, which will be available to participating partners on a continual basis.

The activities listed above will help achieve the goal of sharing knowledge among partners to ensure a cross-programmatic, place-based approach. As the project progresses, NHCD and partners will also continue efforts to

reach out to the community to build capacity and create new partnerships to maximize the sustainable techniques practiced on the Colony Park site.

(2) Expand Cross-Cutting Policy Knowledge

As it becomes available, NHCD and partner agencies will collect output data on a regular basis to continually analyze effectiveness of sustainability techniques being implemented at Colony Park. The following data will be collected: number of S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ Housing units produced (by affordability levels) within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers; number of jobs created on-site at the Colony Park development; reduction in VMT (vehicle miles traveled) of residents in the Colony Park development (compared to City of Austin average); energy usage in newly constructed homes at Colony Park; water usage; and landfill waste generated. All data collected will be by race and ethnicity, as well as by HUD-defined income levels.

In order to encourage community participation and education, one of the goals of this project is to maximize the amount of data-sharing to other research institutions and entities. The grant request dedicates \$50,000 to contract with an entity or entities that will analyze household and parcel-level data in the Colony Park Sustainable Pilot Project. A data-sharing agreement will be executed to define the specific data components that will be available. The City anticipates that a likely partnership for this policy research would be with the Capital Area Texas Sustainability Consortium (CATS), a regional consortium of local governments and other regional stakeholders that was awarded \$3.7 million in funding from the HUD Sustainable Communities Program. Key partners in the CATS consortium include the Capital Area Council of Governments, the University of Texas at Austin, and IBM.

Dissemination of policy lessons learned during the planning process to the public, including policymakers, other regional consortia, and interested community advocates and leaders, will be provided through a variety of methods. The Master Plan public engagement process targeted at Colony Park area residents will include opportunities to disseminate best practice techniques, data collection methods implemented on-site, and other policy lessons learned through the project.

NHCD will also undertake a minimum of one paid internship project over the 3-year grant period, during which a graduate level intern enrolled in either a Masters level urban planning or public administration program will work with NHCD staff to study best practices for sustainability techniques, and perform data analysis on collected output measures. This will result in at least one research study, and a report, which will be posted on the NHCD Colony Park webpage. Results from this study will also be presented for staff of NHCD and partnering agencies.

In Year 3 of the grant implementation, the City of Austin and other grant partners will host a national conference intended to disseminate the best practices and policy lessons learned from the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project to other jurisdictions interested in creating similar communities.

3. Rating Factor 3 – Budget

a. Sources and Uses of Funds/Budget

See attached form HUD-424-CBW for an overview of the sources and uses of all proposed activities.

b. Proportion of Budget Request Dedicated to Public Participation and Engagement

This application requests \$294,466 in funding dedicated to public engagement activities, or 9.8% of the total funding request.

c. Use of Funds by Project Activity

Rating Factor 2.a. Work Plan includes a description of funds by project activity.

d. Match and Leveraged Resources

See attached form HUD-424-CBW and Rating Factor 4 for an overview of the funding or cash equivalent amounts being provided as match and leveraged resources.

4. Rating Factor 4 – Additional Leveraging and Collaboration

a. *Additional Leveraging*

Since 2001, the City of Austin has collaborated with the Colony Park neighborhood to address concerns regarding infrastructure, amenities and services, public safety and the proliferation of poorly planned manufactured housing developments. To support the existing neighborhoods and for the future success of the new development the City of Austin has invested almost \$31 million into the area:

- \$3,000,000 for purchase of 258 acres of vacant property known as Colony Park, 50 acres of which was purchased as dedicated parkland and land for the new elementary school.
- \$5,600,000 for construction of the Turner-Roberts Recreation Center and joint use facility with the newly constructed Overton Elementary School.
- \$22,300,000 for Loyola Lane infrastructure and flood control improvements.

In addition, AHFC has committed \$461,000 in non-federal funds for the preliminary engineering and design for the development of the Colony Park subdivision. The following work has been completed to date:

- Due Diligence / Feasibility Analysis which included:
 - Environmental – Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and City of Austin Environmental Assessment
 - Surveying – Boundary Survey and Tree/Topographic/Design Survey
 - Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering – Purpose is to determine engineering properties of the in-situ soils as it pertains to pavement design, foundation design, slope stability, fill placement and compaction.
- Due Diligence Report
- Conceptual Planning: Conceptual planning task included preliminary land use planning; developing conceptual land plan and preparing a traffic impact analysis.
- Water/Wastewater Service Extension Request for the future development

b. *Collaboration*

NHCD will collaborate with a number of partners to ensure the proposed program is effective, affordable, and sustainable. The City is a long-time advocate of sustainability and green building, and almost all city departments have created best practice programs to promote sustainability in their fields. The following entities have agreed to participate in the Sustainability Implementation Team for the Colony Park Sustainability Pilot Project:

Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) - The Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) was created in 1979, as a public, nonprofit corporation and instrumentality of the City of Austin under the provisions of the Texas Housing Finance Corporation Act, Chapter 394, and Local Government Code. AFHC's mission is to generate and implement strategic housing solutions for the benefit of low- and moderate- income residents of the City of Austin. The Austin City Council serves as the AHFC's Board of Directors.

City of Austin Sustainability Office coordinates all "green" efforts and action at the City of Austin, provides community education and outreach, and manages the Austin Climate Protection Program. The Office has five themes for a sustainable Austin: homegrown prosperity, conservation & environment, health & equity, culture & creativity, and city shaping & mobility.

Austin Energy, the City's electric utility, is a leader in sustainable energy initiatives. Austin Energy is working to ensure that the City's goal that all new homes built under the 2015 Austin Energy Code will be net zero energy-capable. This will reduce resident's utility expenses and also help Austin reach its goal of using 30 percent

renewable energy by 2020. The **Austin Energy Green Building Program** promotes affordability through density and energy efficiency. Since its creation in 1991, the Austin Energy Green Building Program has used its rating tools to save over 53.6 million kilowatt hours of electricity, 65.8 million gallons of water and diverted 120,698 tons of construction waste from the landfill.

The **City of Austin Solid Waste Services Department** is “working hard every day to keep Austin clean and green.” The Department offers a variety of services such as garbage collection, single-stream recycling, composting, bulk collection, street sweeping, and yard waste collection. Austin has a zero waste goal of reducing waste sent to the landfill by 90 percent by 2040 and will collaborate with NHCD on this project to develop the Colony Park Zero Waste Plan.

The **City of Austin Water Utility** supplies water to customers within and outside the corporate city limits of Austin as well as to other surrounding communities. It operates two major wastewater treatment plants: Walnut Creek, and South Austin Regional. The Utility also manages the City’s Water Quality Protection Lands (QWPL) through its Wildland Conservation District.

The **City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO)** was created to manage the city’s economic development policies and to promote and facilitate sustainable growth in the Desired Development Zone in partnership with the community, project developers and the City of Austin with a goal of enhancing livability and economic viability in a manner that preserves the character of Austin and its environment.

The **Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department’s (HHSD)** mission to promote a healthy community, which reflects social equity through prevention, protection, provision and promotion. HHSD’s Human Services division will focus on expanding social services to area residents; and the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention unit will assist in promoting a healthy, safe and walkable neighborhood for the residents of the proposed community and residents of existing nearby neighborhoods.

The Pecan Street Project is a non-profit organization focused on developing and testing advanced technology, business model and customer behavior surrounding advanced energy management systems. The Pecan Street Project will partner with the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project by leverage the experience managing the DOE-funded Smart Grid Demonstration project at Austin’s Mueller Community to help the Colony Park development incorporate cost-effective smart grid technologies. Inclusion of smart grid in the planning process will ensure affordable utility bills for the low-income homeowners while protecting the environment of the Central Texas region through conserved resources. See Appendix 6 for a letter of support from Pecan Street Project.

Capital Area Texas Sustainability Consortium (CATS), is a regional consortium of local governments and other regional stakeholders that was awarded \$3.7 million in funding from the HUD Sustainable Communities Program. A formal partnership between CATS and the Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project will be defined as a component of the Master Planning process.

5. Rating Factor 5 - Capacity

a. Examples of Successful Projects

The Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) office, along with other departments within the City of Austin, has a history of working with new developments. The most recent development that closely aligns with the proposed effort is the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport redevelopment. This is an award-winning, large-scale redevelopment effort that began in Austin in 1996 on a former airport site. The City of Austin turned an underused piece of land into an “urban village” in the heart of Austin. This development started with a multidisciplinary team of consultants led by ROMA Design Group who worked with citizens and the City to create a redevelopment plan for the 709-acre site. Similar to the Robert Muller Municipal Airport redevelopment, the

proposed Colony Park development effort will provide a framework for the development of a mixture of commercial, retail and residential.

In addition, AHFC has significant experience in developing property and in the construction and sale of new single-family housing. Most recently, AHFC completed the construction of the last 12 units of an 81-lot subdivision where the corporation served as developer of the site.

b. Experience in Outreach to Underserved and Low Income Persons

This application builds upon several City of Austin initiatives to distribute public benefits more equitably across the community and to focus on the recent economic development and employment needs of historically underrepresented persons and populations. In 2005, the City launched a critical study on the African American Quality of Life in Austin, with the goal to improve African American quality of life, and in 2009, the City conducted the Hispanic Quality of Life initiative, a multi-phased process with the goal of improving the Hispanic quality of life in Austin. Both of these studies have provided data on significant disparities between racial and ethnic groups in Austin and have assisted in targeting City planning efforts in a broad array of focus areas, including employment and economic stability; education; health and health care; and housing.

In addition, the City's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office (NHCD), as lead applicant, has a strong track record of increasing the participation of historically underrepresented and excluded communities in Austin. NHCD has extensive experience in outreach and service to low- and moderate-income families in Austin, as well as addressing the needs of special populations as defined in the City's 2009-14 HUD Consolidated Plan: the elderly and frail elderly; persons with physical disabilities; persons with developmental disabilities; persons with severe mental illness; persons with substance abuse problems; persons with HIV/AIDS; at-risk children and youth; victims of domestic violence; persons experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness; Housing Authority residents; households with children in need of lead-based paint remediation; and persons returning to the community from correctional institutions and/or with criminal histories.

c. Designated Staff Managing Proposed Project

The proposed project includes completion of a Master Plan for the Colony Park Development as well as completion of development entitlement submissions and approvals and architectural designs and plans for the site development and building construction. The NHCD and AHFC offices have staff members with expertise in construction, real estate development, and policy and planning outreach. In addition, consultants will be hired to complete the Master Planning, including the market and economic analysis, and engineering and architectural design processes. AHFC will procure these consultants upon grant award. Appendices 7 and 8 summarize the qualifications of key staff expected to contribute to the project's completion.

d. History in Managing Federal Funds

The City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Office is the primary administrator of four federal entitlement grants from the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and has received each grant since the inception of the federal program. In FY11-12, NHCD expects to receive and expend approximately \$13 million in federal funds, including the entitlement grants listed above as well as funding from the HUD Section 108 Loan Guarantee program.

6. Preferred Sustainability Status

Please see the attached Certification of Consistency with Sustainable Communities Planning and Implementation form, certified by the Designated Point of Contact for the Capital Area Texas Sustainability Consortium.