

2010-2011 ACTION PLAN TESTIMONY

My name is Stuart Hersh, and like most Austin residents I rent. I ask the Community Development Commission to recognize the following:

1. The greatest housing need in Austin is for individuals and families who earn less than 15% and 30% of the Median Family Income, the poorest among us.
2. Many of the poorest among us need housing that is accessible for people with disabilities and/or support services.
3. The City Council has established a goal that 350 units of supportive housing be completed by 2014.
4. Timely availability of General Obligation Bonds, Housing Trust Fund, Community Development Block grant, and HOME funds as well as other local resources can facilitate the achievement of the 350/30% MFI goal.
5. The Return on Investment web-site suggests that 250 30% MFI rental may be completed with the use of General Obligation Bonds and other resources over the next four years.
6. Greater availability of Tenant Based Rental Assistance can expand rental housing opportunities for the poorest among us.
7. Greater coordination with the master planning initiatives and budget decisions of the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA), the Travis County Housing Authority, and Capital Metro can expand the availability of housing that is both affordable to the poorest among us and is located near public transportation.
8. Discussions with parties holding City contracts and/or leases at the Poleyard, AMLI, Green, and Seaholm sites could create opportunities to expand the availability of housing that is affordable to the poorest among us and is located near public transportation.
9. Repaid S.M.A.R.T. Housing fee waivers could be a resource for increasing the number of 30% MFI homeowners that receive home repairs.
10. The Austin community measures success by examining the income levels and demographic information of those served by Austin's housing programs and policies not just in federally funded housing, but in locally-funded housing development as well.

Now, therefore, the Community Development Commission recommends that the following be incorporated in the 2010-2011 Consolidated Plan:

1. Immediately issue a Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) for all housing programs to increase production of 30% MFI housing and to reduce the amount of 2009-2010 housing funds carried forward to the 2010-2011 Budget.
2. Include all remaining General Obligation Bond funds in the 2010-2011 Budget, and issue Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) following Council approval of this element of the Action Plan.
3. Establish 30% MFI housing goals for 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 in rental and homeownership programs based upon contractual obligations and program performance in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.
4. Increase Tenant Based Rental Assistance for those at 30% MFI by \$500,000.
5. Improve coordination with other public agencies that could result in an increase in the amount of housing that is available to the poorest among us and is located close to public transportation.
6. Require that housing programs in 2010-2011 report income and demographic information mandated for federally funded housing programs.

7. Include repaid S.M.A.R.T. Housing fee waivers as a resource for increasing the number of 30% MFI homeowners that receive home repairs in the 2010-2011 Budget.
8. The funding for fast-track S.M.A.R.T. Housing be restored/retained and the following performance goals be established; 14 calendar days for initial subdivision and site plan review; 7 working days for all subdivision and site plan updates, corrections and revisions; 7 calendar days for all initial multi-family reviews; 2 working days for all multi-family updates, corrections, and revisions; 2 working days for all initial single-family reviews; 1 working day for all single-family updates, corrections, and revisions; all zoning change requests placed on the City Council agenda within 45 days of confirmation that required neighborhood notification occurred prior to filing of complete zoning change application; all zoning variance requests placed on the Board of Adjustment agenda within 45 days of confirmation that required neighborhood notification occurred prior to filing of complete variance application.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Hersh, 1307 Kinney Avenue #117, Austin, TX 78704-2279
Shersh@austin.rr.com (512) 587-5093 (cell)