



Austin Raza Round Table
September 22, 2015

Mayor Steve Adler and Members, Austin City Council
City of Austin
P.O. 1088
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mayor and Members of the Austin City Council:

You received immediate and well-deserved praise for the good and sincere intentions behind the recent Spirit of East Austin conference. The process of collating and translating the participants' expressions of concern, frustration and hope into substantive and effective initiatives, on the other hand, may be too daunting a task to produce immediate and positive results. We wish to propose a reliable method to determine needs and to respond immediately and effectively to the problems burdening our poor, especially in the eastern neighborhoods of Austin and Travis County.

Our proposal calls for city council members and county commissioners to commission a survey that identifies social needs in Austin's "Eastern Crescent" and approves a 10-year plan of action that immediately begins to address the issues identified by the survey with funds from public and corporate sources.

We propose an immediate convening of a task force of staff and stakeholders to prepare and implement a needs assessment survey that targets the historic minority district of East Austin as well as the communities in eastern Austin and Travis County that have been receiving the exodus of poor people from the central part of the city. The survey instrument should be relatively easy to construct and apply given the information that already exists on the geographic boundaries of poverty in the city and the county, as well as the extent to which a lack of resources denies poor residents their rights to a decent quality of life and opportunities to act on their own behalf.

We recommend that the Austin City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court follow the survey and analysis by establishing a 10-year plan of relief and recovery that immediately begins to address some of the more critical needs identified by the survey. This

will require an initial allocation of funds, as well as a small staff to begin preparing proposals for additional funding to support other planned activities.

We believe that the problems of poverty and lack of resources—aggravated by gentrification and the previous official inattention—are so serious that the city and the county governments have to act aggressively and without delay (a month for the design and implementation of the survey, and a month for the preparation of the plan of action). We also know that these problems are sufficiently well-known that we should not have to delay action with additional arguments and justifications. Furthermore, we understand that city and county officials have acted with generosity and deliberate speed when facing other challenges and opportunities—witness the subsidies involved in the construction of The Domain, the Circuit of the Americas, and the forthcoming medical school. A social crisis of major proportions, made all the more evident by the surrounding abundance, requires no less of a response.

At your convenience, we request a meeting with you and a delegation of 3-4 representatives of our organization. Please call (512-971-8304) or email (janehrivera@austin.rr.com) Jane Rivera, the convener of the Raza Roundtable to set this up. Thank you for your kind consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Raza Round Table of Austin:

Susana Almanza	Rockie Gonzalez	Frank Rodríguez
Larry Amaro	Monica Guzmán	Justin Rodriguez
Dan Arellano	Rev. Lydia Hernández	Dionisio Salazar
Daniel Baladez	Tom Herrera	Paul Saldaña
Dr. Paul Barton	Harish Kotecha	Dr. Juan Sanchez
Skylar T. Bonilla	Daniel Llanes	Eli Santiago
Alejandro Cáceres	Jere Locke	Alfredo Santos
Ernesto Calderón	Johnny Limón	Kenny Snodgrass
Ruby Calderón	Griselda Lopez	Marcelo Tafoya
Fred Cantú	Liz Lopez	Rachel Torres
Mario Cantú	Tim Mahoney	Jose Uriegas
Diana Castañeda-	Orlando S. Mata	Cynthia Valadéz
Herrera	Valerie Menard	Cynthia Valadéz-Mata
Marylou Castillo	Brigido Mireles	Kathy Vale
Ricardo A. Chavira	George Morales III	Dr. Angela Valenzuela
Dave Cortez	Amaru Necuametzl	Peggy Vasquez
Leonard Davila	Robert R. Ojeda	Dr. Tane Ward
Caly Fernandez	Alicia Pérez-Hodge	Carl Webb
Mike Flores	Teresa Pérez-Wisely	Dr. Emilio Zamora
Arturo García	Anita Quintanilla	
Manuel Ray García	Jill Ramirez	
Rosendo Gómez	Rene Rentería	
Dr. Alfonso Gonzales	Isabel Ríos	
Esther Portillo Gonzales	Gilbert Rivera	
Alberto C. Gonzalez	Dr. Jane Rivera	
Rosa Maria Gonzalez	Pete Rivera	