

May 1, 2016

Montopolis Neighborhood Association's Proposal for Changing Direction of the City's Eastern Crescent

The Montopolis Neighborhood Association, which is comprised of seven neighborhood associations, is submitting a three prong project with substantial, material, achievable goals and projects that will move the needle and forever change the direction of our city's eastern crescent. The Montopolis community has long been neglected. The Montopolis community has identified short, mid and long range goals to implement equitable, economic and employment opportunities in our community.

The Montopolis community boundaries, recognized by the City of Austin Neighborhood Planning Department, is the following; Grove Boulevard to the West, Highway 183 to the East and North, and Hwy 71 to the south (see attached Montopolis Neighborhood Plan map).

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the area defined as Montopolis was 10,842 for the year 2013 and covers an area of 2,555 square miles. The population density per square miles is 2,689 people per square mile, just above Austin's citywide average of 2,610 people per square mile. The racial breakdown is 82% Hispanic/Latino, 10% black, 7% white and 1% other. The community is on average younger than the rest of the city, as the median age for males is 25.1 and for 26.4 for females (compared with 29.6 and 30.2, respectively).

Despite the close proximity, Austin waited until 1951 to partially annex Montopolis, and it wasn't fully annexed until the 1970s. The working-class neighborhood has long been one of the poorest in Austin, with about two of every five residents living in poverty, according to the U.S. Census. Educational attainment also lags far behind the city average- in 2000, 53 percent of Montopolis residents more than 25 years old didn't have a high school diploma.

While the Montopolis community is presently being gentrified and has recently seen a growth of high-cost townhomes ranging from \$240,000 to \$300,000, the Montopolis community is among the lowest income neighborhoods in America. With 74.3% of the children here below the federal poverty line, this neighborhood has a higher rate of childhood poverty than 98.5% of U.S. neighborhoods.

The Montopolis Neighborhood Association proposal includes three projects; Outside the Box Dropout Prevention program, Young Scholars for Justice Leadership Development Program and "One Job at Time" Job Readiness Program. Outside the Box Dropout Prevention program will provide the Million Minute Learning Project that provides students in grades, PK-12, most at-risk of dropping out of school due to low academic, social and/or language skills, access to quality, year-round, out-of-school learning, in a format they understand (see outside the Box Dropout Prevention proposal). PODER's Young Scholars for Justice Leadership Development Program develops future leaders. PODER believes it is imperative for youth to become active participants in the decision-making processes that directly affect their lives. Civic participation and community organizing provides young people the opportunity to envision and practice participatory democracy and equips them with the tools and knowledge they need to become informed, active community participants (see PODER's Young Scholars for Justice Leadership Development Proposal for more information). The "One Job at a Time" Job Readiness program's goal include preparing low-income job seekers to be able to qualify and compete for entry-level positions in the demand occupations found in their respective labor force areas. According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics, the shift from goods-producing to service-industry employment continues. Thus, although the job market is still tight, the number of consumer-oriented jobs continues to increase. These are the

types of jobs that require customer service and work readiness skills which this project will offer (Review “One Job at a Time” Job Readiness proposal). These three projects/programs will provide services for children, teenagers, young adults and families. These projects/programs address equity, culture and diversity; government and engagement; family support and social services; employment (Jobs) and job training; education, sustainability, preservation and environment. More importantly, education, leadership and employment (job readiness) will help lift people out of poverty. These three projects/programs will increase development and utilization of Austin’s human resources, with special emphasis on the needs of low-income and underserved population, in the areas of education, training, employment, business and economic opportunity.

Our request for the three projects/programs is \$179,640.

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