

Anti-Displacement Task Force February 24th Community Forum
Feedback Notes

Large Group Discussion - Citizen Communication

1. Overall Urgent Concerns of Displacement

- a. Immediate Action Necessary
 - i. Entire group expressed the need for immediate action especially for those African and Hispanic families being displaced now
 - ii. Citizen explains how displacement affects employment, school and transportation creating a comprehensive crisis for families facing displacement.
- b. More Low-Income Housing
 - i. Entire group agreed that Austin needs more low-income housing not just affordable housing because those experiencing displacement cannot afford “affordable” housing
 - ii. Citizen advocates that the City helps defend rent control housing
 - iii. Citizen wants the affordability of affordable housing to lower to low-income families and a suspension of demolition to preserve historic land like the Austin colony
- c. Better Public Communication
 - i. Citizen from mobile home community wants better outreach and education of City programs, policies and events as their community was unaware of this Forum or why they are being displaced
 - ii. Citizen expresses distaste of the structure of the forum, wanting more citizen communication and less presentations which was strongly supported by the forum attendees
- d. Mobile Home Communities need Attention
 - i. Citizen concern on mobile home displacement which pushes families away from Austin amenities are necessary like schools and hospitals, emphasizes concern of the message of exclusion to the children facing displacement and urges assistance to mobile home families that are being displaced

Preserving and Expanding Affordable Housing Small Group

1. Low-income Housing not “Affordable” Housing

- a. Citizen explains that affordable is not affordable to low-income communities using the example of Mueller
- b. Citizen suggests that task force should confirm it meets 10% affordable house minimum on new developments
- c. Citizen reminds audience that renters take up 55% and need to be considered
- d. Citizen suggests creating a position to monitor who gets affordable units to ensure they fully qualify and to market these units to those who truly need them
- e. Strong audience option that CodeNEXT is racist and does not help low-income

2. **Use Comprehensive Tools to Build Low-Income Housing**
 - a. Citizen explains that city must use all tools even weak ones to provide low-income housing such density bonuses, restricting development, making developers pay for entitlements. Suggests banding other Texas cities together and speak to state legislature to create new tools
 - b. Citizen suggests providing incentives for community and universal housing
 - c. Citizen suggests voucher system for students along with more low-income options for students to make college more accessible
 - d. Citizen explains how some tools that are meant to help low-income communities are being used against them such as the 311 anonymous code enforcement. Suggests that there should be due process for these code violations so that there are options to work with violation without being evicted
 - e. Citizen suggests programs like houses for humanity be used, perhaps using bond money
3. **Use Public Land for Public Housing**
 - a. Citizen urges city to stop using public land for private investors
4. **Stop Historic Land from Demolition**
 - a. Citizen concerned of historic minority land being demolished and communities forced to move further east
 - b. Citizen urges moratorium on demolition
5. **Tax Exemptions and Fixed Household Costs**
 - a. Citizen believes this to be the best immediate action that would help families facing displacement, especially those on a fixed income
 - b. Citizen complains about taxations suggesting housing taxes stay the level when purchased and assistance should focus on low-income families 30% MFI
 - c. Citizen sees rent, mortgage and property tax as a value of fixed household costs because these affect the affordability the most
 - d. Citizen suggests lowering the age of tax exemptions for city and county taxes to help more people who are struggling
6. **Neighborhood monitoring** and maintaining housing prices to maintain affordable taxes for existing neighbors
 - a. Citizen explains how developers are allowed to build million dollar homes next door to \$150,000 homes which drives up taxes for the whole neighborhood
 - b. Citizen suggests a price cap be enforced
7. **Environmental impact** and the Need for Green Space
 - a. Citizen urges city not to forget long term environmental impacts and how healthy communities need green space
8. **Community Outreach and Education of resources**
 - a. Citizen explains tax exemption opportunities for certain groups such as disabled veterans but many do not take advantage of these options for lack of knowledge
 - b. Citizen request more transparency and outreach explaining policy
 - c. Mayor's Office explains deferral program, encouraging people to reach out to learn about programs and share with their communities
 - d. Citizen explains the need for information to be translated into many languages such as Mandarin and Vietnamese

- e. Citizen stresses importance of educating communities on options they have to help them, explanations of CodeNEXT, homestead preservations and deferrals
 - f. Citizen explains experiencing displacement then unfair eviction stressing the need to consider migrant worker or other special cases
 - g. Citizen who supports CodeNEXT stresses the need for it to be explained to the community in understandable language
 - h. Task Force member encourages a movement of working class homeowners
 - i. Citizen suggest information on how appraisal works be communicated to citizens
 - j. Suggestion of sending this information through direct mail
9. **Reserve 1% of Budget to Low-Income Housing**
- a. Citizen complains about racism of CodeNEXT and other city policies that spend excessive money but still fail to help the poor, suggests reserving money to solely help the poor

Preserving Small Businesses Small Group

- 1. **Focus on small businesses more than “Amazons”**
 - a. Task Force member explains that Austin labor pool is tight
 - b. Citizen suggests city provide loans to small businesses in an non-competitive system so that they can survive with bigger businesses
 - c. Citizen questions if the city help with taxes, permitting, debt forgiveness, training for small businesses and other special programs for small businesses
- 2. **Multiuse Housing with Small Businesses and Low-Income Housing on Public Land**
 - a. Citizen suggests “Live work play” build public housing on public land
 - b. Citizen suggests the city creates a workforce housing near city center
 - c. Want to be planned better, as traffic rises and makes problem like that example of the east 6th – can there be someone in charge of this growth – eastside red/com
- 3. **Permitting Office needs reform**
- 4. **Create a Comprehensive Tool for Small Businesses**
 - a. Citizen urges city to educate small businesses especially minorities about loans, mentorship programs, matching programs, utility help to create an incubator atmosphere
- 5. **City reserve 1% budget in beginning to small businesses**

Cultural and Historic Preservation Small Group

- 1. **City Audit on Cultural Arts programs in terms of funding, equity and preservation**
- 2. **More equity in funding for minority non-profit arts organizations**
 - a. Citizen who owns non-profit bookstore explains that with recent economic pressures they have to cut back on important community programs. Currently, 8% of non-profit funding goes to minorities and citizen urges for an increase in funding so minority communities can have the same opportunity for non-profit support.
 - b. Citizen suggests we promote artists more so they can gain recognition through festivals like Compton’s festivals for artists of color

3. **Historic preservation** should not be under planning and zoning department staff and adequately trained staff for historic preservation department
 - a. Citizen thinks that City Council should decide on historical preservation not Planning and Zoning department. The staff for historical preservation should be stronger with better expertise and more staff, perhaps even an office that can help each neighborhood preserve their history and culture like other cities have done.
 - i. Other Citizen agrees and had experienced the benefits of similar program in Seattle.
 - ii. Other Citizen suggests we look into Houston's 3rd Ward as a precedent.
 - iii. Other city examples: Boston Landmarks Commission, San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation, City of Baltimore Equity in Planning and City of Philadelphia
4. **More Cultural Arts Funding with Less Barriers**
 - a. Citizen on the board of the Mexican-American Cultural Advisory Board explains how within cultural arts funding, only 10% is Hispanic and African American and Asian together make 10% leaving minorities with a disadvantage to minority artists. Suggests that we educate minority artists on methods of receiving funding without being a non-profit so that there is a model for them to use.
5. **Affordable and varied performance venues**
 - a. Citizen who dances in a small group explains that taxpaying performance spaces are not affordable or adequate for their type of performance, with suggestion for more variety and affordable options
6. **City reserve 1% budget to Cultural and Historical Preservation**

Forum Attendance

