



RECOMMENDATION

Commission on Seniors

Recommendation Number: 20180411-4Bi Recommendations Regarding Gentrification Study

WHEREAS, the Commission on Seniors serves as an advisory board to the council concerning the quality of life for senior citizens in the Austin area and to help ensure older adults are productive, independent, and healthy (§ 2-1-132); and

WHEREAS, according to information provided by the City Demographer, the fastest growing age group in the Austin area are people aged 55 and older, projected to increase from 8 percent of the area population in 2010 to nearly 20 percent of the population in 2040. Seniors often have lower incomes than the average population, with the median household income for seniors aged 65 and older \$44,251 compared to \$55,744 for all households; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Age Friendly Action plan was adopted by City Council and incorporated into Imagine Austin to address the needs of Austin's growing senior population, including the goal of supporting and expanding affordable housing options for seniors; and

WHEREAS, gentrification and displacement impact seniors, including those who have owned or rented residences in the same neighborhood for decades; and

WHEREAS, Council has contracted with researchers from the University of Texas at Austin to study gentrification in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the UT study has identified vulnerability factors in gentrification that specifically excludes seniors (See: <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=290749>); and

WHEREAS, seniors, including senior homeowners, generally live on fixed incomes and are especially susceptible to economic pressures that lead to displacement, such as rising property taxes and rising rents; and

WHEREAS, when displaced from the communities they have lived in for decades, seniors are at increased risk of social isolation, loss of access to transportation, and loss of access to established medical and social services; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Seniors is concerned that leaving seniors out of the vulnerability analysis may result in policy recommendations that do not adequately address the needs of seniors who are renters and seniors who are homeowners, and that we cannot assume that low-income seniors are currently accounted for in the proposed study; and

WHEREAS, the timeline of the study is such that it may not be not practical for the researchers to include seniors in the vulnerability assessment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission on Seniors recommends to the City Council:

- Request the researchers provide maps that identify the percentage of seniors in the city's census tracts that are included in the study and if possible, overlay these maps on the study's maps;
- Request the researchers include seniors and long term homeowners specifically as targeted populations in the policy recommendations and further describe how each proposed policy would address the needs of a target population; and
- Request the researchers format the proposed policy matrix in a manner that clearly identifies each targeted population and whether each policy recommendation benefits that group. An example based on the proposed policy matrix presented to the commission might look like this, with the language in red the new proposal from the Commission on Seniors:

Policy	Financial cost to city per household benefitted.	Length of Impact	Target population/who directly benefit ✓ = yes ✗ = no	How target population/s benefit	Scalability /resources required to implement
			Families/children ✓ or ✗ Seniors ✓ or ✗ Homeowners ✓ or ✗ Renters ✓ or ✗ VLI, ELI or MLI ✓ or ✗ Persons of color ✓ or ✗		

Date of Approval: April 11, 2018

Record of the vote: Passed by a vote of 12-0. Voting for: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Angel, Bordie, Garcia-Pittman, Grampp, Hauser, Jackson, Lugo, Nicola, Sheth, Van Sickle. Commissioner Kareithi off the dais. Commissioner Cagle absent.

Attest: 