

**From:** Shieh, James - BC <bc-James.Shieh@austintexas.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2019 5:24 AM

**To:** Rivera, Andrew <Andrew.Rivera@austintexas.gov>

**Subject:** Affordability Unlocked - Public Input - Please include this in the backup material.

Good day fellow Commissioners!

Sorry to miss the discussion on Affordability Unlocked, but I'm on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade trip to the coast as a chaperone.

It is quite exciting to consider a tool to help bring affordability to all parts of the city. However, I would hope that we don't get too far ahead of ourselves and throw our planning ideas to the way side just to have a tool.

There is so much to affordability than just the cost to purchase or rent the property. We've discussed the facets of this many times to realize this. The cost of car ownership for instance, and the affiliated cost of building parking instead of more units should cue us that these new sites should be located close to transit corridors and hubs. The health of a community is critical as well and location close to services, parks, and schools all play a part. We need to think in terms of Complete Communities and how this fits in.

To truly unlock affordability we should be considering these factors and more. If we do not, these projects may fall by the wayside being located in the most remote parts of the city due to cheaper cost of land. Parking would have to be built since residents would have to drive to get anywhere. Health of the communities we are trying to help will be affected. We have seen this before in Austin and we should not continue to put our most vulnerable population thru this again.

Another concern is how to craft the development to work with the surrounding area. Without design guidelines, and without the requirement of input of area stakeholders, there will be conflict with the surrounding area. There are good solutions as we have seen and deliberated on for developments such as these to fit in and become part of the area. As we saw in an earlier case in north east Austin, creating open space that the neighbors can be part of helped to bring all parties together. There are good, creative solutions...we just have to make room for it!

By considering more than just rent or purchase price of residence units, we may begin to ensure the quality of the developments and attain more meaningful results. Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past...lets get it right this time!

Commissioners, please consider additional criteria as to how a site may qualify for this. We should be promoting to live a more sustainable, affordable, and healthy lifestyle.

Thanks for listening,

James Shieh

Planning Commissioner