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December 2, 2019

To: City Manager's Office  
RE: Hotel Strategy in Austin: Microtel

ECHO is writing in support of the purchase of hotels to be used as low barrier bridge housing for people experiencing homelessness. The hotel units are fully operational and will not take a capital investment prior to being used as bridge housing. Should the units be used for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in the future there will be a need for capital improvements. ECHO is committed to raising the funds for operation of the Microtel and subsequent hotels that ECHO endorses for purchase. Referral processes and pathways are yet to be designed. ECHO will convene service providers and housing providers across the continuum to create an intentional and planful referral process. Referrals for the hotels will come from the following areas.

- Coordinated Entry System
- Encampment Response
- Hospital Discharges (Acute Respite Needs)
- Criminal Justice System Referrals

ECHO has worked closely with our city and service provider partners to identify gaps in Austin's homeless response system. An initial investment of 200-300 units would have a substantial impact on Austin's unsheltered population. We are confident that the creation of these housing units outside of Austin's shelter system would help address unsafe camping using a trauma informed, harm reduction approach. The hotel sites will provide a place for people experiencing homelessness to access the necessary support and medical services to begin their path out of homelessness.

I look forward to discussing this strategy with you and answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Matthew Mollica  
Executive Director