



November 22, 2021

Dear Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Council Members,

HousingWorks Austin wants to thank Mayor Adler and Council for initiating a conversation on housing affordability and housing supply at a special work session on November 30, 2021. There is no doubt that it is critical for our community to tackle the issues of housing affordability and supply to ensure that all Austinites have adequate housing opportunities in our city. This is especially important as housing prices and rents have risen dramatically in Austin during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint Scorecard Progress to Date data illustrates, unless we take meaningful and robust steps to address this issue, we will not be able to meet our 10-year community goals around expanding affordable housing and market-rate housing opportunities in our city. In order to meet these goals, it is integral that the City of Austin continues to support bond funding and explore other innovative sources of funding for affordable housing. It is equally important to develop and strengthen policies and programs that expand affordable housing opportunities and housing supply.

We recommend that the Austin City Council consider discussing the following policies and programs to expand housing opportunities in our city.

1. Create affordable housing density bonus opportunities in residential and commercial zoning districts citywide. The goal of such policies should be to maximize bonus participation, maximize affordable housing benefits, and increase housing supply. This should include discussions to capture affordable housing and other additional housing benefits such as source of income protections, tenant and displacement protections, and affirmative marketing. Increased entitlements should be considered as leverage to maximize affordability benefits, including discussions regarding increasing allowable height, reducing compatibility and parking standards, and altering site development standards.

2. Ensure that housing supply and the development of affordable housing density bonus programs expand housing opportunities in high opportunity areas, particularly in West Austin. Housing dispersion is critical to meet the goals of the Austin Housing Strategic Blueprint, to address our community commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing, and to live up to our community values of equitable development.

**Awais Azhar, Advocacy Committee Chair**  
PhD Candidate, University of Texas

**Don Baylor, Jr.**  
Lafayette Square Holding Company, LLC

**Emily Chenevert, Chair**  
Austin Board of REALTORS®

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Austin Justice Coalition

**John Michael Cortez**  
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**Ashton Cumberbatch, Nominating Committee Chair**  
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**Quincy Dunlap**  
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**Catharine Echols, Secretary**  
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**Frances Ferguson**  
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**Parisa Fatehi-Weeks, Treasurer**  
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**Diana McIver**  
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**Terry Mitchell**  
MOMARK Development

**Cile Montgomery**  
VMware

**Karen Paup**  
Texas Housers

**Emily Ryder Perlmeter, Chair-Elect**  
Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

**Cookie G. Ruiz, C.F.R.E.**  
Ballet Austin

**Kathy Tyler**  
Austin Women in Housing

Executive Director  
**Nora Linares-Moeller**

3. Provide opportunities to create accessory dwelling units (ADU) in more parts of the city and revise policies to minimize impediments to the development of ADUs. It is critical that the design and parking requirements for ADUs allow for flexibility and support creative housing solutions. Council should consider the development of a preservation bonus that allows flexible infill development while incentivizing the preservation of existing primary housing structures. Council should also consider allowing internal ADUs for all Austinites in all parts of town to further expand housing and economic opportunities.
4. Increase housing choice for Austinites by providing opportunities for missing middle housing options such as townhouses, multiplexes, and live-work developments throughout the city. Housing choice is critical to respond to different housing needs and expand affordable housing choices in more neighborhoods.
5. Expand the benefits offered as a part of the S.M.A.R.T Housing program to further incentivize the development of affordable housing, particularly projects where a majority of the units are affordable. This should include discussions to waive additional fees, including those associated with utilities, and providing priority expedited review to affordable housing developments.
6. Address issues with development processes that can add extra time and cost to the development of housing, including affordable housing. This should include an assessment of the need to improve the site plan review process, permitting, and developing improved administrative processes, with the goal of achieving better outcomes in relation to housing supply and affordability.

We thank Mayor Adler and Council for their leadership on this issue and hope our recommendations can help shape this critical conversation. If you have any questions, please email me at [REDACTED] [g](#) or call 512-413-1627 and/or Awais Azhar, Advocacy Committee Chair, HousingWorks Board of Directors at [REDACTED] or call 412-298-7063.

Best Regards,



Nora Linares-Moeller  
Executive Director  
HousingWorks Austin

cc: City Manager Spencer Cronk