




## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Rosie Truelove, Director, Housing Department 

**DATE:** June 21, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Response to Budget Rider 1 - Fiscal Year 2021-2022 regarding the Displacement Prevention Navigator Pilot Program

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This memorandum serves as a response to Fuentes Budget Rider 1, which directed staff to explore creation of a Pilot Displacement Prevention Navigator Program using staff and resources allocated within the FY 2022 Budget. Staff is directed to provide an update on the development and implementation of this pilot program to City Council.

### ***Background***

Austin's low-income residents are under tremendous displacement pressure. Local median income has risen with an influx of more affluent residents and tech jobs, while housing production has lagged, and property values have risen. Home prices, rents, and property taxes have rapidly become less affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Between 2021 and 2022, rents rose by 35%, while the median home price jumped nearly 22%.<sup>1</sup> More than a third of local households are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income for housing. For people already more likely to be vulnerable to displacement—renters, seniors, people with disabilities, and communities of color—these shifts pose acute challenges.

### ***Overview***

The Displacement Prevention Navigator pilot program aims to help people stay in their homes and communities by connecting them with available information and resources. In spring 2023, 12-15 Navigators will be recruited from local communities to participate in a one-year pilot program to start in summer 2023. Acting as a bridge between communities and resource providers, Displacement Prevention Navigators will provide direct assistance to community members at risk of displacement. The pilot program will focus on Colony Park and Dove Springs, two neighborhoods at high risk of displacement as identified by the [Uprooted](#) report and updated through City analyses (Fig. 1). Supported by in-depth workshops and training, Navigators will bring close knowledge of City programs and other housing resources to the households who need it the most.

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Ellis, "Rental Market Tracker: Asking Rents Rose a Record 15% in January," Redfin 2/18/2022, [www.redfin.com/news/redfin-rental-report-january-2022](https://www.redfin.com/news/redfin-rental-report-january-2022); Dr. Clare Losey, Dr. Harold D. Hunt, and Reece Neathery, "Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown Housing Affordability Outlook," Texas A&M Texas Real Estate Research Center, Technical Report 2346 / 4th quarter 2022, [assets.recenter.tamu.edu/Documents/Articles/2346.pdf](https://assets.recenter.tamu.edu/Documents/Articles/2346.pdf).

The Displacement Prevention Navigator pilot program is in alignment with Action 7 of the [Displacement Mitigation Strategy Blueprint](#), which calls for the City to engage directly with communities vulnerable to displacement and connect them with services.

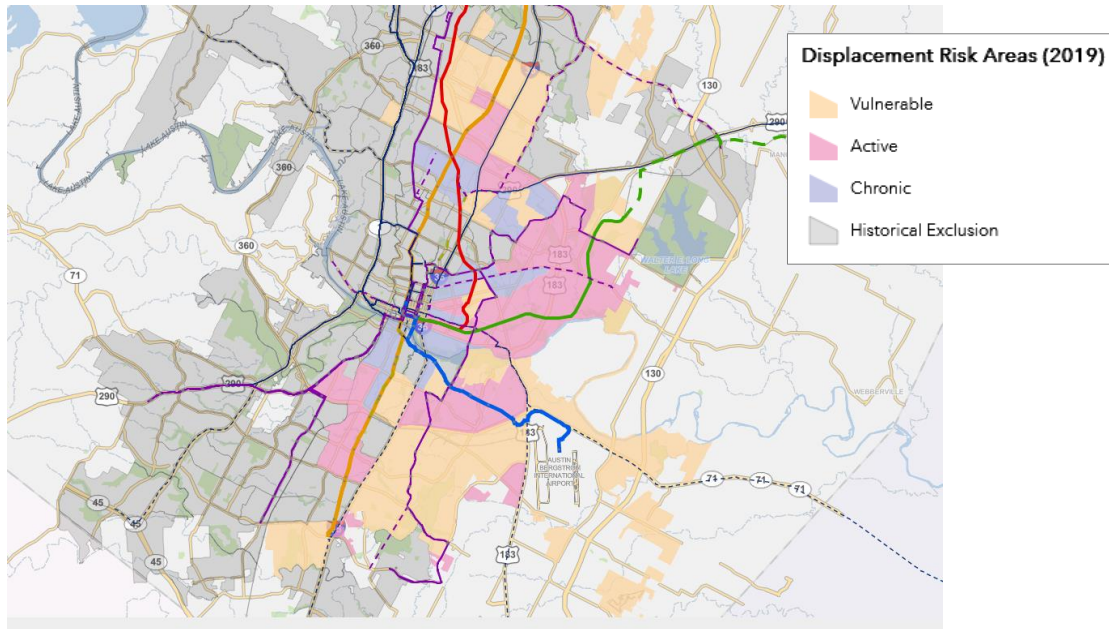


Figure 1. Displacement risk areas (2019)

### ***Program Management***

The pilot program will be managed by Displacement Prevention Office staff in the Housing Department. Working directly with Navigators will help to 1) identify issues with accessing City displacement prevention programs; 2) adapt the pilot program as needed for success; and 3) learn from the pilot program for future outreach and assistance efforts.

At the conclusion of the one-year pilot program, staff will evaluate results and determine next steps.

### ***Next Steps***

Recruitment for the Navigators will begin in spring 2023, with training in summer 2023 and community assistance scheduled to begin in fall 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [Rosie.Truelove@austintexas.gov](mailto:Rosie.Truelove@austintexas.gov) or (512) 974-3064 or Cara Bertron, Senior Planner with the Housing Department, at [Cara.Bertron@austintexas.gov](mailto:Cara.Bertron@austintexas.gov) or (512) 974-1446.

cc: Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager