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July 19, 2023

Jessica Lemann
Senior Associate State Director, AARP Texas
1905 Aldrich St., Suite 210
Austin, TX 78723

Mayor Kirk Watson
Mayor Pro Tem Paige Ellis
Members of the Austin City Council
Austin City Hall
301 W Second St., Second Floor
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mayor Watson, Mayor Pro Tem Ellis, and members of the Austin City Council,

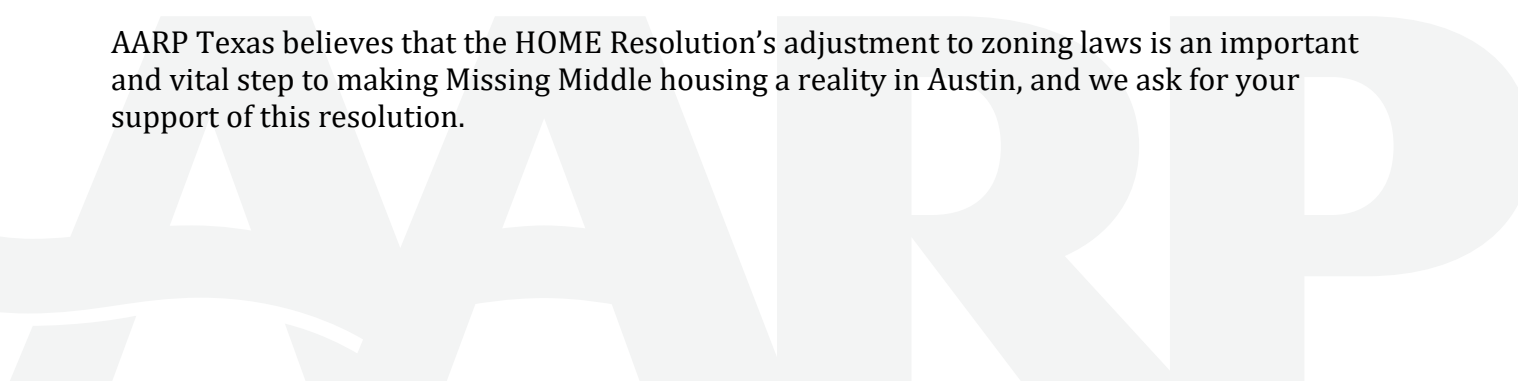
I am writing on behalf of AARP Texas in support of Item 126 on the City Council Agenda for July 20, 2023, otherwise known as the Home Options for Middle-income Empowerment (HOME) resolution brought forward by Council Member Leslie Pool.

The 2021 [AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey](#) of adults age 18 or older shows that most Americans, including the 50-plus, prefer to live in walkable neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options — and are close to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and green spaces. AARP believes that "Middle Housing" developments can meet these needs.

As the population of older Austinites grow, the importance of creating of a variety of housing options will only increase. Older homeowners who want to sell their residence and move into something nearby that's more affordable, compact, and accessible routinely discover such housing doesn't exist.

With people living longer, more and more older adults will be increasingly reliant on family caregivers. Missing Middle Housing and housing for middle-income earners can ensure their family members can also afford to live in Austin.

AARP Texas believes that the HOME Resolution's adjustment to zoning laws is an important and vital step to making Missing Middle housing a reality in Austin, and we ask for your support of this resolution.



I encourage you to review AARP Livable Community's *Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing Guide* and *Re-Legalizing Missing Middle Housing Guide* at [AARP.org/MissingMiddleHousing](https://www.aarp.org/MissingMiddleHousing).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica K. Lemann

Jessica Lemann
AARP Texas



July 18, 2023

Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Austin City Council,

The Austin Board of REALTORS® (ABoR), Home Builders Association of Greater Austin (HBAGA), and the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA) are encouraged that the City of Austin is taking steps to increase Austin’s housing supply by considering changes to allow for smaller lot sizes, additional dwelling units by right on single-family lots, and a streamlined site development process for single family dwelling units. Item 126 is a resolution to initiate code amendments to the Land Development Code to reduce the minimum lot size in single-family zoning districts to 2,500 square feet or less, allow for up to three dwelling units per lot, and modify certain development regulations accordingly.

On behalf of our members, **we ask Council to support Item 126 as written to encourage and facilitate the development of smaller housing units** like townhomes, row houses, triplexes, garden homes, cottage courts, and other missing middle housing. Our organizations support land use changes, like the proposed changes in Item 126, intended to help increase the abundance and variety of housing. Local regulatory barriers to new housing development – including minimum lot size and other zoning restrictions – have reduced the ability of many housing markets across the country, including Central Texas, to respond to growing housing demand.

According to the [White House](#), **“one of the most persistent factors depressing the supply of housing**, especially entry-level and rental units, is exclusionary zoning laws and practices, like **minimum lot size requirements**, minimum square footage requirements, unnecessary parking requirements, **prohibitions on or differing treatment for multi-family homes**, accessory dwelling units, and manufactured housing, and limits on the height of buildings.” In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [reports](#) that **land use regulations, like minimum lot sizes, setbacks**, and other local regulations that limit housing “not only **contribute to high housing costs and a shortage of homes**, but they push housing farther away, leading to sprawl.”

ABoR, HBAGA, and RECA support removing regulatory barriers, like minimum lot size and other development regulations, that prevent additional housing from being built in Austin. Reducing the minimum lot size and allowing three residential units by-right per lot could dramatically change the types of housing built in Austin. **To ensure these land use reforms have a meaningful impact on market-rate affordability, these policy changes must be approved citywide, by-right, and without any affordability requirements.** Additionally, it is important that the City explore **additional increases in impervious cover** where possible to ensure that builders have the additional space to build to a greater density. Our community must come together to meet the challenge of housing our rapidly-growing population by collectively finding ways to increase the abundance and variety of housing. It is imperative we address Austin’s housing affordability issues

and approve meaningful changes so that anyone who wants to buy a home in Austin can do so and at a price point they can afford.

We want to thank **Council Members Leslie Pool, José Vela, Zo Qadri, Mayor Pro Tem Paige Ellis** and **Mayor Kirk Watson** for sponsoring this resolution. We appreciate their leadership and their willingness to take bold steps to change the trajectory of our housing market by allowing for greater housing capacity. We look forward to participating as a stakeholder in this important policy discussion and providing recommendations intended to have the greatest potential impact on our housing supply. We are here to partner with you as you work to increase our city's housing stock.

Thank you,



Emily Chenevert
CEO
Austin Board of REALTORS®



Taylor Jackson
CEO
Home Builders Association of Greater Austin



Dianne Bangle
CEO
Real Estate Council of Austin