

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT			
City of Austin Affordable Housing Finance Programs			
Name	Organization	Testimony	Date Received
AUSTIN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING: JANUARY 7, 2010			
Richard Troxell	House the Homeless/Living Wage Campaign	158 homeless persons died on the streets of Austin last year. There are people who are working full-time who are still homeless. Minimum wage is not an affordable wage. Advocating for a living minimum wage, and a worker's Motel that would be a pathway for people to get out of homelessness. It should be in proximity to downtown for those who are supporting the downtown growth.	1/7/2010
Helen Varty	FrontSteps Executive Director	Supports Americorp housing co-op. The Housing First program supports moving people into housing before requiring them to work on other issues. It entails not losing their housing if they relapse. Outcomes are positive, and it is cost-driven to reduce frequent public service users. We need affordable rental housing for the mentally ill/substance abusers/ex-offenders.	1/7/2010
Marilyn Hartman	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Austin)	Advocating for citizens who have serious mental illnesses, which are leading cause of disability in ages 15 - 44. Safe, affordable housing is a necessary part of their treatment plan. Cost to society in taxes is higher when this group does not get treatment. We need governmental support for this population, which includes not only housing, but services that go along with it too. This would be both cost-effective and morally right.	1/7/2010
Nancy Cates	Mary Lee Foundation	Encourage that we still use GO Bond \$ for extremely low-income rental housing. They were GO Bond recipient west of Lamar, and their building is 100% accessible/visitable - aging in place. All GO Bond funded properties should be accessible. Same cost when done in building from the beginning.	1/7/2010
Spencer Duran	Accessible Housing Austin!	CDC should focus on housing for those at or below 30% MFI. All housing should be accessible and close to vital public transportation and services.	1/7/2010
Bryson Smith	ADAPT of Texas	Wants to reiterate what Mr. Duran said. We should stay focused on the needs of those at or below 30% MFI.	1/7/2010
Kathy Stark	Austin Tenants' Council	Need more housing for 50% MFI and below. We still have big problem from fair housing angle since most affordable housing winds up in East Austin. Housing should be spread in all parts of town accessible to jobs. Need long term affordability and should build on what we've done. Please try to make sure that housing and services are not tied together to one person/entity.	1/7/2010
Michael Willard	Austin Habitat for Humanity	Wanted to highlight the successes of the GO bond program. Thinks the 60 rental and 40 homeownership split has worked. Habitat has received 2.4 million in funding to help reach initial goals of deep affordability, long-term affordability, and geographic distribution of affordability. Habitat will build 75 units with the funds received. The Housing Market Study surveys showed that the most requested option was homeownership. Habitat for Humanity addresses that need.	1/7/2010
Francie Ferguson	HousingWorks	HousingWorks was instrumental in passing G.O. Bonds originally. Voters focus on working poor led to initial G.O. guidelines. Results have been very good; it has allowed groups to expand their capacity. There have also been some successes in geographic dispersion. Advocates that funds continue to be used for 60/40 rental/homeownership split. Proposes the applications be PDFed and posted online. Underwriting should be documented in a more specific way, and a policy is needed on when AHFC will share ownership. Encourage continuation of stakeholder meetings, and tracking funding of awards, not just awarding of awards.	1/7/2010

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Kelly Weiss	PeopleTrust	Reiterate HousingWorks model of all types of housing for all types of people in all parts of town. We need safe housing, and shared equity housing. Advocates that 40% stay with homeownership, and supports shared equity housing. Use Housing Market Study data and demographics from Ryan Robinson to plan strategically. Important to fund homeownership for middle and working class because we are losing them to suburbs. PeopleTrust just got funding to build 50 homes in 78745. Supports CHDO-Roundtable logic model.	1/7/2010
Mark Rogers	Austin CHDO Roundtable/Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation	CHDO Roundtable Logic Model to build in more flexibility for fund use outside of 60%/40% split. After 12 months, whatever funds not being used should be freed up to be used where they are needed. After 18 months the 20% of Council Funds should also be made flexible. That way, we can fund special projects. Need more outreach and explanation on Rapid Acquisition Program. Very important that affordability is being tied to funds, but should have more notice about this to CHDO Roundtable because many nonprofits were caught by surprise.	1/7/2010
Isabelle Headrick	Austin CHDO Roundtable/Blackland CDC	Need deeply affordable housing. Need to show voters that this round of GO Bond funding has worked. Wary of funds being too specifically allocated for designated projects. Increase transparency.	1/7/2010
Ramone Valeriano	PeopleTrust	Cost of Single Family home is rising; gap in affordability for homeowners. Likely to continue if we don't address lack of affordable homes in Austin. Collaborating of city nonprofits and for-profits to come up with program to address gap. Support current allocation of 60/40 funding.	1/7/2010
Gavino Fernandez	Concilio Coalition/Dep. Director of LULAC	Has received complaints regarding accessibility of homes built with federal dollars. AHFC adds additional criteria that makes persons ineligible. Some applicants were excluded due to past debt/credit issues. We should invest in affordable housing for seniors and disabled with remaining funds. Geographic dispersion of affordable housing should be equitable.	1/7/2010
Elisa Montoya	El Concilio/East Town Lake Citizen Neighborhood Association	Concern regarding delivery of services for affordable housing applicants. AHFC has requirements that deny services, like past bills or bad credit. Code enforcement has started coming to homes and telling owners their houses need to be up to code. They turn to AHFC, but don't qualify for services because they have a lien.	1/7/2010
Kim Penna	College Houses	Advocating for extremely low-income persons and needs defined by the Housing Market Study. Supports investment in creating an Americorp housing co-op with a shared equity model. Right now there are only zero-equity co-ops in Austin.	1/7/2010
Charlotte Benbenek-Price	Americo-op Coalition	Supports the development of a co-op in East Austin. This would be affordable housing for Americorp volunteers, who are all extremely low income and need housing to continue serving their community. The co-op and its assets will eventually be turned over to the community.	1/7/2010
Ayleen Perez	PeopleFund/Citizen	Single mom on pathway to homeownership. Need for homeownership for the 50-80% MFI working class. We should continue the original allocation of GO Bond funding.	1/7/2010
Stephen Moore	UT Architecture/ Board of ACDDC/ Center for Sustainable Development	Advocating for alley flat initiative (units 850 sq. ft. or less, sustainable/accessibile units). There are 3,000 potential units with current zoning - 5,000 units if zoning is tweaked. 42,000 possible if city-wide. Working to create comprehensive AlleyFlat ordinance as part of Comp. Plan.	1/7/2010

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Stuart Hersh	Citizen	We should promote housing that is S.M.A.R.T. TM . Should always get 40 years of affordability by tying funds to other federal grant sources and bringing the funds together. For rental housing, we should create 10% at or below 30% MFI, 10% at or below 50% MFI. For homeownership, we should create at least 10% at 65% MFI. Owner should be required to maintain own property for 40 years after we provide the repair. Should deal comprehensively with housing problems when repairing. Supports shared-equity co-ops.	1/7/2010
Janice Cahlane	Citizen	More efficient use of current affordable housing stock. Applicants only required to income qualify when they apply - not continued income qualifications for future earnings. Provision should be made for a restriction.	1/7/2010
Sabino Renteria	Citizen	Affordability is constant pressure, especially in East Austin. Advocate for affordable rental units. Should sell the Millenium Youth Center instead of using housing money for its debt service. Could use proceeds for affordable housing.	1/7/2010
Gus Pena	Citizen	Homelessness occurring because families can't afford rents. East Riverside has recently lost units. We need more jobs so people can get back on their feet. Homeownership is a secondary concern; the first priority is homelessness/affordable rental housing/veterans.	1/7/2010
Summary of Public Comments: NHCD Affordable Housing Finance Programs Comment Period			
Melanie Behrends Yonke	Trinity Center	Needs more supportive affordable housing for ex-offenders. These are people who are willing to pay rent. They are receiving social security disability checks each month or are working at least part-time, mostly in day labor, because their records keep them from getting jobs too. Other problem I see is that there's no supportive housing for alcoholics. I had one client who, after 2 years on a waiting list, HACA denied him housing because he had too many public intoxication tickets. Other cities have "wet housing" for special cases like this one. I'd like to see us try something like that. Next, there is the problem of mental illness. Many of my clients have a mental illness, both extreme and more minor cases. They need supportive housing programs in an environment where they are required to take their medication and attend counseling and/or case management. If they were housed permanently in supportive housing, they would have a safe place to keep their meds, and be given the proper care to stay put and not keep going back to the streets or to jail. Finally, there is a high need for more shelter for women. The Salvation Army only has	12/17/2009
		15 beds with a one-month stay limit. Safe Place only allows women in who are in an "active" domestic violence situation.	
Bob Henry	Citizen	I offer a Sweat Equity based Cooperative project that would really make a difference. I would really appreciate your input and help to get those funds.	12/17/2009
	Austin CHDO Roundtable	GO Bond Funding Allocation Policy Proposal: For Rental and Homeownership: Rather than explicitly moving homeownership fund allocations over to rental, the group decided that it made more sense to make homeownership and rental funds flexible after a discreet period of time. The funding clock would begin when the GO funds officially become available for rental and homeownership projects - typically the beginning of the City's fiscal year. If the rental or homeownership GO funds had not been fully spent/committed by an established date after the funding clock begins, a portion of that year's unspent funding allocation would become available for either type of affordable housing project. Below are the proposed time periods and %s: After 12 months, 50% of the uncommitted funds become flexible. After 18 months, the remaining uncommitted amounts become flexible. For Council Priority: Given that funds from this category have largely remained uncommitted, we would urge Council and staff to consider three recommendations: 1) ensure that projects funded through this category be subjected to the same due	12/18/2009

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		diligence/review process as projects funded through other G.O. bond funding categories; 2) explore the possibility (legally speaking) of using a portion of these funds in a more targeted way to invest in innovation that has a broader systemic impact on affordability throughout the city; and 3) consider making these funds similarly flexible (as Rental & Homeownership) after a discreet period of time. Below are the proposed times and %s: a. After 6 months, 50% of the uncommitted funds become flexible; b. After 12 months, the remaining amounts become flexible. For Rapid Acquisition: As a consequence of some feedback from folks who've applied for funds, we would urge Council and Staff to consider two recommendations: 1) improve the marketing of funding in this category; and 2) make funding flexible after a discreet period of time. Specifically, after 12 months, 100% of the funds should become flexible.	
Steven A. Moore	UT Architecture	I plan to attend the Community Development Commission meeting on 7, January to discuss options for affordable housing in Austin. I've taken the liberty to attach a copy of a report completed by interdisciplinary graduate students in my UT course that examined the Alley Flat Initiative as a means of providing affordable, sustainable in-fill housing for Austin. I suspect that you will find our findings to be of interest. Attachment: TSD Report 2008.	12/18/2009
Kenneth King	Citizen	This program is a scam! We applied for affordable housing in 2007 and were denied. My wife is a (redacted). We provided letters from Doctos and completed all the paperwork and got back a letter of denial stating our proof of disability was not accepted.	12/21/2009
Patricia Budak	Citizen	I had an experience recently when I applied for an apartment at Mosaic Mueller. The Graystar staff escorted me around the new complex and gave me an application including several pages of affordable housing financial information which I returned two days later. I told the young man I had a Section 8 Housing voucher from the beginning, but it was not until three weeks or so later that the office manager called and told they would not accept my voucher. I suggest you use the stimulus money to take a survey of all developers who received a tax break in exchange for affordable housing tenants. They are discriminating against Section 8 voucher holders. And after you know who they are, please alert the proper elected officials and other authorities that this practice is going on in Travis County, Texas. This needs to change.	12/22/2009
Susan London	Citizen	Tough times call for innovations certainly and that is what we look at and recommend. There are all types of innovations but find that brokers and clients just do not pay attention. For example if I can save you \$300,000 a year in electric bills and get it rebated at 100%, why would you not do that over the long term life of a building. What does this mean for tenants and rents? Clients include Dell, Morton Salt, ATT, hospitals, industrial, retail, office and single family.	1/3/2010
John B. McFarland	Austin NAMI/Front Steps	I write to advocate for use of affordable housing funds for the mentally ill. Most homeless people suffer from mental illness and/or substance abuse, and many have criminal records. They are the population most in need of housing and least able to obtain housing. As a practical matter, it is very difficult to provide this population with the services they need if they are not housed. If housing dollars are to be spent where the need is greatest, this population should be on the top of the list. Front Steps advocates for Housing First - providing housing first for those most in need, so that they can then be provided the mental health and addiction services they need to improve their lives. This population uses substantial public resources - in ARCH, in hospital emergency rooms, with police and in our jails. Use of housing funds to house this population greatly reduces their use of these other resources.	1/4/2010

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Marilyn Hartman	Citizen	I am writing to represent the housing needs of our seriously mentally ill citizens, who have consistently been left out of the planning process over the years. Mental illness is the leading cause of disability for ages 15-44. 6% of our population has a SERIOUS mental illness. Experts and numerous studies agree that safe, affordable, permanent housing with support services geared to the needs of each individual is a necessary part of a mentally ill person's treatment plan. Conversely, without this kind of housing and support services, the success rate for recovery is not very high, and the cost to all of us as a society in terms of taxes and our quality of life is higher than if we provided what these citizens need to stabilize and move in their lives. My 35-year-old son, diagnosed 10 years ago with schizophrenia, is an example of the difference that housing with care supports can make. For the first 3 years, he cycled in and out of mental hospitals 13 times, and because of the severity of his illness, 3 of those times he was kept in for the maximum 3 months, the last	1/5/2010
		time at Austin State Hospital (AS). It became clear that the government had no funding policies for care supports that would be essential to break this destructive cycle. We were fortunate to find a place for him at the Mary Lee Foundation, available only because we are paying for his care. In the nearly 7 years he has lived there, he has not been hospitalized once.	
Patty Sprinkle	Citizen	As more neighborhoods become gentrified it has become even harder to find a safe, affordable place to live, especially for low income and at risk populations. New development is not replacing old units, or is too expensive for former residents. To address the immediate needs of homeless and at risk populations, the city would do well to shift the ratio of the general obligation bond funding to favor rental units as opposed to home ownership. More money should be allocated to preserving and rehabilitating existing homes as another avenue to keep Austin affordable for all.	1/5/2010
Richard R. Troxell	House the Homeless	By recent count, there are 4,400 homeless in Austin area. Last several U.S. Conference of Mayors' reports have stated at at current Federal Minimum Wage of \$7.25/hr., a full time worker is unable to affordable basic rental housing across urban centers in the United States. The University of Texas recently conducted a survey which showed that 51% of those surveyed wanted job training, and 52% are looking for work. By a more recent House the Homeless survey, 90.7% said they would work 40 hours a week for a living wage. 37.8% said they were working at the time of the interview. In the past, we had a national network of highly affordable worker rental housing. Now our 4,000 plus people try the impossible task of fitting into only 600 emergency shelter beds by way of nightly lottery or trying to work while living under a bridge. In November 2009, 158 homeless died in the last year alone. If our businesses are not going to pay living wages, we can still create a pathway out of homelessness if we create a Workers Hotel, which would replicate the YMCA format of old. The hotel should be located in downtown area at a site like the fallow Young	1/8/2010
		Women's Club of America, YWCA building on Guadalupe Street.	
George Holcome	Asbury Methodist Church	In support of Richard Troxel's written comment	1/9/2010
Vera Janes	Citizen	In support of Richard Troxel's written comment	1/9/2010
Alison Dieter	Citizen	I heartily and thoroughly agree that housing funds must be used to help the homeless get back on their feet. A workers hotel would be a good start. 158 people died on the streets of Austin last year. A living wage of \$10.00/hr. would also be a good start.	1/9/2010
Ben H. White	Citizen	I am in favor of our bond money, at least a goodly portion, going to the poorest of the poor.	1/9/2010
Fred Fuchs	Citizen	In support of Richard Troxel's written comment	1/10/2010

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Clint Smith	National Gray Panther/HousingWorks of Austin	In support of Richard Troxel's written comment	1/11/2010
Walter Moreau	Foundation Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We support the CHDO roundtable position to continue a priority for single family projects for a time. 2. We believe that any remaining or returned multifamily GO bond funds should be prioritized to create units for 30% MFI households and below. 3. Because of rising utility costs and the impact on affordability, all GO bond funded projects should not only meet a one start green building goal (part of SMART Housing already) but be required to achieve a two star level 4. The City/AHFC should not be in the ownership position of any project for the purpose of achieving a property tax exemption unless the property is already a City owned site, supportive housing, or a downtown location. 5. Because funds are limited, no more GO bond funds should be used to “buy” affordable units in a project that requires demolition of existing affordable housing. 	1/12/2010
D'Ann Johnson	Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc.	<p>Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) is a non-profit organization that provides free civil legal services to indigent residents of central Texas. It is our mission to promote dignity, self-sufficiency, safety and stability of low-income Texans. On any given night, there are an inadequate number of places for a person with limited income to spend the night safely and securely. The concept of a worker hotel is not a new one. My partner, a long-time freelance Austin photographer, lived at the YWCA for \$20 a month for about 20 years. The idea has had a new resurgence. Even in Japan, hotels have gone so far as to offer tiny plastic cubicles to provide options for low-income or out of work residents (see New York Times, January 2, 2010). While these tiny berths are a bit out of the ordinary, the need for creative solutions is clear. The general housing bonds should be leveraged to provide the most affordable housing for the most needy. I urge the council to take steps to provide services for the one in twelve residents below the poverty line. Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.</p>	1/13/2010
John Meinkowsky	ARCIL	<p>ARCIL is disappointed to see that the City of Austin has failed to keep its promise to use General Obligation housing bond funds to assist people who are extremely-low income. In 2007, the City Council approved \$33 million for rental housing, with the promise that 50% would be used for housing units for people below 30% of AMFI. Excluding the shelters and transitional housing commitments, we count only 221 out of 790 permanent housing units (about 28%) for people at the 30% income level. At ARCIL, we struggle daily to help people with disabilities, including those who are extremely-low income, find affordable housing. This is often limited to directing people to waiting lists. Meanwhile, local, state and federal programs spend billions of taxpayer dollars on housing programs for “low-income” families, who actually have incomes over \$40,000 per year.</p>	1/14/2010
Terry Klein	Citizen	In support of Richard Troxel's written comment	1/17/2010

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Jo Ann Koepke	House the Homeless	I am Jo Ann Koepke, Board Secretary of House the Homeless, Inc. I am writing you to provide my strongest support for Richard Troxell's proposal of a Worker's Hotel to enable homeless persons to get off the streets of Austin by working and at the same time having a safe roof over their heads. I have included a copy of Richard's testimony before the Community Development Commission below. As Richard states in his testimony, this past November we had a Memorial Service for the 158 homeless persons who died in 2009. Each year since 1992, I have helped put together these Memorial Services. I joyfully get the food donated for the breakfast we serve after wards. I joyfully get our flowers donated to plant underneath our Memorial Tree. And I joyfully get the carnations that we place on our Memorial plaque when each name is read. But I really shouldn't have to do this. These people should be alive and working at jobs that pay a Living Wage. And this both deeply saddens me and outrages me. Richard and I are diligently working on the Universal Living Wage campaign and we sure do hope to fulfill this campaign soon. But like all changes that better	1/21/2010
		society for everyone, Richard and I are both doing the campaign over the long haul But that simply doesn't mean more people need to die. This is where Richard's concept of a Worker's Hotel fits a truly excellent solution. The city of Austin has the money---34 million dollars. And I totally agree with Richard that this should be used for the truly destitute. And homeless persons are as destitute as one can be. I also strongly support Richard choice of a location. The fallow Young Women's Club of America (YWCA building on Guadalupe) is close to bus stops and other essentials that would enable homeless persons to work, take care of themselves and above all stay alive. At the same time this will greatly benefit all of Austin. Again, I strongly urge you to promote Richard's idea for a Worker's Hotel. Homeless persons are citizens of this great city--Austin. And they are the most destitute in our great city. Let's give them a chance to live. In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support Richard's idea of a Worker's Hotel. And I relish the joy of not having to plan Memorial Services for my friends who could have lived if they had had a basic necessity--housing.	
	Austin Neighborhoods Council Executive Committee	ANC Resolution concerning allocation of remaining GO-Bond funds: Whereas, there remains \$15 million in unexpended funds from the \$55 million Go-Bond, and Whereas, market forces have limited home-ownership projects while rental projects for very low income households have been successful and the goal of expending 60 percent of the funds for rental units has already been achieved; and Whereas, the critical need for housing affordable for very low income households necessitates timely expenditure of these funds; and Whereas, there is an urgent need for housing for homeless persons and families, and Whereas, there is a critical need to create more housing for homeless persons in all areas of the city while retaining facilities such as Garden Terrace and The ARCH, Therefore, be it resolved that the Austin Neighborhoods Council supports expending the remaining funds for both homeowner and rental projects as they are submitted with special preference given to projects providing housing for the homeless that is dispersed throughout Austin and available to all groups including women and families.	1/28/2010
Mary Straw		I realize this is late, but please take it into consideration. I am a MHMR client who lives in an apartment complex that accepts Section 8. Without assistance, I might have again become homeless as I once was - in 1989-1990. A woman is not safe when homeless. I am very grateful to the City of Austin Section 8 program.	2/1/2010

Name	Organization	Testimony	Date Received
Genevieve T. Hearon	Austin-Travis County Integral Care Board of Trustees	<p>Dear Mayor Leffingwell: In our ongoing efforts to continuously update elected officials with relevant information about our community, Austin Travis County Integral Care's (ATCIC) Board of Trustees would like to address and explore the significant community support for implementation of permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for vulnerable populations in Austin and Travis County. PSH is permanent, affordable housing linked to a range of support services that enable tenants to live independently and fully participate in community life. It is cost-effective and a successful alternative to more expensive and less efficacious emergency services or institutional settings. The following outlines a specific set of information around this issue: • A recent report by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) prepared for the Austin/Travis County Reentry Round Table, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition and the Mayor's Mental Health Task Force Monitoring Committee conservatively estimated that Austin needs 1,889 new PSH units to meet the needs of</p>	2/2/2010
		<p>3,242 homeless individuals in our community. • As a short-term goal, the CSH report recommends creating 350 PSH units over the next four years. • In the Travis County Jail alone, there were 814 inmates with mental illness in 2008 who were homeless. Based on the average cost for jail bed, over \$3 million were used to care for these inmates. • Other communities that have implemented PSH for vulnerable populations have demonstrated positive cost benefit results. • In 2006, Austin voters approved \$55 million in general obligation bonds for affordable housing. Approximately \$15 million of those bonds remain unspent. The CSH program and financial model proposed for Austin/Travis County strongly recommends reprogramming the remaining funds for PSH. Additionally, this model utilizes these general obligation bonds to leverage additional local, state and federal operating subsidies, and provides for sustainability planning to ensure ongoing supports. The Downtown Austin Alliance has consistently advocated for the creation of housing and support opportunities for</p>	
		<p>Travis County residents with no or low income. On behalf of ATCIC's Board of Trustees, we would like to express our full support to utilize the remaining general obligation bonds to expand PSH to provide much needed housing services for the most vulnerable populations of our community. Should you have any questions, please contact David Evans, Executive Director, at 512-440-4031 or david.evans@atcic.org.</p>	