

RENTER ASSISTANCE OR RENTAL REGISTRATION:  
AFFORDABILITY/SAFETY VS CITATIONS/COLLECTIONS

There is a sharp contrast between the Renter Assistance: An Alternative Approach presented at the 7/30/13 meeting of the Building and Standards Commission and the City Budget released on 8/1/13. Here are the changes to the City Budget I proposed to better assist renters and homeowners that need housing that is both affordable and safe:

1. On 10/1/13 require Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) to create a registry of renters who are displaced by Property Maintenance Code violations, demolition of multi-family housing, and/or zoning changes.
2. Transfer \$100,000 from the proposed Code Compliance Department budget to assist those tenants that are not assisted by their property owner and have a household income at or below 50% Median Family Income.
3. Eliminate the proposed increase of 26 employees in the Code Compliance budget to provide assistance to low income homeowners and renters if property owners will provide property maintenance repairs. Rental and owner-occupied property would be eligible for assistance if households are at or below 50% Median Family Income.
4. Transfer \$3,000,000 in Clean Community funds from the Code Compliance Department to NHCD to fund the Home Repair program as recommended by the Community Development Commission.
5. Transfer the balance of the Code Compliance Department savings from eliminating proposed new FTEs to fund property maintenance repairs for rental property serving tenants at or below 50% MFI for 40 years.
6. Require a property maintenance code violation filed with Code Compliance to be investigated within 2 working days, and possible dangerous conditions within one working day.
7. Require a cited property maintenance code violation where an owner has not complied within 90 days or demonstrated significant repair activity towards compliance within 90 days be placed on the agenda of the Building Standards Commission for hearing, possible order, and penalty.
8. Consistent staff recommendation for rental property not in compliance with a Building and Standards Commission order is \$1,000 per day of violation.
9. City collection through the courts is always instituted after \$30,000 is due.
10. Consistent staff enforcement of utility holds on vacant property in violation of the property maintenance code through collaboration with City-owned utilities.
11. Require all current rental registration license requirements for hotels, motels, rooming houses, boarding houses, bed-and-breakfasts, and short-term rental be paid annually. Require all 2012, 2013, and 2014 payments be made by 3/31/14 or face Building and Standards Commission Order with potential penalty of \$1,000 per day.
12. Create a registry of all owners that have not complied with at least 2 Building and Standards Commission orders within a 24 month period. Post the results on the City website and require the registrants to notify all of their tenants of their status on this recidivist registry.
13. Transfer all penalties collected from Building and Standards Commission penalties to the affordable rental repair program at NHCD.

14. Amend the Building Code to allow an annual repair permit at a minimum fee to encourage owners to proactively repair their property.
15. Require annual repair permits to be issued within one working day.
16. Process all property maintenance code complaints in Restore Rundberg, North Austin Civic Association, and the East Riverside Oltorf areas within one working day in 2013-2014, and if non-compliant, to the Building Standards Commission within 90 days.
17. Eliminate proposed Consultation Fee and Amnesty Certificate of Occupancy fee that would discourage voluntary compliance.
18. Require all fees created since the S.M.A.R.T. Housing resolution to be waived per the S.M.A.R.T. Housing affordability impact review requirements.
19. Reinstitute S.M.A.R.T. Housing fast-track review requirements.