



# City of Austin

# MEMO

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Date: November 14, 2014  
To: Mayor and Council  
From: Betsy Spencer, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development   
Subject: Response to Council Resolution 20141002-049 regarding schools and families

This memorandum serves to respond to City Council Resolution 20141002-049, related to the City of Austin's programs and collaborations regarding schools and families.

On October 2, 2014, the Austin City Council approved a resolution directing the City Manager to "report back to Council by November 15, 2014 with a timeline for the implementation of strategies to promote the development of family-friendly housing in the City based on recommendations made by the School and Family Work Group of the Joint Subcommittees of the Austin City Council, AISD Board of Trustees, and Travis County Commissioners' Court..."

Below are the strategies and estimated timelines:

Strategy	Estimated Timeline
Use CodeNEXT Project to Promote Affordable Family-Friendly Housing	<p>Council is scheduled to discuss and provide direction on the Code Approach Alternatives on November 20, 2014. Whichever Approach Council selects will have an impact on the CodeNEXT timeline, as different Approaches will require different amounts of time to complete. After an Approach is selected, the CodeNEXT team will start working on some of the mechanics of the new Land Development Code (LDC) including organization and format. The Council will have an opportunity to provide affirmation and direction in <b>Spring of 2015</b>. Following that, the CodeNEXT team will begin to work on a public review draft of the LDC, which will be released to the public in <b>Summer 2016</b>. An adoption draft should be ready in <b>late 2016</b> and remapping would begin in <b>2017</b>.</p> <p>This schedule would be extended an estimated 12 to 18 months if Approach 3 is selected instead of Approach 2.</p>

<p>Expand Housing Planning Efforts among Public Entities to Specifically Target Families with Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by addressing school attendance zones with declining enrollments as identified by AISD;</li> </ul>	<p>Each fiscal year, NHCD meets with stakeholders to refine the housing investment strategy and scoring criteria for its Housing Developer Assistance programs. NHCD plans to conduct this review in <b>January 2015</b>. Through this review, NHCD will utilize expertise and AISD reports such as the “Demographic Analysis and Student Projections for the Austin Independent School District 2012-2013 Update” to enhance planning specific to geographic areas of need.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by targeting programs to create more family-sized housing in those zones as well as areas of higher opportunity as appropriate;</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>January 2015</b> housing investment strategy refinement process will include market analysis and other reports such as the one listed above to consider the needs of five priority populations in order to develop specific goals to address population-specific housing needs. These populations include families with children, veterans, seniors, persons with disabilities and the chronically homeless.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by establishing a policy to be adopted by public entities to include the City of Austin, Travis county and AISD regarding surplus property and capital planning coordination;</li> </ul>	<p>Utilizing the Joint Subcommittee (JSC) as an instrumental policy advisory body, Staff will introduce this issue at the <b>March 2015</b> quarterly meeting, requesting that a working group be established that will allow for a cross-agency working group to develop specific policy and specific actions to accomplish capital planning coordination by public agencies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by developing policies and guidelines for giving preference to families with children in family-sized affordable housing developments</li> </ul>	<p>So as not to be duplicative, the same JSC working group recommended above will be used to develop these policies and guidelines by the <b>end of 2015</b>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by identifying strategies to increase stability utilizing existing programs such as the Family Resource Centers and Best Single Source Plus service model to target housing counseling resources, emergency rental housing assistance, and utility assistance funding specifically for low-income families with children in neighborhoods with high rates of student mobility in public schools, working in partnership with AISD to ensure refinement of goals and objectives as needed to decrease student mobility and increase family stability</li> </ul>	<p>The Housing/Student Mobility Working group meets monthly to address issues impacting residential and school mobility among families with school aged children. An original report was produced February 19, 2010, and the working group provides updates to the JSC.</p> <p>The membership is composed of staff or representatives from the following: Austin Independent School District, City of Austin, Travis County, The Austin Project (Martin and Mendez Family Resource Centers), Austin Voices for Education and Youth (Burnet, Dobie, LBJ, Reagan and Webb Family Resource Centers), HousingWorks and Austin Tenant’s Council and Dr. Susan Millea.</p> <p>The group conducted a conference call with members from the Families with Children</p>

	<p>Taskforce. During this conference call members were able to provide an update to the Families with Children Taskforce members. We discussed how we could work together as we moved forward. The group continues to work on short and long term strategies aimed at reducing student mobility to acceptable levels. The group is tentatively scheduled to present to JSC in <b>December of 2014</b>.</p>
<p>Explore Partnerships for Family-Friendly Developments</p>	<p>The Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) has recently entered into discussions with a nonprofit organization to redevelop a model affordable family-friendly development. As proposed, the development would include 104 two, three, and four bedroom units in the Harris-Pearce-Reagan AISD track. This is located in a school attendance zone with declining enrollment in a densely populated area and would include units set aside for chronically homeless families. This project is scheduled to be in front of the City Council and the AHFC Board on <b>December 11, 2014</b>.</p> <p>In <b>October of 2014</b>, AHFC began partnering with the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), a non-profit providing energy, health and safety-based housing interventions for lower income families to break the cycle of deferred housing repairs that result in higher medical bills, higher energy costs, higher housing maintenance costs and poorer health outcomes. This partnership will enable more low-income families to stay in their homes, minimizing student mobility.</p>
<p>Enhance Safe Routes to Schools, Parks and Libraries</p>	<p>The Safe Routes to School Program's (SRTS) goal is to increase the number of children that walk or ride a bicycle to school. SRTS works with many departments to determine safe pedestrian and bicycling routes to school. National best practice is to provide a safe pedestrian and bicycling route within a two mile radius of all elementary schools. The majority of Austin is covered by a two mile radius around all elementary schools, thereby also covering Austin's parks and libraries.</p> <p>Current plans for safe pedestrian routes fall under the current Sidewalk Master Plan while safe bicycle routes fall under the recently adopted Urban Trails Master Plan and 2014 Bicycle Plan. The SRTS program works very closely with the sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail programs to determine missing gaps. The SRTS program also coordinates closely with AISD and school specific Citizen Advisory Committees to determine local needs and priorities for schools.</p>

	SRTS continues to work to identify and remove gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network by working with all necessary departments and entities. Future transportation bonds will include missing gaps identified in the pedestrian and bicycle network as they are priorities for pedestrians and bicyclists to get safely to schools, parks and libraries.
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Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Erica Leak, Planning and Policy Manager with Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, at (512) 974-9375.

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