

# CAN Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, 06/10/16

Austin City Hall, 301 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Room 1101, 1-3 p.m.

**Present:** **Marina Bhargava**, Executive Director, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Cristina Bordin**, (for Bill Clabby, Associate VP, St. Edward's University), **Colette Pierce Burnette**, President, Huston-Tillotson University; **Eric Bustos**, Diversity Specialist, Capital Metro; **Kelly Crook**, Superintendent, Del Valle ISD; **David Escamilla**, Travis County Attorney, Community Justice Council; **David Evans**, C.E.O. Austin Travis County Integral Care; **Stephanie Hawley**, Associate V.P. for College Access, ACC; **Ora Houston**, Council Member, District 1, City of Austin; **Ann Howard**, Executive Director, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition; **Jeremy Martin**, Senior VP, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Irma Martínez**, Board Member, Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; **Brigid Shea**, Precinct 2 Commissioner, Travis County; **David Smith**, President, United Way for Greater Austin; **Dr. Matthew Snapp**, Board Member, Austin Travis County Integral Care; **Nick Solorzano** (for Sabino Renteria, Council Member, District 3, City of Austin); **DeWayne Street** (for Jerry Davis, President & CEO, Goodwill Industries); **Simone Talma Flowers**, Executive Director, Interfaith Action Central Texas; **Yasmin Wagner**, District 7, AISD Board of Trustees; **Susan Willars** (for Christie Garbe, VP & Chief Strategy Officer, Central Health).

**Partners not represented:** CAN Community Council, City of Pflugerville, Greater Austin Black Chamber, Manor ISD, Precinct 4 Commissioner Travis County, Seton Healthcare Family, St. David's Foundation, UT Austin, Workforce Solutions-Capital Area

**CAN staff in attendance:** Raul Alvarez, Catie Bialick, Mary Dodd and Carlos Soto.

**Call to order and introductions:** Board Chair Jeremy Martin called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. Members introduced themselves and shared announcements.

**Approval of minutes:** The 5/13/16 meeting minutes were approved unanimously, on a motion by Simone Talma Flowers, seconded by Dr. Stephanie Hawley.

**Executive Director's Report:** Raul Alvarez mentioned two community dialogues scheduled for June and invited those present to attend. The first community dialogue was held in May at First United Methodist Church. There is also an online forum in development. The Central Texas Regional Summit will be November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the committee has selected Williamson County to host the event, at the Dell Diamond Events Center. Alvarez also presented on the discussion topics for the upcoming Board Meetings. Upcoming topics: August: Transportation, September: Health, October: Social Services.

## **Community Council Update:**

Raul Alvarez briefed the council on upcoming plans, beginning with the new dashboard presentation to the council, followed by the possibility of partners to serve as ambassadors and present these findings to the community in order to increase the impact of our work. At upcoming meetings, there will be presenters speaking about how to perform community engagement in a person centered manner. Each month a different topic will be discussed.

**2016 CAN Dashboard Presentation:** Raul Alvarez provided a brief background about the steps involved in the creation of the dashboard, discussed its mission of focusing on increasing community awareness, tracking progress in achieving community goals, and identifying issues and solutions, and reviewed an outline of what the dashboard can accomplish. Following this, Alvarez discussed the dashboard steering committee, its initial role, and its continued mission. Alvarez also presented on the input CAN receives from its Dashboard Steering Committee. Changes to this year's dashboard include:

- Reorganized the layout of each indicator page
- Main graphs for each indicator
- A new column was added: "Are we on track to target?"
- A new "Equity Analysis" section analyzing disparities by race/ethnicity for each of the four goal areas

Alvarez then discussed some of the findings from the dashboard report, beginning with community strengths. Highlights include: a 25% drop in crime rate in the previous 5 years, increase in residents with health insurance, increase in high school graduation rates, and low (3.2%) unemployment. In terms of community challenges, Alvarez mentioned that although unemployment is low, 69% of jobs don't pay enough to support a family, and we are also seeing an alarming decrease in the number of kindergarteners who are school ready (a 12% drop in 1 year). Next Alvarez discussed the equity analysis, where he reviewed how equity or disparity is determined. Disparities in our community include disparities in age and race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and poverty. Alvarez also presented a map illustrating concentrations of poverty in the 5 county region. 4/5 of the basic needs indicators worsened for the first time since 2010, including poverty, homelessness, percent who are housing cost burdened, and daily vehicle miles traveled per capita.

**Discussion:** Jeremy Martin opened the floor for discussion, encouraging feedback on two new areas of the dashboard to help inform future versions of the dashboard: inclusion of on track to target on page 4, and the equity section on pages 5-8. David Evans challenged attendees to think of the dashboard as a tool, and not an end of itself, urging that we have to apply what we learn in order to maximize the Dashboard's utility.

Commissioner Shea said she feels an impatience about what we do about it (the findings in the Dashboard). Shea also reminded us that the vision statement reads "The Dashboard is intended to help the CAN Board of Directors determine the priorities for its annual work plan", and mentioned that this would be a very valuable document for each of us to take back to our organizations and ask the question "What can we do about these key indicators where we're failing?"

Irma Martinez stated we need to focus on Voter Turnout, and mentioned initiatives to increase voter turnout. Martinez shared some local efforts and encouraged attendees to contribute to increase voter turnout. Commissioner Shea mentioned assistance from tax assessor voter registrar Bruce Elfant for voter registration and deputization for voter registrars. Dr. Stephanie Hawley mentioned it might be useful to look at root causes. Short term initiatives can amount to band aids on a bigger problem, and addressing root causes can interrupt some of the disparity going on. We have the "What?" of the types of problems challenging our community, but we have to work on the "Why?" if we want to solve those.

Collette Pearce Burnet expressed her concern that the equity section might not help to attract equity, and instead speaks against it because it's alarming and it might repel people from our city unless it includes a plan to address the challenges.

Cristina Bordin asked if we had an idea of how many organizations are using the dashboards for their strategic plans or work plans, wanting to know if any members knew of an organization that actually used

the dashboard as a resource in their strategic planning. She urged board members present to act as ambassadors of the dashboard to their organizations to use as a resource.

Councilmember Ora Houston added that the Dashboard's findings shouldn't be surprising, considering that this is a trend that has been happening in Austin since the recession. It's getting worse because as a community we are not being more intentional about how we set policy and where we focus our efforts. We have been doing a lot of work, but outcomes haven't changed. What can we do for families upstream so that we don't then become fatigued when we eventually have to pull them out of difficult situations? We know about disproportionality for blacks in the criminal justice system... what do we, as partner agencies, do about it? When they come out, they can't get housing, jobs or educations. Are we talking to the police, are we talking to the DA? What are our partner agencies doing? David Escamilla characterized the Criminal justice system as a canary in the coal mine. When focusing on disparity and inequality, the true resolution comes at the front end: education, health, housing, things we are all committed to improve.

Councilmember Houston also raised concerns about the increasing number of vehicle miles traveled by Austin residents, and about the double-digit unemployment rate in her district, and the local government's efforts to address these challenges. How are we involving private businesses in the effort to revitalize the areas of our city that are floundering? Until we can get high paying jobs into the areas with high unemployment, those disparities are going to persist. Irma Martinez suggested to perhaps break down the report further and focus on areas with most pressing needs. Maybe we can identify communities first, and try to fix it. Then take our best practices and apply them to other communities.

#### **Local and Regional Efforts to Address the Economic Divide through Housing:**

**Koren Darling**, Planning Manager, Research & Planning Division, Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, presented an overview of Travis County's housing investment programs and policy development. Darling listed 4 county departments investing in housing:

- Health and Human Services & Veterans Service
- Justice Planning
- Planning and Budget (Strategic Planning/Land)
- Travis County Housing Finance Corporation

Next, Darling reviewed Travis County housing investments, followed by several county housing initiatives, including land redevelopment, financing, and policy changes. Darling also discussed the Community Development Block Grant program, which invests in projects that address an impediment to fair housing choice, such as home rehabilitation, infrastructure to improve neighborhoods, expanded bus service, and land acquisition for affordable housing development. The presentation concluded with an overview of two maps: one featured opportunity areas with respect to the City of Austin's racially & ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, and the second (originally included in the county's first Comprehensive Land, Water, and Transportation Plan released by the Transportation and Natural Resources Department), was a growth guidance concept map encouraging development in Eastern Travis County due to the abundant amounts of developable land and activity centers supported by area plans and development agreements. Darling also discussed how the Affordable Housing Policy Committee plans to achieve their goal of working together to create policy that allows for fair housing compliance and to improve opportunity through investments.

**Discussion:** There was a question about whether the County and ECHO used standard definitions in their design and reports on the housing continuum. The response was that it was unclear, and that there were other directives that were also unclear. Another question was about dollar amount allocated to Rental Housing Services, which turned out to be a figure based on an investment in the Housing Finance Corporation's bond program over a course of many years.

**City of Austin:** Erica Leak, Planning, Policy and Outreach Manager with the City of Austin, presented on how the City of Austin thinks about affordable housing, how they are approaching it, and to introduce the City's draft strategic housing plan. First was a review of the approach the city is taking in assessing city housing needs through data analysis. An example of this approach was the 2014 Comprehensive Housing Market Study, which identified a rental gap of 48,000 affordable housing units for low-income households, among other findings. Leak also mentioned the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing to help determine the challenges relating to fair housing in Austin, and noted how the location of available low and moderate income jobs aren't located where the moderate to low income residents live. Current levels of funding to address affordable housing fall short of what the data says is needed. 10-year community housing goals include 35,000 Affordable Units and 40,000 Market Rate Units. Other strategies include requirements that certain percentages of housing should be in Imagine Austin corridors, and requiring zip codes to contain certain amounts of low to moderate income housing. Next, a draft of the Strategic Housing Plan was presented where key policies and programs were highlighted. The focus is to:

- Prevent households from being priced out of Austin
- Foster equitable communities
- Invest in Housing for those most in need
- Create new and affordable housing choices for all Austinites in all parts of town
- Help Austinites reduce their transportation costs

In closing, Leak called all present to action with ideas on how we can contribute to the effort, with a final call to engage in CodeNEXT, which is the City of Austin Land Development Code revision project.

**Discussion:** Discussion began with a question about programs such as sweat equity programs in Austin, programs where qualifiers for services contribute labor to the program. Programs such as Habitat for Humanity incorporate sweat equity into their programs. Board Members also expressed their concern about how zoning is a discretionary act on the council, and how in Texas the city can't legally require affordable housing because it's considered contract zoning, but it struck them that it was part of a social contract when people were asking to increase their ability to make more money off their land by up zoning. The Council could simply communicate that affordable housing won't be required, but that instead action won't be taken on zoning requirements above a certain size unless they include a provision to either include a percentage of affordable housing, or setting aside funds in lieu of. There was also a discussion about the connection between public transportation and affordable housing, and how each needs to be accessible to the other. The board also discussed the need for collaboration between the city and the county as a way of maximizing impact.

**Ending Community Homeless Coalition (ECHO):** Ann Howard from the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition began with an outline of ECHO's Framework for Housing Stability. Howard also discussed homelessness in Austin over the years, pointing out that homelessness appears to have increased. The causes of this increase in the homeless population in Austin are not clear or easily identifiable. Some of the most salient findings of the ECHO report are: the existence of barriers to rental housing in Austin that sometimes result in homelessness, the need for jobs so people don't fall into homelessness, and the costs on the healthcare system due to homelessness. Howard finished her presentation with a slide on projected needs to address the homeless situation in the future. Howard closed with information about a project in the works that is recruiting private investors to help scale up permanent supportive housing.

**Discussion:** The main topic of discussion was the tracking of affordable housing units being created and its effect on homelessness levels or rates.

**Adjournment:** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.