



October 25, 2022

Dear AIA Austin Members,

In a few weeks' time, you will be asked to vote on Proposition A, a tax-supported general obligation bond for affordable housing. This bond comes at a crucial time in Austin as we're one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and our housing supply is insufficient to meet the increasing demand; consequently, many Austinites are struggling to find affordable housing options. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, nation-wide there are only 37 affordable rental homes available for every 100 extremely low-income renting households. In response to this, AIA National has called on Congress to remove policy barriers that discourage the development of affordable housing as well as to increase federal funding for the construction of new affordable housing as well as retrofitting existing housing.

The demand for affordable housing in Austin has never been higher, and in response, the City's Strategic Housing Blueprint has outlined the need to build 60,000 new affordable homes by 2028. This equates to 6,000 new homes every year starting from 2018. Over the last three years, however, only 7,601 affordable homes were built; well below the goal of 18,000 for that period. The failure to meet the annual targets is largely due to the lack of funding. As inflation and construction prices continue to rise, the development of affordable housing is not viable without financial assistance.

If approved, Prop A will not only be used to build new affordable housing but will also be used to preserve existing affordable housing and to acquire land for the future development of affordable housing. All three of these investment strategies are vital to the success of this program, as is the equitable distribution of funds throughout the city. AIA supports diversity, equity, and inclusion, and calls for the elimination of inequitable discrimination in the affordable housing stock. To this end, if passed, we will advocate for the city to distribute these funds in support of affordable housing options in all ten council districts and incorporate the City's Anti-Displacement policies.

Moreover, the projects supported by housing bonds serve a diverse range of Austinites. The Strategic Housing Blueprint, which the Housing and Planning Department uses to assess applications for funding, particularly emphasizes Permanent Supportive Housing—which serves individuals coming out of homelessness, those with chronic illness and disabilities, and other marginalized groups—as well as Family-Friendly housing—defined as two-bedroom and larger units with amenities specifically designed to serve families. Previous affordable housing bond funds have encompassed “deeply affordable” housing—serving families below 30% of the Area Median Income—through “workforce: housing—families making up to 80% AMI which often includes AISD teachers and other essential workers. These projects include both rental and ownership opportunities.

The impact of the housing bond funding goes far beyond the amount approved. Projects funded by the bonds leverage that investment to secure additional funding from county, state, and federal sources as well as to obtain favorable rates with private lenders. The Austin community previously passed two affordable housing bonds over the last decade totaling \$372 million. According to a recent economic impact analysis by Housing Works Austin, these bond dollars enabled affordable housing developers to attract an additional \$788 million dollars of investments to build a total of 3,707 affordable housing units as well as to secure land for future units. Additionally, these developments supported a total of 7,466 jobs adding over \$1 billion to Austin's economy since 2016.

With all that said, we strongly encourage you to support AIA Austin's affordable housing priorities by voting for this bond. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like more information on Proposition A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Camille Jobe', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Camille Jobe, AIA  
AIA Austin President 2022