

District 5 Candidate - Ann Kitchen

1. What ideas do you envision to reach significant progress with the goals identified in the Blueprint?

I sponsored the resolution to ensure the implementation of Austin's new Strategic Housing BluePrint to increase housing access and affordability. The BluePrint and its Implementation Plan which Council will consider this Fall are the first actual strategic housing plan our city has ever developed. We must find lasting solutions and commit the funding necessary to build more affordable homes, help people at risk of losing their homes, and offer people a path out of homelessness. Key actions to reach significant progress with the BluePrint Goals include:

- The \$250 million housing bond is a good step toward producing the affordable housing and support for homeless we need
- The Council has also moved to lower cost for families trying to remodel to make it easier to stay in place, with CM Garza's Family Homestead Initiative to reduce permitting barriers and home remodeling costs
- 2019 Budget included full funding for the Housing Trust Fund via a total transfer of \$5.3 million, a \$3.1 million increase
- An additional \$3.4 million of new funding for homelessness programs, building on \$26.3 million in on-going expenditures. This funding will support rapid rehousing, as well as navigation, HOST, and other social/health services to support housing. While not sufficient to address this public health crisis, this funding will help immediately while the city completes work with stakeholders on a longer term funding plan.
- Land development code revisions to encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing and to provide more housing choices / supply for Austinites at all stages of life and income. See Key Goals for a Successful New Land Development Code, Mayor Adler, CM Alter, CM Kitchen.

2. how do you suggest we enable the market to build more attainable housing for families and individuals currently priced out of our market, but earning more than 80% MFI?

Implementing the Strategic Housing Blueprint and revisions to the land development code are major steps to enable the market to better respond to Austin's housing needs. Activities include: incent expansion of housing along corridors and activity center through careful recalibration of density bonus programs; allow for a greater variety of housing types in more areas of the city; and expand the areas allowing ADU's and smaller homes.

3. How would you encourage large employers and private sector partners in Austin to contribute to the provision of affordable housing for their workers and the industries serving them?

Employers benefit financially from a healthy workforce, which means workers need a safe, affordable place to live closer to work to avoid long, unhealthy and expensive commutes. I will work with city staff to: identify interested employers and create/expand pilot programs for employers to contribute to loan programs and/or partial rental subsidies in large new developments (such as PUDs). Explore using the city's economic incentive and affordable housing programs to launch these types of initiatives. For example, the city could consider developing these types of programs as part of affordable housing programs available through bond funding or as part of efforts to develop cityowned land.

4. What city policies and roles can the city play to prevent formal and informal evictions among low income tenants?

The cost of prevention is by far preferable to the many long-term social impacts resulting from evictions. The City offers eviction prevention programs to support low-income tenants with legal assistance, emergency grants for rent or utilities, alternate housing, short-term motel vouchers, or placement in a local shelter. The Council has also directed the City Manager to present a comprehensive eviction counseling service for renters and recommended the program provide early intervention services through education, support, and mediation after a tenant has received a Notice to Vacate, as well a representation during eviction court proceedings. I support increasing financial support for legal services for renters threatened with eviction and continuing to increase funding for tenant rental support.

5. When considering affordable housing to be supported by the City, whether financial or other support, what are the top 4 or 5 criteria you would use to rank order a project to deem it worthy of support?

I evaluate City support for affordable housing based on a number of criteria, including the number of units, % MFI levels of affordability, the number of years of affordability, location, access to transit, and number of family sized units.