

Mayoral Candidate - Alexander Strenger

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

The first thing that we need to do in order to meet our affordability demands proposed in the Strategic Housing Blueprint is make sure that all incoming businesses from here on in (cough cough Anthony Precourt) pay their fair share of property taxes on city owned land, which by the way the city uses 40% of that revenue for affordable housing. Our council also needs to build the stated amount of affordable units that are supposed to be built with every contract that they implement and this will be achieved by doubling the density bonus fee in lieu from \$2 to \$4/sq foot. Furthermore, companies that have already build affordable units within the city need to maintain certain standards (both amenity and maintenance wise) in order to continue receiving funding from the city.

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?

Incoming developers from here on in should build a percentage or rent to own units on their property so that these specific individuals who earn over 80% MFI are not priced out of the market.

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?

While Employee Assisted Housing plays a significant role in reducing turnover, as well as training and recruitment costs, I believe that the choice to offer Employee Assisted Housing should be left up to the company. The benefits for these programs are pretty clear so it would only make sense that companies would choose to enact these policies on a voluntary basis. I have thought about the idea of offering tax breaks to companies who adequately finance EAH programs here in Austin. However, the concern I have with this is that we already have a thriving business community, and the last thing we should be doing is giving large tax incentives to multinational companies here in our city. Even if they succeed in housing a large amount of their employees at an affordable rate compared to their salary, the continued influx of these companies here in Austin is substantially raising the MFI and making it increasingly unaffordable for the majority of Austinites to live here. I instead propose that we use existing city funds or create a bond item that partially subsidizes the housing costs of public servants such as firefighters, police officers, emergency service personnel, as well as teachers, and healthcare providers so that they can afford to live comfortably in the communities that they work in.

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

All communities need to verify income as a means of ensuring that tenants are capable of paying the rent. Furthermore, we as a city need to do a better job in the support and creation of tenant councils so that renters have a better understanding of their rights. As Mayor, I will encourage the consistent scheduling of weekly to monthly tenant council meetings so that renters and management are able to cohesively work together in order to benefit both renter and landlord.

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?

- a) Approval from the City as well as neighborhood association
- b) Determine whether affordable housing complex has direct community benefits.
 - Medical Care, Financial Education Classes, Vocational Training, Group Fitness, etc
- c) Proximity to Public Transportation
- d) Proven Track Record of Maintaining Property
- e) Proven Track Record of Financial Solvency