

## **Mayoral Candidate - Steve Adler**

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

I am proud to be part of a Council that, in the budget just approved, fully funded the Housing Trust Fund at the goal set a couple years ago by this Council. We need to make this something that is expected every year. We need to develop and better calibrate our city's density bonus programs. Calibration is being addressed by city staff, again pursuant to a recent resolution I sponsored, results due at the beginning of the new year. And we need to pick up and finish the work of expanding and developing new bonus density programs with or without the future work to re-write our land development code. Density bonus programs that can provide for deeper affordability should absolutely be a part of that discussion. We need to set up a strike fund, from multiple funding sources, pursuant to the resolution passed by Council that focused on housing for those earning at 60% of MFI and less. We need to expand the use of community land trusts and other ways to decrease property taxes owed. I'm open to any and all ideas to increase our supply. I will push for the maximization of affordable housing bond money and using that money to leverage deeper affordable units mixed with market rate units.

### **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?**

One such way to do so is to make building housing cheaper by streamlining the land development code and permitting process and providing greater expediting and by-right approvals for affordable housing. That effort could help lower the building costs and ultimately make producing lower end and middle market rate housing more profitable incenting its development. We should also look at revisions to the land development code and use transitions and compatibility where neighborhoods and denser corridors meet, in a context sensitive manner, to locate such missing middle housing. One exciting and potentially game-changing organization is the Austin Housing Conservancy, which is a for-profit real estate partnership built around a non-profit general partner that seeks to purchase, maintain, and operate existing affordable workforce housing along Austin's densest corridors. I've joined others in the community and worked really hard to make this first-of-its-kind model work and it will close on its first purchase by the end of the month and has several potential projects that could soon follow. This model presents an innovative market based answer to work force housing preservation.

### **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?**

If employers don't have places for their employees to live (a phenomenon that Austin is starting to experience), our affordability and housing challenges will continue to get worse and our economy will start to slow down. That's why I've been raising money for the Housing Conservancy and I will continue to do so during my next term. This is a new innovative model for incenting market participation in housing preservation and possible creation. The recent re-write of the Chapter 380 Agreement policy will have the city focusing on community benefits when it considers co-investing with employers and providing housing is one such community benefit that needs to be targeted. We need to look at every interaction with large employers and institutions to try to drive housing, as is one of the possibilities being discussed with UT in the discussions about the MUNY golf course tract.

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

The city can expand its programs and assistance for low-income renters facing difficulty in their housing situations and the 10/1 Council has passed several resolutions to initiate expanded and new programs. In the budget just passed, there are new monies for legal support. Part of the negotiations for greater entitlements sought by owners associated with such projects are now being met with discussions about formalizing opportunities for tenants to organize and support one another. We are pursuing ordinances that would support just cause eviction policies. Proposition A in the November bond has significant monies earmarked for this kind of tenant support. We need to sharpen our focus on maintaining an accurate inventory of affordable units in our city so that the people who need them the most are getting access to them, as has also been initiated by the 10/1 Council. We can also help folks make more money, which is part of the long term goal for families being able to avoid evictions (the greatest claimed reason for them is non-payment of rent. I'm proud to have played a significant role in the region's first Strategic Workforce Development Plan, which will help lift 10,000 families out of poverty and help another 20,000 Austinites train for existing middle skill jobs that have vacancies right now in our city.

**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) Location – Is it a high opportunity area?
- b) How many units and how much affordability?
- c) Is there access to transit, jobs, and food security?
- d) What kind of partnership can we leverage to increase the impact of the project?
- e) Does it meet the goals of the Strategic Housing Blueprint and the strategic goals of the council?