

## Mayoral Candidate - Todd Phelps

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

Creating a diverse inventory of housing across all affordability levels will continue to be our City's biggest challenge. Rising land values, shortages of building supplies and labor are creating an affordability crisis. The public sector can not solve this alone. We must reach out to private developers, foundations and non-profits for innovative solutions. Rehabilitating, subdividing older homes, and adding additional dwelling units on larger lots will add diversity to our housing inventory at varying price points without adding overwhelming density to our neighborhoods.

Another approach to building affordable housing is to look for smaller infill opportunities. By utilizing smaller lots scatter throughout the city to bring out small multifamily units, we can add inventory and socio-economic diversity to existing neighborhoods. Austin should also consider 'land banks' to preserve tracts of land for future housing.

**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?**

Part of the affordability challenge is the lengthy development process. We need to streamline the development and permitting processes, so we can bring out more housing units faster. Shorter building cycle will improve costs and produce more attainable housing. Also, as housing inventories increase, rents should stabilize helping affordability in general.

**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?**

Instead of asking employers to get into the housing business, we should encourage employers to pay living wages. By offering fair wages and benefit packages, workers will be better able to afford area housing.

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

Difficulty paying rents is often caused by lack of personal finance and budgeting skills. The City could help provide consumer financial education materials through utility bills, in libraries and online. Landlords could be encouraged to share these educational materials with renters experiencing difficulties and offer a grace period or delay late charges, if tenants take personal finance class or a short online course. In more severe

cases, landlords could provide tenants with a resource list on where to get financial assistance to avoid eviction.

**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?**

The city should have a set of criteria to determine which affordable housing projects to support. Some of the criteria could include:

- a) Proximity to transit corridors, metro rail lines and other mobility alternatives
- b) Varied age and family friendly floorplans and amenities (daycare, markets, green spaces)
- c) Projects that add diversity of housing units to neighborhoods
- d) Mix-use developments that create employment and housing opportunities
- e) Infill multifamily development projects that utilize small lots to bring out 4-10-unit complexes. (Scattered housing throughout the city.)