



# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF TRAVIS COUNTY

Board Strategic Discussion January 5, 2017



# Housing Authority of Travis County Strategic Plan

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On January 5, 2017, the Housing Authority of Travis County Board and senior staff engaged in a strategy session to create a strategic plan. Sherri Fleming, Travis County Executive for Health and Human and Veterans Services was also present. The process was facilitated by Woollard Nichols and Associates. The results are below:

## Wicked Questions

*These questions are used to identify the paradoxical challenges that an organization faces. The following were identified for HATC:*

1. How do we balance declining funds while demand for affordable housing increases?
2. How do we help households with criminal backgrounds have access to housing?
3. How do work with HACA and still remain friends?
4. How do we define goals of both HATC and the Strategic Housing Finance Corporation?
5. How do we work together without violating the open meetings act?
6. How do we serve 30% AMI without adequate funds?
7. How do we bring in funds without being able to provide services?
8. How do we balance external public perception with internal operations?

Other questions identified:

1. What is the county's role?
2. How do we expand to the west side of town?
3. How do we maintain transparency to county of HATC needs?

## Housing Authority of Travis County and SHFC: Identity Statements

HATC	Strategic Housing Finance Corporation
<b><i>HATC advances its mission of preserving and developing affordable housing and vibrant communities which enhance the quality of life for all.</i></b>	<b><i>SHFC advances its mission of working with private developers and public entities to research and create opportunities to build new affordable housing.</i></b>
<b><i>By serving our Customers</i></b> Households in Poverty, Very Low-Income Households (less than 50% AMI), seniors, veterans, homeless, people with disabilities	<b><i>By serving our Customers</i></b> A continuum of household incomes including those who can afford up to market rate as well as lower income households
<b><i>In</i></b> Travis County	<b><i>In</i></b> Travis County and the surrounding region

<p><b>With our Key Partners</b> Travis County, ATCIC, ECHO, FrontSteps, TDHCA, Goodwill, ACC, Boys and Girls Club, City of Austin, Surrounding PHAs, HACA* (uniquely required)</p>	<p><b>With our Key Partners</b> TDHCA, Affordable Housing Developers, Equity Partners, HACA (uniquely required), neighborhood organizations, civic associations</p>
<p><b>Using our Competitive Advantage of:</b> Small efficient Board, local government support from Travis County, skilled quality staff, skilled knowledgeable board</p>	<p><b>Using our Competitive Advantage of:</b> Speed, efficiency, and knowledge of product; Agility; Track record or production; staff expertise</p>
<p><b>How we Ensure Sustainability</b> Use RAD or other tools to create more units; transparency, internal Controls, grants, philanthropy, and government contracts</p>	<p><b>How we Ensure Sustainability</b> Continue to meet goals (2 projects a year); balance goals with expense of housing creation and ensure that cash flow needs can be met</p>

## Five Year Goals

### 1. HATC is a key player in addressing the affordable housing needs of Travis County.

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC	Strategic Housing Finance Corporation
Implement sound business practices	Provide responsive, streamlined, service-oriented affordable housing products
Increase affordable housing opportunities	Collaborate with Travis County and other partners to leverage resources, including leveraging public land
Strengthen Community Partnerships	Provide affordable housing to a wide array of incomes and subsidize serving extremely low-income households
Access flexible funding sources	Strong communication about available products to stakeholders
Maximize technology	Access a variety of funding sources
Strengthen communications to stakeholders	

## 2. HATC is a responsive leader at serving vulnerable/special needs populations (seniors, veterans, homeless, people with disabilities).

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC	Strategic Housing Finance Corporation
Build expertise regarding the needs of special populations	Create affordable housing with at least 10% affordable to 30% AMI and below
Create Strong partnerships with other organizations that serve these populations and leverage their resources and services	Access creative financing, including gifts and grants, and explore mechanisms such as public improvement districts (PID)
Provide a standard for how a public housing authority and housing finance corporation can serve vulnerable populations in a meaningful way	
Communicate with funders regarding the success of HATC in meeting the needs of special populations	

## 3. HATC has a system for successful self-sufficiency and employability of residents.

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC
Strong community partnerships that provide support to residents for issues including transportation, child care, education, workforce development, and access to computer labs
Effective Marketing (Example: enhancements to website)
Explore incentives for residents to participate in self-sufficiency programs
Leverage the resources of and strengthen partnership with Travis County
Explore making community centers available for partner agencies to provide programming

#### 4. HATC is a model, ethical, and transparent organization that is self-sustaining.

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC and Strategic Housing Finance Corporation
Executive Director is transparent regarding finances and policies
Continue to implement board policies and procedures and conduct business in a transparent manner
Communication of agency programs and processes using technology ie, website and exploration of webcasting board meetings
Access non-federal and flexible funds to include private financing
Assure administrative space needs of the organization are met

#### 5. HATC is an authority in innovative affordable housing solutions through the use of a variety of private and public funds.

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC	Strategic Housing Finance Corporation
Board coordinated advocacy regarding affordable housing to include Texas Legislature, Federal Legislature, HUD, TDHCA and NAHRO. Action steps could include: placing policy updates from staff and board on the board agenda and collaboration with Travis County Intergovernmental Relations	Explore creative affordable housing solutions. Action steps could include: purchasing market rate affordable housing that can help serve and subsidize affordable housing, utilizing tools such as RAD and Section 811, utilizing public land – such as Travis County and School Districts, and marketing to voucher holders.

#### 6. HATC provides homeownership opportunities for its residents.

This goal is achieved by working towards the following strategies:

HATC
Strong partnership with a housing counseling agency
Coordination with City and County down payment assistance programs
Utilize Section 8 voucher program to provide mortgage assistance

## Board Role in Achieving Goals

In 12 Months the Board Would Like to Have Achieved the Following:

- All committees are active:
  - **SFC Real Estate Committee** will explore creative financing mechanisms as well as opportunities to leverage public land and proactively bring opportunities forward to the Board
  - **HATC Governance Committee** will identify and address policy and advocacy issues as well as determine how to address communication priorities and strategies – this may need a separate committee
- Organization maintains a clean record with the county and the community
- Profile of organization and its' success is raised
- Partnerships are solidified, with board making introductions to potential partners
- Two affordable housing projects deals are closed, with some units for those at 30% AMI
- Board members identify and bring forward deals to the organization
- Board accompanies staff to advocacy and partnership engagements
- Following a baseline year, in 2018, the Strategic Housing Finance Corporation will set goals for number of overall units to be developed, including unit goal for low income units.

### Metrics of Success in 5 Years

- Strong partnerships are in place
- HATC and Strategic have stable leadership and staff
- More affordable housing units (10 new properties) are created with 10% of units affordable to 30% AMI
- Increased funding for housing choice vouchers has been received
- The organizations is less financially dependent on federal government

### Immediate Next Steps

- Executive Director will create and provide metrics to increase transparency to Board
- Staff will maintain transparency with the Board and begin to provide board an overview of contracts
- Policy updates will be incorporated into HATC agendas
- Committees will review their new charges

## Appendix

Prior to the strategic discussion, Woollard Nichols and Associates spoke with Board members to identify the issues that they wanted to address and assess their beliefs about the current functioning of the Housing Authority of Travis County (HATC). The results are below:

### Goals for the Strategic Discussion:

- Create shared understanding of HATC's history, current status, and priorities for moving forward
- Develop clear goals for the next three years
- Create engagement and commitment of board members
- Gain clarity of roles and expectations
- Identify of areas for further Board capacity building

### HATC Strengths

- Recent unification – from 2 boards to one with 5 members
- Board members have good working relationships
- Strong, capable staff and leadership
- Good communication between ED and Board
- Good organizational infrastructure
- Organization is financially stable
- Improving day-to-day operational efficiency based on key metrics (e.g. lease-up rate, occupancy rate, etc)

### HATC Challenges

- Jurisdictional issues with HACA
- Competition for housing development deals/knowledge and capacity to serve as our own developer
- Clarifying roles/distinctions between HATC & Strategic HFC
- Working together as a team toward one vision
- Having the organization be more accountable to the board – developing a system for accountability and communication
- Meeting the general challenges of creating as much affordable housing as possible in this market and assisting homeless populations in getting off the street
- Traditional organizational practices (sacred cows) need to be examined
- Improve performance on strategic planning goal to serve < 30% MF

### **HATC Opportunities**

- Building new real estate/acquisitions and new bond issues/tax credits
- Managing current assets/Improving monitoring and compliance of current units
- Developing new revenue streams
- Improving relationship with Travis County – develop long-term plan for the building/facility
- Continuing work with existing partners and building new partnerships with HACA, Travis County HFC, Capital Area HFC
- Partner with non-profits to better serve existing tenants (transportation, social services, etc) in all housing
- Strengthen SFHC
- Becoming more aggressive; scanning the environment for potential opportunities
- New partnerships to support vulnerable populations (e.g. to serve persons who are homeless)
- Programs based on evidence-based practices

### **Initial Board goals for next 12 months**

- More involved in development or development partner to create new units
- Existing public units being renovated (RAD)
- Efficiency in finances
- Strengthen administrative structure; policies/procedures; clarify committee structure (what is their function)
- Establishing channels of communication with ED
- Implementation of strategic plan
- Set clear policies
- No oversight/problems with Commissioners Court and auditors
- Board needs to identify potential development opportunities and strengthen relationships in the development community
- Better functioning committees (real estate committee; program/administration committee, executive committee) – set expectations for committee meetings, report out to full board