



City of San Antonio

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Title: Director's Report: (a) Staff Responses to Questions from Previous Meeting; (b) Evictions Work Update; (c) Emergency Housing Assistance Program Evaluation Update; (d) Renters' Commission Proposal Update; (e) Source of Income Discrimination Protections Proposal; (f) Program Notes and (g) Upcoming Meetings [Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department]

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DEPARTMENT:

Neighborhood and Housing Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:

Citywide

SUMMARY:

Director to report updates on Neighborhood and Housing Services Department Programs

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Each month the Director prepares a report on program updates directly affecting the Commission and its charge.

ISSUE:

Topics to be discussed are: (a) Staff Responses to Questions from Previous Meeting; (b) Texas Eviction Diversion Program and Eviction Courts team update; (c) Emergency Housing Assistance Program Evaluation Update; (d) Renters' Commission Proposal Update; (e) Source of Income Discrimination Protections Proposal; (f) Program Notes; and (g) Upcoming Meetings

a) Staff Responses to Questions from Previous Meeting

During the October 28th meeting, Commissioners asked for two (2) items to be addressed at a future meeting, and no questions. The Commission requested individual presentations by City Public Service and VIA Metropolitan Transit.

b) Texas Eviction Diversion Program and Eviction Courts team update

In November, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and NHSD finalized the contract for the pilot program and staff began working to build out our current on-line housing assistance application review system to accommodate the Texas Eviction Diversion Program (TEDP) application process. Staff will brief the Commission on implementation to date as well as the work of the Eviction Courts team.

c) Emergency Housing Assistance Program Evaluation Update

The Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) survey is live as of November 9. As of November 16, the survey had 3,017 responses in English and 194 responses in Spanish. The survey was sent to EHAP applicants and landlords via the online application system and distributed to our implementation partners via email. It is also available on the SA Speakup Website. Staff have begun to make phone calls to a subset of randomly selected applicants inviting them to complete the survey by phone. The survey is broken down to receive responses from clients, landlords and contractors that participated in the program. As of November 16, 87% of respondents are applicants. Staff will brief the Commissioners on further progress through December 1 and possible next steps.

d) Renters' Commission Proposal Update

On November 2nd, staff briefed the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee (CNSC) of City Council on the Renters' Commission engagement. This included an update on the SA Speak Up survey that closed on October 29th as well as focus groups that took place on October 14th and 15th. In general, respondents favored the establishment of a Commission that included renters and property owners/managers from diverse housing situations and socio-economic experiences. Staff will update the Commission on more detailed findings from the engagement and next steps, including options to be presented to CNSC in December.

e) Source of Income Discrimination Protections Proposal

On November 9th, staff briefed the Planning & Land Development Committee (PLDC) of City Council on the ForEveryoneHome initiative and Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP). As part of those briefings, staff included an example policy idea that had surfaced through these efforts; source of income discrimination (SOID) protections. SOID occurs when an applicant is denied access to housing because of their lawful form of income, most typically a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV.) In this briefing, the Committee directed staff to explore options for addressing SOID in San Antonio. Staff will brief the Commission on SOID and next steps, including options to be presented to PLDC in December.

f) Program Notes

This is the list of programs administered by NHSD: Risk Mitigation/Covid-19 Emergency Housing Assistance

Program; Down Payment Assistance; Owner Occupied Rehab Program; Minor Repair Rehab Program; Green and Healthy Home Program; Under 1 Roof program; Gap Funding (HUD sourced) for preserving and creating affordable housing; HUD Entitlement Grants; Tax Increment Financing; Housing Bond Program; Urban Renewal Agency; Fair Housing Counseling; Eviction Interventions via Court Eviction team; Right to Counsel (out-sourced); Low Income Housing Tax Credit; Mission Oriented Development pilot.

g) Upcoming Meetings

The next regular meeting will be held on January 27, 2021.

ALTERNATIVES

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.