



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City of Austin Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Council Members

**FROM:** Awais Azhar, Chair, Project Connect Community Advisory Committee

**CC:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager, City of Austin  
Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager, City of Austin  
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Assistant City Manager, City of Austin  
Deletta Dean, Austin Housing Director, City of Austin

**DATE:** February 12, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Project Connect Community Advisory Committee Anti-Displacement Fund  
Budget Recommendations for 2026 to 2028

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The Project Connect Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is tasked with advising the Austin City Council regarding the funds available to address any potential Project Connect transit-induced displacement. Over the next three years, \$60 million in funds will become available for this purpose, with \$20 million available for allocation each year.

The recommendations below regarding funding for anti-displacement were created utilizing feedback from the engagement process led by Raftelis and Austin Housing, and the Nothing About Us Without Us: Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool. While the CAC recommends the adoption of a three-year funding plan for better coordination, staff may revise the funding allocation for 2027 and 2028 in consultation with the CAC and Austin City Council, to better respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

**2026 to 2028 Anti-Displacement Investment Proposal**

We recommend that the anti-displacement funds for 2026, 2027, and 2028 be committed as follows:

**3 YEAR TOTAL: Years 2026-2028** (Funding available: \$60 million)

- Affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition: \$46.5 million
- Programs and other strategies addressing immediate needs: \$9 million
- Staffing, administration, community engagement, and marketing: \$4.5 million

**YEAR 1: 2026** (Funding available: \$20 million)

- Affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition: \$18 million
- Programs and other strategies addressing immediate needs: \$0.5 million
- Staffing, administration, community engagement, and marketing: \$1.5 million

**YEAR 2: 2027** (Funding available: \$20 million)

- Affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition: \$16 million
- Programs and other strategies addressing immediate needs: \$2.5 million
- Staffing, administration, community engagement, and marketing: \$1.5 million

**YEAR 3: 2028** (Funding available: \$20 million)

- Affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition: \$12.5 million
- Programs and other strategies addressing immediate needs: 6 million
- Staffing, administration, community engagement, and marketing: \$1.5 million

These recommendations reflect feedback from the 2025 Austin Housing engagement; with a focus on prioritizing the creation of income-restricted affordable housing and the preservation of existing multifamily housing, along with land acquisition. At the same time, the CAC recognizes the need to continue funding anti-displacement programs that help stabilize households and communities.

**Anti-Displacement Investment Guidelines**

We also recommend that the following guidelines be utilized in planning and expending the anti-displacement funding dedicated to each category listed above.

***Affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition***

1. ***Austin Light Rail focus:*** The CAC recommends that funding for creating and preserving affordable housing must be utilized in areas within one mile of the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 route, including priority extensions, which are vulnerable to displacement. If staff struggle to make investments only within this geography due to fewer available opportunities, they can change this requirement in consultation with the CAC and Council.
2. ***Funding flexibility:*** To provide greater flexibility, the CAC recommends combining overall funding for affordable housing development, preservation of existing multifamily housing, and land acquisition to allow for the best possible use each year, while maintaining an expectation that all the strategies listed will be seriously pursued and at least some investments are made in each strategy each year.
3. ***Deeply affordable housing:*** The City must prioritize the creation of deeply affordable housing that serves residents earning 30 percent of median family income or less by partnering with nonprofits, housing authorities, and other mission-driven organizations. Housing needs data and community engagement continue to highlight the need for affordable housing at these lower rent levels. While the CAC has continued to call attention to this need, gaps remain in providing deeply affordable housing, requiring innovative strategies and targeted investments.
4. ***ETOD fund:*** Staff should pursue development of an Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) Fund. The aim of this revolving fund would be to provide attractive construction financing, gap financing, and high risk financing to encourage dense development within walking distance of light rail stations, with all projects including a minimal percentage of affordable units as well as some other community priorities, such as walkability, public spaces, and desired amenities, such as grocery stores, senior and child care and activity facilities, and support for small business. Such a fund would be modeled on national best practices and aim to significantly increase the number of housing units, market rate and affordable, within walking distance of Austin Light Rail stations.

### ***Programs and Other Strategies Addressing Immediate Needs***

1. ***Maintain geographic scope:*** Programmatic funding can continue to be utilized within one mile of high-capacity Project Connect infrastructure, including the Light Rail, MetroRail, and MetroRapid elements, in areas vulnerable to displacement.
2. ***Phased programming:*** Considering that several existing Community Initiated Solution grantees have received extensions and supplemental funding, and there is still some funding remaining for additional grants, the CAC recommends that programmatic funding take a phased approach from 2026 to 2028, with greater investments in the last year. Considering the CAC's commitment to anti-displacement programming, we recommend investing in targeted programs in 2026 and 2027 to fill programmatic gaps, while continuing these investments along with reconsidering funding for the CIS program in 2028.
3. ***Recommended programs:*** In order to fill programmatic gaps, the City should consider a targeted approach to establish the following programs using a solicitation process.
  - An estate and probate planning program providing legal assistance to low-income homeowners should be established with the explicit aim of reducing issues with heirs' properties, where clouded or tangled titles prevent intergenerational wealth building and fuel forced sales.
  - A local tenant-based rental assistance or voucher program for income-qualifying households, particularly those at risk of eviction, that can provide renters with assistance to rent units that they select by allowing them to pay 30% of their adjusted income towards rent and utility costs, with the assistance covering the remaining balance.
  - In addition to the existing Austin Displacement Prevention Navigator Program, the City should fund organizations to provide one-on-one counseling and enrollment support so that owners and renters can enroll for existing local, state, and federal programs that they may be eligible for, such as qualifying for the Travis County homestead exemption, City of Austin home repair program, Texas area agency on aging program, federal Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) etc.
  - A program to fund relocation benefits for residential or commercial tenants who may not be eligible for the benefits provided by the Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) as part of its relocation program due to citizenship status or other issues.
  - While the CAC recognizes the need to provide anti-displacement business support, we recommend that programmatic efforts be focused on preventing residential displacement only at this time, based on the community feedback received. The CAC recommends that Austin Economic Development staff coordinate with ATP staff on their business mitigation strategies and provide updates to the CAC regarding any gaps in programming or funding.

### ***Staffing, Administration, Community Engagement, and Marketing***

1. ***Existing program analysis:*** There should be a strong emphasis on program and strategy analysis as part of the funding allocated to staffing, administration, community engagement, and marketing, particularly in the case of the Community Initiated Solutions (CIS) program.

Considering this was an innovative approach implemented by the City to make programmatic investments for anti-displacement strategies, sufficient time and resources must be dedicated to evaluating what is working well, identifying opportunities for improvement, and determining which strategies should be continued or refined in the future.

2. **Enhanced communication:** For the CIS program and other programmatic investments, a more coordinated and cohesive communication approach should be adopted to strengthen the overall impact. Clear and consistent communication is essential, considering community feedback indicates that not all stakeholders are aware of existing resources or how efforts can be aligned.

We encourage City of Austin staff to coordinate across different departments and divisions, and if possible, across other public entities to better align and leverage different resources, attempting to avoid duplicative programming. In addition, wherever possible, align work with existing planning and programming to support community efforts and leverage other funding sources.

These recommendations build on the success of existing Project Connect and city-wide anti-displacement efforts, while responding meaningfully to feedback received during community feedback sessions led by Austin Housing and Raftelis.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at [bc-awais.azhar@austintexas.gov](mailto:bc-awais.azhar@austintexas.gov).

Date of Approval: February 12, 2026

Record of the vote: Approved on a 9-0-0 vote (Committee Members Garza and Gonzalez absent)

Attest:  , Project Connect Community Advisory Committee Chair