



City of Austin's Annual Customer Assistance Program
AFFORDABLE ENERGY SUMMIT





City of Austin Equity Office





Who are we?

- In an effort to address racial inequity in Austin, City Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027 in 2015, which directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact of existing city policies and practices on racial equity and develop an Equity Assessment Tool that can be used across City departments during the budget process.
- The Equity Office was created in 2016 to focus on advancing equity in all aspects of City operations. The first Chief Equity Officer, Brion Oaks, began this work in October 2016.
- The Equity Office has built its approach through partnerships with national networks. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and Racial Equity Here have provided tremendous support through their connection with over 100 local government jurisdictions.



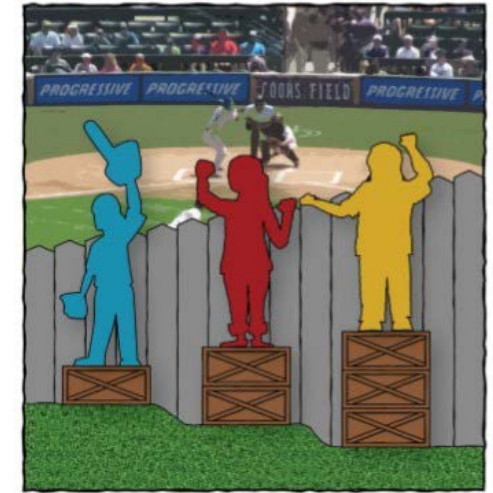
Racial Equity Means:

COA Equity Statement

- Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community.
- The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore we begin the journey toward social equity with this definition.
- The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of these wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.



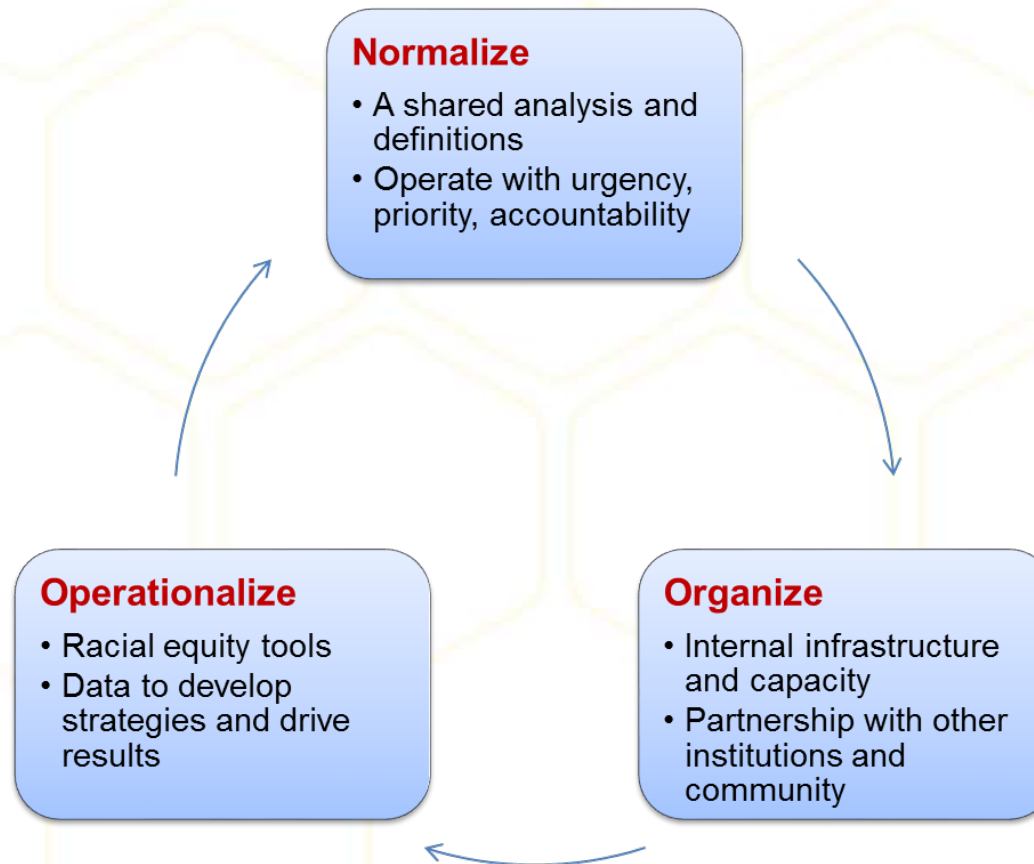
EQUALITY



EQUITY



Building a Framework for Equity:





Our City's Values:



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & AFFORDABILITY

Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.



MOBILITY

Getting us where we want to go, when we want to get there, safely and cost-effectively.



SAFETY

Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.



CULTURE & LIFELONG LEARNING

Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.



GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative.



Why are People Poor?



Why are People Poor?

The role that conscious and subconscious racial attitudes play in shaping public attitudes towards poverty has been explored extensively in social science research.

There are marked differences between racial and ethnic groups: 70 percent of black Americans believe racial discrimination is a major reason why black people have a harder time getting ahead, compared to 36 percent of white people, and 58 percent of Latino people. – Pew Research Center







Percent Poverty by Census Tract, Austin MSA, 2010-2014, ACS 5-Year Data

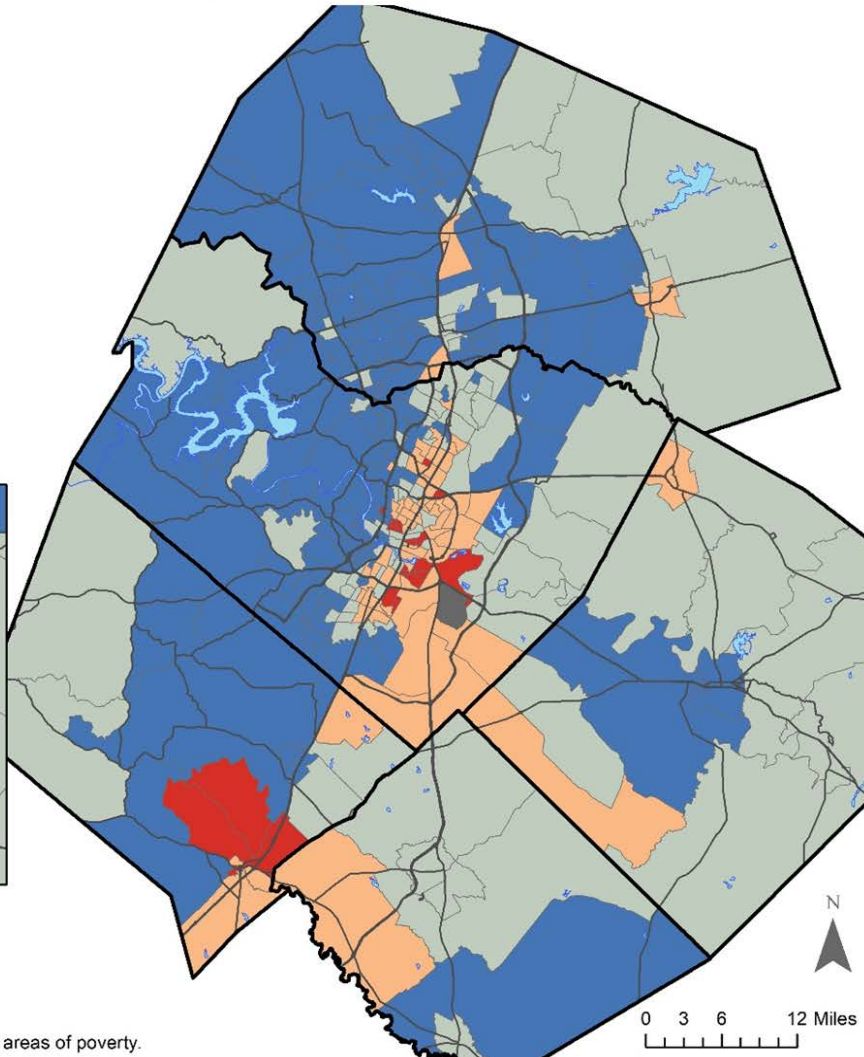
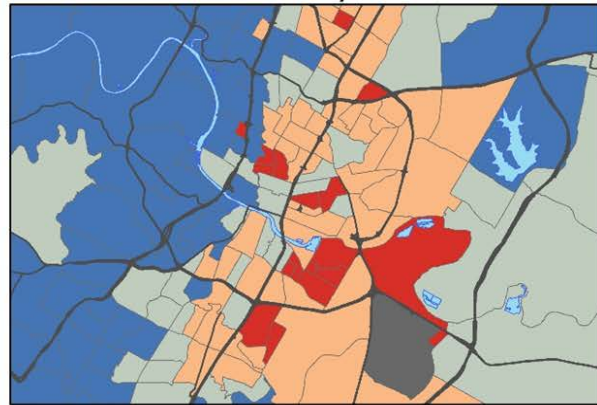
Legend

-  County
-  Highways
-  Water
-  Airport

Percent Poverty by Census Tract

-  Less than 10%
-  10% to 20%
-  20% to 40%
-  Over 40%

Inset: Central Travis County



 Community Advancement Network

Map produced by CAN from U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year, 2010-2014, American Community Survey data. (Table C17002: Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in Past 12 Months)
 Census tracts with high student populations tend to correlate with high areas of poverty.



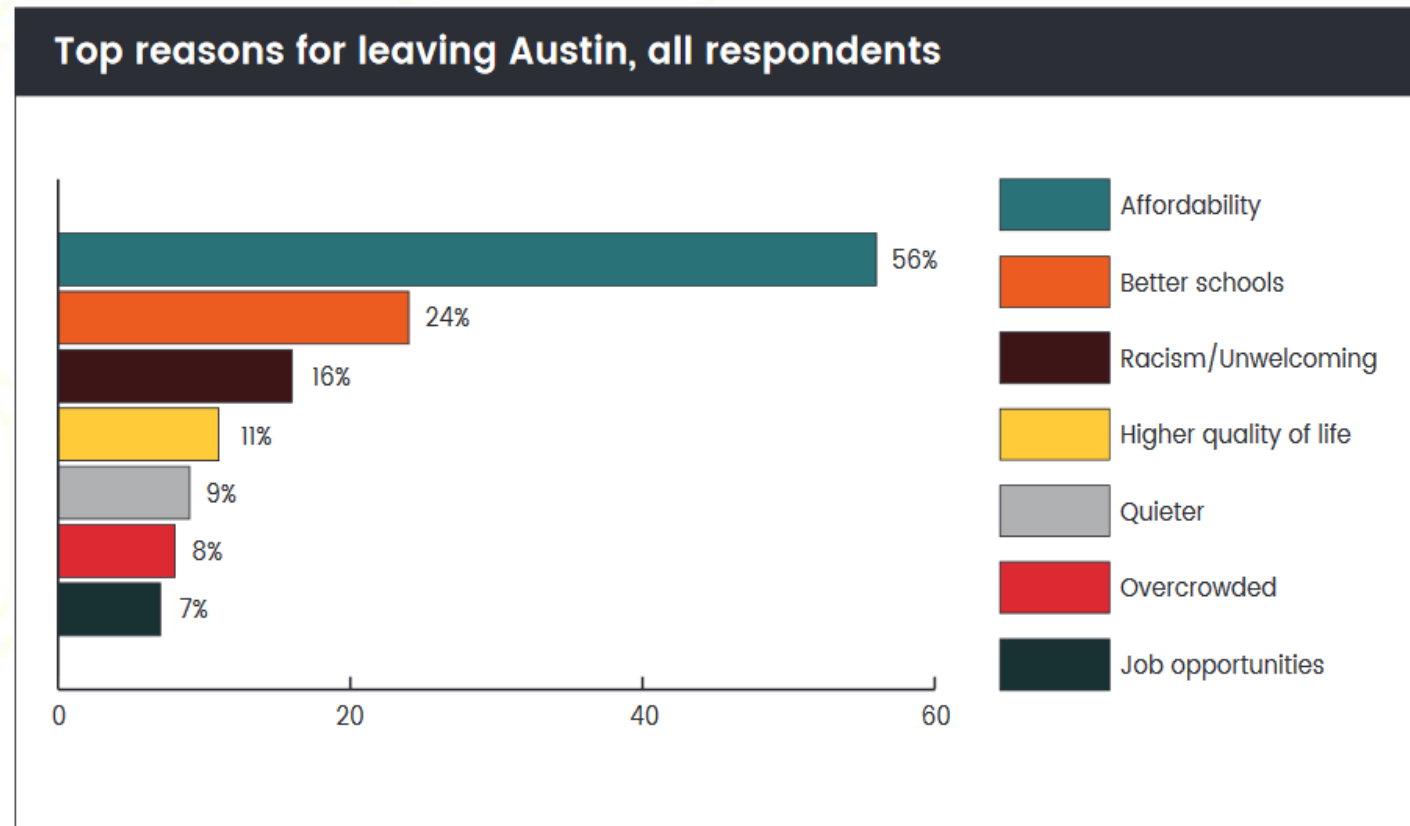
Who lives in these neighborhoods?

- **51%** of Black Americans and **44%** Latinx live in high-poverty areas, vs. just 17% of White Americans



Black Austinites are Leaving the City

Austin is the **only** major American City whose Black population is **declining**



Source: Dr. Eric Tang, University of Texas, "Those Who Left"



What do you know about the racial history of Austin?



Acknowledging how we got here

Inheriting inequality

- “As greater Austin booms, the poisonous legacy of segregation continues to cut off the African-American population from economic opportunities and its own cultural anchors, threatening the whole region's potential.”

-An American-Statesman three-part series

<http://projects.statesman.com/news/economic-mobility/>





1928 Plan

“There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present. Practically all attempts of such have been unconstitutional.”
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tening Waller Creek through this area, a wonderful neighborhood play ground site can be claimed from property which is now very low in value and, in its present condition, is a menace to health of the neighborhood. These two incidents are cited as examples of which it is easily possible to provide the necessary land for the recommended neighborhood play grounds.

The high school located at Twelfth and Rio Grande Streets, we have pointed out heretofore, has a nucleus for a play-field just west of the school grounds. We have already recommended in this report that this play-field be enlarged and developed to provide for a modern play-field. We also recommend that other play-fields be established in various parts of the city. If it is the intention of the school board to provide additional high schools, such play-fields should preferably be located at, or adjacent to, these high schools.

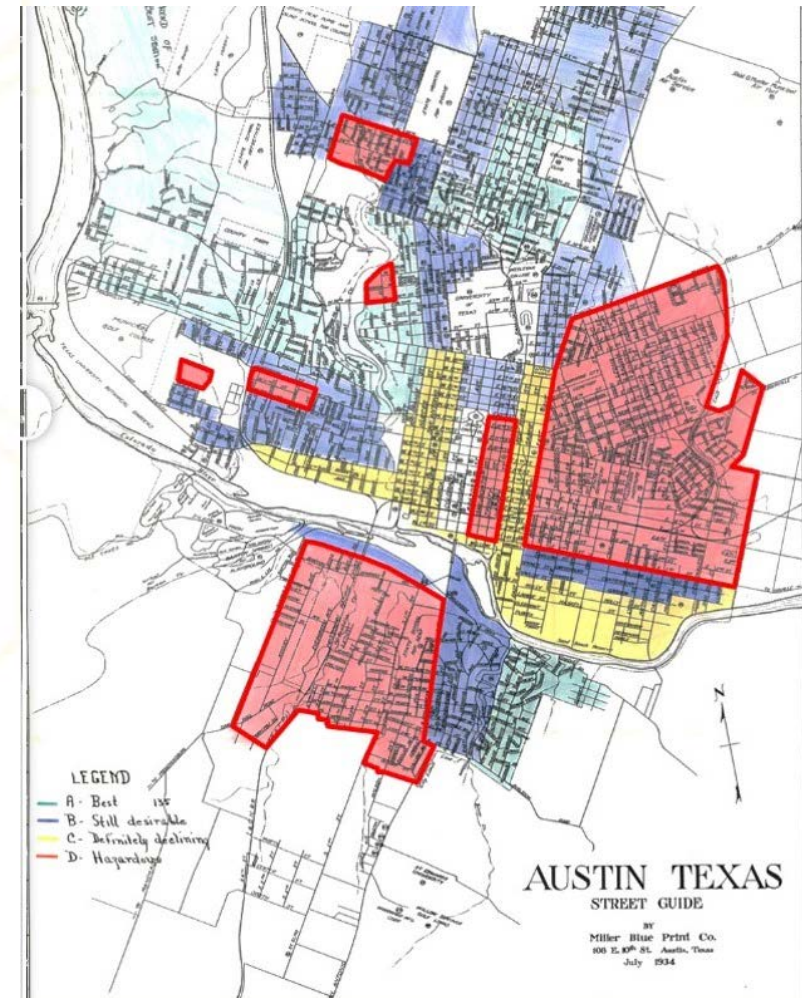
There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present. Practically all attempts of such have been proven unconstitutional.

In our studies in Austin we have found that the negroes are present in small numbers, in practically all sections of the city, excepting the area just east of East Avenue and south of the City Cemetery. This area seems to be all negro population. It is our recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will be the recommendation of this district as



Creating the “Negro District”

A New Deal program was proposed that would reinforce segregationist boundaries in Austin and throughout the country. The program, designed to restore household wealth during the Great Depression, used redlining -- the practice of denying goods or services to racially determined neighborhoods -- to specifically exclude communities of color.





Housing

Santa Rita Courts

- Built in 1939
- Nation's first federally funded housing project





Housing Act of 1937

In the 1930s, the City of Austin build Rosewood Courts through eminent domain, destroying Emancipation Park, to the dismay of East Austin residents.





Urban Renewal/Removal

Who benefitted from urban renewal projects?

How does “urban redevelopment” continue to impact communities of color?





The Equity Assessment Tool



Austin's Opportunity to Drive Equity

Key Areas of Departmental CHOICE

- **Planning:** What to change and prioritize in programs?
- **Budgeting:** what items do we add or cut and what initiatives get the funding?
- **Personnel:** who to hire, retain, promote, or develop as leaders
- **Policy Development:** what to propose or modify?
- **Practices:** routines/habits and or expectations to set

The cumulative impacts of small choices can lead to BIG influence on outcomes and equity



Sections of the Tool

- **Introduction:** Brief historical account, schedule, and Council Resolution for context
- **Departmental Analysis:** A look at the department's culture and commitment to principles that drive equity
- **Community Engagement:** Gauges your practices and quality of interaction with the community
- **Budget:** A scan of potential for realignments and insight on how community is included in budget planning
- **Alignment:** Evaluates opportunities to align addressing disparities with Council's six priority outcomes



Equity Assessment Core Elements

Lead with
Race/Ethnicity

Focus on human
centered design and
institutional empathy

Engage residents,
especially those
adversely affected, in
decision making

Bring conscious
attention to racial
inequities and
disparities *before*
decisions are made

Avoid or minimize
adverse impacts and
unintended
consequences

Affirm our commitment
to equity, inclusion, and
diversity



Equity Assessment Pilot

- Austin Water
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Health
- Library
- Public Works
- Transportation



COURAGE...

...is contagious



Outcome Evaluation for Customer Energy Solutions a division of Austin Energy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Collaboration with other City Departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Working with 9 other departments and offices on issues like housing affordability, reducing energy costs, and improving access to transportation options	<p>Hiring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff not representative of its client baseNo strong equity priorities identified
<p>Alignment with City Council Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently addressing all 6 Council Priorities	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">No onboarding/orientation/training on equity and racism
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and Implement equity priorities into existing or new programs addressing affordability	<p>Disproportional Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Well-intentioned policies (ex. Community Benefit Charge) negatively impacting marginalized groups
<p>Evaluation Efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Need a formal process for measuring the success of policies and programs that are meant to address racial equity	<p>Budget and Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Budget structure prevents tracking of investments that promote equityNo line items in the budget reflecting the activities, programs, and services that advance equity



Reflections and Activity: Values vs. Realities Implicit Bias



All men are created equal...

...was revolutionary at the time, but when Jefferson spoke these words, they applied to White male property owners.

Of the people, by the people, and for the people...

...yet our leaders across all industries don't come close to the diversity of our communities. Women didn't get the right to vote until 1920. Until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 People of Color were not guaranteed access to their vote



What do you see?





What do you see?





What AP Saw:

Caption: Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery.



Caption: A young man walks through chest-deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans.





Takeaways

“...implicit bias is a natural, unavoidable part of our brain function: however, through acknowledgement and understanding of its presence, implicit bias can be distinguished from prejudice. **Implicit bias, itself, is not static.** The attitudes and stereotypes we have learned through media and learned experiences are social in nature and likely to evolve. **Implicit bias is experience on an individual basis, but also influences society on an institutional basis. Daring to engage in that social experiment is key and willingness to address systemic inequities could lead to a very different, truly inclusive world.”**

-Hass Institute Director, John Powell



Any questions, concerns, requests:

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Questions



Activity