



Travis County

Section IV:

Strategic Plan

2006-2010 Consolidated Plan,
Amended August 2007



Introduction

As an urban entitlement county, Travis County must comply with the Consolidated Plan requirements in order to receive funding for its formula-based HUD programs. Designated as the lead agency by the Travis County Commissioners Court, the Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department (HHS/VS) is charged with the preparation and the submission of this Consolidated Plan to HUD. HHS/VS is also responsible for oversight of the public notification process, approval of projects, and the administration of these grants. Travis County intends to administer CDBG funded projects in the unincorporated areas of the County. Community development, housing, and public service opportunities in geographic areas outside of the incorporated cities and villages in Travis County will be considered.

The Strategic Plan sets general guidelines of the Travis County Consolidated Plan for housing and community development activities for the next five years, beginning October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2010. The policies and priorities of the strategic plan are drawn from an analysis of housing, community development, and service needs within the urban county. These needs assessments are detailed in Section III of this plan– *Community Needs*. The priorities and objectives provide structured guidelines that direct HHS/VS, on behalf of the Travis County Commissioners Court, regarding the selection of projects to be funded over the next five years.

This Strategic Plan presents policies and a course of action to focus on priorities anticipated over the next five years that will address the statutory program goals as established by federal law:

1. Decent Housing – which includes:

- Assisting homeless persons obtain affordable housing;
- Assisting persons at risk of becoming homeless;
- Retention of affordable housing stock;
- Increase the availability of affordable permanent housing in standard condition to low-income and moderate-income families, particularly to members of disadvantaged minorities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability;
- Increasing the supply of supportive housing which includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs (including persons with HIV/AIDS) to live in dignity and independence; and
- Providing affordable housing that is accessible to job opportunities.

2. A Suitable Living Environment – which includes:

- Improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods; and
- Increasing access to quality public and private facilities and services;

3. Expanded Economic Opportunities – which includes:

- Job creation and retention for low-income persons;

- Availability of mortgage financing for low-income persons at reasonable rates using non-discriminatory lending practices; and
- Empowerment and self-sufficiency for low-income persons to reduce generational poverty in federally assisted housing and public housing.

The Strategic Plan focuses on those activities funded through CDBG funds that are provided to the County by HUD on an annual basis. Based on the County's annual allocation of \$838,659 for fiscal year 2006-07, the County is expected to receive approximately \$4.19 million over the five-year Consolidated Plan period.

Note: In the original preparation of the 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan, HUD informed Travis County of an allocation of an estimated \$2,449,337 annually. Due to human error, HUD informed Travis County of a reduction in the allocation amount by approximately \$1.6 million dollars annually. HUD disallowed the original submission prepared by Travis County, and the Plan was substantially amended in November of 2006. At the time of amendment, Travis County chose only to address the Action Plan for program year 2006, and to re-evaluate the strategic direction later. The amendment to the strategic direction results from the information gathered through the citizen engagement process in 2006 and 2007 and the original needs assessment data gathered in 2006.

While the amendment to the strategic direction is not required to go through a public comment period, the scope of the change is substantial enough to warrant Travis County's interest in eliciting public comment. During the week of June 4, 2007, Travis County published a Public Notice announcing and summarizing the proposed amendment to the strategic direction. The notice appeared in several area newspapers that target the unincorporated areas of Travis County. The 30-day public comment period commenced June 20, 2007 and ended July 19, 2007.

After considering the housing, community development and public service needs of Travis County's low- to moderate-income residents as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment, Market Analysis, and citizen engagement efforts, Travis County Commissioners Court identified the following national goals as its focus for CDBG funds for the five year grant period:

1. Decent Housing:

- Assisting low- and moderate-income persons obtain affordable housing

2. A Suitable Living Environment:

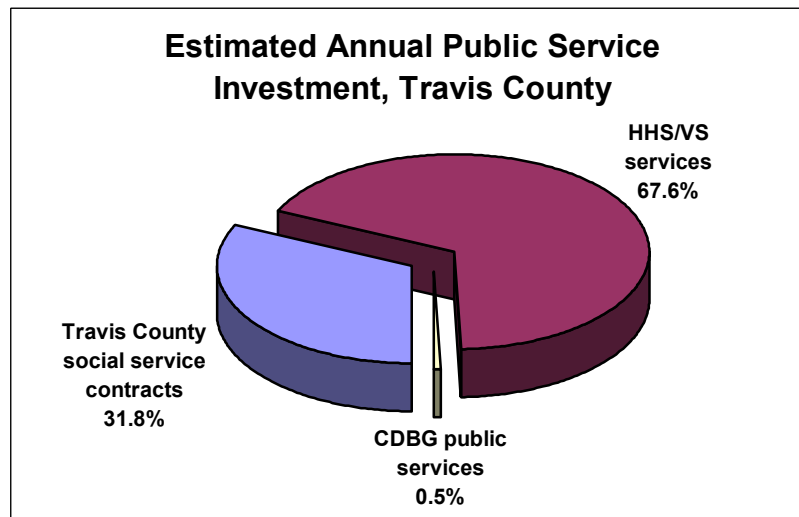
- Improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods and
- Increasing access to quality public and private facilities and services

Availability of Resources

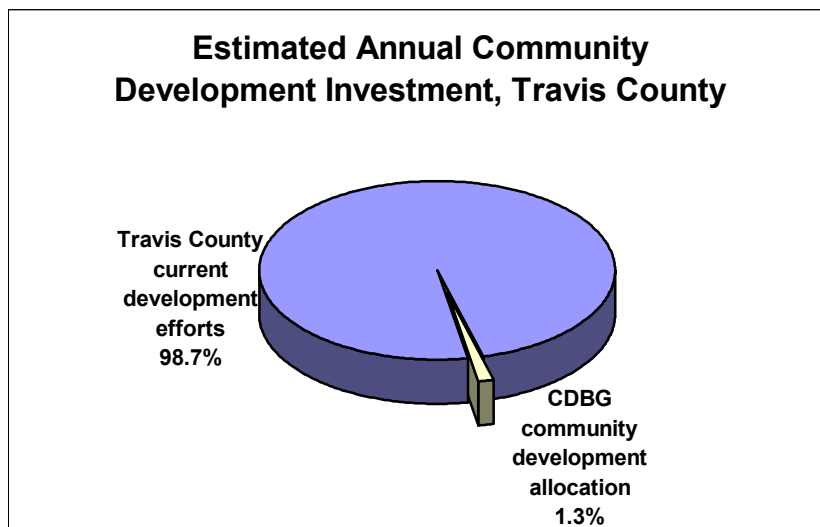
The Strategic Plan focuses on those activities funded through CDBG funds provided to Travis County by HUD on an annual basis. Based on the County's annual allocation of \$838,659 for fiscal year 2006-07, the County is expected to receive approximately \$4,193,000 over the five-year Consolidated Plan period. At this time, the County does not receive HOME funds.

In addition to these funds, the County has other funds that may be used to leverage CDBG money for housing, community development and public service projects.

Public Service Investment: The County currently contracts annually with over 40 non-profits in the form of social service contracts to the sum of approximately \$7,268,700. In addition, the Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department (HHS/VS) provides direct public services annually in the amount of approximately \$15,442,265. The cap on public service dollars for CDBG is 15% of the County's allocation, or approximately \$125,798 annually. Therefore, CDBG public service dollars equal not more than 0.5% of the County's overall efforts in public services.



Community Development and Affordable Housing Investment: The County's infrastructure department, Transportation and Natural Resources, conducts community development activities in the form of public parks, bridge and drainage projects, storm water management, road maintenance, onsite sewage facilities, transportation planning, and various other projects, totaling approximately \$56,274,900 annually. Housing and Community Development activities using CDBG funds are anticipated to total at least \$545,128 annually. Therefore, CDBG community development and housing funds equal approximately 1.3% of the County's overall efforts in housing and community development.



Priority Needs Analysis and Strategies

Priority Needs Determination

The priority needs for housing, homelessness, and non-housing community development efforts were determined using data presented in Section III (*Community Needs*) of this plan, and through public hearings, surveys, and consultations with both County staff and with housing, community development, and public service providers serving low- to moderate-income residents of the unincorporated areas of Travis County.

Key factors affecting the determination of the five-year priorities included: 1) the types of target income households with greatest need for assistance; 2) those activities that will best address their needs; and 3) the limited amount of funding available to meet those needs.

Priority ranking indicates the following intent:

High Priority: Travis County plans to use funds made available for activities that address this unmet need during the period of time designated in the strategic plan.

Medium Priority: If funds are available, activities to address this unmet need may be funded by Travis County during the period of time designated in the strategic plan. Also, Travis County will take actions to locate other sources of funds to address this identified unmet need.

Low Priority: The jurisdiction does not plan to use funds made available for activities to address this unmet need during the period of time designated in the strategic plan. The jurisdiction will consider certifications of consistency for other entities' applications for Federal assistance.

For the five-year Consolidated Plan period, Table 2A, Figure IV-1, and Table 2B identify the priorities assigned to the housing and community development activities and the populations the County anticipates targeting during the Consolidated Plan period. While priorities and goals have been assigned to housing and community development needs, these represent estimates. The specific type and level of need in the community is not completely known at this time. The County will undertake additional analysis of the specific nature of needs in the unincorporated areas of Travis County in the coming years. In addition, the County will continually assess the service delivery system, gaps in services and emerging housing and community development needs of low- to moderate-income residents in order to ensure effective and efficient program development for the use of CDBG funds.

Affordable Housing Strategy

Table 2A: Priority Needs Summary Table					
Priority Housing Needs (Households)		Priority Need Level (High, Medium, Low)		Unmet Need	Goals
Renter	Small Related	0-30%	High	385	6 2
		31-50%	High	295	5 1
		51-80%	High	432	8 2
	Large Related	0-30%	Medium	78	0
		31-50%	High	181	3 1
		51-80%	High	186	3 1
	Elderly	0-30%	High	129	2 1
		31-50%	High	59	4 0
		51-80%	Medium	22	0
	All Other	0-30%	High	387	6 1
		31-50%	High	335	5 1
		51-80%	High	458	8 2
Owner	0-30%	High	1399	50 20	
	31-50%	High	1493	52 15	
	51-80%	High	2873	105 31	
Special Needs		0-80%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Goals					264 78
Total 215 Goals					N/A
Total 215 Renter Goals					N/A
Total 215 Owner Goals					N/A

Information from the CHAS Data Book 2000 was used to determine unmet need, specifically numbers of households with housing problems by type and income level. CHAS data is

available at the county or city levels, but not by block group. Unmet need for residents in unincorporated areas was calculated for each category of need by subtracting the number of City of Austin residents with housing problems from the number of Travis County residents with housing problems. The resulting figures were then multiplied by the percent of County residents with housing problems in order to estimate the number of residents in the unincorporated areas of Travis County who experience a housing problem, and thus have an unmet need. Due to the two-thirds reduction in the allocation amount, the goals were reduced to approximately one-third of the original goal set.

As evidenced by the information in Table 2A, there are a significant number of both renter and owner households experiencing housing problems, and thus needing housing services. Travis County will prioritize housing development and services toward the populations with the highest number of households with housing problems. In addition, clients may be prioritized by considering vulnerability and other such conditions other than income. Data show a significantly higher number of owner households with housing problems in Travis County outside the City of Austin than the number of renter households with housing problems.

Figure IV-1 below identifies the kinds of projects through which Travis County anticipates alleviating the housing problems of low- to moderate-income residents in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Two previously high priority categories were changed to medium. This change reflects a more targeted approach to address the housing development needs. Changes made to the Figure IV-1 reflect the Travis County Commissioners Court approved narrowed direction.

Figure IV-1: Priority Housing Projects	
RENTAL HOUSING GOALS	
Production of new units	High <u>Medium</u>
Rental Assistance	Medium
Acquisition of existing units	Medium
Rehabilitation of existing units	Medium
OWNER HOUSING GOALS	
Production of new units	High
Homebuyer Assistance	High <u>Medium</u>
Acquisition of existing units	Medium
Rehabilitation of existing units	High
Other: Other ways to promote affordable housing development <u>Infrastructure to support affordable housing development</u>	High

Homeless Strategy

For the five-year time period covered in this plan, Travis County does not intend to target Community Development Block Grant funds toward efforts to address homelessness. Travis County invests \$298,000 in general fund dollars in contracts with social service providers targeting the homeless in conjunction with the Austin/Travis County ESG grant administration and according to the Austin/Travis County Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

See the *Anti-Poverty Strategy* section of this document for Travis County’s strategy to help low-income families avoid homelessness.

Non-Housing Community Development Strategy

The priority needs for Travis County’s non-housing community development efforts were determined using research from multiple sources, information gathered in public hearings and surveys, consultation with County staff, and consultation with community development and public service providers serving low- to moderate-income residents of the unincorporated areas of Travis County.

Eight (8) previously high priority categories were changed to medium. This change reflects a more targeted approach to address the non-housing community development needs. Changes made to the Table 2B reflect the Travis County Commissioners Court approved narrowed direction.

Table 2B: Community Development Needs		
PRIORITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS	Priority Need Level High, Medium, Low	Dollars to Address Unmet Priority Need
PUBLIC FACILITY NEEDS (projects)		
Senior Centers	Medium	N/A
Handicapped Centers	Medium	N/A
Homeless Facilities	Medium	N/A
Youth Centers	Medium	N/A
Child Care Centers	Medium	N/A
Health Facilities	Low	N/A
Neighborhood Facilities	Low	N/A
Parks and/or Recreation Facilities	Low	N/A
Parking Facilities	Low	N/A
Non-Residential Historic Preservation	Low	N/A

Other Public Facility Needs	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
INFRASTRUCTURE (projects)		
Water/Sewer Improvements	High	\$2,500,000
Street Improvements	High	\$1,500,000
Sidewalks	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Solid Waste Disposal Improvements	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Flood Drain Improvements	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Other: Erosion Abatement	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Other: Litter Abatement/clearance	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
PUBLIC SERVICE NEEDS (people)		
Senior Services	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Youth Services	High	\$1,000,000 \$250,000
Employment Training	High Medium	\$500,000 N/A
Child Care Services	Medium	N/A
Transportation Services	Medium	N/A
Substance Abuse Services	Medium	N/A
Health Services	Medium	N/A
Lead Hazard Screening	Low	N/A
Crime Awareness	Low	N/A
Other Public Service Needs	High	\$1,000,000 \$500,000
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
ED Assistance to For-Profits	Low	N/A
ED Technical Assistance	Low	N/A
Micro-Enterprise Assistance	Low	N/A
Rehab; Publicly- or Privately-Owned Commercial/Industrial	Low	N/A
C/I Infrastructure Development	Low	N/A
Other C/I Improvements	Low	N/A
PLANNING		

Assessment and Planning	High (<u>was not included in the assessment of ranking</u>)	\$600,000 N/A
TOTAL ESTIMATED DOLLARS NEEDED:		\$11,050,000 <u>\$4,750,000</u>

Note: The total estimated dollars to address unmet non-housing community development needs in the above table is based on needs identified for Travis County’s first program year. The dollar amounts represent a rough estimate and do not include the cost of administration and planning, public services or housing efforts. Due to the reduction in the allocation, all estimated dollar amounts of need for priorities that changed from high to medium also reduced the amount of assistance to Not Applicable (N/A). Dollar amounts for the remaining public services considered a high priority were reduced as well to reflect the small amount of public service dollars available through CDBG.

Strategy to Address Barriers to Affordable Housing

Fair Housing

Travis County will continue to promote and practice compliance with the Fair Housing Act and engage in efforts to reduce and/or eliminate barriers to affordable housing through approaches including:

- Collaboration with non-profits, businesses, agencies and coalitions
- Promote legal advocacy for fair housing issues via funding or other forms of support
- Increase knowledge about fair housing via community education, social work services and outreach

Barriers to Affordable Housing

Travis County will invest, as funding allows, in opportunities to mitigate housing, land, fees and infrastructure costs through:

- Acquisition of land
- Construction of new infrastructure for single family and multi-family dwellings
- Collaboration with non-profits, businesses, agencies and coalitions
- Supporting initiatives throughout the County which increase affordable housing opportunities

County staff will work to ensure the development of county policies affecting building codes, zoning and growth that promote, to the greatest extent possible, affordable housing development.

Lead-Based Paint Strategy

Only a small proportion of Travis County’s housing units are likely to contain lead-based paint. The vast majority of housing units were built after 1978. Figure 2 provides an inventory of potential numbers of homes that may contain Lead Based paint.

Upon establishment of any programs for owner occupied rehabilitation and/or minor repairs, the County will develop procedures in that program year’s Action Plan in compliance with the Residential Lead Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (Title X) and subsequent changes in September, 1999. The procedures will include:

- Notification
- Identification
- Treatment (if necessary)

Figure IV-2: Tenure By Year Structure Built, Travis County TX	
Owner occupied	
Built 1970 to 1979	32,815
Built 1960 to 1969	16,498
Built 1950 to 1959	13,947
Built 1940 to 1949	6,963
Built 1939 or earlier	6,145
TOTAL	76,368
Renter occupied	
Built 1970 to 1979	39,147
Built 1960 to 1969	18,439
Built 1950 to 1959	9,672
Built 1940 to 1949	4,622
Built 1939 or earlier	4,637
TOTAL	76,517

Source: Census 2000

Anti-poverty Strategy

In 2004, 12.6 % (106,765), of Travis County residents lived below the federal poverty level. However, of single parent households headed by a female, 19.4% were under the poverty level (2004 American Community Survey).

Travis County does not yet have a formally adopted anti-poverty strategy. However, the Health and Human Services and Veterans Service Department is committed to developing a formal anti-poverty strategy over the time period covered by this Consolidated Plan. Staff will work with other county departments as well as community partners to initiate, engage, and develop a comprehensive, coordinated anti-poverty strategy to address the root causes of poverty in Travis County. In addition, the Travis County Commissioners Court has allocated an anti-poverty reserve in its annual budget cycle for fiscal year 2007 which will initiate coordination of current efforts and implement additional programmatic efforts to address poverty in a comprehensive manner.

Many of the Consolidated Plan strategies directly assist individuals who are living in poverty. In addition, Travis County’s lead agency for administering these funds is the Health and Human Services and Veterans Service Department, whose mission is “to work in partnership with the community to promote full development of individual, family, neighborhood, and community potential.” The vision of HHS/VS is “optimizing self-sufficiency for families and

individuals in safe and healthy communities.” Both the mission and vision of HHS/VS are essentially aimed at preventing and ameliorating conditions of poverty in Travis County.

In addition, Travis County participates in the assessments, plans, and activities of the Community Action Network, whose members have informally pursued anti-poverty strategies as part of their primary mission. The Network consists of seventeen partners, including:

- Austin Area Human Services Association
- Community Justice Council
- Austin Independent School District
- Capital Metro
- City of Austin
- Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Health Partnership 2010
- Higher Education Coalition
- Travis County
- United Way Capital Area
- Travis County Healthcare District
- Worksource - Greater Austin Area Workforce Board
- Community Justice Council
- Austin Independent School District
- Austin Area Research Organization
- Austin Area Interreligious Ministries
- Austin Travis County MHMR Center

In its *2006 Poverty Fact Sheet*, the Community Action Network identified the following factors as primary causes of poverty:

1. Low wages and a lack of benefits
2. Unemployment/underemployment
3. Very young or very old age and dependency on others to meet basic needs
4. Mental illness
5. Disability status
6. Social exclusion of special populations, including ex-prisoners, homeless, people with AIDS, and people with language barriers.

The Travis County Community’s Anti-Poverty Programs

- **Providing comprehensive case management for low- to moderate-income families to address the root causes of financial instability and promote self-sufficiency.***
- **Employment training for unemployed or underemployed persons to promote job skills and retention.***
- Providing assistance with emergency basic needs (including rent, utility and food assistance) in order to prevent homelessness.
- Advocating for and supporting public policy initiatives that create real solutions for adequate healthcare, childcare, living wages, education and disability assistance.

**Denotes Travis County's intent to use CDBG funds to address this strategy.*

Institutional Structure and Coordination

Effective implementation of the Consolidated Plan involves a variety of agencies. Coordination and collaboration within the Travis County government and between agencies helps to ensure that the needs in the community are addressed. The key departments and agencies that are involved in the implementation of the Plan are described below.

Institutional Structure

Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department (HHS/VS) is the lead county agency responsible for the administration of the County's CDBG funding. This department has primary responsibility for assessing community need, developing the Consolidated Plan and yearly Action Plans, managing project activities in conjunction with other county departments and other community partners, administering the finances, and monitoring and reporting. In addition, HHS/VS administers some CDBG funded public service project activities. HHS/VS reports to the Travis County Commissioners Court for oversight authority.

Other County departments involved in providing services and administering the funds might include Transportation and Natural Resources, Facilities Management, the County Attorney's Office, and the Planning and Budget Office. Contracts will be procured through the County's Purchasing Office, and the County Auditor will audit financial records of the County as well as any sub-recipients used to conduct funded activities.

At this time, Travis County's jurisdiction does not include consortium member cities.

Coordination

The County is committed to continuing its participation and coordination with federal, state, county, and local agencies, as well as with the private and non-profit sector in order to serve the needs of targeted income individuals and families in the community.

Travis County will partner with local Community Housing and Development Organizations (CHDOs), non-profits, and other community development and housing providers to explore options for community development and public service projects to best meet the community's need and leverage other federal, state, local and private funding.

In addition, Travis County will partner with the Travis County Housing Authority to explore options for affordable housing development and the development of public housing in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Public Housing

Created in 1975, the Housing Authority of Travis County (HATC) provides safe, decent and sanitary housing for low-income families in Travis County. HATC is not designated by HUD as a “problem housing authority.” The Housing Authority’s mission is to:

- Operate existing federally supported housing programs in an effective manner.
- Create and foster partnerships with other Travis County service providers to develop a common vision from which to coordinate delivery of housing services to families and individuals in need.
- Develop capital devoted to providing low-income housing, without creating additional tax burdens.
- Meet and exceed the highest quality standards for provision of low-income housing and services.
- Assure long-term availability of affordable housing and strive to build a secure community environment.

HATC manages a total of 105 public housing units at three public housing sites in the incorporated areas of Travis County. Additionally, together with the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, HATC administers three Shelter Plus Care projects in the Austin-Travis County area, which utilize integrated rental housing and flexible and intensive support services to promote community tenure and independence to the chronically homeless and disabled. These Public Housing and Shelter Plus sites are all located in incorporated areas of the county. In the unincorporated areas, HATC does administer the Section Eight Housing Choice Voucher Program to assist very low income, disabled and elderly families or individuals. HATC also operates a Lease-Purchase program, to provide homeownership opportunities for prospective homebuyers who can afford monthly mortgage payments, but do not have funds for a down payment and/or closing costs or the credit standing to qualify for a loan. However, at this time no publicly owned housing developments exist in the unincorporated areas of Travis County.

The major strategic goals of HATC’s Five-Year Plan (FY 2005-2009) are as follows:

- Expand supply, improve quality, and increase available choices for assisted housing
- Provide an improved living environment
- Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households
- Ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further fair housing
- Improve physical conditions of all properties and create a safe workplace

Travis County will continue to support HATC’s efforts to provide homeownership and affordable housing opportunities to low-income residents. Travis County will partner with HATC to explore opportunities to expand these efforts in the unincorporated areas in the five-year period covered in this Strategic Plan.