

# Austin Community Land Trust

AHFC/ Austin Housing  
TACDC CLT Coalition | 6.26.26

# Municipal-Run Community Land Trusts

**Purpose, Benefits, Lessons, and  
Practitioner Recommendations**

# What Is a Municipal-Run CLT?

- **A city-owned or city-administered land trust designed to preserve long-term affordable homeownership.**
- **Uses public land and public financing tools to stabilize affordability.**
- **Integrates CLT strategy directly into local anti-displacement, housing, and planning goals.**
- **Works alongside, not instead of, nonprofit CLTs.**



# What is Austin Community Land Trust? (ACLT)

## Benefits to ACLT Homeowners



Lower costs to own a home

Better housing security than renting



Payments you can afford



Opportunity to build equity



Austin Community Land Trust homes are affordable and move-in ready for families with limited incomes

- **Austin City Council created AHFC in 1979 as a public, nonprofit corporation under the Texas Housing Finance Corporation Act (Chapter 394, Local Government Code).**
- **AHFC administers and oversees the day-to-day operations of the ACLT Program.**
- **Austin City Council serves as the Board of Directors for AHFC.**
- **AHFC retains permanent ownership of the land under each ACLT Home.**
- **Homeowners lease the underlying land through a 99-year, renewable Ground Lease.**

# Why Municipal Run?

- **Ability to deploy public land for affordability outcomes at scale.**
- **Aligns directly with city housing priorities, bond programs, and policy direction.**
- **Reduces barriers for practitioners by standardizing leases, resale formulas, and compliance.**
- **Creates consistent stewardship and long-term affordability oversight.**
- **Supports communities experiencing displacement or rapid cost escalation.**



## Pros of a Municipal-Run CLT

- **Stable, long-term land ownership and affordability protection.**
- **Predictable policy and regulatory environment.**
- **Ability to leverage city subsidies, land contributions, and bond funds.**
- **Increased visibility and public trust when programs are municipally backed.**
- **Scalability — able to move multiple projects simultaneously.**

## Potential Challenges

- **City processes can lengthen development timelines.**
- **Vulnerability to leadership changes, shifting political priorities, or budget constraints.**
- **Requires sustained staffing and operational funding for stewardship.**
- **Risk of appearing top-down or disconnected from residents if community voice isn't built in.**
- **Possibility of overlap with nonprofit CLTs or CDCs without clear role definitions.**

# Preference Policy – Program Design



- **Program Design**

**2018:** City Council [Resolution No. 20180308-010](#) directed the City Manager to propose a preference policy that relates to the distribution of affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income households **based on generational ties to the City**. The proposed policy must be designed to **further the City's obligation to affirmatively further fair housing** and should include a method to prioritize the waitlist for programs and resources, such as homeownership and rental assistance programs, for low- and moderate-income households who are displaced. The policy should **also be based on household size**.

- **Applies to 50 % of available units when  $\leq 2$  units are available and 40% when 3+ units are available.**

**Preference Policy Pilot implemented through the Austin Community Land Trust (ACLT) in 2020.**



99 YEAR GROUND LEASE

# Preference Policy – Program Design



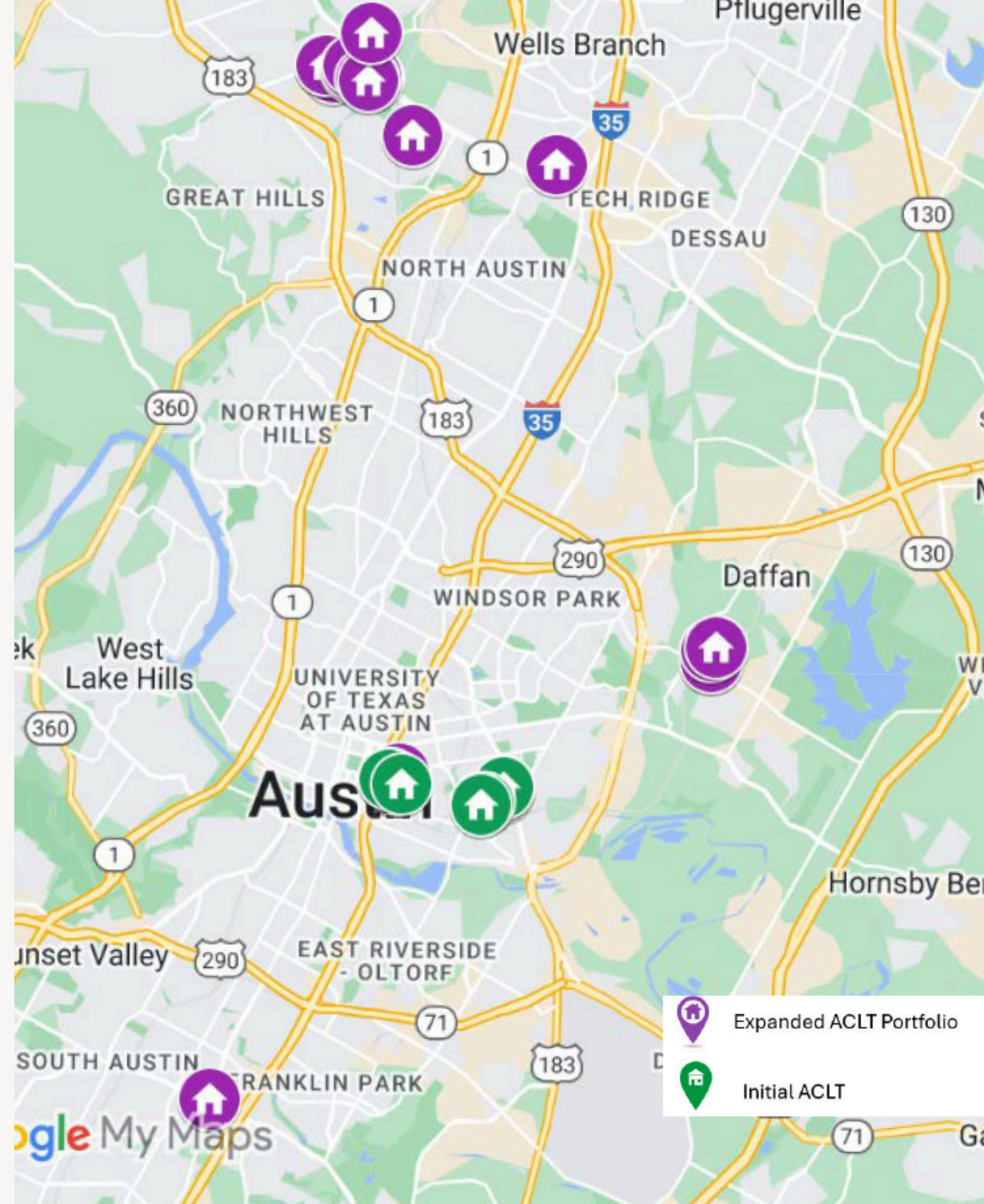
## 3 Main Components of the Preference Policy

The preference policy includes preferences for household size, disability, and three types of preferences related to generational ties and displacement.

- **Disability:** applies to accessible units. Households with disabled members will receive priority for units with disability modifications.
  - **Applies to all accessible affordable unit**
- **Household Size:** a household whose square footage requirements for sleeping areas based on the Property Maintenance Code are equal to or are less than the size of the available housing unit.
- **Generational Ties & Displacement<sup>1</sup>:** the following preferences address the topics of generational ties and displacement of low- to moderate-income (LMI) households:

# ACLT Portfolio Snapshot

- 16 properties built/renovated and sold in 2015/2016
- 20 homes in a HACCA portfolio purchase renovated and sold 2020-Present
- 4 new builds through development agreements
- 2 new ACLT developments (63 new units)
- +/- 4 additional expansion prospects in AHFC land inventory



# ACLT Portfolio Snapshot

## HACA Homes- Rehab

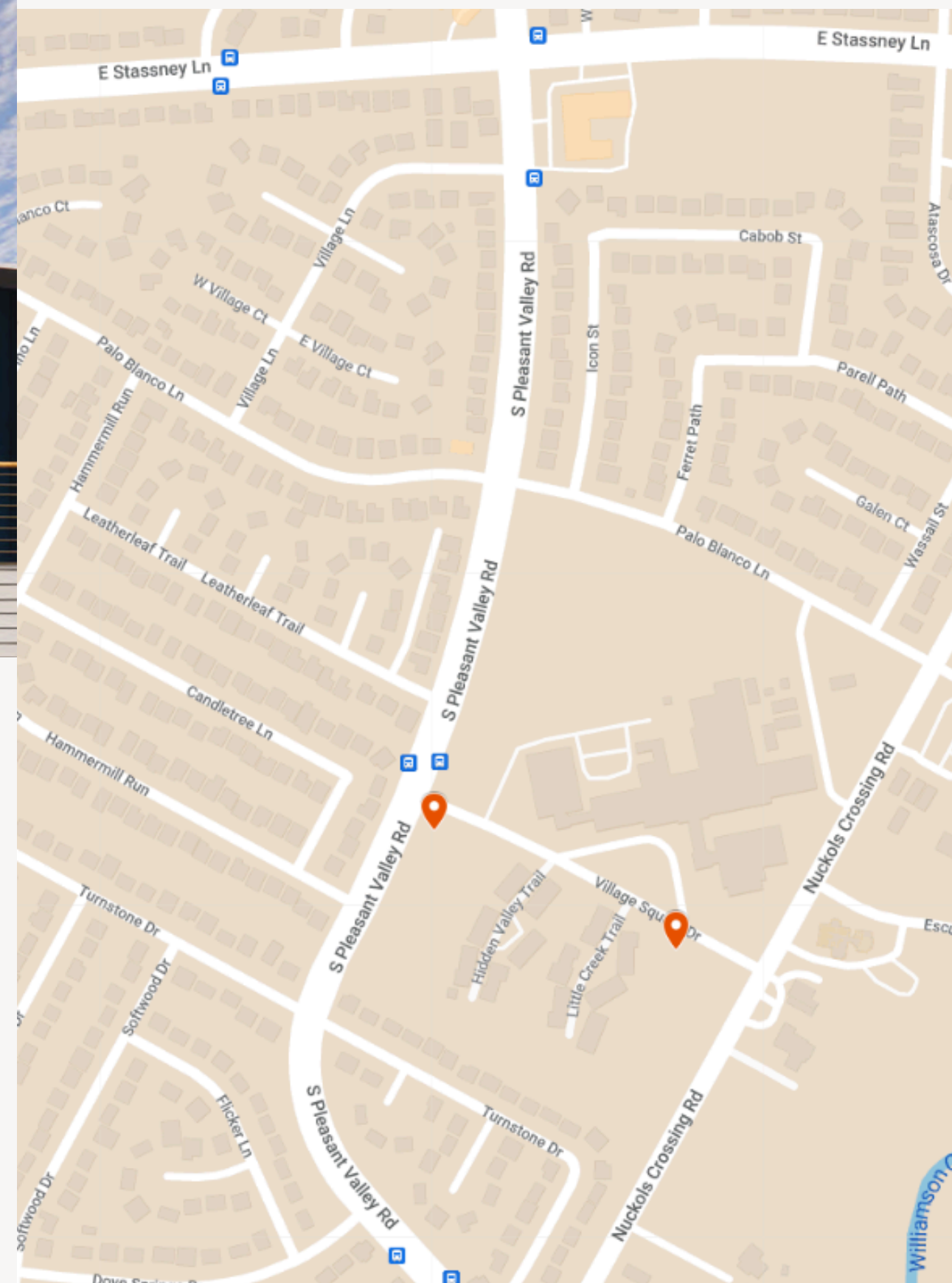


- Acquired 20 homes in 2020 for \$4.5M (2018 GO Bonds)
- Total construction cost ~\$3.8M
- Estimated holding cost ~\$0.5M
- \$195k-\$280k sales prices
- \$198k subsidy/unit

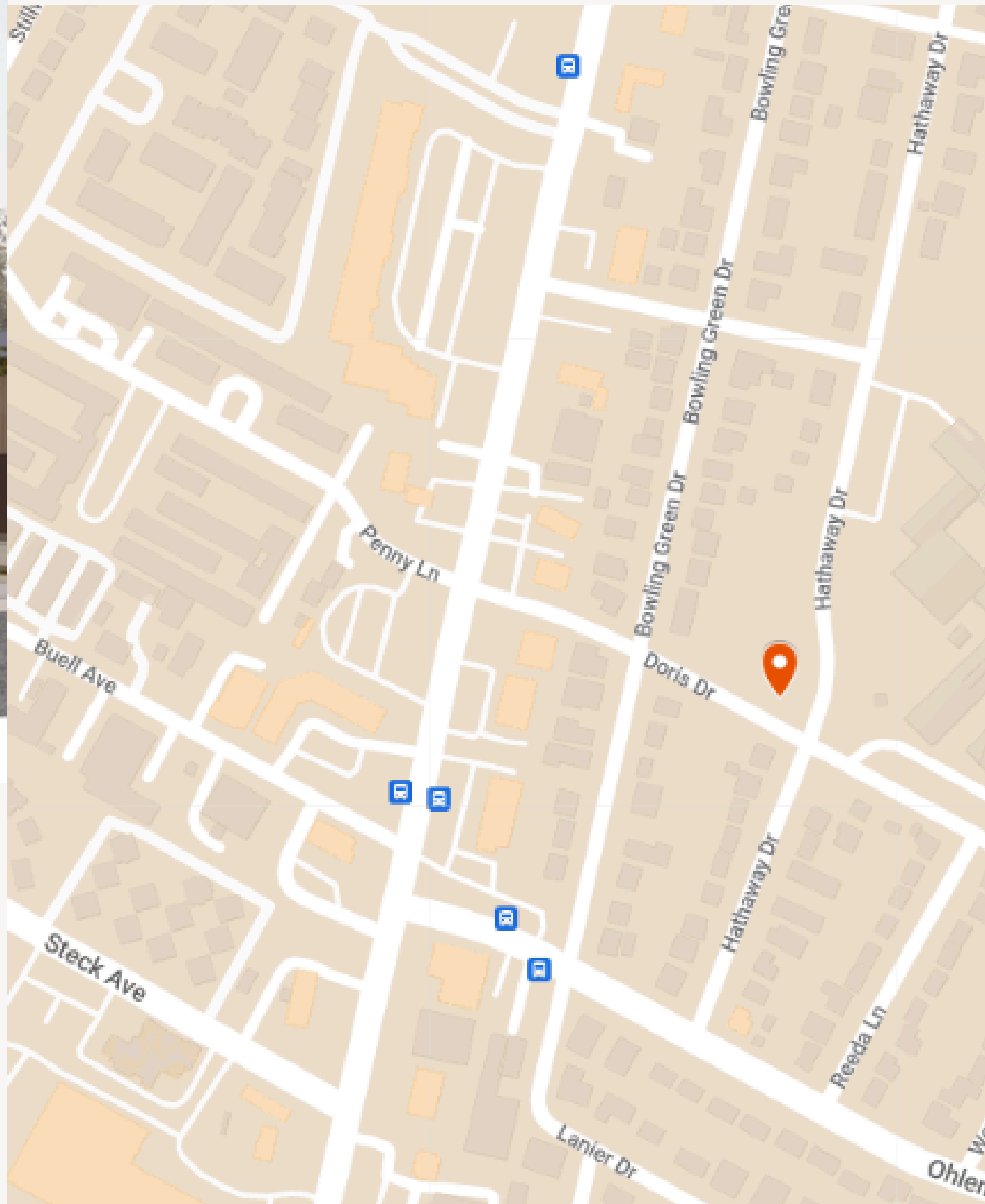
# Willows Crossing- Coming Soon 2027



- Acquired 2.7 acres in 2021 for \$1M General Obligation GO Bonds
- Industry ATX partnership
- 38 units, 1-3 BR units
- 12 fully accessible units
- \$185k-\$249k sales prices
- \$230k subsidy/unit



# Doris & Hathaway- Coming Soon 2027



- Acquired 1.23 acres 2018 for \$0.9M
- Developed "in-house"
- Total construction cost ~\$8.4M
- 25 units, 1-3 BR units
- 3 fully accessible units
- \$184k-\$248k sales prices
- \$182k subsidy/unit

# Lessons Learned

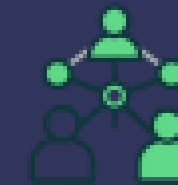
**Map partner roles early — clarify who stewards, who develops, who educates buyers.**



**Standardize documents: ground leases, resale formulas, underwriting, compliance checklists.**



**Build strong interdepartmental coordination (housing, legal, real estate services, planning).**



**Start with pilot properties; scale once systems for resale, monitoring, and buyer readiness are stabilized.**



**Use data systems to track units, owners, and resale cycles.**



**Respect and elevate existing nonprofit expertise; avoid duplicating services they already deliver.**



**Keep learning — stop, reevaluate, and adjust.**



# Recommendations for Practitioners

- **Use a hybrid governance model: municipal ownership with community voice and oversight.**
- **Align CLT strategy with bond funding, anti-displacement plans, and land disposition policies.**
- **Build a pipeline of ready buyers—education, counseling, and mortgage-ready prep, affirmative marketing**
- **Develop formal partnerships (MOUs) with CDCs, housing counseling agencies, lenders and government agencies.**
- **Fund stewardship as a core operational need, not an afterthought.**
- **Prioritize transparent public communication about the CLT model.**
- **Start with the goal in mind- if using multiple funding sources note the income limits and who you are trying to serve**

# Tools That Support Municipal CLTs

- **Ground lease template & resale formula calculator**
- **Standardized underwriting and developer guidelines**
- **Displacement risk maps/GIS tools for strategic land use**
- **Buyer readiness and homeownership counseling programs**
- **Pipeline tracking & stewardship monitoring systems**
- **Multilingual marketing and community engagement toolkits**
- **Anti-displacement policy coordination (repair programs, estate planning, etc.)**

# Constituent Attitudes

## Early Perceptions

- **Confusion about owning the home but not the land**
- **Concerns about wealth-building limits**
- **Distrust based on histories of displacement or government actions**
- **Questions about fairness: who gets access and why?**
- **Worries about resale restrictions or regulatory complexity**



## How They Evolve

- **From skepticism to understanding as residents see examples and outcomes**
- **Growing appreciation for permanent affordability**
- **Recognition of stability and predictability**
- **Increased interest among first-time buyers as CLT becomes more visible**
- **Community narratives shift toward long-term neighborhood preservation**

# How Conversations Have Changed

- From “What is a CLT?” to “How do we scale it responsibly?”
- From individual units to portfolio-level land stewardship strategy
- From crisis-response to proactive anti-displacement planning
- From siloed city departments to coordinated cross-agency models
- From limited nonprofit capacity to shared public-community partnerships

## STABILIZING HOUSEHOLDS

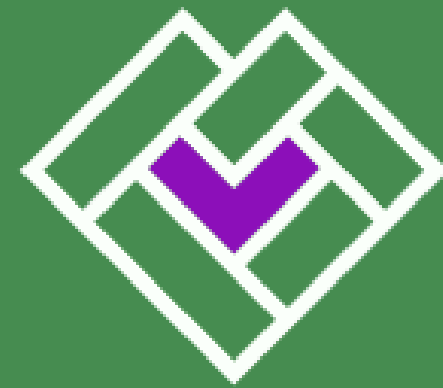
AHFC Rental:  
Permanent Supportive Housing  
Rental/LIHTC

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY

AHFC Ownership  
Homebuyer Programs  
Down Payment Assistance  
Affordable Ownership Units  
(CLT/ Deed Restricted)

## STABILIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

AHFC Displacement  
Prevention  
Repair Programs  
Preservation Support



# Austin Community Land Trust

Creating Permanently Affordable  
Homeownership Opportunities in Austin

Visit us at [ACLT-Homes.org](https://aclt-homes.org)

[AustinTexas.gov/Housing-Planning](https://austintexas.gov/Housing-Planning)

[ACLT-Homes.org](https://aclt-homes.org) [info@aclt-homes.org](mailto:info@aclt-homes.org)

(512) 790-9590

[Chanda.gaither@austintexas.gov](mailto:Chanda.gaither@austintexas.gov) 512-974-1053

