

Austin, Texas

In 1999, the Austin community published *Through the Roof*, a report detailing how the lack of affordable housing in Austin had reached crisis proportions. The report described how local regulatory barriers—cumbersome and costly development review processes, as well as the cost of regulating housing development—and the NIMBY phenomenon were all major causes of the crisis. In response, the city of Austin created the SMART (**S**afe, **M**ixed-income, **A**ccessible, **T**ransit-oriented, **R**easonably-priced, **M**eets green building standards) housing initiative to stimulate affordable housing production. According to the city, since the inception of this program in 2001, almost 4000 affordably priced single- and multi-family units were completed.

Specific actions taken:

- **Makes surplus city-owned land available to a non-profit housing organization at below market cost for the development of affordably priced housing.**
- **Reviews all proposed code amendments, rule changes, neighborhood plans, and development fees, resulting in several modifications to create greater affordability.**
- **Fast track reviews of proposed SMART housing developments and establishment of a facilitation and resolution process to address problems, thereby cutting down review time by one-half.**
- **Defuses “NIMBYISM” through the facilitation of dialogue between neighborhood groups and SMART housing developers for proposals requiring zoning changes, thus promoting early identification and resolution of concerns.**
- **Provides for fee waivers based on amount of affordably priced housing contained in a SMART development proposal.**