

[Free Credit Check: View all 3 of your Credit Scores before you Apply for a Home Loan! »](#)

Home > [Blogs](#) > Carl Webb's blog about housing

Carl Webb's blog about housing

21,754 views

[Refinance Rates at 2.62% Start Saving! \(3.12apr\)](#)



By [Carl Webb](#) | Home Buyer in [Austin, TX](#)

[Send to a friend](#)

[Share this blog](#)

[Email Alerts](#)

[RSS](#)

[Share](#)

[RSS](#)

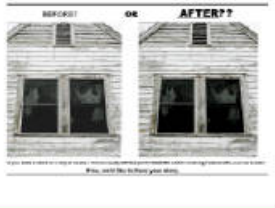
Austinites Lobbying for Municipal Accountability

Posted Under: [Quality of Life in Austin](#), [Market Conditions in Austin](#), [In My Neighborhood in Austin](#) | [October 15, 2010 2:11 AM](#)
| [249 views](#) | [No comments](#)

LET'S CLEAN HOUSE!

[TODO Austin August 2010 pg](#)

5:PHANTOM FUNDS II: Where's the Money? That's (Still) the Question. By [Katie Walsh](#)



[Fill Out Our Questionnaire](#)

[TODO Austin June 2010 pg](#)

5PHANTOM FUNDS: Austinite Fights for City Accountability to Taxpayers By [Katie Walsh](#)

“LET’S CLEAN HOUSE” is A.L.M.A.'s Accountability Project for the City of Austin's affordable housing programs. The project focuses on questions raised about the City's apparent:

- o mismanagement of its affordable housing programs;
- o possible misuse of Federal housing funds;
- o Complaints made against the City &/or its contractors by previous program participants;
- o Contractor Cronyism;
- o lack of accountability and nonresponsiveness to program participants' complaints.

All Citizens & Taxpayers are affected by decisions about the use of Federal funds made by our elected and appointed Public Officials.

The Victims are Middle-income and Low-income participants, including Senior Citizens and the Disabled.

[Click to read A.L.M.A.'s General Inquiry:](#)

Austinites Lobbying for Municipal Accountability
Keeping the Power in the Hands of The People

A.L.M.A.
alma@austinaccountabilityproject.com
www.AustinAccountabilityProject.com

A.L.M.A. is a community coalition concerned about Housing Programs & Land Grabs

A.L.M.A. insists on Government Accountability & Mopping Up Misuse Of Power.

The Accountability Project – for Affordable Housing Programs:

I. A.L.M.A. launched The Accountability Project – for Affordable Housing Programs, after a number of citizens' complaints were made that centered on a common issue. That common issue is the alleged mismanagement of certain housing programs and how the citizens who participate in those programs are/were affected.

II. Questions are raised with regard to the management of certain affordable housing programs:

Carl Webb's Blog »

Categories

- [General Area](#) (27)
- [Quality of Life](#) (117)
- [Traffic & Public Transportation](#) (25)
- [Schools](#) (3)
- [Crime & Safety](#) (20)
- [Entertainment & Nightlife](#) (3)
- [Shopping & Local Amenities](#) (3)
- [Market Conditions](#) (84)
- [Home Buying](#) (36)
- [Home Selling](#) (4)
- [Financing](#) (29)
- [Tech Tips](#) (20)
- [Curb Appeal](#) (1)
- [Foreclosure](#) (28)
- [Celebrity Homes](#) (1)
- [Remodel & Renovate](#) (4)
- [Going Green](#) (15)
- [In My Neighborhood](#) (35)
- [How To...](#) (25)
- [Rental Basics](#) (19)
- [Rent vs Buy](#) (1)
- [Property Q&A](#) (12)
- [Home Insurance](#) (2)
- [Moving](#) (4)
- [Credit Score](#) (3)
- [Rentals](#) (3)

Locations

- [Alabama](#) (1)
- [Florida](#) (1)
- [Louisiana](#) (1)
- [Massachusetts](#) (1)
- [Texas](#) (14)
- [Harris County](#) (2)
- [New York County](#) (7)
- [Los Angeles County](#) (2)
- [Bexar County](#) (1)
- [Cook County](#) (1)
- [Travis County](#) (72)
- [Orleans County](#) (5)
- [Tarrant County](#) (1)
- [Denver County](#) (1)
- [Galveston County](#) (9)
- [Saint Francis County](#) (1)
- [Otter Tail County](#) (1)
- [Austin](#) (89)
- [Chicago](#) (1)
- [Denver](#) (1)
- [Fort Worth](#) (2)

- 1) general practices enacted by program managers & other public officials i.e.:
 - a. are contractual & H.U.D. guidelines consistently followed?
 - b. have program participants' rights been violated?
 - c. have fiduciary duties been fulfilled or misused?
 - d. are contractor violations and poor workmanship consistently reported & penalties enforced?
 - e. Verity of Recordkeeping and Evaluation Reports:
 - loan repayments, application of funds and other financial reports;
 - contractor evaluations and contractor re-qualification applications;
 - project status & completion reports;
 - project delays &/or abandoned projects;

Galveston (1)
 Houston (2)
 Los Angeles (2)
 New Orleans (5)
 New York (7)
 New York Mills (1)
 Palestine (1)
 San Antonio (1)
 Texas City (9)

2) Does management follow through with what it represented it would do?

3) Accountability of: Program Managers; Program Contractors; Public Officials

4) how effectively are our tax dollars being applied? ... and WHO is benefiting?

5) what is the end result for certain program participants and their homes?

6) Does the City maintain its obligatory stance of neutrality; OR is preferential and protective treatment given to certain contractors?

III. A.L.M.A. aims to keep homes & families safe from misuse of power by holding its public officials accountable.

IV. A.L.M.A.'s goal with The Accountability Project is:

1) To hold Public Officials and programs Accountable;

2) maintain &/or restore ethical & exemplary management practices of these housing programs;

3) Develop and implement a plan that will:

- a. safeguard from potential mismanagement in the future.
- b. provide realistic, effective and responsive avenues for participants to enforce accountability & restore equitable treatment.
- c. protect participants rights via writing and implementing more equitable contracts on behalf of the participant.

4) Acquire a thorough investigation by a neutral & objective party. As part of the Investigation, A.L.M.A. requests that:

- a. ALL program participants dating at least as far back as 1990, be notified of the pending investigation, and that they ALL be given the opportunity to provide comments, free from the fear of retaliation.
- b. ALL program participants are allowed to formally question the manner in which the status of their projects were reported.
- c. The application of funds for each project be thoroughly traced; and determine whether its legitimacy is disputed by the participant.
- d. If participants no longer own the property that was the subject of the program, determine WHY.
- e. Review the number of foreclosures & vacant lots; how many are owned by the City; how many were sold; and WHAT circumstances prompted the foreclosures, sales, vacant lots, or municipal ownership – contact the previous program participants to get their side of the story.

A.L.M.A. welcomes your support. We hope that The Accountability Project will provide relief for previous housing program participants; and assurance and protection for future housing programs in the future.

A.L.M.A. thanks the Gray Panthers of Austin, Travis County Green Party, Austin Housing Pinch, ANC & KOOP radio & P.A.C.T.V.

Cordially,
 Allissa Chambers, Chair – Austinites Lobbying for Municipal Accountability

Carl Webb's Profile
 Carl Webb's Questions & Answers

RSS

Central Texas Wins Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

Posted Under: [Quality of Life in Austin](#), [Market Conditions in Austin](#), [Going Green in Austin](#) | October 14, 2010 7:05 PM | 241 views | No comments

The Central Texas region has been awarded \$3,700,000 from the federal Sustainable Communities Partnership, part of the DOT's, HUD's and EPA's coordinated effort to promote sustainable communities through a \$98 million [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program](#).

"Regions that embrace sustainable communities will have a built-in competitive edge in attracting jobs and private investment," said HUD regional administrator C. Donald Babers at today's announcement. "Planning our communities smarter means parents will spend less time driving and more time with their children; more families will live in safe, stable communities near good schools and jobs; and more businesses will have access to the capital and talent they need to grow and prosper."



Pictured above C. Donald Babers and Congressman Lloyd Doggett.

Ours was one of 45 regional areas to receive funding through this new initiative intended to build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation. The Central Texas grant will be used to develop cutting-edge tools and plans that provide the information we need to make the investments that will help us create the region we want.

[Envision Central Texas](#) is a member of the application consortium which includes the Capital Area Council of Governments, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Cities of Austin, Round Rock, San Marcos, University of Texas at Austin, Austin Community College District and Texas State University, and IBM. A number of additional organizations from around the region were involved in the development of the grant and will participate going forward.

<http://www.envisioncentraltexas.org>

Sustainable Housing Research in the Texas colonias and other similar areas.

Posted Under: [Quality of Life, Market Conditions](#) | October 12, 2010 10:11 PM | 72 views | No comments

LBJ School Professor Peter Ward Awarded \$100,000 Ford Foundation Grant for Sustainable Housing Research

AUSTIN, Texas, October 11, 2010—LBJ School Professor [Peter Ward](#), C.B. Smith Sr. Centennial Chair in U.S.-Mexico Relations and Adviser to the LBJ School Ph.D. program, has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation. The grant will fund research on sustainable housing policy and policy development for self-help in the Texas *colonias* and other similar areas.

The project will build upon data from 2000 and will offer a longitudinal perspective from two cross-sectional databases for 2000-2010.

"This work grows out of my students' very successful Spring 2010 semester class discussions and final report about sustainable housing application opportunities in low and very-low income settlements in Texas *colonias*," said Ward. "Taking sustainable housing practices a feature of all housing and urban rehab efforts, and not just those that affect middle-class America, is essential and forms an important part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The work that we are now doing for the Ford Foundation will directly inform emerging policy recommendations both nationally, as well as in self-help housing areas in Latin America and beyond."

Assisting Dr. Ward with the research will be graduate students from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and other programs. Research will contribute to the development of housing and land market policy for low-income *colonias* in the Lower Valley counties as well as similar subdivisions in peri-urban areas of major cities like Austin, Dallas and San Antonio.

The first portion of the project will be a densification re-study to provide data on how many formerly vacant lots were taken up since the original study in 1999. Ward's prior research in 2001-2002 evaluated the impact of a program to provide clean property titles to residents. The new study will provide a ten-year snapshot to help understand what improvements have been made since 2002 and how those improvements were financed. It will also seek information regarding housing market performance in light of the 2008-2009 housing and financial crisis and to explore the potential for helping homeowners to incorporate sustainable, green technologies within self-help housing processes.

The final portion of the project will be to develop simple cost-benefit models that can be applied by communities and the households themselves in order to gauge the utility and benefits of green and other self-build housing improvement investments in their homes.

Ward and his students will conduct their study between September 2010 and August 2011.

For more information and data on previous studies done by Ward and his students, please visit <http://www.lahn.utexas.org>

Get LinkedIn to Twitter - Realtor Track

Posted Under: [Tech Tips in Austin](#), [In My Neighborhood in Austin](#), [How To... in Austin](#) | October 9, 2010 10:29 PM | 231 views | No comments



Get LinkedIn to Twitter - Realtor Track

Thursday, October 14 · 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Austin Title North - Spicewood Offices
3708 Spicewood Springs Rd. Ste #100
Austin, TX

[Schmooze Networking](#)

Austin Title and Schmooze Networking present
Get LinkedIn to Twitter
This session geared towards the Real Estate Agent

We've all known about LinkedIn for years and how to use it to connect with your peers. But they have made changes that puts them on the same level as a social medium playing field with other platforms. Now tied in with Twitter, there's no reason to not utilize both for business. We'll show you how. Learn how to use these features to increase your internet exposure.

Agenda
12-1pm lunch served prior to class
1pm Class begins promptly at 1pm

\$10 (Includes lunch) prepaid or \$15 at the door (cash, check or charge) Prepay here:
<http://www.schmoozenetworking.com/austin-workshops.html>

RSVP to Becky Hopkins at Becky.Hopkins@austintitle.com if paying at the door so we can include you in our lunch count.

Special thanks to GNM Lohr Homes for lunch sponsorship and Jake Kail for being our room sponsor.

Wall



Schmooze Networking We've lowered the cost! Thanks to our great sponsors for this session. Lunch provided by GNM Lohr Custom Homes; Room sponsor - Jake Kail, Private Label. Be sure to thank them and be sure to register and take advantage of the \$10 prepaid cost or \$15 at the door. <http://www.schmoozenetworking.com/austin-workshops.html>

[Austin Workshops - Schmooze Networking](#)

Austin Unscripted will film community discussion about historic preservation.

Posted Under: [General Area in Austin](#), [Quality of Life in Austin](#), [In My Neighborhood in Austin](#) | October 9, 2010 12:44 AM |

206 views | No comments

Austin Unscripted



About the Conference

Austin Unscripted is headed to town, and so is the [National Preservation Conference](#). Learn more about the premier educational and networking event for historic preservation professionals, volunteer leaders, and advocates, which will take place October 27-30 at locations throughout Austin. Also, stay tuned in the coming weeks as we add features to our website that will let you experience the conference virtually.

Introducing Austin Unscripted!

By **National Trust for Historic Preservation** on October 5th, 2010

How do you keep a place weird?

That's the million-dollar question for a city growing as quickly and dramatically as Austin. And it's a question that Austinites can answer best.

So our team here at the National Trust for Historic Preservation brainstormed, called, edited, tweeted, and used up an inordinate number of black Sharpies to give you a way to tell us. The result (drum roll please) ... **Austin Unscripted**.

Starting Friday, October 22 — right before the [National Preservation Conference](#) — we are rolling our video cameras at locations across town with one goal in mind: to capture your answers. What should Austin save? What places define it? What do you want the future to look like? What is historic preservation and how can it help?

If you love your city and want to shape its future, then we want you! [Visit our website](#), choose a meet-up, and join us to speak your mind about the city you call home.

In the meantime, **help us get the word out!** [Share the video](#) with your friends and family, and encourage them to comment. You can also [join us on Twitter](#) and use the [#atxunscripted](#) hashtag to find other involved Austinites.

More videos, tweets, and info coming soon. And thanks for helping us keep Austin weird, preservation-style.

Support the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Donate now.

<http://blog.preservationnation.org/2010/10/05/introducing-austin-unscripted/>



Wheatville Co-op
11:30 AM-1:30 PM, 3101 Guadalupe

Waterloo Records

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM, 600A. North Lamar

East End Fourth Fridays
6 PM-8 PM, 1106 E. 11th



SFC Farmers' Market - Downtown
9 AM - 11 AM, Republic Square Park

Torchy's Trailer Park
12 PM - 2 PM, 1311 S. 1st

Hey Cupcake! – SoCo
3 PM - 5 PM, 1600 Block of S. Congress

Cheer Up Charlie's
What Is Austin? Happy Hour
6 PM - 8 PM, 1104 E. 6th

Sunday

Our Lady of Guadalupe
8 AM - 10 AM, 1206 E. 9th

Ebenezer Baptist Church
9 AM - 10 AM, 1010 E. 10th

HOPE Farmers Market
11 AM - 1 PM, 414 Waller

PODER
2 PM - 4 PM, 2604 E. Cesar Chavez



Renaissance Market
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM, Guadalupe @ UT

Quack's 43rd Street Bakery
4 PM - 6 PM, 411 E. 43rd

Five Public (and Free!) Events at the National Preservation Conference

By **National Trust for Historic Preservation** on September 21st, 2010

If “free” is your favorite price point — and you happen to live in the Austin metro area — then you should check out the five public events happening at the [National Preservation Conference](#) in October.

While we'd love to have you for the entire conference, we know how busy life can get. So feed your preservation needs with these cool events instead, and make a note to join us next year in Buffalo for the whole shebang!

Wednesday, October 27

Opening Plenary Session

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the [Long Center for the Performing Arts](#)

Begin the conference by hearing from Paul Goldberger, Architecture Critic for *The New Yorker*, where since 1997 he has written the magazine's celebrated “Sky Line” column. He's also the author of two new books, including *Why Architecture Matters* and *Building Up and Tearing Down: Reflections on the Age of Architecture*, a collection of his architecture essays. Mr. Goldberger began his career at *The New York Times*, where in 1984 his architecture criticism was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Criticism, the highest award in journalism.

Thursday, October 28 – Friday, October 29

Exhibit Hall and Preservation Bookstore Open

~~9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.~~

Thurs. 10/28, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the [Hilton Austin](#)

Fri. 10/29, 12 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the [Hilton Austin](#)

Visit often to find a compelling selection of booths with information on local artisans, commercial restoration products, preservation-related educational programs, and financial institutions that support preservation projects and activities. Take the time to peruse a wide selection of preservation-themed books and souvenir gifts to take home. To enter the exhibit hall, please stop by registration on the 6th Floor at the Hilton Austin to complete a brief form.

Thursday, October 28

Next American City URBANEXUS Salon

Project Row Houses: Art & Preservation as Tools for Social Change

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the [Hilton Austin](#)

Next American City presents a special film screening and a salon-style discussion casting art and historic preservation as tools for social change. *THIRD WARD TX*, directed and produced by filmmaker and Austin resident Andrew Garrison, features the captivating story of [Project Row Houses](#), a nonprofit organization in Houston and a model for inner-city urban renewal through community engagement. Moderated by John Cary, President and CEO of *Next American City*, Andrew Garrison and Project Row Houses founder Rick Lowe will take audience questions about this unique example of social activism.

Friday, October 29

National Preservation Awards

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the [Paramount Theatre](#)

Join us at the fabulous Paramount Theatre (the newly crowned [winner](#) of the [This Place Matters Community Challenge!](#)) for the 2010 [National Preservation Awards](#)—a gala tribute to the best in preservation as we announce and celebrate award recipients.

Saturday, October 30

Closing Plenary Session

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the [Paramount Theatre](#)

Sponsored by Bud Light/John and Bobbie Nau

Wrap up the conference surrounded by the lyrical landscapes of Texas and the American West. Speakers include Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar (invited) and Juan Hernandez, a native Texan and the only American to have served President Vicente Fox in the Mexican cabinet.

Decided you want to join us for the whole conference? [Register here!](#)

On Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/NationalTrustforHistoricPreservation>

Housing Authority City of Austin hiring Assistant Housing Manager

Posted Under: [General Area in Austin](#), [In My Neighborhood in Austin](#) | October 8, 2010 10:57 PM | 201 views | No comments

Assistant Housing Manager 21-10: Housing Authority City of Austin

Job ID	21-10
Company Name	Housing Authority City of Austin
Job Category	Clerical/Administrative; Real Estate
Location	Austin, TX
Position Type	Full-Time, Employee
Salary	\$13.67 per hour
Experience	0-1 Years Experience
Desired Education Level	High School
Date Posted	October 1, 2010

Assistant Housing Manager

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: Assists Housing Manager with managing one or more of the Housing Authority's public housing developments. Acts as Manager in the absence of the Manager. Implements and enforces all HUD and agency rules and regulations. Conducts orientation for all new residents: shows unit, explains lease and briefs them on all Authority's policies and procedures governing their possession and continued occupancy of the unit. Reviews lease obligation between tenants and Housing Authority: monitors and evaluates compliance with Authority policies and procedures and HUD/Agency occupancy standards. Accurately calculates residents' family income. Determines the correct amount of monthly rent, eligibility, and qualifications for earned income disallowances. Collects rents, prepares bank deposits and maintains accurate collection records of all security deposits and other charges. Schedules and mails notification letters for annual and interim recertification of residents and accurately conducts re-certifications in a timely manner. Mails delinquent notices, eviction letters, rent change notices and other correspondence to residents when necessary. Reviews account receivable reports daily and conducts documented collection activities for all delinquent accounts. Interviews and counsels residents concerning lease violations and offers referral information for financial assistance and any other social service assistance that may assist the resident or initiate corrective action. Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS: Some college hours in business, public administration, or social sciences in an accredited college or university. Copies of diplomas and/or transcripts may be required. Four years work experience working in an administrative capacity in public housing or property management, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Must successfully complete the Housing Managers Certification Training within one year of the date of hire or at the first available offering. **Skills and written test will be administered. Valid Texas Driver's License and driving record required.**

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT: Work is performed indoors and outdoors, and may involve physical exertion during visits and inspection of units and developments. Work may entail travel to meetings, conferences, and workshops in other cities. The employee is required to work unusual hours. Work involves the normal risks and discomforts associated with an office environment and visits to outdoor developments, sites, dwellings, or facilities, inspections of structures and confrontations with applicants and residents.

APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT: Resumes will not be accepted without a completed application. Applications are available at the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, 1124 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704 or on our website at www.hacanet.org. The HACA is a drug-free workplace. Any offer of employment will be contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory DPS Criminal History Report & drug screen.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

City of Austin's Affordable Housing Forums - Linking Community Investments: Affordable Housing and Economic Development

Posted Under: [Quality of Life in Austin](#), [Market Conditions in Austin](#), [Home Buying in Austin](#) | [October 6, 2010 11:40 PM](#) | 261 views | No comments

Friday, October 8, 2010 - 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

The City of Austin's Affordable Housing Forums, sponsored by the City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) office, will continue in a four-part series, "Linking Austin's Investments for a Sustainable Community." All forums will be located at the Street Jones Building, 1000 E. 11th St., 4th Floor.

This series of Affordable Housing Forums explores the intersection between housing and other vital factors contributing to Austin's quality of life.

The series will examine questions such as:

- * How does affordable housing fit into the larger picture of Austin's vital public services?
- * How can our limited subsidies be spent to maximize the benefits for Austin's low- and moderate-income populations?
- * What do we prioritize as key components of affordable housing policies and planning as we continue with Austin's Comprehensive Planning process?

Forum No. 2: Linking Community Investments: Affordable Housing and Economic Development

The second forum of the series will focus on the linkage between affordable housing and economic development. Panelists will discuss recent trends in job growth in Austin, ways to relate that job growth with the housing market, and opportunities for employers to assist in creating housing opportunities for workers.

[« Read older posts](#)

Residential Real Estate

[San Francisco real estate](#) | [New York real estate](#) | [Los Angeles real estate](#) | [Orlando real estate](#) | [Miami real estate](#) | [Philadelphia real estate](#) | [Phoenix real estate](#) | [San Diego real estate](#) | [San Jose real estate](#) | [Chicago real estate](#) | [Arizona real estate](#) | [California real estate](#) | [Florida real estate](#) | [Illinois real estate](#) | [Massachusetts real estate](#) | [New Jersey real estate](#) | [Pennsylvania real estate](#) | [Texas real estate](#) | [Other local real estate](#) | [California apartments](#) | [New York apartments](#) | [Texas apartments](#) | [Apartments for rent](#) | [Home price maps](#) | [Real estate community](#) | [U.S. Property records](#)

Explore Trulia [Homes for Sale](#) | [Homes for Rent](#) | [Stats & Trends](#) | [Real Estate Advice](#) | [Trulia Mobile](#) | [Trulia Labs](#) | [Trulia API](#)

For Professionals [Agents](#) | [Brokers](#) | [MLS](#) | [Advertisers & Partners](#) | [Tools & Widgets](#) | [Submit Your Listings](#)

Corporate [About Trulia](#) | [News Room](#) | [Trulia Blog](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Advertiser Terms of Use](#) | [Trulia Pro Terms of Use](#) | [Community Guidelines](#)