Thinking Beyond the Homeless Encampment

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By

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to those who have impacted and supported my journey through this program and provided me with unwavering support to pursue the work I am passionate about. To my parents, Nancy and Tim, and brothers, Anthony and Dante, who believed in me and supported my endeavors, helping me become the person I am today. To my mentors, Aleksandra, Jake and the many other faculty and professionals in the field who worked with me, advocated for me, and helped foster my ability and interest in pursuing this work. To Taylor, a Ph.D. student in the Planning program, who provided me with countless resources, connections and support vital to the completion of this thesis. To my friends, classmates, and cohort, who provided me with moral support and helped me think through my interests and ideas. To my roommate Chase, who supported me, checked in on me, and listened to me as I worked through these ideas.

This work is also dedicated to those who are living unhoused in communities across the world and those who are tirelessly working to create solutions to the crisis of homelessness.

To all who impacted my personal and professional journey, Thank You!

Abstract

Thinking Beyond the Homeless Encampment

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This thesis explores the Tiny House Village Model as a critical framework for developing intentional homeless communities, or IHCs, that better serve the housing, service, and social needs of those experiencing homelessness. This research examines different approaches to land ownership, land-use & zoning regulations, and financing tools that allow transitional congregate shelters and affordable tiny house villages to be more easily constructed on land within the urban area. Additionally, this research considers the various aspects of housing and community design that can be used in these projects to give planning and development professionals an idea of how to best create these communities to allow a positive transitional and permanent housing experience. Using lessons from seven case studies across Oregon, Washington, and Texas, this research offers a resource guide for planners and housing leaders in the Austin community to use when thinking about innovative and human-centered approaches to housing the city's homeless population. This research focuses on the City of Austin and addresses how local government can best support these projects by enacting policies and regulations that provide legal grounding, support, and recognition of this type of housing infrastructure. Results include strategies for creating IHCs through existing and proposed land ownership, regulatory, and financing tools to give the City of Austin the best chance of creating alternative housing types for the unhoused population.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The presence of tent cities in American urban areas has demonstrated a troubling pattern of exclusion and inequality for a growing sector of our population. With increasingly high barriers to accessing housing and a vast increase in lower-end rental prices, people experiencing housing insecurity have few options to pursue (Philip, 2012). Before the Covid-19 pandemic, wages remained stagnant and public assistance was dwindling, resulting in affordable housing options being few and far between. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, there were only thirty seven affordable and available rental homes for every one hundred extremely low-income renters nationwide in data gathered for 2021 (NLIHC, 2021). As it stands, our nation is poorly prepared to deal with the crisis at hand, which has led to increasing rates of homelessness and housing insecurity (HUD Public Affairs, 2022).

The public perception of tent cities was projected during the fallout of the most recent financial crisis, with communities sprouting up in cities across the nation. Frequent images were shown in national publications of the American River encampment in Sacramento, bringing the reality of the situation to the eyes of the nation (Loftus-Farren, 2011). Since then, tent cities have become commonplace in all major population centers and encounter continuous resistance from those who wish to dismiss them as a counterculture of people who cannot comply with the standards we perceive the United States to hold (Heben, 2014).

One of the largest contributing factors to the lack of smaller, more informal, and intentional housing in this nation is the widely adopted regulatory frameworks that make these tent cities illegal through zoning, trespassing, and anti-camping legislation (Heben, 2014). The construction of shelters and other types of housing aimed at the extremely low-income population is held to the same dimensional building standards as all other housing types, creating a difficult system for innovative practices and smaller dwelling units to be attempted. Another contribution is the tendency of the home building industry in the United States, prioritizing the increased size of housing, the demands of affluent Americans, and the expectations of speculators – all to meet the growing desire of cities to build bigger houses on bigger lots (Heben, 2014, Interview Two, 2023). This notion has set out to further fulfill the practice of expanding single-family home development popularized in post-war America, and the expansion of that philosophy through the increased size of homes beginning in the 1980s (Interview Two, 2023).

Purpose

This research is not about affordable housing but is rather an exploration into the methods that have and should be used to create innovative transitional housing structures that aim to address the need for housing and social support for people experiencing homelessness. Through this research, I provide an overview of practical efforts, policies and theories that exist in the United States around creating intentional homeless communities (IHCs) that are more responsive to the social and economic needs of people than traditional supportive housing. One such method is the Tiny House Village Model

which I highlight as an alternative, human-centered approach to housing that can better address the needs of people who don't fit into the mold of traditional supportive housing (Heben, 2014, Mingoya, 2015).

The purpose of the study is to discover methods for implementing congregate shelters and micro-housing communities through the concept of the Tiny House Village Model for people who are experiencing homelessness. I explore this model of IHC as an alternative to traditional methods of shelter and housing resources to more thoughtfully address the needs and desires of people as they transition out of homelessness. Additionally, I highlight the benefits of creating and expanding the scope of these communities specifically in the Austin metropolitan area.

In general, intentional communities, are defined as those that provide housing and services to accomplish a specific goal (Falvo, 2019). For the sake of this research, the goal is to plan and design a site or multiple sites that can offer a range of supportive housing from formalized tent cities to affordable micro-housing units that can operate for various lengths of time and address different needs. My research looks into the methods of developing these IHCs, looking specifically at the ownership of land, the regulatory environment of that land and the financing mechanisms that can support the development of these projects. This research aims to uncover a number of strategies to accomplish this work here in Austin while also providing more general strategies to the various types of homeless response infrastructure that exist around the country.

Exploring the existence and formation of tent cities is a piece of the puzzle that this research is looking to uncover, highlighting the power and resourcefulness of those who

live in spaces and in communities that are unrecognized by our larger understanding of housing. Recognizing and supporting these spaces as a vital housing infrastructure is part of the framework for pushing the idea of formalization that this research is intended to demonstrate. Included are a number of lessons that draw our nation's housing ideology back to a time of more intentional and community-oriented housing types that foster greater social connection (Heben, 2014, Furst, 2017). This research builds upon prior studies on the subject that have recognized the important role that tent cities play in our housing infrastructure, focusing on the belief that we cannot discount the impact of this form of settlement in the absence of other solutions (Heben, 2014, Warner, 2014).

Any improvement to the way traditional homeless shelters and housing are developed, such as Emergency Shelters and Permanent Supportive Housing, will not be explored in this thesis. I chose this topic to explore the alternative efforts and ideas of people who for one reason or another don't fit into the rigid definition of housing that we have created in this country. The discussed solutions will allow researchers and citizens alike to take a step back from the way we typically think about residential communities. Essentially, this work is looking at the idea of developing community-based solutions to formalize the concept of tent cities into spaces that can operate as both a shelter and housing infrastructure for people experiencing homelessness. Highlighting the importance of this framework to produce innovative approaches for creating alternative affordable housing models.

Motivation

Homelessness in the United States is an issue that has long deserved the title of "crisis", yet it has failed to be recognized as one due to the perception that those in the situation chose to be in it in some way. Our country's system of privatized land and housing, exclusionary property rights and political dysfunction has had an immense impact on our disadvantaged community members (Cohen, 2019). The instance of homelessness in the United States has created tension between our regulations, economic concerns, and the needs of people. People experiencing homelessness should have a place in our communities that is adaptable to the range of needs they may have while they transition. The goal of land-use and policy agents should be to understand these factors and work outside of the traditional forces of housing development to innovate and try solutions that will prevent people from living unsheltered, unorganized and without support. There is no "silver bullet" to solving homelessness, and this study makes that very clear. This research hopes to highlight positive solutions that can be linked together to create a fabric of ideas and knowledge that can be applied to the homeless response system for cities like Austin and others across the nation. The Tiny House Village Model is a structure that has built-in flexibility to address the diversity of needs that people experiencing homelessness may have, including their basic needs for safety and belonging. Additionally, I believe these villages should be designed with the highest level of resident participation in order to provide the most impactful transitional experience.

Looking at this issue through the rigid lens of land ownership, financing, regulations, and housing form, I intend to highlight the impact that these structures can

have on the development of smaller, more intentional communities that can serve as a stop-gap for those currently living unsheltered. There is no one solution that will solve homelessness, but giving greater flexibility to housing development will surely open up the gates for further innovation in this space, allowing for more people to be served in a way that is more reflective of the values they hold. Interpreting tent cities and tiny house villages in this way and for this purpose allows residents themselves to participate in the action of obtaining shelter and services that will build that sense of community and support that is so vital to human well-being (Warner, 2014). An important aspect to acknowledge here is the disparate impact that homelessness has played on our communities of color. Nationwide, over 50% of people that experience homelessness are people of color or mixed-race, while they make up less than 24% of the total population in the United States (Fowler, 2022). Recognizing this reality is an essential part of this work, and informs the framing and analysis of this topic as part of the mission to address the racial and wealth disparities in this country.

Shelter-to-Housing Continuum

The recently adopted Shelter to Housing Continuum Project in Portland, OR, implies there is a need to think about homeless housing as a fluid system that can accommodate both temporary and permanent supportive structures (Portland.gov, 2021). Shelter and housing are two sides of the homeless response system that are necessary to consider when thinking about accommodating people with a range of services and support that will best assist them in their progression from homelessness, through transitional

shelters, and into permanent housing. Providing a type of environment that is flexible to the needs of individuals while also complying with the rigid framework of the formal planning process is something that many types of homeless housing struggle to achieve. Complete plans and permits are needed to begin construction and buildings must be completely finished before people move into them, but this process does not lend itself well to creating any sort of "active" solution to homeless housing (Heben, 2014). This is a process that caters itself to mass production and leaves little room for alternative understandings of development, such as those that happened more organically, prior to formal planning and zoning regulations.

In terms of land use and zoning requirements, shelter and housing are two different types of occupancy that deal with different needs and different lengths of time. Combining these two structures to achieve a more comprehensive response to the issue is something that is relatively unheard of, but is something that is ripe for further exploration. Setting aside the complexity of land-use regulations for now, it is important that we understand this duality of housing resources as something that is desired in the execution of IHCs. As beneficial as it would be to create a land-use designation that would allow flexibility for both of these uses, it is not advantageous to expect that this route would be accessible through most formal planning processes. Discussed in Chapter Four: Research Findings, something more achievable considering the existing constraints would be the retooling of existing transitional housing, congregate use, and single-room occupancy (SRO) regulations that would offer a more flexible environment for different aspects of this continuum to exist on their own.

It is difficult to think of this concept through the lens of traditional planning and development processes because they often fail to give the market enough incentive to establish baseline shelter and housing needs (Byrne, 2013, Cohen, 2019). Housing today is not thought of nor designed with this idea in mind but is rather built for profit and designed to fulfill the needs of the free market. Housing for people of extremely low income is rarely considered in this market system due to various banking and financial practices which focus on creating high returns and less on community needs (Byrne, 2013). This has almost eliminated its viability as a housing form and left it to faith-based and non-governmental organizations to create. Emergency shelters and other temporary housing infrastructure exist within the same reality, where the development of these spaces is entirely dependent on public and mission-oriented entities that exist to fill in the needs for this type of housing. It is important to note that this crisis and the existence of tent cities provide a foundation for self-managed, human-scale models of low-cost and low-impact housing (Heben, 2014). Looking at housing through this lens offers a profound opportunity for a more flexible form of housing development that can function as both a short-term shelter and long-term affordable housing, depending on the immediate needs of the community. The following chapters explain the implications of this on existing zoning and land-use requirements, but the need for this flexibility is something that we as a society could benefit from and is a central point of this research into alternative forms of intentional homeless communities.

The Rise of Tent Cities

When we think of tent cities, one of the main images that come to mind is that of Hoovervilles that sprang up during the great depression of the 1930's. More recently, during what some may call the second great depression, similar images became the face of the news headlines, with tent cities being documented in places such as Sacramento, Austin and many others (Savlov, 2009). These images depicted a struggle that many could not fully comprehend, but were something that all Americans were beginning to understand as a reality that was caused by runaway financial policies and a highly speculative economy. The telling of this story was done in a visual manner, which was a stark difference from the typical written reporting on the issue, typically perceiving it as an incurable social issue (Heben, 2014).

The housed tend to perceive homelessness in a piecemeal way, seeing small glimpses of panhandling or people sleeping in doorways, but they don't often see the whole story because the true scale of the issue is hidden from sight. While these stories attracted attention from around the world, they often lacked any consideration to the fact that people were living there, in tents, for a reason. But even the homeless who were interviewed for the story seemed to focus on the tragedy of the situation and how they were living there in response to a failed affordable housing system and insufficient social safety net. This increase in tent cities created a movement to study the phenomena, beginning with a report from the National Coalition for the Homeless in 2010 that dubbed them as a "waiting room for affordable and accessible housing" (National Coalition, 2010).

A tent city is a form of homeless encampment that is well-rooted in the community and organized to some level to provide a collective benefit to those who live there (Heben, 2014). This recognition may be adopted by the inhabitants themselves or by the surrounding community, who may give a name to the encampment and establish some sense of identity. There are two main legal understandings of tent cities, those that are sanctioned and given legal status and those that are unsanctioned and exist outside of any formal regulations. While unsanctioned tent cities are far more common, their existence in the community happens in a grey area, with many municipal regulations banning the practice but not intervening due to the reality that there is no other viable option for housing. This "tacit acceptance" is an ethical and policy issue that all major metropolitan areas are wrestling with. Without any formal alternative to house people, many cities have moved to accept these settlements in certain places and at certain times, but reserve the right to use police power whenever they see necessary (Heben, 2014).

Sanctioning on the other hand moves to create a formalized community out of what was once an organic tent city. This process can be initiated by any government entity, on land they own or acquire, through a regulatory framework that is often unique and outside of the traditional regulations. Examples include planned unit developments, conditional or temporary use permits, zoning for camping and emergency declarations, each of which is discussed in detail in Chapter Four: Research Findings (Heben, 2014). City leaders may also work with encampment leaders to create a sort of agreement around their acceptance, which has been the case for selective tent cities in Seattle and Portland, a testament to their progressive political climate.

The Concept of Formalization

The term formalization in the context of this research is one that can be associated with many different development practices, some of which deal with the more legal and regulatory side while others with the improvement of housing and services side. Both are required to initiate the type of development that is necessary to provide space for IHCs. The act of formalizing a space is something that most people are supportive of, and is why framing this effort as such is so important to the success of IHCs both with the surrounding community and with policy-makers and local leaders. Envisioning the possibilities of what a formalized tent city could look like initiated my interest in this research and is the driving force behind what I see as a new form of an intentional, human-scale housing development.

There is no right or wrong way to think about formalization as it often happens more organically and involves substantial influence from the people who initially claimed the space. Tent cities are often a reflection of the people who live in them, highlighting their personality and intentions as they strive to create a place for themselves in a society that too often fails to recognize the alternative order that exists within informality. The residents themselves have their own intentions in the creation of these spaces, which may be to improve their situation or to invest themselves in creating an alternative to the demands of transitional housing, such as length of stay and use restrictions. (Heben, 2014).

In interview research performed by Andrew Heben in his book *Tent City Urbanism*, residents of tent cities were asked what type of shelter they would most prefer. The choices were affordable housing, traditional shelter, a tent city or living on the street. Respondents overwhelmingly chose affordable housing as their first preference, with a tent city

following as an alternative. There was a mixed result for the third choice between the traditional shelter and the street, offering a stark critique of the traditional shelter system. He also noted that the majority of people interviewed preferred the tent city even if they were able to get a space in the shelter, with many also preferring the street over a shelter (Heben, 2014). A few also preferred the tent city to affordable housing, demonstrating a strong preference for an alternative type of shelter that is outside of conventional housing. The essence of this is captured in the following passage:

> *Rather than dismissing the American tent city as a mere symbol of our nation's hardship, just maybe it is alluding to a more sustainable and fulfilling housing option - socially, economically, and environmentally (Heben, 2014).*

Tiny House Villages

With roots tracing at least thirty years back, the tiny house movement has fostered a large and growing advocacy group that believes in the fundamentals of minimalism, affordability and environmental sustainability. However, not until the last ten years has the movement really become prominent on a national scale, with the concept being applied to a broad range of needs and desires of people who wish to explore alternative forms of housing. This movement is tied to the idea of intentional living, a concept coined by tiny house advocates which describes a community formed by individuals who share an ideology or value (Furst, 2017). Today, there is a wealth of resources available for those who wish to build tiny houses, ranging from website tutorials and training courses to architectural models and construction guidelines. The industry as a whole has gained

national attention and support through trade shows, television programs, and organizations that specialize in this work (Furst, 2017).

The tiny house provides an alternative means to creating IHCs that are more conscious of the way they deliver housing, services and social support. It is a stark difference from the common homebuilding ideology, which has propelled an increase in average house size from 983 square feet in 1950 to 2,500 square feet in 2012 (Heben, 2014). The general lack of affordable places to live in this country is tied to the scarcity of land and the regulations that govern them, which is discussed further in the research findings of Chapter Four: Research Findings. These regulations tend to prioritize large dwellings that are often separated from the communities they are placed in. The efficient use of land and resources encounters many barriers in the production of affordable places to live, yet tiny house advocates are working to return this efficiency and the sense of community that has been lost over time.

Depending on how the construction is performed and if they are built on-site or purchased from a contractor, tiny houses can range in cost from as little as $6,000 to up to $40,000 or more (Furst, 2017, Heben, 2014). They may be designated as an accessory dwelling unit if built on a foundation or can be built on a trailer and placed on private property to comply with building code regulations and minimum square foot requirements (Heben, 2014). The wide range of costs can be attributed to the types of features included in the house. The typical idea of a tiny house often includes all of the amenities of a traditional house, including a full kitchen and restroom. But organizing these structures as a village instead of an individual dwelling can allow for the separation of some of those

amenities into common facilities that serve the entire community. Doing so drastically reduces the cost of each house, and those savings can be invested in additional structures and services to serve the community (mlf.org, 2023, Heben, 2014).

Many people interested in the tiny house movement are interested in the idea of communal living and the sharing of resources that are often associated with a need or desire for broader social connection. This idea of tiny house villages comes from the roots of self-organization and self-management of one's space and resources, something we also see with the organization of tent cities (Heben, 2014). Tiny houses provide a game-changing environment for housing our nation's homeless population, illustrating how the problem has less to do with people staying in housing and more to do with the size and scale that housing is expected to be. Our standard of housing has become inaccessible to a growing number of people, and the tiny house is a way of creating that accessibility.

Research Questions

This thesis examines the role of regulations, ownership and financing that allow IHCs to exist in urban spaces, either being supported by onsite services or located near existing service providers. The critical role of this exploratory research is to consider the role of local government in the creation of these spaces, and how they can take a leading role in establishing this concept as a vital housing and service framework that can fill the gap between unsheltered homelessness and government-funded affordable housing. My research questions for this thesis are as follows:

1. **How can cities encourage and facilitate the development of intentional homeless communities through the lens of the *Tiny House Village Model*?**

2. **How do differing land ownership, regulatory environments and financing tools affect the successful outcomes of these communities?**

3. **What actions can the Austin city government take to support the development of intentional homeless communities?**

Methodology

To address these research questions, I first conducted a review of existing literature on topics that highlighted the significance of tent cities, their organization & structure, and various stratagies that helped recognize and formalize these spaces within cities. Thinking about this structure as a continuum between temporary and permanent structures, I then began looking at research on tiny house and micro-housing communities that exist to serve a similar purpose. Both of these research interests were grounded in existing case studies here in Austin, The Esperanza Community – originating as a sanctioned tent city, and Community First! Village – a micro-housing village community tailored to the chronically homeless. In conducting this initial research, I looked through news reports and previously published studies to learn about these examples and the many others that exist to fill this need for alternative housing structures for the homeless. There are a number of previously published theses regarding the organization and structure of both tent cities and tiny house

villages for the homeless, but none have focused on the idea of enabling these communities through regulations and general recognition of them as something of value in providing shelter and housing resources. My research builds on previously published studies that have recognized the importance of these communities and takes a practical approach to implement them through both existing regulations and proposed amendments.

To gain further insight into the political, social, and regulatory environment behind these communities, I contacted a wide range of stakeholders and people who participated in the design and implementation of these communities. Additionally, I conducted a set of interviews with various experts and advocates in both the nonprofit and public sectors who have knowledge of these projects and ideas on how to further implement this concept here in Austin. There are two groups of interviews conducted for this survey, those with people who work at or helped develop these projects (referred to as *Non-profit*) and those who work in the public sector and have knowledge of land use policy and city politics (referred to as *Public*).

The goal of the non-profit interviews is to learn about the process of development for these projects and learn about the intricacies they faced when owning or acquiring land, getting supportive regulations, and financing the development of the project. Additionally, I am interested in the housing and community design philosophy, tying these larger regulatory frameworks to the environment they helped create. Regarding the interviews of public officials, I was interested in learning the broader conditions that would be needed to perform such projects and the political will to push these projects into actualization. I interviewed planning, zoning, and housing experts as well as staff of city council members

to understand these dynamics and test the applicability of furthering this model in Austin. The goal of these interviews was to expand my understanding of these case studies and ideas beyond what is available in academic resources, filling important gaps and creating a collection of resources and stories that show how these communities can be expanded.

Interviews were conducted via video calls, phone calls and in-person conversations to capture a wide range of people with respect to the time commitment and resource needs of each. Many interviewees chose to participate via video call or phone call in order to have access to resources that would be valuable for the discussion, such as informational documents. Recognizing the complications related to this concept, many interviewees requested access to internet resources to test my questions against existing regulations and internal discussions to best prepare my research for eventual implementation. Interviews began with oral consent to be included in the research and were audio-recorded to ensure that the information expressed could be precisely interpreted into my research. I then asked a prepared set of questions, which often turned into a more free-flowing discussion that was framed around testing different strategies and considering different implications to each question. Participants were aware that they could skip any questions for any reason and that their information would be anonymous in the report.

Interviews were accompanied by site observations and research on past and ongoing IHCs to better understand the impact of this model and how it can best be implemented into formal laws and regulations in Austin, TX. Given that this research area is relatively fluid and rapidly changing, I relied on news articles, ordinances, zoning regulations, resources from city council meetings and other recent discussions on the topic

to understand the current state of knowledge around this idea. Each of these various resources and perspectives is essential to include in moving this discussion forward in Austin as well as better positioning this concept to make a real impact on the national stage.

Thesis Chapter Organization

The Introductory chapter covers the purpose of this research, research motivation, background on the shelter-to-housing continuum and formalization, research questions and intended audience. The following chapter consists of a review of the literature on this topic, including a history of homelessness and low-income housing, existing homeless response infrastructure and an outline of the existing efforts and realities around homelessness here in Austin, TX, and around the country. Chapter Three covers case studies and is divided into two sections, with the first looking at precedents established from the Pacific Northwest. The second section includes the core case studies from the local context here in Austin, looking at Community First Village and the Esperanza Community. Chapter Four analyzes research findings from each of the case studies and interviews, highlighting the benefits of providing a spectrum of shelter and housing options and the value that each of these communities brings to people who exist outside of our traditional housing infrastructure. Important findings include the cost-effectiveness of this model, its inclusiveness in responding to the dynamic nature of the issue and its ability to provide an attainable housing form to those experiencing homelessness that is more social and supportive than alternatives. The final chapter, conclusions, covers the strategies and

challenges of creating and implementing the Tiny House Village Model, remarks on how this system can best be implemented here in Austin and recommendations on next steps for increasing awareness of alternative homeless housing infrastructure.

Audience

This research is aimed at city planners, policy-makers, nonprofit leaders, religious organizations and development professionals who deal with housing problems related to homelessness in their local communities. This thesis highlights strategies that city leaders can take in partnership with entities that have a shared vision in responding to homelessness with all and any means necessary. Policy implications for this analysis include broadening the use case for congregate living facilities, enabling and growing financial tools that support such projects, creating meaningful partnerships with community and private industry and loosening regulations for dwelling units that are used in the development of IHCs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

My goals in writing this chapter are to highlight existing literature around historical trends in low-income housing, the experience of homelessness, and the general response system that serves people living on the streets and those moving through the transitional process. This chapter is divided into three sections, each of which builds on one other to explain the need and desire for an alternative form of housing that better serves the ongoing crisis we are facing. The first describes the disparate impacts of homelessness and includes a background of homeless and low-income-oriented housing resources in the United States throughout the last century. The conclusion of this first section introduces more modern frameworks for addressing this homeless housing conundrum, leading into the ideas of Housing First, Shelter First, and Community First.

Section two investigates literature and news articles on the realities of camping in Austin and cities around the country, speaking to the existence of tent cities and the common ways they are criminalized by local and state governments or sanctioned to provide legal status. The final section highlights existing housing forms that have been created to serve people experiencing homelessness, including those implemented at the national and local levels. This includes a discussion of some of the unique and ongoing efforts that Austin has implemented in the wake of the city's camping ban that was passed in early 2021. The latter portion of this section introduces the notion of sanctioning and formalization, setting the stage for an introduction to the case studies that have made an impact in Austin and embodying the framework that is outlined in the final section.

The Impact of Homelessness

First identified as a "public problem" in the early 1980s, homelessness has been seen as a persistent problem resulting from a variety of causes that range from individual or local concerns and conditions to broader policy and discriminatory practices (Bryne, 2013). Many of these causes are rooted in historical patterns of exclusion and economic inequality, which have created an uneven landscape of opportunities for people to prosper within (Heben, 2014). The common view of homelessness as a phenomenon that exists primarily because of poor decision-making and a lack of willingness to improve one's condition is something that has reduced the overall empathy we see in community responses (Warner, 2014). This broad perception has created an environment of difficult and often contradicting conditions for the homeless population where their desire for public assistance is discouraged by those who see their situation as self-inflicted. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a count and survey conducted in January 2022 found that there were 582,462 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in the United States (HUD, 2022).

RACIALIZED HOMELESSNESS

Through my research, I made a conscious effort to address the racialized impact of homelessness on communities of color. Despite accounting for less than a quarter of the total population in the United States, people of color account for more than half of the people experiencing homelessness (Fowler, 2022). This trend is also present in Austin, where a black Austinite is 4.8 times more likely to experience homelessness than a white

Austinite (Davis, 2021). This overrepresentation in the population has reaffirmed the disparate impact that public policy, land use and general exclusionary decisions and perspectives have had on communities of color. This understanding is consistent with the extensive impact of exclusionary practices in the mid-20th century United States, such as segregation, racialized housing policies and vagrancy laws. Each of these policies aligned to create control over urban space allowing for the concentration of wealth among those who reflected the values of policymakers of the time, the vast majority of whom were white and male (Fowler, 2022). Policies enacted to segregate people of color from their white counterparts through various means created a system of hierarchy that was engrained in the minds of the general public, creating a platform for ongoing racial prejudice. This framework of creating "separate, but equal" facilities for people of color eventually made its way into housing policy and local decision-making, further exacerbating the impact that this ideology would have on this population.

Housing policy decisions such as those propelled by the Federal Housing Administration created a set of implicit and explicit tools to regulate the investment of housing and resources in neighborhoods based on their perceived racial composition. These decisions were later codified into law through zoning and land-use policies that acted to concentrate poverty and people of color in certain neighborhoods, leading to the perpetual decline of those resources and the people who lived there. After this form of explicit racism was struck down at the federal level with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, new strategies began to be devised, including regulating public space, racial profiling by landlords, and the concentration of affordable housing in lower-income neighborhoods further contributed to

these disparities (Fowler, 2022). Vagrancy laws, a policy framework enacted to criminalize common activities such as sleeping and begging in public spaces have been a major point of contention for cities (Fowler, 2022, Heben, 2014). The involvement of criminal and legal punishment for these types of crimes has disproportionately impacted people of color, leading to more substantial obstacles that one must overcome as they look to find permanent housing (Fowler, 2022). These policies are in direct conflict with the existence of tent cities, which are often organized in public spaces and operate as a direct action protest to these laws. The impact of these far-reaching policies and tools has produced an unequal landscape of opportunity for communities of color in our society today, contributing to this disparity in the homeless population.

HISTORY OF LOW-INCOME HOUSING

As the impacts of homelessness continue to create a burgeoning impact across groups based on wealth and racial lines, it is important to discuss the history of housing resources that have been allotted to fill this ongoing need for low-income housing. In doing this, I use research from both policy and housing development as a way to discuss the detailed efforts that were conducted to incentivize the construction of housing designed for people of low income. This analysis does not discuss housing types directly oriented to people experiencing homelessness (which is covered later in this chapter) but highlights the infrastructure that was designed to provide housing to people who were not able to attain market-rate housing as we typically understand it. These often include a variety of low-cost, short-term, and smaller housing types that were constructed to fill the need of a

more transient population, in a time when people traveled far and wide in search of work (Orlebeke, 2000). Housing of this character provided a resource for people to live in through the unsubsidized private sector that tended to prevent people from falling into unsheltered situations (Heben, 2014). These resources and many others are explored through the section to outline previous strategies for generating low-income housing through a similar idea as what is promoted through the Tiny House Village Model.

Demise of Low-Cost Housing

Looking back on the last century of the United States housing discourse, there has been considerable shifting between policies that target and incentivize private development and policies that enable public entities to fund and construct low-income housing. The presence of these shifting priorities in deciding who should build income-restricted housing has created an ever-changing dynamic that has inevitably allowed people to slip through the cracks and result in a situation where there is a vast deficiency in the number of affordable housing units. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's "The Gap" report, there is a shortage of over 7.2 million affordable and available housing units for extremely low-income renters in the United States (Aurand, 2022). The report gives a glimpse into the shortage of available units that has been in part fueling the increasing rates of homelessness and housing insecurity in the United States. After reading this statistic, it is clear that the United States must invest more strategically in incentivizing affordable housing development that has both long-term rent restrictions and alternative living environments. Allowing this goal to be met through means outside of private and federally

subsidized housing development, a strategy introduced in the following paragraph. To get to the bottom of this shortage, I look back into the history of housing development and uncover various forms of housing infrastructure that have previously served groups of low and extremely-low income people.

One of the most basic and widely recognized forms of historical affordable housing is Single-Room Occupancy, or SRO housing. This housing provided low-cost, short-term options through the private sector that could be rented out for the day, week, or month at variable costs (Heben, 2014). Many depictions of this housing form are related to the conversion of early-20th-century urban hotels in many major cities such as New York City and San Francisco. The existence and later conversion of these hotels into permanent residences were strategic in allowing people of low and extremely low income a place to live in inner-city neighborhoods, giving people the ability to live near their work and have access to urban resources. Earlier buildings commonly had shared facilities for a kitchen and bathroom, while later versions included the kitchen and bathroom in-unit, similar to what we see in the modern hotel room. The units typically ranged from 80 to 140 square feet (Levander, C & Guterl, M., 2015). As recently as 2013, SRO units in converted hotels in New York City had rents ranging from $450 to $700 per month, providing one of the most affordable options for renters that the city has to offer (Sullivan, 2013).

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, minimum building standards and the increasing pressures of gentrification from the conversion of these structures into high-income condominiums created a demise in SRO buildings (Heben, 2014). Other pressures included the general decay of inner-city housing stock during the time due to poor

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maintenance and a lack of upkeep and those from "urban renewal" practices of the 1960s leading to redevelopment opportunities for building owners and city-sponsored agencies (Heben, 2014, Lonova, 2013). In the 1990s, a group of architects, urban planners, city health officials and other design and administrative professionals expressed their concern about SRO buildings, stating that "no one should live there" and that their presence was leading to a "public nuisance" for the city (Groth, 1994). Since this time, urban policies have largely held low-income housing standards to that of middle-class housing (Heben, 2014). This has created better conditions for housing at lower income levels, but has in turn created an environment where housing is dependent on government subsidies to be viable, which are typically in short-supply and increasingly underfunded (Heben, 2014, Sullivan, 2013).

The Affordable Housing Crisis

The creation and regulation of housing through property rights, selective financing and inequitable land ownership have ensured the perpetual existence of homelessness and housing insecurity in the United States (Heben, 2014). Increasing rent prices, the lack of affordable housing and insufficient assistance programs have left a growing number of Americans homeless or at risk of homelessness. (HUD, 2022). Federal policies over the last century around the standardization of building codes and the prescribed reduction in traditional low-cost, short-term housing have created a perpetual crisis for people trying to find suitable housing. These factors, among others, have led to increased poverty fueled in part due to a shortfall in housing attainable to low-income people.

According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, there is a deficit of 7 million affordable units in the United States today - yet in 1970 there was a surplus of 700,000 affordable units (U.S. Interagency, 2022). Many of the reasons for this can be traced back to our decisions to move affordable housing production out of the public sector and into the private and financial services sector, which has acted to produce larger, more fiscally productive housing forms that are vastly unattainable to lower-income populations. To articulate this shift, the following paragraph includes a brief timeline of federal affordable housing development and finance mechanisms that have been created to generate income-restricted housing.

During the latter half of the 20th century, housing policy debates began with the Housing Act of 1949, which promised that the federal government would step in and solve the housing crisis through its exercise of strong political leadership and strategically facilitated and socially conscious bureaucracy (Orlebeke, 2000). The initial production of housing during this time was through an existing framework, Public Housing, which was the only program at the time that created low-income housing. The momentum that was hoped for during the passage of the Housing Act quickly fell short of its production targets, with new programs being started but never gaining the momentum that was needed to produce the needed housing resources (Orlebeke, 2000). A turnaround came in 1965 when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was created. This move created a centralized office for the production and management of low-income housing and offered a reaffirmation of the production targets specified in the 1949 Act. This included new housing subsidy programs, planning requirements aimed at dispersing these low-income

housing projects across city geographies and a fair housing act banning discriminatory housing practices (Orlebeke, 2000). These new low-income housing products soon began to diminish in 1973 during the Nixon Administration, when Nixon imposed a moratorium on all new subsidy commitments. Since the moratorium, three separate policy instruments have been implemented to fill the void that was left by the abrupt end of Public Housing.

The first was the housing voucher program, which went under many different names, but was essentially a tool that could be used to provide people with low-income a stipend that would pay a portion of a person's rent in an unsubsidized residence, rather than spending that money on producing new housing (Orlebeke, 2000). The second was the introduction of the (HOME) Housing Block Grant and (CDBG) the Community Development Block Grant which came under the Housing Act of 1990 (Orlebeke, 2000). Both of these programs allowed federal money to flow into housing production and rehabilitation projects for low-income owners and renters but left the determination to local officials instead of ones at the federal level (Orlebeke, 2000, HUD, n.d.). Included uses for these funds are new construction, demolition, and social services. The third program issued was Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), which uses tax credits to attract housing developers into creating income-restricted housing projects within their projects. Enacted in 1986, this program has become the most commonly used housing program for constructing these units, and its success can be attributed to the control it gives to states and cities to determine what projects get built (Orlebeke, 2000). It is also helped politically by appearing as a tax expenditure rather than a spending item, where its costs are generally hidden from the public's eye (Orlebeke, 2000).

The LIHTC program is the main generator of federally financed affordable and supportive housing resources. These projects typically take the form of apartment buildings that are costly to build, but align with the general form of development that is seen in cities large and small.

Housing First/Shelter First/Community First

Housing First is an internationally embraced approach to housing the nation's homeless population by providing them immediate access to housing that is paired with supportive services (Byrne, 2021). There are no time restrictions to the housing that is provided and the program is typically aimed at those most in need of housing, typically those who are chronically homeless (Byrne, 2021). There is no mandate to participate in treatment or specific services in obtaining or retaining housing, which has led to a wider population being reached and housed (Padgett, 2016). This housing philosophy behind it was originally coined in New York City and was an alternative to the previously accepted idea of "treatment first" which was promoted as an intermediate step toward living independently (Byrne, 2021).

In recent years, the most prominent example of a successful Housing First endeavor comes from Houston, which moved more than 25,000 people into apartments and houses, with the vast majority remaining housed after two years (Kimmelman, 2022). The city has cut its homeless population by 63% since 2011, which has produced an outcome that is twice as effective as the rest of the country, cutting the average wait time for permanent supportive housing from 720 days to just 32 days (Kimmelman, 2022). The success of this

approach in Houston comes from the leadership of the Mayor, working with city and county agencies to align various service providers, corporations and charitable nonprofits under a system that works. The success of this effort came from the alignment of all agencies involved in the fight against homelessness around a system that worked for the city, which was able to use its existing housing resources through commitment by landlords to accept these tenants and this framework for a greater Houston for all.

Without this alignment, the effectiveness of a Housing First program can be complicated, such as what we are seeing in Austin today (Kimmelman, 2022). This city has adopted a Housing First policy in its effort to end homelessness, but has seen a relatively modest impact from their Housing First efforts given the difficulties in constructing new income-restricted housing units and has seen a general lack of participation by landlords who accept vouchers (Kimmelman, 2022).

Housing First is one approach to housing our nation's homeless community, but it is far from the only one. The reality of isolating a person experiencing homelessness from their previous community within a tent city or in a homeless shelter is something that may not be effective for all those who experience homelessness. A more nuanced approach, requiring far less capital and resources to perform, is the idea of a shelter-first approach. This approach aims to take people off the streets and into a more immediate shelter environment, including but not limited to a formalized or sanctioned tent city, as an initial step towards a more permanent housing option. This option allows for many of the community aspects to remain in place, consolidating resources and more rapidly delivering services to those experiencing homelessness without separating people from the

community they have created. This idea for more immediate and place-based shelter resources differs from the concept of Housing First, but creates an alternative resource for cities to use that may be better suited to the reality of a community's formal housing resources.

While Housing First may serve as a more ideal and widely supported framework for moving people off the streets, it is an effort that often fails to capture the needs of the larger homeless population. It is difficult on anyone to be removed from their community and placed in an apartment or home that can be located anywhere in the city. With the difficulties observed in the Austin housing market, there is a need to try alternative solutions that center shelter and community as an essential piece to the response. Tailoring this concept to the existing efforts of Housing First will create a landscape of allowing a shelter-to-housing continuum to exist, an essential aspect of the framework I am highlighting through this research.

Camping Realities in Austin

CAMPING BAN/CRIMINALIZATION

Many local governments have created laws around land use and public vagrancy that have made the work of this response system more difficult to achieve. Anti-camping legislation and the banning of certain activities or uses on public land has been common practice for municipalities, often resulting in the criminalization of people experiencing homelessness. Examples of these laws include Austin's Proposition B and Seattle's Civility Laws, which act as mechanisms to criminalize the uses of spaces where activities common

to people experiencing homelessness are forbidden. These laws create disorder within the homeless community, assessing unnecessary criminal penalties and fees and making it much more difficult for outreach workers and city staff to reach them with necessary resources and a potential connection to housing.

What has resulted from these neglectful restrictions on our shared land has left a scattered and often unorganized structure of informal tent encampments that exist to fill this need for transitional housing resources. These encampments and the people who occupy them exist in a kind of grey area of society, a concerning, yet accepted way of living in the United States today. Populations of unhoused people are being pushed to underutilized and heavily concealed spaces far from existing resources and connections that would provide necessary community and social cohesion. These communities exist far outside of our typical perception of housing, which has led to a concerning acceptance of these spaces as a normal way of living in our nation. The prevalence of homelessness in the United States today and the contention about how to approach it by government entities has created a complex reality where people who can't live in traditional housing must create their own forms of housing.

CAMPING REALITIES

More often than not, tent cities that are unrecognized by a municipality are often relegated to spaces that are hidden from sight to establish some sort of stability (Heben, 2014). In other situations, tent cities exist in a manner that is noticeable, but these environments are continually subject to clearing and displacement at the whim of common

anti-camping legislation and actions. Tent cities exist in all cities across the United States, with the majority of sanctioned tent cities located on the nation's west coast, where the warmer climate and political environment are more supportive of these informal communities (Heben, 2014). Regardless, the presence of a tent city is subject not only to these conditions, but to the attitudes of surrounding communities, the availability of services, and the intentions and personalities of its members (Heben, 2014). These personalities and intentions devised in the creation of the tent city are critical factors in the design and origination that exist within the community (Heben, 2014). Some may be designed in order to make a statement while others may be in place just to get by. Others may be created as an alternative to existing types of transitional housing (Heben, 2014). When tent cities are accessible to be researched and understood, meaningful information is obtained, allowing researchers and advocates alike to understand the presence of these housing structures, specifically how they impact the people living there. These factors can be implemented and result in meaningful development knowledge that can be used in the formal creation of these spaces.

Diana Gray, Austin's Homeless Strategy officer, said there are approximately 4,600 people experiencing homelessness in Austin in the most recent count from early 2023. With around 1,000 people who are in shelters and about 3,600 who are unsheltered (Remadna, 2023). Noting this current statistic gives this research a concrete number to consider when creating shelter space to accommodate the population in need. A broad-reaching barrier to the existence of these tent cities is Texas House Bill 1925, which was passed in early 2021 and introduced a state-wide camping ban that applies to all public land (Oxner, 2021). This

ban also applies to public parkland and requires an additional approval process for a jurisdiction to create a sanctioned encampment, such as the one that the state created in 2019, home of the Esperanza Community today (Oxner, 2021).

An amendment from the State Senate removed the word arrest from the bill's language "clarifying that law enforcement officers would have to provide the person the information…only before the time of issuing a citation and not arrest" (Oxner, 2021). The City of Austin itself also reinstated its camping ban in 2021 through the will of the voters but has designed multiple systems to properly place people into the bridge and transitional shelters following any city-sponsored clearing activities. The most notable of these efforts include the Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link or HEAL, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Tacit Acceptance

Throughout all of these efforts to ban camping in cities across the State of Texas, the reality is that people are going to continue camping when there is no other viable solution to provide them with legal shelter. With an estimated 3,600 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the streets of Austin each night, people are forced to live in public spaces. With the camping bans being implemented at the city and state level, people who wish to not engage with authorities have been delegated to hide in heavily wooded areas or in other spaces that are out of sight. Their presence on these sites is technically illegal, yet there is no capacity or willingness to clear out each site and enforce the laws created, resulting in an environment of tacit acceptance. (Heben, 2014).

This means that people who live in these environments are given some sort of safety from enforcement activities, but are also at the whim of state law enforcement when they make their rounds for clearance. The reality of tacit acceptance is dependent on jurisdictions, with the state acting differently than those enforcement agencies at the city level, coming down to who has control over the land under the tent city. With no alternative solutions being actively considered in the state, tacit acceptance and selective enforcement of tent city communities will continue to be a reality for the homeless in Texas.

Existing Structures for Homeless Housing Intervention in Austin

The homeless response system has varied throughout the century, but has typically been led by government, nonprofit and philanthropic actors who work in some sort of broad collaboration to provide needed resources to the unhoused community. These organizations have established housing and food assistance programs, often in partnership with religious organizations, to provide resources to unhoused people in the community. While vital to the active response to homelessness, this system is far from sufficient in moving people out of homelessness and into stable housing resources.

National Programs

	Cost per day	Permanence
Emergency Shelter	$20.92	12 Hours
Transitional Housing	$66.56	~6 Months
Rapid-Rehousing	$24.60	1-2 Years
Permanent-Supportive Housing	$32.37	~6 Years

Table 2-1: Overview of National Programs, Heben, 2014

Emergency Shelters

Emerging in the 1980s, many of the emergency shelters in the United States were designed to be a "stop-gap" solution to rising rates of homelessness (Evans, 2011). The unfortunate reality of our current crisis with homelessness has allowed these structures to become a permanent feature of our urban housing infrastructure. Persistent poverty and a general lack of affordable housing have created an environment where emergency shelters are used as an alternative to living on the streets, but do so in a way that is restrictive and often viewed as institutional, similar to the environment found in prisons (Evans, 2011). Regardless, they are essential to providing people with a space to live for a short period of time while they figure out their next move. Emergency shelters typically provide a bed to people through various configurations ranging from large communal settings to pods of 4-6 individuals (Heben, 2014). Additionally, emergency shelters can take the form of hotel and motel conversions as well as new and existing housing units, depending on a city's ongoing resources and willingness to invest in advancing shelter resources. Many shelters have also been adopting new sets of rules and regulations around creating low-barrier entry

systems, remaining open 24 hours, allowing pets and providing secure spaces to store belongings (Doherty, 2018).

The City of Austin and Travis County operate three shelter facilities, one for men, one for women and children and one for families. The men's shelter, known as the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless or ARCH, is a city-owned facility that provides shelter and resources in Downtown Austin. Opened in 2004, the facility was designed as a multi-service facility that included day and overnight stays, a health clinic, technology training and case management assistance (Design Resources, 2016). Initially intended to serve 300 adults with day services and 100 men at night, the facility has since expanded its capacity to serve 600 people during the day and 230 men at night.

The Austin Shelter for Women and Children (ASWC) is a low-barrier, housing-focused emergency shelter with 81 beds that is open to women and dependent children who are experiencing homelessness (salvationarmyaustin.org). The center offers case management services, employment assistance, childcare, child/family therapy and rapid rehousing services as part of its service model (salvationarmyaustin.org). Originally built in 1935 by the City of Austin, the Salvation Army has operated the site since 2001 with a large-scale renovation happening in 2018 adding increased capacity, a new daycare facility and ADA improvements to the site (salvationarmyaustin.org). The shelter has received notable awards for its renovations and has also been distinguished as one of the Salvation Army's highest performing programs (salvationarmyaustin.org). Unfortunately, after 20 years of service to the community, the shelter is set to close in early 2023 due to a

recognition that they could no longer offer the quality of care that is needed at the downtown location (Fernandez, 2023).

The Rathgeber Center for Families is another emergency shelter resource in the community that opened in 2020 on land in east Austin that was donated by Dick and Sara Rathgeber (salvationarmyaustin.org). This facility offers similar services as the main downtown Salvation Army shelter but orients the housing and service operations towards families with children (salvationarmyaustin.org). The site is comprised of two phases, the first being a low-barrier emergency shelter with 120 beds in 42 private rooms, with the average stay of families ranging from 90-120 days (salvationarmyaustin.org). The second phase is a higher barrier, extended-stay facility with 23 suites designed to help families find success and eventually move into more permanent housing options (salvationarmyaustin.org).

Transitional Housing

In some instances, transitional housing can be closely associated or aligned with emergency shelter resources, as many of the qualities are similar in providing people with a place to stay for a short period of time (ECHO, 2018). They are used to create temporary housing for up to 24 months and are paired with supportive services such as childcare and job training to prepare them for further transition into permanent housing and support resources (ECHO, 2018). A current challenge with transitional housing in Austin is that it is the preferred method of transitional housing for people escaping domestic violence, at-risk youth and those who are in recovery and need sober living. The cost of transitional

housing is much higher in comparison to the benefit, as the report notes that more cost-effective solutions exist in permanent housing initiatives, such as rapid re-housing (ECHO, 2018). Many other variations of these larger housing concepts exist in Austin and around the country, but these are the main efforts that are funded or supported in some way by the federal government in assisting communities in housing and supporting their homeless populations.

Rapid Re-Housing

In a similar vein to Housing First is the Rapid Rehousing Program, an effort that aims to stabilize households by providing a time-limited, but highly flexible housing form that aims to rehouse people quickly after the onset of homelessness (Byrne, 2021). This program can also be referred to as "secondary prevention" as it looks to reduce the duration and impact that occur during a time of housing instability (Byrne, 2021). The program was born out of the Great Recession of 2008, which provided funding for this endeavor as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Byrne, 2021). Given its relative success in keeping individuals and families housing during the economic downturn, it was later adopted as a permanent structure through legislation to continually accommodate those who experienced housing insecurity more broadly (Byrne, 2021). In Austin, the typical Rapid Rehousing program relies on short-term rental assistance and housing case managers to connect unhoused households to permanent housing as quickly as possible (ECHO, 2018).

Permanent Supportive Housing

A longer-term and more intensive structure of housing for people experiencing homelessness is permanent supportive housing. Generally, these programs provide housing with case management and support services that are oriented toward the needs of the individual receiving the assistance. These services are typically aimed at individuals and households with the most intensive service needs, such as those facing physical and mental challenges, and those who have been experiencing homelessness for the longest amount of time. The intention of this housing is to stabilize the health and provide durable support systems for those individuals as they move towards independent living. (ECHO, 2018) Typically, rent and utilities are limited to 30 percent of the tenant's income, with the housing developer assembling the remaining funds by applying for public funding at the local and state level (Local Housing Solutions, 2023). Figure 2-1 below is a chart of the active permanent supportive housing developments in Austin as of 2014. According to a more recent presentation by the City of Austin Homeless Strategy Division, the projected total of permanent supportive housing units is estimated to be at 1,538 by the end of 2025, up from just 513 in 2022 (Homeless Strategy Office, 2023)

Permanent Supportive Housing Inventory

Primary Service Provider	Housing Provider	Property Name		Occupied Units	Anticipated Units[2]	
Front Steps/ATCIC	TCHA	Scattered		17	1	
Front Steps	Green Doors	Pecan Springs Commons I		8	0	
Front Steps/ATCIC	Palms/Mulholland Group	Palms		13	0	
Front Steps/ATCIC	Scattered	Scattered		15	0	
Caritas-partnership	Foundation Communities	Spring Terrace		8	2	
Caritas-partnership	Foundation Communities	Arbor Terrace		9	1	
Caritas-Terraza	Foundation Communities	Arbor Terrace		39	1	
Caritas	Summit Housing Partners	Marshall Apartments		10	7	
VA	Green Doors	Pecan Springs Commons		25	1	
VA	Green Doors	Treaty Oaks		25	0	
SafePlace	Green Doors	Glen Oaks Corner		6	0	
Lifeworks	Lifeworks	Works at Pleasant Valley		19	1	
SafePlace	Captuity Investments III	Retreat at North Bluff		4	2	
TBD	Foundation Communities	Capital Studios		0	34	
Foundation Communities	TCHA	Garden Terrace/ Spring Terrace	JRI partnership	18	4	
ATCIC	DSHS	Scattered	DSHS Grant	30	0	
ATCIC	TDHCA via DSHS/DADS	Scattered		1	9	
ATCIC	NHCD/ HACA	Scattered	City 1115 Contract	0	15	
VA	AHFC	Anderson Village		5	0	
VA	GNDC	Guadalupe-Saldana		1	0	
City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development - last updated 7/22/14			**Total**	**253**	**78**	**331**

Figure 2-1: Austin Permanent Supportive Housing, City of Austin, 2014

Local Programs

Finding Home ATX

Finding Home ATX is a community initiative that brings together a diverse, passionate and experienced group of leaders together to engage in collective efforts to end unsheltered homelessness in Austin (findinghomeatx.org). This initiative is designed to create the needed housing and service resources behind the adopted Housing First framework of the city, looking to create over 3,000 rent-restricted units through both securing existing private market units and through the creation of new permanent supportive housing (Homeless Strategy Office, 2021). The goal of the initiative is to use private funding and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to reach a goal of $515 million to create the capacity for 1,300 new housing units and 1,700 private market rental units that will be paid through city-sponsored housing vouchers (Homeless Strategy Office, 2021).

Solicitation Schedule	Phase #1	Phase #2	Phase #3	Phase #4
Focus Area	Housing Stabilization	Crisis Response	Supportive Services	Capacity Building
ARPA-Eligible Project Types	• Rapid Rehousing • Landlord Engagement, Navigation, Move-In Costs	• Shelter • Street Outreach • Day Resource Centers Respite Care	• Employment Services • Behavioral Health • Benefits Access • Capacity Building	Organizational Capacity Building Innovation Equity
Total Solicitated Amount (ARPA Funds)	$53M ($45M of ARPA)	$10M ($9M of ARPA)	$7.5M ($6.5M of ARPA)	~$4M (100% ARPA)
Timeline	Released: January 31, 2022 Closed: March 9, 2022 Awardees notified: June 2022	Released: March 31, 2022 Closed: May 12, 2022 Awardees notified: July 2022	Released: May 31, 2022 Closes: July 7, 2022 Awardees notified: August 2022	TBD

Figure 2-2: City of Austin Memorandum - Update on Finding Home ATX Fundraising Efforts and ARPA

Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link (HEAL)

The HEAL initiative was born out of the reinstatement of the local camping ban in Austin, establishing financial resources and political support for the responsible clearing of the city's homeless encampments (Homeless Strategy Office, 2021). The purpose of this resolution is to connect people who live in tent cities with temporary housing, services, and support to begin their process of receiving permanent supportive housing in the future (Homeless Strategy Office, 2021). The city itself invested in purchasing two hotels and converting them into transitional, or "bridge shelters" that would serve the mission of the HEAL initiative by providing a specific site to send people after an encampment was cleared. The designated shelters are named Northridge and Southbridge, given the parts of the city they are located in (Herron, 2022). Both are converted hotels located along Interstate 35 (Herron, 2022). Diana Gray states that "When our staff goes into an encampment and are able to offer people access to shelter, thus far 87% say yes when there is a linkage to permanent housing," (Herron, 2022, Remadna, 2023) Data from the initiative thus far shows that around 65% have exited bridge shelters with 44% finding housing and the other 48% returning to homelessness on the streets (Herron, 2022).

Coordinated Entry System

The coordinated entry system is a federally mandated system that is intended to match people with community resources so that they can best meet their needs and help them enter into permanent housing. (ECHO, 2022). Through the guidance of HUD, each municipal Continuum of Care must establish and operate a coordinated entry process to better align existing services with people experiencing homelessness in the community.

This information is used to help communities allocate housing and stabilization resources through proven interventions and information gathering that is essential to moving people off the streets and into housing (ECHO, 2022). Each person who completes a coordinated entry survey is weighed on a scale determined by the municipality to rank their need for housing and assistance, so as to serve the people with the most need quickly.

HUD describes the core elements of a coordinated entry system to be Access, Assessment, Prioritization and Referral. Access refers to the way in which individuals and families access the crisis response system, which may be through calling the crisis hotline, walking into an access point facility, or being engaged by an outreach worker (HUD Exchange, 2014). Assessment is the process of gathering information about the person or family's housing needs, preferences, and vulnerability (HUD Exchange, 2014). Prioritization is determined through the information gathered during the assessment, aiming to manage community housing and service resources by prioritizing those with the greatest housing need and vulnerability with support to resolve their housing insecurity (HUD Exchange, 2014). Finally, Referral is the process of placing people in available housing and service resources that align with their needs and vulnerability (HUD Exchange, 2014).

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STATUS QUO

While the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program offers the ability for cities and developers to create rent-restricted supportive housing, it is not a model that can produce the number of units that are needed today to begin addressing the dual crisis of

homelessness and affordable housing. The construction of permanent supportive housing encounters many barriers coming from both programmatic and policy concerns impeding the development of these units and creating an environment that is increasingly difficult for people experiencing homelessness to access (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). The entities who do this work are required to work across many different siloes to get projects on the ground and completed.

This is further complicated by a fragmented policy environment which has altered its position toward funding efforts through many different processes and philosophies, referring to the shifting of these policies from the public to the private market, which I described earlier in this chapter (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Entities are also working to fulfill a very broad mission of creating housing that has both long-term affordably and services that are tailored to the needs of its residents (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). In the next few paragraphs, I describe some of the common barriers to the development of supportive housing, speaking directly to the policy and program deficiencies that exist in their development process.

Within the development of supportive housing is a broader issue of fragmented and uncoordinated funding sources which creates a vast regulatory hill that must be scaled to make these projects happen in a way that is supportive to their overall mission. Each project must involve at least three different federal agencies in their project, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Health and Human Services and the Treasury Department, which oversees the LIHTC Program (National Academies

of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Each level of government is also needed in this process, with coordination and alignment of federal, state, and local governments all working together to create the space for these projects (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). The usual suspects who develop this sort of housing tend to be nonprofits that are often working with limited funding sources and limited internal capacity (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Providing health and medical clinics onsite also requires a slew of federal, state, and local entities to conduct services, which often have their own broad missions and may have differing expertise in how the overall project process works (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Additionally, many of the entities that issue funding for these projects are subject to funding that is discretionary and must comply with strict budget constraints and fluctuations that change on a year-to-year basis (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Accompanying this is the decline in allocated funding from the federal government, starting in the 1980s, which has seen a reduction of $2.9 million for housing assistance from 2004 to 2015 alone (Mazzara et al., 2016). This reality has meant that affordable housing has had to navigate an increasingly difficult funding terrain which has created competition between providers for progressively scarce resources (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). This sort of competition has created more targeted efforts that prioritize specific groups, such as homeless veterans, which puts an emphasis on certain groups of the population while

reducing the impact these projects have on the larger homeless population (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Outside of the general funding barriers that exist in the formation of these coalitions and alignment of capital resources are the many issues that take place while operating in complex housing markets and regulatory environments (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). The high cost of acquiring land or property in many housing markets has created a sort of competition between private and nonprofit developers, who have disparate and uneven access to funding streams. More often than not, nonprofit organizations lose these contracts due to these funding differences and the different types of regulatory issues that come with developing affordable housing as opposed to housing that is market-rate (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Given that the majority of affordable housing development is classified as multifamily and restricted to small lots along major corridors, this provides a regulatory barrier that is fueled by inadequate zoning codes, including a plethora of NIMBY, or Not-In-My-Backyard opposition (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Discrimination against people with housing vouchers is also an increasing barrier to the placement of people within units in the private market, a longstanding issue that has seen difficulty in enforcement (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Landlords in most jurisdictions have the ability to refuse people based on their source of income, often excluding people with housing vouchers and sending them on a search spree around the city to find a place that will accept them as a resident. This

often leads to people living in poorer conditions with problem landlords who accept these payments, but maintain substandard conditions in many instances leading to a concentration of poverty (Heben, 2014, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Highlighting these issues through a more recent funding effort passed by Los Angeles voters in 2016, Proposition HHH enabled city officials to issue nearly $1.2 billion in bonds to incentivize permanent supportive housing development in the city (Local Housing Solutions, 2023). Even with substantial investment being approved and supported by the city at large, many issues began to arise early on, which resulted in a slow process for the development of these units as construction and land costs soured (Local Housing Solutions, 2023). Construction was also hindered by a lack of qualified developers and a development process through the city that was reported to take anywhere from three to six years to get through for affordable housing projects (Local Housing Solutions, 2023). Over 5,500 units are in the pre-development phase with only 179 units being constructed and operational as of late-2020, which has frustrated many citizens and administrative officials alike as the progress has been slow to realize (Local Housing Solutions, 2023). Recent efforts have been enacted to try and fast-track the development process to ensure that these units get constructed in a timely manner, but the costs of going through this process are quickly mounting to make projects infeasible. This issue is yet another barrier preventing the construction of supportive housing, creating distrust within the community regarding the allocation of funding and its efficiency in creating housing that can best support homeless populations (Heben, 2014).

SANCTIONING/FORMALIZATION PROJECTS IN THE UNITED STATES

With an understanding of the broader homeless housing infrastructure and the pitfalls that these structures encounter within their mission, it is important to begin thinking about ways we can break from the status quo and consider what other forms of housing communities can and should exist to fill this need. Various researchers engaged in the issue of homelessness have pointed to the existence of homeless encampments and tent cities as a viable interim solution to fill the gap in the shelter and housing resources that are needed today, to ensure that people are not living in dangerous and counterproductive situations on our streets (Heben, 2014, portland.gov, 2021). Thinking of the tent city as an alternative form of housing that allows its residents to remain in place, build on the existing community and sense of belonging they have created, and further their ability to transition into more formal housing and service resources is the essence of what this thesis research is promoting. Not only does this structure model from the informality and self-management possibilities of a tent city, but it creates a pathway to think about creating a more formally recognized type of housing and shelter in the form of a tiny house village (Heben, 2014). Throughout the history of housing development, societies have shifted from a more organic process of creating housing to one that is more prescribed, limiting the possibilities of how housing and neighborhoods can look and creating a market for the resource that continually excludes those who cannot comply with its demands (Heben, 2014). The quote below encapsulates the idea behind this concept and speaks to the nature of development that is necessary to recognize these types of communities.

"Operating under exceptional circumstances of emergency, these settlements are sometimes able to avoid the reach of formal planning. In doing so, these democratic communities become optimal grounds for starting from scratch with a more human approach to planning. Self-organized tent cities serve as an example of how the unhoused are, out of necessity, collectively finding solutions to their own problems in their day-to-day struggle to survive" (Heben, 2014).

By blending the idea of a formalized tent city with the popularity of the tiny house, a marketable solution is produced to create a new form of emergency shelter that has the capacity to house people for short and long periods of time through a lens that is closely associated to the features and optimism of a village community (Heben, 2014). Referring to this as the "village model", this notion looks to create an alternative form of transitional and affordable housing that exists to blend informal realities with the type of shelter and housing that already exists in our modern society (Heben, 2014). Both the tent and the tiny house are widely recognized forms of structure that people use in various circumstances and situations, which leads me to believe that we as a society understand their importance, but have failed to fully recognize them as valuable housing assets for the population at large. Doing so will open up these housing opportunities to our urban regulatory environments, financing mechanisms, and the ability to create such structures through partnerships with organizations that own land that could be used for this purpose.

The village model demonstrates an array of physical, social, economic and ecological benefits that the American society and many others around the world have begun to ignore through the vast commodification of the housing market (Heben, 2014). Regarding its physical attributes, the village provides a vision of ownership over a space

in society, dividing the modern house into separate structures while allowing for an abundance of shared common space (Heben, 2014). Here, a connection to both the natural and social environment is created, giving people a more deeply rooted sense of belonging (Heben, 2014). In terms of social attributes, the village model signals a return to smaller-scale communities and democratic environments that give members a voice and the social capital needed to create change in a way that is reflective of their values (Heben, 2014).

The essence of this comes from the problems we see related to social isolation in society today, which has both left people behind and created an environment where people feel the need to take on everything by themselves and shun away from asking for help (Heben, 2014). Economic benefits include a reduction in the amount of land and the size of each house, leading to a more human-scaled form of development that is both affordable and reduces our modern standards of living (Heben, 2014). In terms of ecological attributes, the village model presents a way forward that prioritized minimizing, localizing, and sharing resources to reduce the human impact on the natural environment (Heben, 2014).

The following chapter highlights a number of case studies that demonstrate varying interpretations of the village model and its implementation into existing building, regulatory, financing and land ownership structures which have allowed these communities to move from concept to reality. Each of these structures is essential to creating an environment that not only recognizes the village model and its resourcefulness but ensures that these developments have a place in urban environments to generate housing that is

woefully needed in our communities. Existing case studies show a divide in the way the village model is conceptualized given the often stubborn reality of regulatory and political environments.

Case studies for the most part are divided into a temporary shelter framework on one side and a housing, landlord-tenant framework on the other, given that these two structures are defined differently in the majority of city codes (Heben, 2014). Initiatives have already begun to strategize about a way of mending these two codes in the name of providing emergency shelter, but the discussion is far from being resolved through the formal regulatory environment. Another factor is the funding and financial instruments that allow local government and development professionals to embark on such housing projects, which are essential to creating these communities and the associated social services that are integral to their mission. Finally, I look at land ownership and how various models of private, public, nonprofit and religious ownership of land can help create opportunities for the village model and other homeless housing operations to exist within cities.

I begin by introducing the two core case studies which generated my interest in pursuing this research into thinking of ways to produce homeless housing communities through the notion of formalizing tent cities. Each is explored in depth in the following chapter, but their existence provides a profound basis for the impact that the village model can have in creating housing resources for those who are experiencing homelessness here in Austin. The Esperanza Community, a state-sanctioned transitional campground began as a safe place for people to camp in the city, but is today being built out through

partnerships with local governments and nonprofits to include factory-built shelters in a design that closely resembles that of its former tent city.

Community First! Village, a privately owned, tiny-house village community offers long-term housing structures with an approach to social connection that brings residents, staff, volunteers, and community partners together. Both of these examples were created through a diverse mix of regulatory factors, financing tools, and land ownership strategies that allowed for their existence and ability to create alternative forms of housing for our unhoused neighbors. The impact of these communities is far-reaching and is undoubtedly proving to the city at-large that these ideas have a place in the community to provide that missing housing and social environment that is necessary to transition people out of homelessness for good.

CHAPTER THREE: CASE STUDIES

Itinerant Camp System

Right 2 Dream Too

Opportunity Village

Dignity Village

Safe Rest Village

Community First! Village

Esperanza Community

Table 3-1: Case Study Images – The Sacramento Bee, Place Journal, Occupy Eugene, San Francisco Chronicle, Willamette Week, Housing Innovation, KVUE

Precedent Studies

To better inform the direction of my research, I have selected five precedent studies from outside of Austin and two case studies from within the city that I believe strike at the essence of what it means to create IHCs through the lens of the Tiny House Village Model. The case studies in Austin are discussed later in the chapter. Table 3-2 below summarizes the studies that I have reviewed for this chapter.

Focusing on the Pacific Northwest, where many of these ideas have come to light, this section lays out the story behind each project, highlighting the policies, regulations and financial tools used to plan and develop these communities. This research also looks at the housing & community design of these projects to highlight the beneficial structures that exist to maintain the space while respecting the autonomy of those who use, live, and work there. Through this, I pull together various strategies, partnerships, and initiatives that allow the tiny house village model to succeed as an alternative to traditional homeless shelters and housing.

The following precedent analysis covers literature around the Tiny House Village Model, each example covering unique strategies that allow these communities to formally exist in their respective urban environments today. They include *Dignity Village* and *Right 2 Dream Too* in Portland, OR, Opportunity Village in Eugene, OR, and the *Iterative Camp System* in Seattle, WA. Additionally, I wanted to explore a more recent precedent in the policy realm which is the *Safe Rest Village Program*, a set of code amendments and regulations aimed at making it easier to establish these intentional communities. Through the organization of these precedents, I show the organic evolution to increasing formality,

ranging from structures that provide a safe place for people to sleep to a tiny house village that establishes housing in a more permanent way. This section concludes with the policy framework of the Safe Rest Village Program, which was developed more recently to deal with the regulations of these intentional communities. Following this discussion on precedent studies, the chapter ends with a discussion of the core case studies for this research, which cover the two examples in Austin that were foundational to this research.

	City	Ownership	Regulations	Financing
Itinerant Camp	Seattle, WA	Institutional Land (Public, Religious, University)	RLUIPA, State Law, City Ordinance (Transitional Campground)	City, Private Donations
Right 2 Dream Too	Portland, OR	City-Owned Land	City-Sanctioned	City, Private Donations
Dignity Village	Portland, OR	City-Owned Land	Zoned as Transitional Campground	Grants, Private Donations, Tenant Rent
Opportunity Village	Eugene, OR	City-Owned Land	Conditional use Permit	Private Donations, Tenant Rent
Safe Rest Village Program	Portland, OR	Institutional Land (Public, Religious, University)	Outdoor Shelter Land Use	Public Money, Grants
The Esperanza Community	Austin, TX	State-Owned Land	State Land does not need to comply with local zoning	Public Money, Grants
Community First! Village	Austin, TX	Private Land	No Zoning Regulations in Texas County Jurisdiction	Private Donations, Grants, Public Funding, Tenant Rent

Table 3-2: Case Study Overview

Itinerant Camp System – Seattle, WA

Story & Mission

The history of the Itinerant Camp system in Seattle can be traced back to 1990 when a group of around 25 homeless individuals established a self-managed tent city near a focal point of the downtown, the Seattle Center (Heben, 2014). Seattle had an extensive past with tent encampments across the city and King County, which encompasses the Seattle Metro, but this was the first of its kind to be formally documented, and was the most organized effort yet (Heben, 2014). With the initial camp being disbanded after multiple attempts at organization, the city decided to step in and support the tent city by establishing an indoor shelter to take its place. This shelter, dubbed the "Aloha Inn" was designed to be a transitional housing program that would be allowed to operate through self-management by its residents (Heben, 2014). An organization under the name of SHARE/WHEEL was placed in charge of managing the operations of the facility given it had an extensive background in running shelters across the county. This included a network of fifteen indoor shelters currently under their management (Heben, 2014).

With homelessness continuing to expand in the city, new attempts were made to create a sanctioned tent city. Finding a space for this initial attempt at a recognized and supported tent city shelter was no easy task. Multiple attempts were tried to locate the shelter on public land and then private land, with arguments around land use and NIMBY complaints complicating the site selection process (Heben, 2014). A legal battle ensued which noted in a consent decree that "despite the city increasing spending on shelters, the city was unable to house more than 1,000 residents" (Heben, 2014). The involved parties

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were SHARE/WHEEL, the City of Seattle, and El Centro de la Raza - a nonprofit organization that was hosting the tent city at the time (Heben, 2014). Resulting was an agreement allowing for one tent city, managed by SHARE/WHEEL, to be sanctioned on private or public land within the city, providing it followed a set of guidelines in its execution. These included:

- Forming an agreement with the property owner.
- Maximum capacity of 100 residents.
- No children.
- Strict enforcement of code of conduct.
- A 20-foot buffer or view obstructing fence surrounding the perimeter.
- Provide proper notice to the surrounding community.
- Relocate the tent city every three months, with the ability to relocate to the same site only twice within a two-year period (Heben, 2014).

Following this ruling by the city, another tent city was formed in a neighboring suburban community on the eastside of the metro, where no existing rules or guidelines had been created (Heben, 2014). As the town began the eviction process soon after, a local church invited the residents to use their property for the shelter operation (Heben, 2014). Through this move, the tent city sought protection under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), a federal law that allows religious institutions to bypass certain zoning laws that may burden their free exercise of religion (Heben, 2014).

Land Ownership

Land ownership and maneuvering through regulations is a huge part of what made the initial itinerant camp and subsequent efforts a success in the Seattle region. As noted, the initial impetus for the city was to only allow one temporary encampment in the city on

either public or institutional land, yet the circumstances of the site selection process and the kindness of neighbors led to a vast expansion of possible sites for these projects to locate (Heben, 2014). With the further legalization and implementation into various zoning districts, discussed in the section below on the regulatory environment, temporary encampments are now allowed in virtually all zoning districts and use designations in the city (Rey, 2020). The itinerant model is another fascinating element of this project, which has many parts to it that have benefits for both the residents and the surrounding communities (Heben, 2014).

As the encampments are sanctioned under city ordinance, the residents are notified in advance and at set intervals when they are required to move, allowing residents to move in a less stressful and more organized manner (Heben, 2014). The initial model of moving among only religious institutions in the city was supported by a large network of like-minded, faith-based organizations under the Church Council of Greater Seattle (Heben, 2014). A leader at the managing organization SHARE/WHEEL spoke about additional benefits to the itinerant model, noting that continual relocation reduces the burden placed on any individual neighborhood or community and promotes a more transitional atmosphere among its residents (Heben, 2014). Additionally, these moves allow residents of the tent city to interact with the surrounding communities, building social, support, and awareness networks among the housed and unhoused community (Heben, 2014).

Regulatory Environment

The use of RLUIPA as an approach for allowing a tent city to exist on religious land was further codified into law in 2009 when Washington State House Bill 1956 was passed, guaranteeing the right of religious institutions across the state to house tent city shelters or other forms of temporary encampments (Heben, 2014). The court found that

denying this right would place a substantial burden on the free exercise of religion. Through this, it also prohibited local jurisdictions from assessing excessive fees, requirements of liability insurance, or any other special condition other than protecting the health, safety, and well-being of its residents and the surrounding community (Heben, 2014).

Following an emergency task force on unsheltered homelessness in 2015, the City of Seattle moved to create an ordinance that would allow for a new transitional encampment interim use permit (Seattle.gov, 2016). These permits are good for a one-year term and can be used for up to three tent city shelters within the city that house up to 100 residents each (Seattle.gov, 2016). Through this ordinance, a tent city is allowed in a wide range of downtown and commercial zoning districts (Seattle.gov, 2016). In 2020, an updated ordinance now allows the development of a tent city temporary encampment to be located in residential zones, further reduces land use requirements for religious institutions that host projects, and increases the number of allowed temporary encampments from three to forty (Rey, 2020).

This vast expansion of the capacity of the interim use permit came through a ruling in a legal case named Martin v. City of Boise (Rey, 2020). This case ruled something that I covered earlier in this thesis, the criminalization of sleeping and camping, in the absence of a sufficient alternative to housing people (Rey, 2020). Seattle recognized that their existing shelter capacity was far out of reach in respect to the number of people who were experiencing homelessness in the city, so they moved to increase the capacity of this permit to fit that gap (Rey, 2020).

Financing

In the operation of the camp, the land used for the camp is always lent at no charge. The City of Seattle has taken the lead in paying for electricity, computers, and internet access at each site for the primary purpose of assisting people in searching for jobs, writing resumes, and educational purposes (Heben, 2014). The rest of the funding comes from in-kind donations that are made to the various nonprofit organizations that house and support the itinerant camp system (Werner, 2014).

RIGHT 2 DREAM TOO – PORTLAND, OR

Story & Mission

With origins coming from the Occupy Movement of the early 2010s, a protest encampment was started when tents began to fill an urban green space in central Portland. These tents were a form of protest that was observed across the country in response to the runaway financial policies and practices that fueled the Great Recession of 2008. As more and more people began to join the movement, the camp began to sprawl onto multiple square blocks of downtown Portland (Heben, 2014). As this happened, an organizational structure began to take shape, with general assembly meetings being held so that residents could propose ideas on how the encampment should be run and how decisions should be made. Food and other resources were donated to the residents by community support, with a volunteer-run kitchen being created to distribute the food to hungry residents.

Through this collaboration, the community was able to form a library, medical clinic, and an engineering station which worked on creating formal infrastructure for the site. The mayor at the time, Sam Adams, publicly allowed the camp to exist without

intervention, which gave precedence to the notion that camping in the city was now acceptable. Within four days of the creation of the Occupy encampment, a new camp, known as Right 2 Dream Too (R2DToo) was created on the north side of downtown catering specifically to people experiencing homelessness (Przybylinski, 2021).

Land Ownership

R2DToo organizers decided to occupy a vacant lot at a prominent intersection in the Old Town neighborhood of Downtown Portland. Old Town is Portland's oldest downtown neighborhood and is known for its history of accommodating Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings and today housing many of the city's social service entities as well as almost a quarter of the city's homeless population (Przybylinski, 2021). The site was in a neighborhood populated with unhoused community members, which led to the camp being conceived as a rest area, providing a safe place to shelter those who were sleeping on the street in difficult and often dangerous conditions (Heben, 2014). The owner of the current site of R2DToo had their building forcibly condemned and demolished by the city due to code violations.

Years went by with the owner trying to propose a number of alternative uses for the site, all of which were struck down by the city in a way he perceived as selective enforcement of his site due to it being a highly visible location. Displeased with the city, the owner told a local newspaper that he planned to donate the site to Dignity Village for a year. Three stipulations came with this agreement, they were to come up with a way to secure the area, acquire liability insurance, and help pay a portion of the property taxes

(Heben, 2014). Without receiving any city approvals, the camp was set up on a Friday evening after city officials had left for the weekend. Throughout the weekend, many volunteers came out to help construct the camp with donated materials from a number of nonprofit organizations, many of which focused on material reuse.

The organizers chose to open on World Homeless Day with the goal of creating enough inspiration and drive from the people to make the effort come to fruition. The creation of R2DToo was a long-planned and carefully executed exercise of direct action (Heben, 2014). There was no permission received by city officials, but the organizers found an opportunity to quickly provide a housing community for its neighbors (Heben, 2014).

Regulatory Environment

After only a month of operation on the Old Town site, the City of Portland issued R2DToo multiple land use code violations, stemming from the confusion about the type of land use that the encampment was trying to present (Przybylinski, 2021). The city viewed the presence of R2DToo as a recreational campground, illegal in state and municipal land uses, while they themselves argued that they were a rest area or transitional shelter, taking cover under "transitional housing accommodations", which were legal under the state land use laws (Heben, 2014, Przybylinski, 2021). The lawsuit was thrown out when the city came in with a new site for the encampment to move to, a parking lot owned by the city's urban renewal agency about two blocks from the initial site, still in Old Town but near the city's Pearl District. When the move became publicly known, the district's business

association and a local developer both filed suit against the city stating that again the tent city was in violation of the state's land use ordinance (Przybylinski, 2021).

The developer ended up purchasing the site from the urban renewal agency through a negotiation they had between the city, the agency, and R2DToo, resulting in a settlement of nearly $850,000 coming directly from the developer's purchase of the lot. The settlement also obligated the city to find a new site for the tent city before it was moved from its initial site. This stabilized the tent city, allowing it to remain on the site for another two years until the city found a new site in early 2015, near the city's Central Eastside Neighborhood (Przybylinski, 2021). The city then passed a zoning amendment applying to the property to make the site comply with existing zoning regulations, with the city purchasing the site following the ruling.

A few months later, the site was again facing a lawsuit, this time from the adjoining neighborhood business association, filing a challenge with the state's Land Use Board of Appeals to stop the relocation (Przybylinski, 2021). The Board agreed with the complainant's argument, blocking R2DToo from relocating to this alternative site. With the site's lease set to expire in a few months, R2DToo and the city were once again in a difficult situation. But the day before the lease expiration, the mayor and his staff announced that they had negotiated with R2DToo and found a new site on a government-owned property immediately across the river from downtown (Przybylinski, 2021). After nearly six years on the site in Old Town, the site was moved to its present-day location and has not received any lawsuits or appeals since (Heben, 2014, Przybylinski, 2021).

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Financing

  Right to Dream Too has encountered many funding issues since its inception in the early 2010s (Sparling, 2020). Even with an operating budget of just $30,000 per year, the organization has had difficulty securing city funding due to its resistance to formalizing its operations to the standards set by the city (Sparling, 2020). The organization and the handful of local nonprofits that have been supporting the project pinned their hopes on stable funding from the Joint Office of Homeless Services, yet their application was rejected in November 2019 (Sparling, 2020). Through this, the group was able to raise $13,000 through an internal GoFundMe campaign and was granted another $9,000 in one-time funds by a City Commissioner to "keep the lights on" and buy emergency supplies (Sparling, 2020).

  Regarding the rejected funding from the city's Joint Office, the city responded that the organization scored too low on the qualification application and left some questions unanswered (Sparling, 2020). Officials noted that during the pandemic, the city embarked on an emergency camping program that was able to house 135 people and provide them with mental and social health services, something that R2DToo has been unable to do (Sparling, 2020). In order to be eligible for HUD funding, it is required to keep a log of people who use the facility and enter that information into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), yet the organization has not done that given its existence as a short-term rest area and the organization's general resistance to the formalized process (Sparling, 2020). Funding continues to be an issue for the community, but the community persists (Sparling, 2020).

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DIGNITY **V**ILLAGE – **P**ORTLAND, **OR**

Story & Mission

The camp's origins can be traced back to the erection of five tents on city-owned land in central Portland in 2000 (Heben, 2014). Following a news report published by *Street Roots*, a local advocacy publisher, there was a realization that the city's shelter infrastructure was far from sufficient in dealing with the estimated 4,000 unhoused people in the city. The group named themselves "Camp Dignity", and formed a campaign called *Out the Doorways* that had three core values: renounce charity models for responding to poverty, to be self-governed, and to demonstrate the practical wisdom behind the creation of a city-sanctioned campground for the homeless (Heben, 2014).

Through multiple rounds of evictions and soft protests over NIMBY obstacles, *Street Roots* began to hold meetings to increase awareness of the issues at stake and the tangible concept of formalizing tent encampments into legal and recognized status. These meetings also spurred research into various examples of tent cities and formalized encampments across the nation, gaining enough precedent to initiate a site selection committee to see what may be possible in Portland. A formal proposal was drafted by a local architect and community organizer to be presented to the city outlining why a tent city was necessary, how it would be organized, and what it would look like (Heben, 2014, Werner, 2014).

The proposal included a phased development plan, given that the group had not yet secured a permanent site but had recognized that the political environment they were working in could be supportive of such ideas. This allowed them to stick to their ideological

roots of developing more organically, similar to what was done in previous iterations of the camp. Phasing out development based on the expectations held at the time was key to the project's evolution, gaining more permanent features and regulations as time went on. Starting with short-term arrangements with landowners and an idea of the physical composition they desired, the camp began partnering with local community organizations to establish tents, portable toilets, and cooking facilities (Heben, 2014).

As a more secure location was identified through a two-year land lease, portable features were implemented that included temporary utility hookups and some common area facilities. When a more permanent site was found in late 2001, more elaborate common areas and tarp roofs over pods of tents were constructed. Rounding out the phased approach, with a more contractual agreement with the city, residents were able to begin construction of micro-housing units made out of recycled materials. Included was a desire to acquire additional land nearby to accommodate micro-enterprises such as farming to provide work for residents and enable additional sources of income for the community.

Land Ownership

The initial notion for land ownership for the site was to either find a private landowner who would house the community for a short period of time, around three months, or some type of public land (Heben, 2014). As time went on and the concept was tested and further formalized, the goal would be to work with the city and find a city-owned parcel of land to avoid regulatory and NIMBY issues (Heben, 2014). In late 2001, a city-

owned parcel on a former industrial site was chosen for the community, which remains there to this day (Heben, 2014).

Illustration 3-1: Dignity Village Areal - WikiDot

Regulatory Environment

Roughly a year after the conception of Camp Dignity, the City of Portland granted sanctioned status to the tent city for up to sixty people on a one-acre site near the city's airport. The site is on a portion of an active leaf composting facility owned by the city. During the next two years, the site existed under multiple short-term lease agreements, which allowed city leaders to explore additional land-use options as they maneuvered through existing ones to keep the site in compliance. But in 2004, a complaint came in around the lack of enforcement of building codes, bringing in a threat of eviction. In response, a State Statute was brought up, ORS 446.265, which covers transitional housing accommodations (Heben, 2014). This statute allows a municipality to approve the establishment of a campground for the purpose of providing shelter accommodations for those that for one reason or another cannot be placed in other low-income housing options. How the statute is interpreted is left to some ambiguity, but outlines the use of separate facilities that are able to accommodate individuals or families with the option of providing access to water, toilet, laundry, and cooking through shared facilities (Heben, 2014). An

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important aspect of this statute is the allowance of up to two of these transitional campground facilities in each municipality.

Financing

During the development of Dignity Village, the primary funding source was from private donations and grants, but as time went on, many of those dollars began to dry up. Residents now pay $35 a month to cover the operating expenses of the community, which is supplemented by donations and profits from the small businesses they operate within the community (Heben, 2014). These businesses included a summer yard sale, selling firewood and various types of produce from their community garden. The city does not charge the community for the use of the land, but monthly operating expenses total around $2,000 and account for trash service, electricity, water, and portable toilets.

Overall, this model has been proven to be an economically efficient use of resources to deal with the issue of homelessness in the Portland community. It was reported that in 2007, the average daily cost per person was $4.28, nearly $15 less per day than a comparable program in the city's emergency shelter infrastructure (Table 3-3 shows a comparative list) (Heben, 2014). This has allowed Dignity Village to serve as a premier example of cost-effectiveness in dealing with the issue of homelessness, showing Portland and cities across the nation that this type of intentional community has a place in the larger shelter-to-housing continuum.

An important aspect of the village's financial capacity is its operation as a 501(c) nonprofit, which allows it to receive tax-deductible donations and grants, as well as the

ability to borrow money through various kinds of bonds and promissory notes (dignityvillage.org)

Shelter Type	Cost per day
Dignity Village	$4.28
Warming Shelters	$12.59
Emergency Shelters	$20.92
Rental Assistance	$24.60
Supportive Housing	$32.37
Transitional Housing	$66.56

Table 3-3: Cost of Homeless Housing Options, Heben, 2014

OPPORTUNITY VILLAGE – EUGENE, OR

Story & Mission

With origins coming from the Occupy Movement of late 2011, Opportunity Village came about through an assembly of people camping in the streets of Eugene, OR in protest (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org). The move to camp in the streets was a statement against the policy and political priorities of the government. These new protesters joined with the unhoused community who were already camping on the city's streets, organizing a broad coalition of residents who felt overlooked by governmental decisions (Heben,

2014). Through the movement and the informal settlement that followed, democratic assemblies were held, a volunteer-run clinic was set up, and hundreds of meals were being served each day to people who were participating, including those from both the housed and the unhoused community (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org).

Though the protest camp was eventually shut down, the presence of this operation shed light on and created public concern for the unhoused community in the city (Squareonevillages.org). Following the closure, the city's acting mayor appointed a task force to identify new and innovative solutions to housing the city's homeless population (Heben, 2014). The task force included a wide range of stakeholders including representatives from the local school district, nonprofit entities, business owners, the police department, and members of the local unhoused community to discuss what these new and innovative solutions could look like (Heben, 2014). Early conversations focused on self-management, alternative micro-housing, and transcending the perception of a tent city into the more positive notion of a village community (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org). The first and most prominent recommendation from the task force was to "direct city staff to work with community members to identify potential sites in order to establish a safe and secure place to be… independently financed with oversight by a nonprofit organization or agency" (Squareonevillages.org).

The original proposal was to be for four separate tiny house villages but was eventually scaled down to just one village as an initial pilot project housing 30-45 residents (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org). The organization was incorporated as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization under the name Opportunity Village Eugene, allowing it to be

selected by the city as the operating entity (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org). The community was to be designed as transitional housing with the goal of moving residents into permanent living situations and serving a larger portion of the city's unhoused population, even though it was emphasized that there would be no limit to the length of stay (Heben, 2014). A major goal of the project was to bridge the gap between the housed and the unhoused community which was done by creating a close relationship with nonprofit organizations and volunteers from the surrounding community.

Volunteers were essential to the construction of the village, whose organizers chose to avoid the traditional development process and instead partnered with residents, volunteers, and skilled builders who worked together to build the village collectively (Squareonevillages.org). The village was built incrementally and in different stages, with the first being the construction of five tiny houses, a dozen garden beds, and a trench for water and electricity infrastructure that would eventually connect to the shared kitchen and bathroom facility (Squareonevillages.org). Some resident volunteers elected to live in tents on the site and volunteer their time to build their own houses and assist in the broader development of the community (Squareonevillages.org). Structures were built with prefabricated panels that are constructed off-site and delivered, utilizing standardized pieces of material such as plywood to reduce waste, simplify construction, and make the donation of materials easier (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org).

Land Ownership

The land that the village sits on is city-owned and is leased to the village for a nominal fee of $1 per year (Squareonevillages.org). The community has existed on this site since its inception in 2013.

Regulatory Environment

Opportunity Village Eugene was permitted as a homeless shelter, a land use that was only permitted in industrial and mixed-used employment zones, and required a conditional use permit to be developed (Squareonevillages.org). The City of Eugene wanted to work with the organization and surrounding community to ensure the vision of the project was met while also complying with existing building codes and regulations (Squareonevillages.org). The interpretation was made to designate the tiny house structures as temporary structures, and sleeping units rather than dwelling units, in compliance with Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) Section 107 (Squareonevillages.org). Resulting of this interpretation was housing that meets code requirements around structural strength, ventilation, and fire safety, while also allowing for flexibility around utility and foundation requirements, which keep costs low and allow for flexibility in the design and construction of the village (Heben, 2014, Squareonevillages.org).

Financing

Initial funding for getting Opportunity Village off the ground was around $98,000 from in-kind donations from private businesses and organizations and some small grants (Squareonevillages.org). Additionally, there was an estimated $114,000 in donations for

materials and labor which was used to construct the entirety of housing and shared community spaces on site (Squareonevillages.org). This accounted for a cost per housing unit ranging from $1,000 to $2,000 (Heben, 2014). Operating the site costs around $30,000 a year, which includes expenses for maintenance, insurance, utilities, and bus passes for all residents. Personal expenses were accounted for starting in 2016, which included $15,000 for a village coordinator, social work intern from a local university, and for the time of the community's executive director (Squareonevillages.org). The village is able to operate at a cost of only $5 per person per day, resulting in one of the most cost-effective shelter operations in the country (Squareonevillages.org). The village does not charge residents rent but does charge a $30 per month utility fee which helps offset the costs of operating expenses, with the remainder of costs being received through fundraising efforts with the local community (Squareonevillages.org).

SAFE REST VILLAGE PROGRAM – PORTLAND, OR

Story & Mission

Portland's Safe Rest Village Program was born in 2021 out of the recognition that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness needed a safe place to rest and store their belongings (Portland.gov, 2022). It was created to serve the immediate needs of people living on the streets of Portland while they prepare for and wait for housing to become available. The program is a city-led and federally funded initiative that allows for alternative forms of shelter, such as "outdoor villages" that are paired with social services. The city does not define what an outdoor village should look like verbatim but specifies

that the sites may include both sleeping pods (which can include tents, vehicles, and RV's) and storage structures, that can be hooked up with plumbing, electricity, and/or portable facilities, and can be either temporary or permanent structures in nature (Portland.gov, 2021). The goal of allowing this form of shelter project is to make it easier to site temporary homeless shelters and social services in various zoning districts, aiming to reduce the number of people who live on the streets (Portland.gov, 2021).

The program has broad applicability to increase housing flexibility through various group living arrangements to allow alternative types of shelter and housing more broadly. This right was passed through a zoning ordinance so that these housing types can be used in perpetuity to slowly relieve the housing and homelessness crisis that is present in the city (Portland.gov, 2021). This amendment to the zoning code also allows for partner agencies, such as homeless services, development services, the housing bureau, and local nonprofits to more efficiently provide safe shelter and more affordable housing options for its citizens (Portland.gov, 2021). Figure 3-1 below shows a diagram of the service priorities that were issued as part of the Safe Rest Village Program, which are essential elements to the vision of the outdoor shelter community service use:

Safe Rest Villages – Service Priorities

Values:
Dignity
Safety
Community
Compassion

Shelter:
Private Space
Shared Space

Hygiene:
Laundry
Showers
Flush
Toilets
Garbage
Recycling

Infrastructure:
Electricity
Clean Water
Wi-Fi
HVAC
Food Preparation
Fire Safety
Public Transportation

Access to Services:
Case Management
Mental Health Supports
Recovery Support
Services
Housing Supports
Community Advocates
First Aid & Medical Care

Figure 3-1: Safe Rest Village Service Priorities, Portland.gov, 2021

Land Ownership

Through the zoning code change, the city allowed the siting of outdoor villages on city-owned, county-owned, land owned by other public agencies, and private property (Portland.gov, 2021). Beyond these zoning amendments passed through the project, local religious institutions are engaged in the broader concept of developing Safe Rest Villages and micro-housing communities of their own, opening up land owned by religious institutions to the mix for possible partnerships and collaborative efforts (Heben, 2014, Portland.gov, 2021). The city recognized in 2016 that the vast majority of its shelter resources were located in the downtown neighborhoods, which was a barrier to Portlanders who were trying to access shelter across the city (Portland.gov, 2021). An amendment allowed for six Safe Rest Village locations within the city and provided funding for an

additional two alternative shelter locations (Portland.gov, 2022). Figure 3-2 below shows

a map of shelters that exist or will exist under the Safe Rest Village program:

Figure 3-2: Safe Rest Village Map - Portland.gov, 2022

Regulatory Environment

The sighting of outdoor shelters was only the initial step in the passage of a larger

and more comprehensive ordinance that covers both shelter and housing infrastructure.

Called the Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) Project, it included a set of zoning code

amendments that were aimed at expanding shelter and housing options for Portland's

extremely low-income residents (Portland.gov, 2021). The project was developed around

four elements:

1. The first was to enable code changes that make it easier to site homeless shelters and social services in various zoning districts (Portland.gov, 2021).
2. The second was to implement a community service land use called "outdoor shelter", which was a use previously allowed on a case-by-case basis in the city but is now engaged to provide a streamlined path for outdoor and other types of alternative shelter models to exist in the city (Portland.gov, 2021).
3. The third element was to increase housing flexibility more broadly by allowing and further legalizing housing types such as Single-room occupancy (SROs, referenced in an earlier chapter), dormitories, senior-care facilities, and co-housing type facilities (Portland.gov, 2021).
4. The final element was initiated to allow occupancy of RVs or tiny houses on wheels on residential property (Portland.gov, 2021).

The city also engaged in Part 2 of the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project (S2HC2) in 2022 which further expanded and strengthened the actions taken in Part 1 of the project in increasing opportunities for safe shelter and affordable housing. These draft improvements include further broadening the site selection criteria for outdoor shelters, relaxing development requirements and zoning barriers for these shelters, allowing for temporary development and alteration rules, and creating a more flexible type of conditional use permit that enables outdoor shelters to be added to existing permits or master plan developments (Portland.gov, 2022).

Financing

With regard to funding, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars were used to implement the Safe Rest Village Program with money from the city/county Joint Office for Homeless Services pledged to sustain it (Portland.gov, 2021). As of early 2023, the

City of Portland has pledged an additional $24 million to fund the creation of outdoor shelters across the city with the funding set to cover one year of operating and maintenance expenses for the sites (Interview Four, 2023).

Austin-based Case Studies

This next section covers case studies from within the Austin, TX metro area that have inspired my interest in pursuing this research. Both of these efforts span the shelter-to-housing continuum and produce housing and service resources for people experiencing homelessness in the city. I look at these case studies through the same lens as I did for the precedent studies, observing the various regulatory, financial, and ownership tools which allow these projects to exist in the community. I cover the general background and story behind each case before I explain more critical information that applies to my research findings. This information should serve as a toolkit for future practitioners as they consider these efforts in application to city-wide legislation.

THE ESPERANZA COMMUNITY – AUSTIN, TX

Story & Mission

The story of the Esperanza Community in Austin, TX is one of compassion, innovation, and resiliency. Beginning in 2017, The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) a nonprofit focused on serving Austin's

Illustration 3-2: Meeting with Founder, Moreno-Lozano, 2023

homeless community, was founded through a desire to find new ways and approaches to providing services to the city's unhoused population (toofound.org). The organization began work on its first project through a partnership with the City of Austin called Workforce First, which provided unhoused people with paid opportunities to clean up city parks and abandoned homeless encampments (toofound.org). Following this, the organization create a second project, the mobile hygiene clinic, which was a truck and trailer outfitted with showers, toiletries, food, and general supplies. Chris Baker, executive director of TOOF, worked to expand both of these projects through outreach with the city and other nonprofits that were conducting this type of work (toofound.org). What started out as a mobile clinic has today grown into several permanent locations around the city for people to access hygiene, food, and general supplies. The clinic has been able to provide 25,000 showers to people as of 2020 (toofound.org).

After 23 years of a public camping ban in the city of Austin, a resolution by city leaders in October 2019 asserted that camping in public places was legal and people would be able to pitch tents around the city for shelter (Aguilera, 2022). The city recognized that the criminalization of camping in public spaces was putting people experiencing homelessness at risk of living in dangerous locations, such as creek beds and other places just to stay out of sight from enforcement agencies (Bova, 2020). The lifting of the ban was a decision that curtailed a trio of local laws that aimed to criminalize the actions of camping, panhandling, and sitting or sleeping in the downtown business district (Bova, 2020). Recognizing that these laws were only designed to make the lives of homeless people more difficult, the city moved to dissolve these ordinances, moving in an opposite

direction than most of the country, and permit camping in public spaces, hoping to reduce the need to live in those more dangerous environments (Bova, 2020).

Another goal of the resolution was to reduce the number of citations that were needlessly given to people experiencing homelessness, which created an undue burden on people who were just trying to find a place to live and survive in a community with a deficiency in affordable housing resources (Bova, 2020). Violation of the previous camping ban would result in a misdemeanor charge and a $500 fine (Bova, 2020). The vast majority of unhoused folks would not show up to court, or receive a warrant for their arrest, which would lead to a criminal history that further prevented their ability to access housing (Bova, 2020). As this resolution began to take shape, fear-mongering attacks became prevalent from the Governor's office which disagreed with the resolution Austin had put forward. (Bova, 2020). He linked the decision with an increase in filth, violence, and general mayhem - reporting that there was a vast increase in crime in the city now that the camping ban had been dissolved (Bova, 2020). With many of the homeless individuals opting to take shelter under the many highway overpasses in the city, the Governor ordered disruptive clear-outs from these sites given that they were owned and operated by a State agency and not covered under city ordinance (Bova, 2020).

As a result of the clear-outs, the Governor announced that he would designate a piece of land owned by the state's transportation agency on the city's eastside to serve as an authorized homeless encampment while a fundraising effort was enacted to create a 300-bed "mega-tent" shelter somewhere else in the city (Bova, 2019). The state-owned property was only meant to provide a space for people to camp in the short term as a way

to disperse people away from camping downtown and under overpasses (Bova, 2019). The move was made with no collaboration with the city's homeless service agencies, and the promises for health services, hygiene facilities, and other needed support from the state were soon to be stalled, along with the funding of the "mega-tent" shelter (Bova, 2019). As soon as the encampment opened in late 2019, people began traveling from around the city to live there, adapting the property to their own needs and steadily building a community out of what was once an abandoned lot on the city's eastside (Bova, 2021).

With the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, TOOF decided to enter the site and provide food, health, and hygiene services to the residents of the new community that had been operating under insufficient state resources since its inception (toofound.org, Bova, 2021). In August 2020, TOOF relocated its main office to the site in order to provide more substantial services and relationships to the people who were living there. They doubled their new office space to include a lounge and computer lab, attracted clinicians to begin providing medical service to people, renamed the site to the Esperanza Community, and established an elected leadership committee comprised of community members (Bova, 2021). TOOF also began offering work opportunities to people in the community which helped reduce the amount of theft and increased the trust and connectedness among residents (Bova, 2021).

In April of 2021, the state transportation department, which had been supportive of TOOF and the project, moved to tear down aging garage spaces left over from the site's previous use. These spaces had been serving as housing for some of the residents and storage for the overall site (Bova, 2021). Residents reported that this change was traumatic, but cooperation with the landowner

Illustration 3-3: IKEA Shelters, Moreno-Lozano, 2023

was needed to maintain good relations (Bova, 2021). IKEA shelters were brought in to serve as shelters for some of the residents, which was part of a broader mission of the organization to begin formalizing the encampment through the development of tiny houses, community facilities, and underground infrastructure (Bova, 2021). As part of this process, safety and liability for the site was transferred to TOOF who would now hold a long-term lease with the state. This move allows TOOF to operate the site as an emergency shelter, serving as a transitional environment for people to live in as they ideally move into permanent housing within a few months (Bova, 2021).

Beginning in late-2020, TOOF, its elected leadership of residents, and various community partners began working on a plan for more permanent housing structures to be implemented on the site (toofound.org). This need was exacerbated by Winter Storm Uri which produced record amounts of snow and resulted in the unfortunate death of a

community resident (Bova, 2021). Later that year, a campaign to fund this new transformational shelter complex was initiated to begin gathering knowledge and resources for the community (toofound.org). Through each stage of the process, residents were consulted and their ideas and vision for the site were implemented into the design proposals. In partnership with many design, construction, finance, and social service entities, the vision of a transformational Esperanza Community was initiated with the groundbreaking of the project in 2022 (toofound.org). Figure 3-3 below shows a diagram of the new site which is currently under development as of 2023.

ESPERANZA COMMUNITY

4 NEIGHBORHOODS EACH WITH:
- 50 transitional non-congregate shelter units (200 total)
- Shaded central gathering area
- 8 conditioned bathrooms/showers
- Food prep areas

SITE SERVICES:
- Community offices
- Case management services
- Employment opportunities
- Onsite healthcare services
- Laundry facilities
- Temperature/rest stations
- Creative/communal areas
- Phone charging/computer access

Figure 3-3: Esperanza Community Site Plan, toofound.org

The Esperanza Community has become a vital piece of the continuum of care model for the city, not only through the number of units being produced but also through its model

of using non-congregate shelters and individual occupancy (Moreno-Lozano, 2023). Residents have reported that this model allows them to be seen and heard in a way that they did not find going through traditional emergency shelters (Moreno-Lozano, 2023). More than 85 people are living at the site as of early 2023, with several of the site's 50 shelter units being built and occupied by residents, with another batch of shelters being slated to complete construction by the end of the year (Moreno-Lozano, 2023).

Land Ownership

The site is owned by the Texas Department of Transportation, an agency within the State of Texas. In 2019, the department entered into a 10-year lease agreement with TOOF and has provided flexibility within the site for the organization to develop it how they wish (Bingamon, 2021).

Regulatory Environment

Since the organization is operating the emergency shelter on state-owned land, it does not have to comply with the general zoning requirements that are subject to private property in the city. The move was done without consultation with the surrounding neighborhood or local elected officials (Bova, 2021). Essentially, the state is able to use the state-owned property to conduct state business, regardless of what the local jurisdiction's zoning code outlines.

Financing

Many different forms of funding have been used throughout the development of the Esperanza Community beginning from its inception as a state-sanctioned site to its ongoing

build-out as a permanent emergency shelter operation. Through viewing the most recent financial statements posted on the organization's website, TOOF received over $1 million in public support, donations, and grant funding in 2020 (toofound.org). It is reported that the operating expenses are around $750,000 a year to run, which comes out to around $20 per person per day to run the facility (toofound.org).

In early 2023, Travis County announced its commitment of $3 million to TOOF to assist in the development of their new transformational shelter complex, coming from a pool of $110 million that has been pledged to fight homelessness across the county (Moreno-Lozano, 2023). This funding will cover nearly half of the estimated costs for the site development, estimated at $6.5 million (Moreno-Lozano, 2023).

COMMUNITY FIRST! VILLAGE – AUSTIN, TX

Story & Mission

Community First! Village is the largest tiny home village for the homeless in the United States. It is currently a 50-acre master-planned community that provides affordable, permanent housing, and a supportive community for the disabled and chronically homeless in Central Texas. (Alexander, 2019, Interview One, 2023). Phase I and Phase II of the project have been completed as of 2023, with Phase III (located across the street) and Phase IV (a satellite location) in the planning and development stage. The organization, known as Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF), began as a food truck ministry in 1998 with a mission of delivering sack lunches and various services to people living on the street in the City of Austin (Interview One, 2023). For the next twenty years, MLF existed solely to provide

that service, expanding slowly through the community, and increasing the size of their truck fleet and their reach across the community (Interview One, 2023).

Through relationship building and a deep-rooted connection with the Austin community, the founder and a group of five other people who had varying experiences with homelessness began to strategize about the next steps for the organization as it looked to further impact the lives of their homeless neighbors (Interview One, 2023). The founder, a former real estate professional, began buying old RVs and putting them around town. This effort had some marginal success, but it was quickly realized that taking someone out of their existing community and moving them to a new place was often isolated and lacked the type of community that was felt when living with others in a similar situation (Interview One, 2023).

At the time, Austin had implemented a slew of "quality of life" laws that banned the act of camping, sitting, and laying down in Austin's downtown streets (Alexander, 2019). So, in 2010, a site selection process began to take place with the help of an architecture class (taught by Professor Steve Ross) from the University of Texas to find a formal location where an RV park for formally homeless people could be located (Interview One, 2023, Alexander, 2019). Initially, the idea was to locate the park in the city limits of Austin so as to connect the residents with the larger community and the services which were concentrated in the downtown district (Interview One, 2023). NIMBY complaints were very prominent in the discussion at public meetings and people feared having an RV park catering to formally homeless individuals near them (Interview One, 2023). With this knowledge, the organization opted to look for a site that was outside the

city limits, and after a six-year process, settled on a 27-acre site in east Austin (Interview One, 2023, mlf.org).

Breaking ground in 2015, an initial site design for the first phase was composed of only RVs, but further deliberation with a group of local architects yielded an idea for also creating micro-housing units (Interview One, 2023). Over the next three years, the site was transformed into a community with 100 RV homes and 130 micro-housing units with five shared restrooms and cleaning facilities and five outdoor kitchen sites spread across the site (Interview One, 2023, mlf.org). Phase I also includes a walking trail, a community health center, an art house, and a community garden among many other features (Interview One, 2023, mlf.org). Building off the success of the first phase, the organization next acquired an adjacent piece of land to construct a similar spread of housing and community spaces, resulting in an additional 310 housing units and seven shared restrooms and cleaning facilities (mlf.org). Table 3-4 below shows images taken from the organization's website showing the design of both Phase I and Phase II:

Phase I (completed in 2018)	Phase II (completed in 2021)
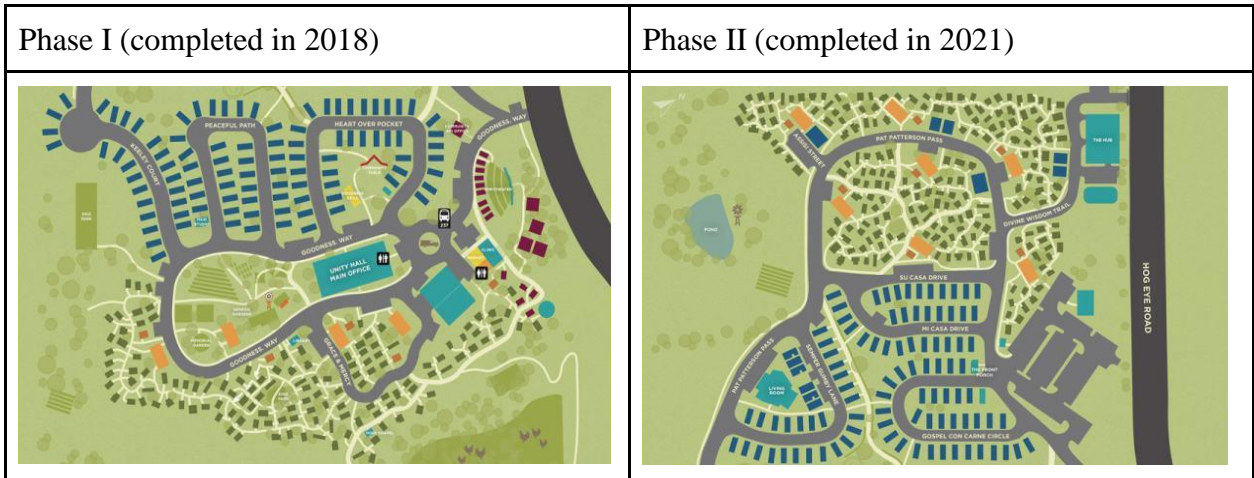
Table 3-4: Site Map of Community First! Village, mlf.org

Land Ownership

The process for land acquisition and ownership for MLF is to work with community partners, such as private foundations, who are looking to make a substantial donation of privately owned land for the project (Interview One, 2023). In the case of all four phases, the land was identified by MLF, purchased by a philanthropic organization, and then donated to MLF for their cause (Interview One, 2023). After the land is donated, MLF entitles it - going through the permitting process with the county and the site development process with the city to add value to the land. The organization that donated the land then gets a tax write-off based on the value of the improved land (Interview One, 2023). This process works well for both parties involved and has created a successful and cost-productive way for the organization to expand its impact on affordable housing in the community (Interview One, 2023).

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Regulatory Environment

After MLF realized the various difficulties associated with locating the project within the city limits of Austin, the choice was made to find a site that was located in the city's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction or ETJ (Interview One, 2023). Counties and ETJ areas in Texas are unique in that they do not have the authority to implement zoning ordinances, except for a few specific instances for counties locates along the U.S.-Mexico border (Stool, 2019). The lack of a zoning ordinance to control land use in this area was essential to the methodology MLF wished to pursue when creating the community. The idea initially was to not involve the city, county, nor use public funding in the development of the community because they wished to have more flexibility in their design and development process without having to work through various regulations and requirements that were common in public-facing work (Alexander, 2019, Interview One, 2023). Given the lack of regulations in this jurisdiction, the project was able to progress through verbal commitments from various leaders and agencies on both the city and county sides (Interview One, 2023). Further support was garnered after the prototype model was seen as successful, leading to further instances of support both verbally and through various land use and financing support (Interview One, 2023).

Financing

The majority of funding, especially for Phase I of development, came from private organizations and foundations through one-time donations which cover the majority of funding and capital expenses (Interview One, 2023). This included the upfront cost of purchasing the land, site work, and the initial housing units, which came out to nearly $18

million (Housing Innovation, 2022). Some of the houses were donated to the project, while others were part of the overall construction cost, which is reported to be around $80,000 per unit on average (Housing Innovation, 2022). Operating costs for the first phase of the project come from both private donations covering about 75% of the cost and unit rental income, covering the remaining 25% (Alexander, 2019, Housing Innovation, 2022). Average per-unit construction costs for each type of housing unit are shown below:

- Studio Tiny House Unit: $10,333
- One-Bedroom Tiny House Unit: $22,500
- RV: $10,000
- Insulated Canvas Teepee Hut: $5,313 (Alexander, 2019)

For Phase II of the project, in addition to some private funding, the organization received Federal Home Loan Bank Grants that could be used for about half of the dwelling units and were extended to include a portion of the shared restroom and cleaning facilities as well (Interview One, 2023). Additionally, the organization received financial support from the NMTC Program, which was used to cover additional dwelling units, restrooms, and cleaning facilities, as well as some of the larger community spaces (Interview One, 2023). Phase III is reported to have a similar mix of applicability from both the federal grant and NMTC program, while Phase IV will utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and will be done in partnership with Foundation Communities, another local affordable housing agency (Interview One, 2023).

These funds were distributed by Travis County, which designated $100 million of those funds to create housing for people experiencing homelessness in the community. $50 million of those funds were distributed to MLF and will be spent on the Phase IV project

(Interview One, 2023). With the ARPA funding, there are more restrictions and reporting requirements for how the funds can be spent, but the organization is moving forward with the plan as it will vastly support the larger mission of creating permanent housing units for people who have been impacted by homelessness (Interview One, 2023).

Major development incentives implemented as part of the city and county's support for the projects include a waiver by the city for all development fees - including the fees assessed on all future phases (Interview One, 2023). Additionally, the State of Texas has offered an exemption on all property taxes for the site and any future phases (Interview One, 2023). Illustration 3-4 provides spatial context for these communities.
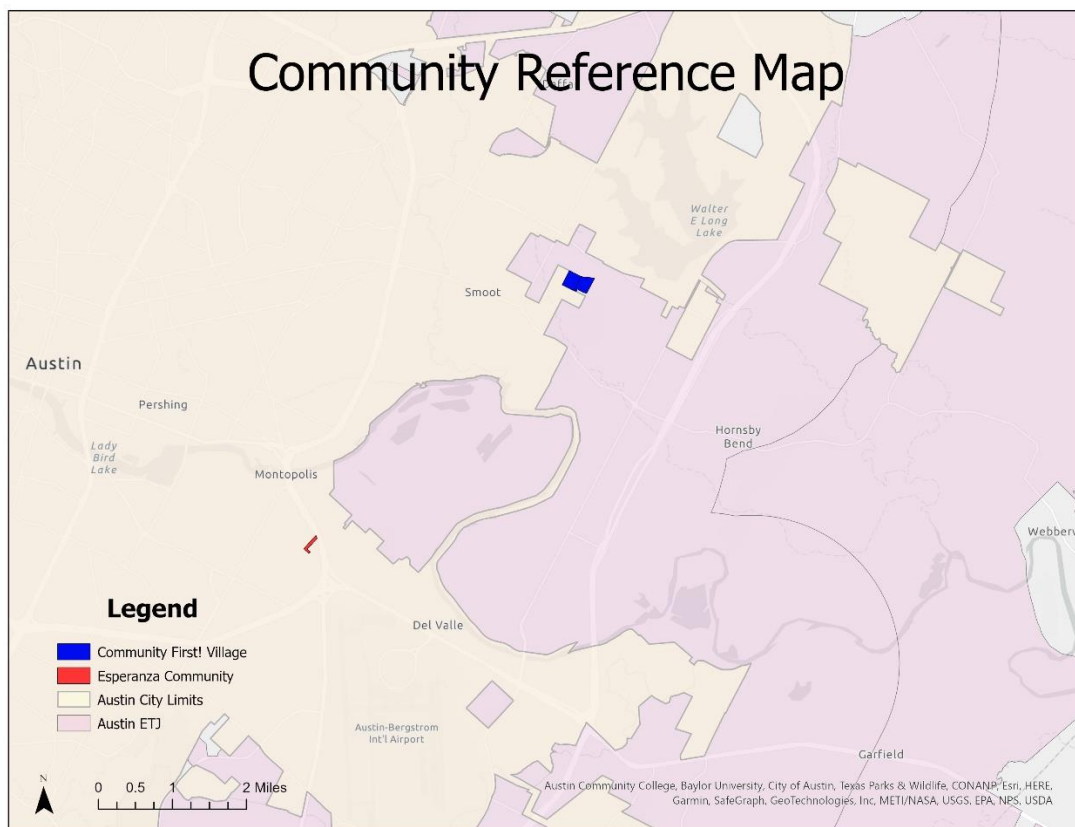

Illustration 3-4: Community Reference Map

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The chapter focuses on the findings from my research into various models of transitional and affordable villages that fill the need for immediate, low-cost, and low-impact housing development aimed to combat unsheltered homelessness in our communities (Heben, 2014, squareonevillages.org). The findings from this research are organized here to better summarize the key elements of design, ownership, land use regulations, and financing that can inform the development of these villages. The information presented here comes primarily from case study research and interviews and is organized into two parts.

The first part provides an overview of the elements that make up the design methodology for creating these villages. Here, I analyze the idea behind the shelter-to-housing continuum, building off of the concept that was introduced in Chapter One: Introduction by including some practical approaches to the way design and development professionals can think about applying this concept. Additionally, this first part includes a discussion of the design characteristics that accompany the broader idea of the shelter-to-housing continuum, disseminating the ideas formulated through the case studies and discussing them as frameworks for implementation.

Part two of the chapter discusses the different avenues that local governments can explore when looking to implement transitional and affordable villages in their communities. This part of the chapter is divided into three sections, beginning with a discussion on land ownership principles that can be used or aligned to enable the

development of this type of community. The second section discusses essential policies, tools, and efforts enacted to enhance a city's regulatory environment to be more accepting of homeless housing and smaller dwelling units. Section three focuses on financing tools that can be used to construct these communities.

Shelter-to-Housing Continuum

When thinking about the process of moving people between housing options that are temporary in nature, like an emergency shelter, to one that is permanent, such as affordable housing, it is crucial to understand the distinction in how each is perceived by the entities that govern development. The complex web of zoning and other land-use regulations that have been enacted to create order within our urban communities have strayed away from recognizing land uses that may shift in structure and permanence as the resources become available to the owner or occupant. This idea is more common in the global south, where informal developments are constructed incrementally through years of resource acquisition and an ability to construct and improve one's space without the need to consult land use and zoning code requirements. These developments are still illegal, but commonly accepted given the lack of affordable and accessible housing. Discussions like this have risen in various conversations around homeless housing and autonomy here in the United States, but these ideas are far from being realized in today's overly complex regulatory and political environment.

With that being said, the shelter-to-housing continuum is best discussed by separating these land uses into categories that provide short-term emergency shelter and

those that provide long-term permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. The continuum portion of this discussion comes from the general idea that people move from these short-term shelters into long-term affordable housing. In general, these transitional communities should be designed to be indistinguishable from the affordable communities as they are both organized around the village model. Each can vary in design, but typically includes smaller dwelling units with shared facilities and common spaces. Though similar at many levels, some distinct differences separate the two models. These differences are important to their applicability in existing zoning ordinances and funding mechanisms. Figure 4-1 is a chart that summarizes these key distinctions between both types of villages:

	TRANSITIONAL VILLAGE	AFFORDABLE VILLAGE
Description	Temporary, moveable tiny homes with common bathrooms and kitchens	Permanent tiny homes with varying levels of dependence on common facilities.
Target Population	People currently experiencing homelessness with little to no income	Homeless or Marginally housed at risk of becoming homeless with a reliable source of income
Land Type	Short or mid term lease; Ideally public property for nominal fee	Long-term lease or purchase; Public or private property
Land Use / Zoning	Homeless Shelter; Temporary Use; Municipal Ordinance	Multi-family Residential; Cluster Subdivision; Planned Unit Development
Ownership Structures	N/A	Rental; rent-to-own; cooperative; community land trust
House Size	60 - 120 sq. ft.	120 - 400 sq. ft.
House Type	Sleeping Unit; Temporary Structures	Dwelling Unit
Foundation	Trailer or Pier blocks	Poured Piers, Slab, or Pier blocks with helical anchors
Resident Payment	$0 - 90 / month	$200 - 400 / month
Project Cost	$5,000 - 20,000 / unit	$50,000 - 70,000 / unit
Funding Sources	In-kind donations, local fundraising, small grants	In-kind donations, local fundraising, larger grants, public funding

Figure 4-1: Village Distinctions, squareonevillages.org

Cities are in dire need of developing both types of homeless housing infrastructure in their communities, but the reality is that recognizing these villages as alternative models is often difficult to conceive. The case studies from the previous chapter have demonstrated that each local government takes time to consider the strategy at play before accepting the community's existence in their jurisdiction. Given this reality, it seems crucial to cover some of the positive and negative aspects associated with both the transitional (shelter) village and the affordable (housing) village so that cities can be the most prepared when developing an alternative type of homeless housing resource. Table 4-1 below shows some

of those aspects that have been conceptualized through the work of Square One Villages,

a nonprofit organization that specializes in the construction of both types of housing

resources in Oregon as discussed in detail in Chapter Three: Case Studies.

Transitional (shelter) Village	
Positive	**Negative**
- Requires less funding to build. - Less professional expertise is needed; is simple and quick to build once approved. - Can utilize temporary sites with short-term leases. - Lower operating costs; better accommodates people with little to no income.	- Difficult to use public funding. - More "outside the box" type of project; often more difficult to build community and political support. - Lack of site ownership poses a constraint to the design. - Very basic infrastructure and accommodations.
Affordable (housing) Village	
Positive	**Negative**
- Easier to utilize public funding sources compared to the Transitional Village. - More advanced infrastructure and accommodations; often easier to build with community and political support. - Long-term site control. - Can provide affordable housing to people with extremely low incomes, without dependence on ongoing public subsidy.	- Requires more funding to build. - More professional expertise is necessary; includes a more complex development process. - Finding a long-term site can be difficult and expensive. - Requires residents to have a stable source of income, unless ongoing subsidies are obtained.

Table 4-1: Positive and Negative Aspects of Village Types, squareonevillages.org

Thinking through these distinctions before beginning the process of constructing these housing resources is key to the successful implementation of these ideas. Done thoughtfully, both types of communities can work in tandem to create a system where shelter and housing resources can fulfill different needs of the community. The following

section further breaks down these ideas, which I express as housing and community design elements, into four distinct project models. This is done to give further context to the applicability of different models to reach the varying needs of people. I look at these models as a spectrum of support, ranging from a model that provides a safe place to sleep to a tiny home village that is designed as an alternative type of housing community. The goal is to blur the lines between the housed and unhoused into an inclusive and supportive community.

Housing & Community Design

Homelessness is a complex planning and policy issue that deals with a diverse range of people with a variety of different needs, desires, and levels of assistance. There is no one-size fits all housing and service framework that can accommodate each individual need, which is why the need for flexibility in community design and land use is necessary to consider. Observing the positive dynamics that tent cities hold when organized and managed by the unhoused themselves, Andrew Heben notes that the narrow understanding of home must be broadened to accept all forms of housing that serve a beneficial purpose to residents (2014). Thinking of housing in these terms, we can see how various forms of informal and unrecognized housing can be adapted to fit a broader purpose of serving residents who lack access to the affordable sector of the housing market.

Such alternatives are discussed by Andrew Heben in his book *Tent City Urbanism*, explaining the various models that can be used to house people experiencing homelessness, those with very low income, and those looking for alternative housing communities

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(Heben, 2014). Models include the Sanctuary Village, the Rest Area, the Transitional Village, and the Affordable Village, each of which is described in depth below (Heben, 2014). Together, these models provide a more nuanced understanding of home while respecting the privacy and autonomy of those who reside in each community (Heben, 2014). Table 4-2 below shows existing communities that are denoted as specific forms of shelter and housing that align with these models promoted by Andrew Heben.

Also notable in this framework is the idea of thinking about "Housing First" as a more formal and resource-intensive concept than that of "Shelter First", which is a concept that acts more immediately to create housing resources for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This concept comes from the notion that without a sufficient alternative to house people in the short term, the tent or other form of temporary shelter, should not be discounted from applicability in this discussion (Heben, 2014). As many cities push forward with a "Housing First" framework for addressing homelessness over the long term, we must recognize that this concept has run into a number of issues when applied to cities with tight housing markets. Specifically, those cities that lack sufficient housing and social service resources to implement this Housing First framework. Austin is one of those cities that have had difficulty in providing the needed infrastructure to meet these needs. Given these conditions, this research promotes the idea that Austin should first focus on providing shelter to these populations for both short and long-term support, as a way of providing a transitional experience while simultaneously developing and/or identifying affordable models of permanent housing.

Shelter Model	
Sanctuary Camp Community First Village (Austin, TX)	Rest Area Safe Rest Village (Portland, OR)
Housing Model	
Transitional Village Community First! Village (Austin, TX)	Affordable Village Tiny Tranquility (Waldport, OR)

Table 4-2: Village Model Graphics - KVUE, Portland.gov, MLF.org, tinytranquility.com

SANCTUARY CAMP

Thinking through this lens of "Shelter First", it is important to recognize that the Sanctuary Camp acts as a lifeboat for those who are unhoused. One that cannot be easily

replicated through our more formal notions of the planning and development process (Heben, 2014). This idea was promoted by a homeless advocate in Eugene, OR, who stated that those in need of this lifeboat often found themselves drowning and took it upon themselves to find unused resources to create something that gave them a sense of safety and security (Heben, 2014). This observation expresses how the government should not push people out of this ability to establish self-organized shelters when they fail to provide a sufficient alternative (Heben, 2014).

Research has shown that poverty-related concerns such as not knowing where you are going to sleep at night and not having a secure place to keep your belongings when you are gone during the day create a significant mental burden for those wishing to focus on their transition out of homelessness (Pearson, 2007). This issue is propelled when vagrancy laws are enacted, often targeted at those experiencing homelessness with criminal records, further limiting their ability to transition into more formal housing arrangements. Simply giving people a place to exist without having to deal with the complications of living on the streets is the essence of what a Sanctuary Camp is trying to achieve (Heben, 2014). This framework can be observed as a positive first step in addressing the issue in a humane way that is more economically efficient for both the service provider industry and city financial resources.

This concept becomes more evident through some of the precedent studies in the following chapter, but the essence is that it allows for a safe and secure place for people to live that is respectful of the individual privacy and autonomy of those who typically live

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scattered throughout the community (Heben, 2014). Residents of sanctuary camps are often required to participate in some sort of community maintenance and upkeep to help create a sense of belonging to the community and allow the site to continually serve people in a way that is productive for the collective transition out of poverty. This approach offers a low-cost, citizen-driven alternative to a tent city that can deal with the need for a place to exist in the absence of sufficient government-provided resources (Heben, 2014).

Tent cities exist in every metropolitan area in the country, but very few have achieved legal status. They often exist in a grey area of legislation where residents must deal with the fear of being evicted at a moment's notice (Heben, 2014). To address this, municipalities should work with advocates from existing tent cities to come up with temporary solutions that recognize these settlements in a way that is in line with the formal concerns of the city (Heben, 2014). This type of community should exist to stabilize those living unsheltered, reducing the number of people deferred to higher-cost options such as incarceration and hospitalization (Spellman, 2010).

THE REST AREA

Building off this need for a safe and private space, the concept of a Rest Area can be applied in an almost identical manner to that of the Sanctuary Camp. The real difference is that this type of camp is only provided to residents for a portion of the day/night, giving those who use it a safe and private place to sleep at night or stay during the day. The typical duration of stay can last from about eight to twelve hours a day, with some stipulations as to how often someone can stay consecutively (Heben, 2014). This concept also gives

residents a place to keep their things safe when they are out, giving them peace of mind that they can leave and do what they need to without fearing that their possessions will be taken. Noteworthy in this concept is the idea that this type of shelter can serve those who may have a more difficult time getting along with people, avoiding the conflict that may ensue in full-time shelters such as the Sanctuary Camp (Heben, 2014).

An example of this concept is Portland's *Right 2 Dream Too*, discussed in detail in Chapter Three: Case Studies. The impact of this concept can be seen in providing a low-barrier and flexible resource to give more people the ability to get off the streets and into a safe place to sleep and store belongings. Also existing in this concept is the idea that this model can be added to the Sanctuary Camp for the purpose of providing support, mentorship, and other resources to those who don't want to commit to living in this environment full-time (Heben, 2014). Thinking of these two concepts in this way allows for a flexible setting that can help push the vision of a formalized tent city to a space that is recognized by city leadership. Promoting these benefits and highlighting the support that is created through the structure as a way to significantly decrease the number of people who are living on the streets unsheltered.

THE TRANSITIONAL VILLAGE

The Transitional Village encapsulates the essence of the Tiny House Village Model. It typically provides each person with a small private space supported by communal, shared facilities and common spaces (Heben, 2014). This housing concept is not designed to be permanent housing but is rather meant to properly serve people who are

interested in pursuing an alternative transitional housing option. Typical transitional resources are often more restrictive, expensive to operate, and resemble institutionalized settings (Heben, 2014). Most transitional housing is only offered for a select period of time and is often organized as a congregate living facility or group home with requirements to participate in formal services (Heben, 2014). Government funding for this housing type is contingent on the number of people that are placed into permanent housing after a certain period of time, which is more difficult for certain communities to achieve. On the other hand, the Transitional Village takes a more do-it-yourself approach to getting to this result by providing residents with control and responsibility over their space through a supportive community of people who are in a similar situation as them (Heben, 2014).

A key component of this concept is the ability to continually improve the site's infrastructure in order to transition housing types from tents into micro-housing units (Heben, 2014). These structures can take the form of prefabricated units or can be done more organically through on-site construction, often performed by residents and volunteers with donated and/or scrap materials. Comparable to dormitories or assisted living facilities, these developments can have land use designations as congregate living facilities with housing units that operate as "sleeping units" instead of "dwelling units", avoiding more stringent requirements under most municipal laws (Heben, 2014). Given the unconventional nature of this form of development, it may be most plausible to initiate this work through a pilot project to test out the concept and gain public acceptance of it prior to engaging in any type of longer-term agreement with the municipality.

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THE AFFORDABLE VILLAGE

Given the concerns we have with producing affordable housing in this country, the Affordable Village looks to create an alternative form of affordable housing that can meet the needs of those living in rent-burdened housing environments and those in search of alternative housing communities (Heben, 2014). This concept capitalizes on the popularity of the tiny house movement, which can be traced back to the 1970s as a way to create intentional living communities that provide low-cost and low-impact housing options (Furst 2017, Heben, 2014). The Affordable Village follows the trend of Housing First programs but uses a more financially sustainable approach and utilizes common and shared resources to highlight aspects of community living without the need for public subsidy (Heben, 2014).

The main difference when compared to the Transitional Village is the idea of permanence, with the Affordable Village serving as a place for residents to live with no requirement or suggestion that they transition into a housing structure that is more widely accepted, such as an apartment or single-family house (Heben, 2014). The ownership structure of this model can play a huge role in keeping these houses affordable to residents and is highlighted as a less costly alternative to co-housing and condominiums developments, which typically operate under a similar ownership model. There are many similarities between the Transitional Village and Affordable Village, with the only difference being the population they are intended to serve. It is explained how both models can support one another by creating a sort of intake system for those living in the

Transitional Village for further placement into an Affordable Village if the resident is supportive of the living environment and they can afford the rent (Heben, 2014).

Continuing on in the analysis of these findings, it is best to think about these two models, shelter and housing, as distinct housing efforts that require different approaches to achieve a type of land ownership, financing, and/or regulatory environment that allows for such developments to be built. The next part of the chapter discusses useful strategies for implementing these types of projects given the understanding that what can work for a shelter environment may not work for one that is designed to serve as housing. Following the structure adopted in Chapter Three: Case Studies, I first address land ownership by looking at various strategies that have surfaced through interviews and case study research that provide an initial perspective into how the ownership of land can impact the outcome of these efforts. This same framework is used to discuss the various strategies for using the regulatory environment and financing as tools to streamline the process of implementing both types of village model into a city's shelter and housing resources.

Land Ownership

The ownership of land is one of the most important pieces of this strategy to increase shelter and housing opportunities. It gives the owner the ability to navigate the regulatory environment and decide what type of structure(s) can and should be built. Having access to ample land resources makes the development of Intentional Homeless Communities (IHCs) easier in the grand scheme of things, but this reality is not always accessible in all cities. Austin for example, is a city that has a contentious demand-driven

environment, making these intentional communities more difficult to develop due to intense competition with others who tend to produce projects that are more economically productive (Staff, 2022). Other cities with less speculation and more underutilized or vacant parcels tend to have an easier time using land for mission-oriented and public purposes. With a less speculative environment, owners of these mission-oriented entities have a much easier time creating developments that are fit for the context and needs of the urban environment. In the following sections, I describe some of those techniques uncovered through research and interviews. The final portion of this chapter discusses insights from The Village Model website, which has developed a specific framework for a Community Land Trust that can be used to bring ownership to people who are far too often excluded from the conversation.

CITY-OWNED LAND

Based on my research of existing case studies, the use of public land for these projects is the most commonly used strategy to acquire land. This strategy offers the most leeway in creating these types of projects because it involves the same entity that is creating the regulations, which increases the capabilities of the land to meet the requirements necessary to produce such projects. For example, Seattle's allowance of the Itinerant Camp System on public and institutional land from the onset, allowed the camp residents and community partners to build a network with various churches, universities, and assorted public landowners to create a system that expanded the impact and diversified the strategy used to keep stakeholder groups satisfied (Heben, 2014). In the case of both Opportunity

Village and Dignity Village in Oregon, city leaders were lobbied by various stakeholder groups to find city-owned land for the projects, knowing that with the grant of land would come further regulatory and financial tools to assist and support the project in the long-term.

Cities have the power to decide parameters for these sites much more easily when the land used is owned and therefore controlled by them. One roadblock to the use of city-owned land is the need to conduct the work as part of a public process, which can result in political disagreements between elected officials and the public. Elected officials represent their constituents and their desires, which can prevent IHCs from seeing the light of day given various NIMBY concerns. With politics being involved in these decisions at the city level, the decisions often come down to a sufficient mix of advocacy and elected officials' willingness to pursue something for the greater good of the city rather than that of only their constituents (Heben, 2014). The idea is that moving that political needle towards benefiting the needs of people living on the street must out way the opposition that is presented by these concerns to make these projects happen on city-owned land.

PARKLAND

In tandem with this discussion, city parkland was brought up in the site selection process for a sanctioned encampment in Austin and I think it is important to address some of these realities here as well. Many homeless encampments exist organically in parks as they are often more accessible, well-shaded, and more comfortable for people to live in. With this notion, people camping tend to take shelter in heavily wooded areas, allowing

them to keep themselves and their belongings out of sight to avoid being reported and harassed by enforcement agencies (Heben, 2014). With the implementation of the camping ban in Austin in early 2021, the city began to explore the idea of opening a sanctioned encampment in a publicly owned green space or park. (Weber, 2021). Through this deliberation, city staff identified many concerns with the sites and the selection process in general, resulting in only two possible sites being offered in the end. (Weber, 2021).

Given some broader concerns from surrounding residents and from the broader belief by the larger constituency that city parks should not be used for this purpose, the idea of moving forward with the project became more clouded. As the Governor's Office and state administrators heard about the discussion, a bill was filed to increase the requirements for any jurisdiction hoping to implement a sanctioned encampment, further compromising the effort (Weber, 2021). Within that same bill, the idea of opening up a sanctioned encampment on parkland was restricted outright by state legislators - strong-arming this idea and forcing the city to rethink its priorities (Weber, 2021).

STATE-OWNED LAND

Given the heavy influence of the state in local decision-making, especially in Texas, I want to discuss the powerful role that state-owned land can have in the execution of IHCs. State-owned land, unlike city-owned land, is subject to far less political reasoning in its use determinations in part due to the constituency being much larger and less directly affected. The decision tends to not involve local actors or policies and zoning and land use regulations do not need to apply (Bova, 2021). This was the case with the siting of the

Esperanza Community in Austin, where the state used an underutilized piece of former transportation department land to site a sanctioned encampment in 2019 (Bova, 2021). The decision did not involve any of the local stakeholders, surrounding neighbors, or local elected officials, and did not comply with local regulations in its execution (Bova, 2021). This provides a quick and easy way of establishing an IHC project but does little to activate the surrounding neighborhoods to collaborate on the project more comprehensively. That being said, regardless of the circumstances, the city and TOOF are supportive of the cause and appreciative of the flexibility the site offers to create a transitional environment for the unhoused folks of the city (Bova, 2021, toofound.org).

RELIGIOUS-OWNED LAND

The use of land owned by religious institutions or public institutions such as universities is another strategy for implementing these types of IHCs. Religious institutions are generally supportive of many community service efforts and initiatives for the unhoused, most notably through providing meals, spaces for service, and existing networks for donations and organizing (Heben, 2014). Many religious institutions are owners of their land and have deep connections with the community and other religious institutions, making them perfectly suited to support various initiatives that align with their mission and values (Heben, 2014). The use of religious land for housing operations is something that exists in a sort of grey area regarding regulations, with a broad set of rights that promote religious freedom, specifying the ability to hold an assembly on the property with protection under federal law (Interview Two, 2023).

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Seattle's Itinerant Camp System found early success by working with religious organizations to site encampments on their properties, which were able to set up camping areas on their parking lots and service those residents through existing food service, donations, and other networks (Heben, 2014). This strategy enabled a very low-cost option for creating an immediate and safe place to live while supporting the organization's mission and beliefs. Public universities also joined in on this effort and provided similar services to their unhoused neighbors, all of which were protected under federal legislation. Some of these protections are explored in the following section. Many similar efforts exist around the country but tend to be smaller scale and unique to the specific organization and situation of the city and of each individual institution. The precedent is in place, and I am hopeful that use of land owned by religious institutions will become more common as time goes on. Illustration 4-1 below shows the religious and city-owned land within the city.
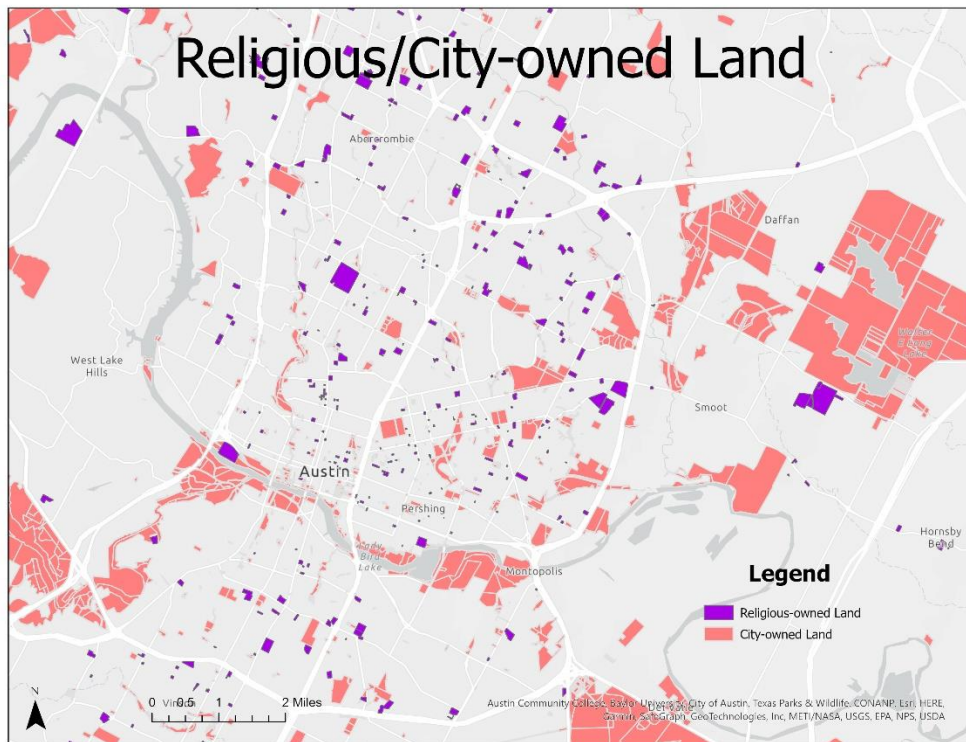
Illustration 4-1: Religious and City-owned Land

PRIVATE LAND

     Private land is another type of ownership that can be used to create IHCs, though it is subject to the many zoning and land use regulations that exist in a municipality. This can create difficulties in its use as a viable space, but understanding those regulations in partnership with a supportive community and local government can yield fascinating results for these communities. The instance of private land being used for the development of Community First! Village in Austin has a very unique land use story that can only be applied in counties in Texas (Interview One, 2023). Counties in Texas are not permitted to enforce zoning regulations and land-use decisions are therefore delegated to the County

Board of Commissioners for approval (Interview One, 2023). Travis County, the county encompassing Austin, is supportive of the process and mission of Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF). They exercised limited oversight in their development process, which allowed them to develop quickly and design the community as they wished (Interview One, 2023).

When city zoning ordinances come into play, these communities must clear many different political and regulatory hurdles in order to come to fruition. The land use must also be specifically defined in the zoning code or else it is subject to varying interpretations, which increases the risk for the developer and tends to halt the project before it ever gets off the ground (Interview One, 2023). Finally, I wanted to note that through an informal discussion I had with an organization in my hometown of Tucson, I learned that private land that is awaiting a future development is also an opportunity to build temporary housing. While still having to go through the public zoning process, this offers another possibility for private land to serve this purpose - given the right circumstances and a landowner who is willing to support the idea. This is similar to the sequence of events that played out at Right 2 Dream Too, with the move helping the owner save on property taxes while a permanent use for the site was being deliberated.

To conclude this section, it is important to mention the possibility to pair land ownership with the ability for residents to enter into ownership of their homes given the right circumstances. Limited case studies exist to support this idea and its applicability to people experiencing homelessness specifically, but I believe this model for ownership is an important tool that interested parties can study as they look to bring ownership of structures into the larger conversation of the Tiny House Village Model. Community Land

Trusts (CLT) have become an increasingly popular way to generate permanent affordable housing through a model of cooperative ownership of the larger site and individual ownership of the housing structures themselves (villagemodel.org). Paired with a CLT would be the formation of a Limited Equity Cooperative (LEC) that would manage the structures and the ongoing maintenance needed to support the longevity of the community (villagemodel.org). This model gives people with very low income an opportunity to own a piece of the tiny house village and preserve its affordability to provide future residents with that same housing resource. Figure 4-2 below is a graphic from the website that shows how this shared-ownership structure can benefit affordable tiny house communities and preserve their availability for people of very low incomes. The main function of this shared-ownership model is to have the land owned by a mission-oriented entity while creating shared ownership of the buildings through a housing co-op.

Figure 4-2: Shared-Ownership Structure - villagemodel.org

Regulatory Environment

Creating a regulatory environment that supports alternative forms of shelter and housing is an essential piece of this puzzle for enabling IHCs to serve the population sufficiently. This environment can allow for these types of communities in perpetuity, which should be the long-range goal of any kind of homeless-oriented and affordable housing infrastructure. The implementation of new regulations, especially regulations allowing for new and innovative types of development that exist outside the typical

accepted forms (single-family, multifamily, etc.) has been difficult to achieve for a number of reasons. Many of these reasons revolve around politics and the economically profitable use of land combined with a history of zoning regulations that have been engaged to strictly maintain order and separation of uses in urban environments (Heben, 2014). In order to create a type of development that is viewed as more informal and perceived as disruptive to the established urban environment, it is essential to build a coalition of stakeholders and supporters to lobby elected officials into making these changes.

Changing land use regulations is always a difficult endeavor, but it has the ability to make a huge difference in the way land is used and affordable and equitable housing is achieved. Creating this comprehensive regulatory environment is not without precedent, showing how even the most difficult-to-adapt aspects of urban planning can be rethought in a way to change the pace of increasingly unaffordable housing. With a political and advocacy environment much different than Austin, Portland, OR has been able to adapt its zoning and land use regulations to accept the types of dwellings that this research is advocating for. As described in the following section in more detail, this adaptation to the city code is something that any city can model off if it chooses to pursue housing options that will increase the ability of people to find resources that fit their needs and allow them to transition in a way that is productive for their own lives.

ZONING AMENDMENT

The Safe Rest Village Program, referred to in Chapter Three: Case Studies, was created out of a need for more immediate access to shelter and services for people prior to

them moving into housing or as housing is being built for them (Portland.gov, 2021). The program was initially implemented by the City of Portland through an existing statewide ordinance that allowed for two transitional campground shelters per municipality throughout the state (Portland.gov, 2021). This allowed the city to coordinate with other municipalities in the Portland metro area and create a network of alternative, outdoor shelters that functioned as a single collaborative effort to better provide shelter to city residents (Interview Four, 2023).

Eventually, the city moved to enact a set of ordinances through the Shelter to Housing Continuum Program that would allow "outdoor shelters" to be a valid land use with applications across many different zoning districts, most of which centered on the downtown area and some industrial and commercial districts (Portland.gov, 2021, Interview Four, 2023). Recognizing that even this effort was not sufficient in creating alternative shelter resources for all who needed them across the city, in 2022 the city expanded the program to include applicability in more zoning districts (even residential ones), a reduction in development standards, and an adaption to both the conditional use permit and temporary activity rules that would allow these shelter communities to fill the existing need (Portland.gov, 2021, Interview Four, 2023).

During the same time period, the city implemented an ordinance called the Residential Infill Project which allowed for various missing middle housing forms to exist in single-family homes districts (Interview Four, 2023). The ordinance allowed nearly all housing types to exist in these districts and allowed for new forms, one of which is central to the research in this thesis. The cottage cluster, the name given to a development type

that resembles a collection of micro-houses existing on a single lot, is the first of its kind in allowing a type of tiny house village through zoning ordinance (Interview Four, 2023). This product is not specifically aimed at people experiencing homelessness but is an innovative effort in increasing the ability of developers to create alternative communities with affordable units. The collection of these efforts in Portland shows the power that the regulatory environment can have on urban housing infrastructure, and it will be fascinating to see what these programs may be able to induce in the coming years.

URBAN CAMPGROUND

Another type of regulation that can be created to produce a similar result to the "outdoor shelter" in Portland is the general zoning for campgrounds and the idea of an "urban campground". The existence of this idea has encountered political resistance in its application throughout the country, especially in Austin. Essentially, the idea is that a city can zone for camping in certain areas to allow people to create these types of shelter communities legally and more organically. Formalizing this use should not have to specially mention the effort to create shelter for the unhoused, which could create some backlash, and instead should focus on increasing camping, outdoor education, and recreational opportunities for people in the city (Interview Three, 2023). This strategy is being conceptualized in Baltimore, MD, where a local nonprofit organization is looking to transform some of the city's vacant lots into a network of urban campgrounds that can serve both housed and unhoused folks (Interview Three, 2023). The idea of approaching shelter in this way is more politically feasible given the opportunities for recreation and

education that are involved, and will surely enable cities to recognize new forms and uses of tents as meaningful shelters.

TEMPORARY AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS

Referenced throughout the discussion on case studies is the use of temporary use and conditional use permits. Generally, temporary use permits apply to land use activities that are short-term and do not comply with normal development regulations (Interview Two, 2023). Cities typically have a set of conditions that a temporary use permit can apply to, such as a temporary trailer to live in during home reconstruction or the use of a park for an event (Interview Two, 2023). On the other hand, a conditional use permit is something that certain land uses must obtain before being granted a permit to build a certain type of structure. In almost all modern zoning codes, the siting of transitional housing, group homes, congregate living facilities, dormitories, and other co-living facilities requires a conditional use permit to be constructed (Interview Two, 2023). The granting of a conditional use permit requires an additional public process where the public is notified and the city council must take a vote, which often hinders the development of these types of projects. In the case of both temporary and conditional use permits, zoning codes can be amended to allow and disallow certain kinds of land uses, which provides an opportunity for city governments who want to expand IHC projects to change these regulations to allow for various temporary and co-living uses more easily.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIRMENTS

City and county governments have the ability to waive or reduce certain development requirements for projects as a tool to both allow these types of developments and make it more cost-effective for mission-oriented entities to do this type of shelter and housing work. When discussing the types of regulations implemented as part of the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project in Portland, the city decided to exempt outdoor shelters from the base zone (standard zoning designation established in the code), overlay zone (additional zoning requirements in addition to those established in the base zone), and planned unit development (flexible, non-Euclidean zoning designation set by agreement between city and property owner) requirements in order to reduce the overall costs and approvals needed to do each project (Portland.gov, 2021, Heben, 2014).

This part of the ordinance was designed to cut down on the amount of "red tape" that needed to be cleared in order to produce the needed resource, creating a different but parallel process that one must go through while still complying with zoning law. Other types of waivers were granted for Community First! Village in Austin through both the city and county government. This included an exemption from development fees from the city on all existing and future phases and a state-level exemption from property taxes (Interview One, 2023). With the community being located outside of the city limits of Austin, in an unincorporated part of the county, fewer requirements and a much less stringent permit process govern the development of the site. This allows the community freedom to construct the village as it seems fit through one site development permit, allowing for flexibility and greater financial freedom in achieving their mission (Interview One, 2023).

The case of the Esperanza Community in Austin was an expression of state power over land use in that it sanctioned the site as a homeless encampment, skirting any type of land use regulation that had previously existed on the land (Bova, 2021).

In summary, there are various tools that cities, counties, and states can enact and adapt to get a result that increases the ability of IHCs to exist. Creating the space for these tools to work in this manner will undoubtedly require an entrance into the often fiercely debated political arena, but it demonstrates that these tools can be used to allow for new types of alternative shelter to exist.

CONGREGATE LIVING USE

The way units are designated is a strategy that can impact the viability of a tiny house or other type of affordable housing structure that is designed to create housing resources for those with very low incomes. As I mentioned in a previous section, co-living facilities are sometimes difficult to define as their structural components vary in different ways and can be interpreted differently depending on how they are observed in relation to larger code requirements (Heben, 2014). One strategy expressed in the book *Tent City Urbanism* is the possibility of designating a tiny house village as a congregate living facility that is supported by shared facilities (Heben, 2014). In this situation, units should be designated as sleeping units, which are rarely defined in city code, but typically possess similar qualities to dwelling units but do not contain a full bathroom or kitchen (Heben, 2014).

The only place where this type of unit is defined, in the Texas statutes, is through Austin's Affordability Unlocked Development Bonus Program, which specifies it as a type of dwelling unit that utilizes shared facilities for seven or more unrelated individuals (City of Austin Ordinance, 2019). Sleeping units, unless defined in the zoning code, tend to avoid the reach of formal regulations and development requirements, leading to the possibility of building them within a congregate living use designation (Heben, 2014). This puts these types of structures in a grey area of interpretation that is not always desired by developers, but the strategy was used in the initial inception of Dignity Village and worked to keep the units out of the formal planning process, reducing costs and increasing housing flexibility (Heben, 2014).

RELIGIOUS LAND USE AND INSTITUTIONALIZED PERSONS ACT (RLUIPA)

RLUIPA is another tool that has been used to site IHCs. This federal law gives religious institutions an equal opportunity to use their land for the purpose of hosting an assembly of people. This law came about after some cities were using their zoning code to deny the use of land for religious purposes. This was commonly done because the use would not produce as much tax base as commercial or residential uses (Dalton, 2023). The law was set to equalize the opportunity for all organizations to host an assembly on their property, just as a commercial business would with a theater or public entity would do with a city hall meeting (Dalton, 2023). The clause prevents the ability of cities to use land use determinations to discriminate against religious institutions based on the type of assembly they hold (Dalton, 2023).

Given this reality, the Itinerant Camp System in Seattle used this federal clause to justify the use of church property to assemble a congregation of people who were experiencing homelessness. This interpretation of land use through RLUIPA was perfectly legal given the broad interpretation of assembly and the anti-discriminatory intent that the law was set to enforce. The City of Seattle ended up formalizing this strategy and codifying it into the zoning ordinance shortly after, but this interpretation opens up the meaning of temporal assembly to encompass any broader missions that religious institutions may have (Heben, 2014).

After conducting an interview with a former planner from the City of Austin, I learned that this utilization was part of the thought process in discussions concerning homelessness within the city (Interview Two, 2023). Though possible in the city, I was made aware that the battle over this use of land for a type of IHC would most likely become a political battle before it ever became one over land use (Interview Two, 2023). Politics in no way should trump the applicability of federal law, but it was also noted that the interpretation of RLUIPA can be different state-by-state. The use of religious land to host these types of communities still exists in a grey area of our regulations, which is why the City of Seattle moved to codify the practice in its zoning ordinance (Heben, 2014). With many religious institutions owning large amounts of land and often utilizing a large community service network, this strategy may be the best option for providing temporal shelter and services to our unhoused population today.

SINGLE-ROOM OCCUPANCY

The final point about the regulatory environment is the idea of rethinking regulations around single-room occupancy structures, which in some instances can be denoted to include tiny house villages. As I discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, the history of single-room occupancy (SRO) dwellings faced an unfortunate reality during the period of urban renewal as they existed to house low-income and transient populations. Buildings were most often converted motels and lacked many of the amenities and maintenance desired by city planners and residents looking to move back to the city center. These dwellings were also written out of city codes through the increase of minimum dwelling unit size requirements. This almost eliminated the instance of unsubsidized affordable housing in cities, the vast majority of which lack affordable housing resources today. Through more recent adaptations of city codes to recognize this type of housing as a tool that could help increase the number of units, especially affordable units in cities - SROs have begun to make a comeback.

Many cities have begun the process of re-implementing regulations governing the development of SRO communities, with this model being used in many new permanent supportive housing models (Heben, 2014). The construction of permanent supportive housing using SRO units has been promoted as one of the most efficient ways to produce these units and has been adopted in cities nationwide (Interview Two, 2023). This methodology has also been implemented in the world of tiny house villages, specifically with the development of Quixote Village in Olympia, WA (Epasi, 2014). The city was able to meet the requirements set by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to fund the tiny house village by aligning SRO regulations with the design requirements set by the grant program (Epasi, 2014). This is the most prominent example of using the SRO model to achieve a federally funded tiny house village and speaks to the

further capacity of the federal government to fund alternative types of housing infrastructure for people who are unhoused across the nation (Heben, 2014, Epasi, 2014).

Financing

When discussing the financing and funding components that can make IHCs a reality in community housing infrastructure, it is important to acknowledge that this type of development is no different from any other type of affordable housing development - in that it requires the collaboration of many different agencies, financing sources, and other innovative strategies to come to fruition. As with the other topics covered in this chapter, there is no one size fits all solution to funding IHCs. These efforts often start out as smaller-scale ideas that are influenced by broad collaboration and relationships with various stakeholders who believe in the organization and its mission in executing alternative forms of shelter and housing. Leveraging these connections and engaging different levels of government to execute a strategy that achieves this goal incrementally is the best way for organizations to begin this work. Many of the case studies covered began as pilot projects in order to gain initial government support and funding. This strategy works well with the broader framework that many organizations wish to develop, knowing that the solution they envision must be tried and tested to be successful both internally to the organization and externally to government agencies and the broader constituency.

This explanation of financing for IHCs follows an outline from villagemodel.org, an informational website that covers strategies for implementation organized by SquareOne Villages (squareonevillages.org). Throughout this analysis, I incorporate

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various financing aspects from each of the case studies covered in the previous chapter to produce a conceptual resource based on real situations and experiences from existing IHCs. This aspect of the analysis is focused more on strategies for implementing tiny house villages, as it looks to create opportunities for permanent and attainable financing and ownership of housing, but many of these ideas can be rolled into the execution of transitional shelters as well. This section is meant to explore the funding mechanisms available to support alternative types of shelter and housing. A sustainable financing strategy includes a mix of resident equity, public subsidies, debt financing, and ongoing charitable contributions (squareonevillages.org). The Village Model is best implemented through a diversity of funding sources, with the use of debt financing in the initial stages of development and a housing co-op model to enable low-income residents to maintain their community without reliance on ongoing government subsidies (Squareonevillages.org). A summary of these strategies is shown below in Figure 4-3.

Expense	Affordability Strategy	Proposed Funding Sources
Land	Community Land Trust	• Public Subsidies / Land Banking • Anchor Institutions (churches; hospitals; universities) • Private Donors
Construction	Tiny House & Cottage Clusters	• Resident Equity (Membership Share Purchases) • Public Subsidies • Construction Loan / Mortgage • Fundraising
Operations	Cooperative Housing	• Resident Payments (Monthly Carrying Charges)

Figure 4-3: Funding Strategies, squareonevillages.org

RESIDENT EQUITY

As The Village Model promotes the idea of grassroots ownership of housing as opposed to low-income rentals, this framework deviates slightly from my initial housing parameters, but I reflect on both concepts here because I believe they are important to outline as part of a comprehensive response. Housing co-ops allow residents to participate in ownership and maintenance of their communities while a rental model, such as what is found at Community First! Village and Opportunity Village allows the organization to handle maintenance while ensuring low rents for its residents. Through a co-op model, residents purchase a share of the community, allowing them to acquire equity which can then be used to borrow against to finance the development of the tiny house community (squareonevillages.org).

To assist residents in purchasing the share, a Revolving Loan Fund can be established (through a capital partner) that allows the residents to borrow funds at an affordable interest rate, where the principal and interest earned are reinvested back into the fund (squareonevillages.org). Equity from the sale of shares can be used to finance the initial development of the project. In a rental model, rents paid by residents are used to cover a portion of the maintenance and operational costs associated with the community. This model is much more straightforward than that of the housing co-op, but requires a larger organization with deep financial pockets, such as what is found with MLF at Community First! Village.

Both models are set to ensure long-term housing stability, but the housing co-op can be done through more grassroots action, utilizing self-sufficiency in bringing true

ownership to people who have never had that access before. The rental model requires an established entity that puts forth the initial capital investment while using resident rent to maintain the operations. This is to say that this resident equity framework supports two different home ownership models. For some, owning might be too much of a commitment because they hope to "move on" in the future, while others who consider the village a permanent solution, may be more inclined to invest to own.

PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES

The use of public subsidies and grants is an essential component of the development of IHCs and can come in many different forms with different areas of applicability. Both subsidies and grants offer a wide range of funding options for organizations in achieving this work, but typically come with stipulations for how the money is spent and how that aligns with the funding agency's overall goals in distributing the funds. Specific funding programs can typically only be used for distinct types of programs, which until recently have excluded many of the shelter and housing forms that are explored in this research. The definition of housing established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has created many barriers to attaining funding for alternative types of IHCs because of the way housing is defined, which does not recognize temporary outdoor shelters or tiny houses as applicable structures (Heben, 2014).

This has created substantial barriers for organizations that wish to access funds from the largest federal housing program, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Being geared towards traditional forms of rental housing, the development of tiny

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house villages, both through a rental and ownership model, are not able to receive funding for the project, even if they do survive the extremely competitive allocation process (squareonevillages.org). Another federal program, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, does offer more flexibility in its application in that the use of funds is decided at a local level, which gives greater flexibility to the types of structures it is used to fund (Heben, 2014). As noted in the previous section on regulations, Quixote Village in Olympia was able to use CDBG funds for the development of its tiny house community, one of the first communities to do so (Heben, 2014).

Another type of federal funding created in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic was American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, which was awarded to jurisdictions to use for nearly any type of project that would boost economic and social recovery (Interview One, 2023). In speaking with Community First! Village, the Esperanza Community, and Planning and Sustainability Bureau in Portland, I learned that significant ARPA funding was put towards their projects, including both temporary shelters and tiny house villages (Interview One, 2023, Interview Four, 2023). This funding window is closing as of early 2023, but these funds have done wonders in maintaining existing projects and getting new ones off the ground, showing the power that a broad funding source can have for alternative housing.

Speaking with Community First! Village, I also learned that the organization was able to apply for and receive funding from a tax credit and grant program that allowed them to receive additional dollars for their new phases (Interview One, 2023). Federal Home Loan Bank Grants and New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) were both awarded for the

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development of the future Phase III of the village, which are both competitive financing programs that aim to increase affordable housing and spur economic development in communities (Interview One, 2023). In 2015, the State of Oregon created the Local Innovation and Fast Track Housing (LIFT) Program to provide flexible funding for innovative housing structures for both rental and ownership projects (squareonevillages.org). This program is the first of its kind to cover both housing and leasehold co-op structures, giving organizations who choose to construct these villages through a more grassroots approach a financing mechanism that supports them (squareonevillages.org)

PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES

Private funding provides much of the startup and gap funds that are needed to bring these communities to fruition. Given that nonprofit organizations are the leaders in creating these alternative IHCs, charitable contributions are a central component of the financial sustainability of these projects. These contributions include large-scale grants of money and land from private foundations and philanthropists but also include ongoing contributions from community members who see the benefits of these efforts to address homelessness. Each organization has its own strategy for receiving private funding through either donations or grants that allow them to budget expenses and income in a way that gives them the ability to pursue its mission. Given that Community First! Village is the only private land-holding organization in this research, it is important to note that all of the land they have used for their projects has been acquired and donated by private foundations

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(Interview One, 2023). In many instances, the operating costs for both shelter and housing-oriented IHCs come from ongoing donations from individuals and organizations. If land costs are covered by money from larger foundations and philanthropy, consistent monthly donations can be modeled to help ensure low rents in perpetuity (squareonevillages.org).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter covers conclusions drawn from interviews and findings to provide suggestions for how the City of Austin can best move forward in creating Intentional Homeless Communities (IHCs) to aid in addressing the homelessness crisis. I first discuss the various strategies that I believe can make an impact on achieving these projects in the city. The first part of this section highlights the aspects of land ownership, regulatory environment and financing that have been used in the city and those from other municipalities which I believe can be adapted to fit Austin's needs. This section also includes a discussion on the power of advocacy in these efforts and the impact that an emergency order can have on the allowance and recognition of alternative forms of shelter. The following section includes challenges that exist in the city around performing this work, recognizing some of the differences between Austin and the other jurisdictions that were covered in the case studies. The final sections discusses limitations to the work and directions for future research.

Strategies for Austin

LAND OWNERSHIP

After exploring literature on how various types of ownership can impact the ability of organizations to perform desired work, I have come to understand that no one strategy can create the quantity and types of housing that are needed to address homelessness completely. My research of case studies has resulted in city-owned land being the most widely used resource to enable IHC project development. Using city-owned land is most

advantageous when political actors are willing to take charge and pilot new and innovative solutions to address homelessness. City-owned land does not need to go through a traditional zoning or notification process when its existing use is being altered, but it does need to pass a vote from the city council, which must take responsibility for the use as part of the larger mission of addressing homelessness. Austin has tried several times to use city-owned parcels for the purpose of creating IHCs, more specifically as city-sanctioned encampments. These discussions have always fizzled out over political disagreements and the unwillingness of council members to accept these communities in their districts. With new members of the city council being sworn in as of late 2022, the consensus is that there is a more progressive view on trying new solutions to housing and homelessness. I have more faith now that this land use option or one similar will continue to be in the discussion for years to come.

The State of Texas has come down hard on the ability to create sanctioned encampments in any jurisdiction, rendering the idea of creating this solution by name much more difficult. State-owned land is the most direct way of creating these spaces in Texas cities, yet I have little faith that the state would grant more of its land for this purpose given the turbulent political environment we are in today at both the state and local level. With public land becoming increasingly difficult to use, I believe there is a much better opportunity to achieve IHC work on religious and institutional lands. Organizations like these have the power to create the type of pilot project that is needed to recognize this work and show the impact that a network of institutions can have on creating such communities when the city cannot. Informal discussions with stakeholders in the Austin community have

suggested that various religious institutions across the city have been looking at strategic ways to house and provide services to people experiencing homelessness. Given the precedent of what happened with the Itinerant Camp System in Seattle, this avenue may have the best chance of success in the city towards initiating a type of alternative shelter in a way that is not forbidden under federal law. Shortly after its creation in Seattle, the city chose to codify this right in its legislation to ensure that this ability remained in perpetuity.

This action to further formalize the effort in Austin may be more difficult to accomplish initially, but this effort is perceivably more attainable as far as politics goes, given that the endeavor is not initiated or managed by the city itself. My recommendation for Austin would be that an existing religious network, such as the Religious Coalition to Assist the Homeless, should spearhead this effort to develop shelter spaces as an initial pilot project. Existing networks can provide backing for the project, which will help avoid political interference from the city and show that matters can be taken into the hands of external organizations. These projects will undoubtedly need support from the city as time goes on, but this initial step would be to show city leaders that this solution does have a place and can make a meaningful impact in the creation of IHCs.

The use of private land for IHCs has been proven in the Austin area through the creation and continual expansion of Community First! Village. City, County, and State leaders have all pledged their support for the project and have allowed it to expand well beyond the initial conception of the project. Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) has proven itself through years and years of work in this space, which has been recognized through all levels of government and supported to continue its mission in Austin. Through

understanding the organization's story, which was analyzed in previous chapters, I think it is important to recognize that the acceptance of this project was based on MLF's long-standing ties with the community and success in achieving work around homelessness. Understanding this connection has been vital to the acceptance of this work by city leadership. I believe that other organizations with similar ties also have the ability to launch projects that create IHCs in the city and county. Existing zoning regulations and political issues may prevent this type of work from happening within the city limits. However, Travis County, where Community First! Village is located, may be more receptive to trying various IHCs, and should continue to be considered when acquiring land for such purposes. The biggest issue with using county land is that it is located far away from urban services and employment opportunities. This was one of the issues that came about in my discussion with Community First! Village. A solution to this will definitely take time, but it was noted that providing on-site services and employment opportunities would be a good supplement until further development reaches the unincorporated area.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

A regulatory environment that is receptive to innovative housing and land use practices is something essential to the thoughtful development of IHCs in Austin. Without the regulatory backing for these new types of land use, there are few resources available to conduct this work in a legal and recognized manner. With the prospect of a zoning overhaul or zoning amendment process looking increasingly bleak, it has been difficult to think of ways that the Austin zoning code can allow for alternative projects to be developed. With

this reality, my research looked at various ways that facilitators of IHC development can work through existing regulations and create these projects. One of my initial thoughts on making this work came from the book *Tent City Urbanism*, where the land use designation of congregate living was expressed as a way of designating a tiny house village with shared facilities.

This was the initial designation for Opportunity Village in Eugene, though it was further regulated through a conditional use permit shortly after completion. This idea struck me initially and led to my exploration of the Austin zoning code to see where the congregate living use was allowed. To my surprise, this use was allowed in many residential and commercial districts but required a conditional use permit which must go through the city council for approval. Though this option did not follow my original strategy of avoiding a public process, it did give me a better understanding of how these options can work through existing use designations. With the election of a new, more progressive city council, the determination of this land use and the acceptance of conditional use permits for IHCs may be more feasible, so I believe this option may work in the near future.

Other options include the use of RLUIPA and the benefits of using religious-owned land, which I alluded to in the previous section, and the further legalization and incentivization of single-room occupancy (SRO) dwellings. The Austin zoning code as it exists in 2023 does not define the requirements for SRO projects but does have requirements for Efficiency Dwelling Units, which are commonly used in new permanent

supportive housing. The main difference between the two is that SRO dwellings typically do not include in-room bathrooms or kitchens while Efficiency Dwelling units do.

The dwelling units in the typical SRO project are more closely aligned with Sleeping Units, which were recently allowed to exist in the city through the Affordability Unlocked Development Bonus Program (AU). Providing Sleeping Units within permanent supportive housing through the AU Bonus program is a strategy that could result in tiny house villages with shared facilities being allowed through existing city code. In the program, a Sleeping Unit is defined as "a bedroom in a structure that serves as a dwelling unit for seven or more unrelated individuals who share amenities, such as kitchen, bathrooms, and living area" (City of Austin Ordinance, 2019). Typically, permanent supportive housing is built using Efficiency Dwelling Units, but the use of Sleeping Units within permanent supportive housing is something that is a relatively novel idea. With this knowledge, there is an ability to build projects through the SRO model in a way that complies with local, state, and federal requirements, given that the specific design requirements are not entirely defined. This technique was used in Olympia for Quixote Village in the development of their tiny house village, outlining how this interpretation can be possible in Austin if the situation arose.

Reducing development requirements on projects of this nature is another tool that cities can use to incentivize certain types of developments and projects. This could include reducing the number of permits needed for a project or lowering property tax liability. Austin and Travis County have done this with the development of Community First! Village, which has allowed the organization to save large amounts of time and money that

they have put into the construction of additional units. This suggestion is not a zoning matter per se, but echoes an idea for the type of regulations that can be put in place to incentivize IHC projects and assist them in creating the most amount of units possible.

FINANCING

My research has shown that financing for IHC projects is context-dependent and makes use of various funding sources from both public and private entities. The majority of projects use a mix of funding sources with the most common being in-kind donations and some type of city-allocated funding. Grants from private foundations and banks as well as public grants from the federal government have also been common in the development of IHCs. Case study research has shown that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Federal Home Loan Banks Grants and New Market Tax Credits have been used to finance the development of both alternative shelters and tiny house villages. The use of these public funds comes with restrictions and reporting requirements that can create roadblocks and reduce the flexibility of projects, but the dispersion of these funds is welcome as it is another stream of capital for entities to use.

The increasing flexibility of use for federally allocated funds is something that gives me hope for the future of IHC development as it now seems the federal government is recognizing new and innovative approaches to achieving this work. Donations from private foundations are also an important piece of the puzzle as they allow projects to happen, often with few requirements for how the funds are spent given the belief the foundation has in the work the organization is doing.

Austin, like all major cities, is investing heavily in various types of resources for the homeless to try and curb the increasing crisis. The difficulty here is that much of the financing effort is being pushed toward Housing First and away from other innovative and alternative models. It is not that Housing First isn't a positive model for addressing homelessness, but I believe it is overemphasized to the exclusion of other approaches that can deliver more socially inclusive housing resources to the community in far less time. With the larger capital costs needed to perform a Housing First initiative and the general lack of accessible housing in the city, isolated spending for this effort will not create the social and physical resources needed to make an impact on the crisis. A lack of willingness for the city to try alternative strategies has most definitely hurt the ability of more grassroots organizations to attempt innovative work, creating a much different environment than what is found in the case studies in Washington and Oregon. Austin has chosen to stick to more common practices of IHC development and has not provided much room for alternative efforts to gain recognition.

The most successful efforts come when the city recognizes the benefit of an alternative model and allows mission-oriented entities to test it rather than sticking to the tried and true. We know that these existing measures, such as emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing, do not produce the number of needed units nor the social aspects that are essential to rehabilitating people out of homelessness. I believe the city should fund and support alternative efforts through pilot projects, so that the potential of these options can be known and applied to the various needs of people experiencing homelessness in Austin.

ADVOCACY

An essential component of the creation of IHCs is advocacy, which has been evident through every case study and interview I have conducted. Many of the projects started with a protest to the lack of sufficient housing and general situations people were forced to live in with no available alternatives. The process of creating a movement and a network of advocacy around the expansion of housing resources is vital to the successful implementation of IHCs, and is something I feel is worth discussing in detail. Many advocacy efforts have existed in Austin around this issue, but before I discuss those efforts, I want to first explore a targeted strategy for getting these ideas in front of elected officials and into the hands of people who can make a real difference. These steps come from the book *Tent City Urbanism* and provide useful information on how to properly advocate for The Village Model as a tool to address homelessness on a more comprehensive scale.

- **Developing a Vision:** This vision is meant to explain the intentions of the village and how this model is different from existing efforts. This vision can be a combination of various personal and expert statements that are combined together through common themes to create a formative but interpersonal vision for the need of such community(s). It should also include items around how the community will be organized, who will be collaborative partners, and what the goals of the community are in transitioning people into permanent housing situations (Heben, 2014).
- **Getting Others on Board:** This includes meeting with public officials and community members to further explain and gain support for the idea. This is a time to resolve any skepticism over the project (Heben, 2014).

- **Know the Code:** Know the zoning, building, and other code requirements that may be needed for the project and ways you can work through the existing code and use requirements.
- **Identify Potential Sites:** Having a specific site in mind can be effective for getting the project on the table (Heben, 2014).
- **Utilize Direct Action:** Persistence and determination to create this change. Escalating and vocalizing efforts to create a political controversy and demands for action (Heben, 2014).
- **Build a Prototype Shelter:** Building a physical structure can help the effort spread awareness and gain traction. Allow the public to visit the structure and learn more about the costs and benefits that are associated (Heben, 2014).

This framework is important to moving The Village Model and other IHC concepts forward in cities. Advocacy in general is vital to the success of social movements as it demands the type of change that needs to happen when legislators are not acting with the urgency and willingness to pursue alternative options. In Austin, the acceptance of the Cady Lofts permanent supportive housing development received the needed votes of city council members through strong advocacy on the side of homeless advocates and people with lived experience (McGlinchy, 2022). Stories were shared about people's experiences in homelessness and their struggles with finding suitable housing to improve their situation. These experiences created an environment where it became politically toxic to oppose the project, even in the face of strong NIMBY opposition from a wealthy and well-established neighborhood in Austin (McGlinchy, 2022).

Outside the state, another example comes from my discussion with planners from the City of Portland regarding the passage of the Safe Rest Village Program. In this case,

the issue of housing affordability and homelessness had gotten to a point where its impact touched the majority of Portlanders. City leaders recognized that existing emergency shelter and affordable housing measures would not slow the increase in homelessness anytime soon, so city and state leaders made addressing homelessness their number one priority. With the state and city aligned, housing advocates became more organized in their lobbying efforts, bringing in people with lived experience and those who could express the impact that an alternative IHC could have on providing more immediate and thoughtful shelter resources. This advocacy and the alignment of elected officials allowed council members to feel a moral responsibility, creating the leverage to change zoning laws to allow for the Safe Rest Village Program to move forward. Advocacy is really the binding agent that allows innovation to speak to the souls of those who can make the changes, allowing for new ways of thinking to impact the structures that are most vital to creating change.

EMERGENCY DECLARATION

The issuance of an emergency declaration by the city or state government is another avenue that can be used to increase urgency and allocation of funding to address homelessness. Recognizing that a large portion of the deadly incidents involved the homeless population, the Mayor of Portland issued numerous emergency declarations that created an emphasis on the problems people were facing living on the streets, paving the way for the types of alternative shelters and housing that came with the Shelter to Housing Continuum Program. This urgency allowed city agencies to collaborate and align resources

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to make these changes a reality. Emergency declarations in Portland allow the city to waive certain procurement processes and portions of the building and zoning code to achieve initiatives in a timely manner (portlandoregon.gov, 2019). Taking this first step is something that elected officials in Austin should pursue to create the urgency and legal right-of-way that is needed to thoughtfully address the issues that unhoused people face.

Challenges for Austin

Austin faces a number of challenges that have created an unorganized and insufficient homeless response system and prevented innovative solutions from hitting the ground. In my mind, this dysfunction can be associated with three broad issues which have implications for both housing affordability and homeless response. The first of these is the often toxic political climate and collusion that has played out in the city council and land-use review boards for many decades in the city. This can be seen by Mayor and Council having ties with the real estate industry in the city and disagreements regarding the severity of the homeless crisis as compared to other, more politically favorable crises such as economic development (Interview Two, 2023). It is to be expected that council members do have some outside interests when running for these positions, but these interests have tended to prevent meaningful discussions of solutions, further creating an environment where housing is viewed as a luxury. Providing meaningful measures to increase the amount of housing and levels of affordable housing has been difficult to achieve in the city. The immense growth of the city in the past two decades has undoubtedly made this work

more difficult, but it does not seem like there is enough urgency or willingness to do what needs to be done to improve the housing situation for homeless Austinites.

Contributing to this dysfunction are Austin's broader issues with its zoning code, which is a result of both political differences and the power of homeowners in the city. This power has prevented meaningful efforts to address housing affordability in the city, which has also impacted the ability of the city's homeless response efforts given that both are tied up to the same Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding streams. Within Austin's existing zoning, there are many tools that can be used to make multi-family and higher-density housing more difficult to develop in the city, with maybe the most prominent being compatibility requirements that regulate how tall buildings can be when located near single-family homes.

Additionally, affordable and supportive housing takes a large amount of leverage to be realized in the city as it has continually received backlash from elected officials and their homeowner constituents who often protest the development of new multi-family housing just purely on the visual appearance and increased density it would provide. The idea of promoting legislation for camping in the city has also become a toxic conversation, being outright banned at the state level, leaving municipalities with few immediate options to pursue in response to the homelessness crisis. Given this reality, implementing temporary shelters and tiny house villages in the city may create an unprecedented political and land-use upheaval.

The final point I would like to make regarding challenges in Austin is the difference in opinion on how to address the crisis of homelessness. The decision by leaders is to

slowly build out the capacity for the city's Housing First model, which will take many years to construct and operate in a manner that would significantly reduce the instance of people living unsheltered on the streets. FindingHomeATX is doing a wonderful job spearheading the effort of organizing this new supportive housing infrastructure, but my concern is that these units will not be able to provide the immediate shelter resources needed to address the number of people who are living unsheltered today. It should be a goal of city leaders to create incremental steps towards reaching permanent supportive housing as a way to more comprehensively provide for the city's homeless population. Existing emergency shelter resources are dwindling in the city as the emphasis has been put on vastly more expensive and long-range options which do little to address the crisis today.

Referring back to the work in Portland, city leaders took a leap and recognized the unsafe conditions that people were living in on the streets. They took action in a number of ways to create housing infrastructure for the immediate needs of people with the understanding that these incremental steps will create a better outcome for people in the long run. While I support the move to build out longer-term solutions to homelessness, I believe leaders in Austin should provide resources to short-term options that are substantially less costly to operate and build that social cohesion that is so often neglected in formal housing development. Having this shelter infrastructure in place will create a more meaningful pipeline into permanent housing for people who are struggling to find a space in the city today.

Limitations of Work

This thesis has been a collection of research and case studies that have addressed the idea of creating a Shelter-to-Housing Continuum in the City of Austin, addressing the gap between people living on the streets and living in permanent housing. Through performing this analysis, I have realized how large and amorphous the conversation is around this topic. Much of the planning and implementation of these projects is context-dependent and requires unique forms of collaboration and cooperation to see this vision play out in urban development. My goal was to demystify various aspects of land ownership, land-use regulations, and financing tools that could make temporary and low-cost housing development easier to create in Austin given the understanding of efforts that have been achieved in other cities around the country. My research has been focused on gathering all of this information and organizing it in a way that I believe paints a picture of what could be done to address the immediate needs of those living unsheltered in our community.

Accordingly, I did not have enough time or space to conduct interviews with all of the organizations and people I wished to speak to, to give this research the best chance of being further implemented in Austin. This made it challenging for me to cover all of the areas that I felt were vital to providing a comprehensive understanding of how to move this framework forward in the city. This research is broad in scope and focuses on two separate models of housing infrastructure, which prevented my work from reaching the level of specificity that would be needed to begin implementing this work in the city. Regardless of these limitations, I know this research will help move the conversation forward to allow

readers and practitioners alike to see how this work can be pursued through the stories of past and present efforts that have recognized this need and used existing tools to make this vision a reality.

Direction of Future Research

As this topic covers many different disciplines and contexts, I believe there are many ways in which this research can serve as a starting point for a more targeted exploration of both temporary shelters and tiny house villages for the homeless. With the goal of using this and similar research studies to further the discussion in cities for creating more immediate solutions to homelessness, I believe that this topic area is ripe for further exploration. Continuing research should focus on creating a more targeted approach to developing either temporary shelters or tiny house villages, and applying that to the conditions of a specific municipality. This research was designed to produce implications for moving the discussion of this topic forward in Austin, while also giving mission-oriented entities some ways to think about creating this type of housing infrastructure.

In my opinion, the most immediate need for further research is the strategic implementation of outdoor transitional shelters. I believe targeted research into this specific alternative model and figuring out how it can best be applied to city housing infrastructure is a step that can provide a basis for more permanent alternative models. There is also a need to map potential sites in the Austin metro which are suitable for these projects and the regulatory requirements associated with each. Additionally, further research and experimentation should focus on the re-emergence of SRO regulations using shared

facilities given that this way of designating units could be the best way of creating Tiny House Villages in Austin today.

Understanding the local conditions is essential to pursuing this work further, and is something that I believe future research can explore more deeply as we look to move this concept toward implementation in Austin. The strategies for Austin that resulted from this research are an initial step for advancing this work in the city, and further research should use those strategies as a way to increase discussion around this topic in hopes of changing the mindset of decision-makers in the city. Strategies for increasing advocacy and improving collaboration in this work should also be researched further as these actions provide substantial power both for lobbying elected officials and providing them with coordinated partnerships that can get the work done. Collaboration among people and agencies is essential to making this work tangible and leads me to think that an analysis of collaborative governance and planning efforts around this topic could also be an angle for future research.

I am excited to see where this research goes, and I hope this work can make an impact on the way we all think about providing shelter and housing to our unhoused neighbors.

Glossary

- **Formalization:** The act of improving conditions to the relative standards of the surrounding area and population.

- **Informality:** Any form of housing, shelter, or settlement that falls outside of government regulation or control.

- **Intentional Homeless Community (IHC):** A community that is recognized by the local jurisdiction as a place for people experiencing homelessness to live. Typically supported through public and private collaboration and operated by a nonprofit organization. For the sake of this analysis, this term does not include traditional homeless shelters or other, government-subsidized housing.

- **Traditional Homeless Shelter/Emergency Shelter:** Defined by the City of Austin as a federally funded program that provides people with a place to stay temporarily when they have no permanent residence. Typically organized to provide temporary shelter with overnight sleeping accommodations for homeless persons which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements (HUD, 2022)

- **Tiny Home Village:** A grassroots or nonprofit model of transitional and affordable housing that is socially sustainable, human-scaled, and economically accessible without the need for government subsidies.

- **Shelter-to-Housing Continuum:** A site or multiple sites where transitional congregate shelters and affordable micro-housing with shared facilities are used to house people for short and long periods of time as they transition toward permanent housing (Portland.gov, 2021).

- **Human-centered Design:** A dedication to building small units and sharing resources to allow for low-cost, low-impact development while still providing each with a space of one's own. Designing for self-governance and management of facilities in order to engage members of the community (Heben, 2014).

- **Tent City:** Refers to a temporary community of tents or other temporary shelters that are set up in a specific location to provide shelter for homeless people. (SAMHSA, 2023)

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