

CITY OF LA FERIA



November 2, 2011

Jorge Ramirez
Director of the Disaster Recovery Program
Texas General Land Office
1700 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701-1495

RE: FFAST Amendment

Dear Mr. Ramirez:

In response to your letter dated October 27, 2011, attached please find amended responses to the City of La Feria's FFAST form. The City's response to Impediment #5, Item #15 and Impediment #6, Item #1 have been revised as requested by your office.

The City of La Feria looks forward to receiving authorization from the general Land Office to move forward with the public hearing on this document and finalization of the Fair Housing Action Plan by the City Commission. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Irene A. Szedlmayer
Planning and Community
Development Director

Impediment #6

Governmental entities at all levels do not appear to have been proactive in the enforcement of both the Fair Housing Act and the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. The State and subrecipients should implement a robust and effective structure for identifying and pursuing suspected violations.

1. Given the potential for increase in Fair Housing enforcement action by federal and state agencies and private organizations, an ongoing fair housing testing program for areas that receive federal housing and community development funds could be beneficial to protect state agencies and sub-recipients from potential repayment. Fair housing enforcement is a valid use of CDBG funding and can be used to establish testing programs by agencies trained in HUD testing procedures. The state, or local jurisdictions combining together, should consider conducting tests in areas that include the following: steering in sales and rental; the denial of and different terms and conditions based on race, national origin, familial status, and disability in sales and rental; predatory and disparate terms and conditions in lending and insurance; and foreclosure modification schemes targeting minority neighborhoods. The state should also consider education to applicable entities on self-testing and self-correction.

We currently have a testing program for Fair Housing violations. For more information.

We do not have a testing program for Fair Housing violations and plan to establish one.

When will you do this? . 2011 X 2012 2013

Not Applicable (Explain)

The City of La Feria is a community of 8,000 persons. It does not have the staff resources to develop and implement a fair housing testing program. The City would welcome the opportunity to participate in a testing program conducted by a third-party entity that has the expertise and staffing to conduct fair housing testing. The City will work with the State and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, or another regional entity, in 2012, to establish a testing program. The City of La Feria has no CDBG funds for 2012 but will participate if the development of a regional program is led by the state or the COG.

Impediment #5

Certain governmental policies and practices may not meet current HUD policy concerning affirmatively furthering fair housing. Jurisdictions should act to ensure that their policies and procedures affirmatively further fair housing, address mal-distribution of resources, and that they do not unnecessarily impact housing choice.

15. All infrastructure programs funded with disaster recovery funds should be designed so that any publicly accessible infrastructure projects and associated facilities are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

We have established clear policies and procedures to insure that all infrastructure programs funded with disaster recovery funds will be designed so that any publicly accessible infrastructure projects and associated facilities are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. [Attach documentation.]

We have not developed these standards and policies, we will do so for Round 2 infrastructure projects. The person or entity responsible for developing these standards will be the Planning and Community Development Director.

When will you do this? X 2011

Not Applicable (Explain)

The drainage infrastructure being installed by La Feria through the TxCDBG-DR Round 2 funds is not intended to be accessed by the public. The City of La Feria does not have written policies and procedures that require all publicly-accessible infrastructure projects to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. However, the City's practice is to make all public facilities fully accessible. This practice will be formalized into a written policy