



## MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council Members

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COUNCIL DATE: June 18, 2008

RE: Austin Tomorrow Interim Update

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### **Description of Backup Information**

Attached you will find back-up information for the Austin Tomorrow Interim Update. This information includes:

- Addendums to Chapters 1, 3, and 4 of the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and proposed revisions to Chapter 2
- Public comment letters
- Planning Commission and Council resolutions recommending and authorizing project
- Interdepartmental staff team members

### **Planning Process**

At the direction of the City Manager, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department Staff reviewed the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan during the fall and summer of 2007 to test the feasibility of completing an “interim update.” The concept was to compile the growth and development related planning initiatives undertaken since the plan’s adoption and to use those as sources to complete an update of the plan. The Planning Commission recommended the update and City Council authorized the project in December, 2007.

In January of 2008, an interdepartmental team began a review of chapter 2: “Goals, Objectives, and Policies”. This team met a total of five times and drafted changes and additions to obsolete portions of chapter 2.

The interdepartmental staff team recommendations were forward to the Comprehensive Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Planning Commission for review. The

Committee reviewed the initial draft on April 1, and May 6, 2008. After each Committee review, revisions were made the Interim Update and posted on the City's website for public review and comment. The Committee's direction resulted in a revised draft called the "Planning Commission Review Draft" for public hearing and action. The Planning Commission evaluated the revised Interim Update during a public hearing held on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

### **Interim Update Summary**

The Interim update is in the form of addendums to Chapters 1, 3, and 4 and proposed revisions to Chapter 2.

**Chapter 1** is an introduction that explains the process and rationale for the interim update.

Proposed changes to **Chapter 2** are in the form of underlined/strike-throughs and are in the color "red". The "grey" text explains the proposed changes and in some instances provides updated commentary to the original language without proposing changes. Each proposed change either references an adopted source or is indicated as a "consensus" change. A "consensus" change means that the existing language is obviously obsolete and in need of updating.

Chapter 2 changes reflect the following Council-approved policies:

#### *Urban Design*

- Land Development Code, Environmental Criteria Manual, National Historic Preservation Act, Design Standards & Mixed Use Ordinance, Complete Streets Resolution, Bicycle Plan, and Pedestrian Master Plan

#### *Economic Development*

- Council Resolution 20050113-52, Austin Economic Development Policy, Austin Climate Protection Plan, Zero Waste Policy.

#### *Environmental Management*

- Austin climate Protection Plan, Environmental Criteria Manual, Airport Zoning Act, Smart Growth Initiative, Drinking Water Protection Zone, Land Development Code, Zero Waste Plan

#### *Government and Utility Services*

- Austin Climate Protection Plan, Smart Growth Initiative, Council Resolution 20080214-055, Zero Waste Plan, Land Development Code

#### *Housing and Neighborhoods*

- Consolidated Plan and Action Plan, S.M.A.R.T. Housing Resource Guide, Vertical Mixed Use, Transit Oriented Development, Affordable Housing Taskforce

### *Parks, Open Space and Recreational Facilities*

- Americans with Disabilities Act, Bicycle Plan, Parkland Dedication Ordinance

### *Transportation Systems*

- Great Streets, Transit Oriented Development, Neighborhood Planning, Bicycle Plan, Clean Air Compact, Climate Protection Plan, Hill Country Roadway Ordinance, Airport Overlay

### *Health and Human Services*

- Creation of Health and Human Services Department: mission, goals, funding, and delivery systems.

The addendum to **Chapter 3** summarizes the major issues and policy choices that Austin faced in the 1970s. It compares the plan's critical assumptions regarding the negative impacts of sprawl against the population and development patterns that emerged since its adoption. The Maps contained in Chapter three are updated and additional Maps have been added. These include:

- City Limits – highlights the changing Austin boundary from 1960 to 2007.
- Steep Slopes – identifies topography with slopes greater than 15%.
- Water Quality and Water Hazard Areas – outlines the Watersheds, Recharge Zones, and FEMA floodplains.
- Environmental Development Limitations – identifies developed areas in contrast to undeveloped areas with/without limitations.
- Neighborhood Planning Areas – highlights areas with current neighborhood plans and those slated to receive plans in relation to zoning.
- Watershed Regulation – compares the Desired Development Zone and Drinking Water Protection Zone.
- Future Land Use – expresses desired future land use for areas with neighborhood plans.

The **Chapter 4** addendum summarizes the process that was used to identify the preferred growth areas recommended by the plan and their implementation strategies. It also summarizes and categorizes major planning initiatives that have been undertaken since the plan was adopted. These initiatives are brought together in a summary fashion and are presented in graphic form as a new "Growth Concept Map" that replaces the existing Growth Priorities Map." Other Maps include the following:

- Growth Management, the Environment – identifies environmentally sensitive areas such as watershed protection, preserves, and park land.
- Growth Management, Downtown – outlines several districts and overlays that currently guide growth around downtown Austin.
- Growth Management, Historic Preservation – identifies historic landmarks and designated Nation Register Historic Districts.

- Growth Management, Compact City/Density – four separate maps are used to identify areas that pertain to density, infill, redevelopment, mixed use, and other planning initiatives that address growth.
- Single Family Construction by Year and Watershed Regulation Area – identifies the single-family built environment with respect to time (pre-1960 through 2007) and environmental constraints.
- 2003 Land Use with Environmental Development Limitations – compares land use in 2003 with environmental constraints.

### **Issues of Concern Expressed by Stakeholders**

There were concerns regarding the adequacy of the sources for some of the proposed changes to Chapter 2. Since the Committee review, these proposed changes have been either dropped or sources for the changes referenced.

### **Issues of Concern Expressed by Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission wanted to incorporate three additional policies into the Interim Update that had been omitted: the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, the Early Action Compact, and policy language that addressed the City's responsibility to assist small businesses. Using the recommendations from the Planning Commission as a guide, the specified policies were included and necessary grammatical changes were made.

### **Planning Commission and Staff Recommendation**

Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the Interim Update of the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and authorization to proceed with the creation of a new comprehensive plan.