



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Greg Guernsey, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department
Director; 974-2387, greg.guernsey@ci.austin.tx.us

DATE: September 19, 2008

RE: Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan Interim Update

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
- Proposed staff revisions to 1st reading of Interim Update document
- Public comment letters
- Planning Commission and Council resolutions recommending and authorizing project

Planning Process

At the direction of the City Manager, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department Staff reviewed the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan during the summer and fall 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 27th, 2008. The Commission recommended sending the Interim Update onto City Council with an 8-0 vote. The "City Council Review Draft" of the Interim Update was created based on Planning Commission recommendations and posted on the City website for public review. On June 18th, 2008, City Council approved the first reading of the Interim Update and advised staff to meet with citizen representatives and Council offices in order to address areas of concern. Subsequent readings of the document were scheduled for July 24th, 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. As recommended by City Council at the first reading, staff met with citizen representatives to address concerns with the Interim Update. The Interim Update was slightly modified to reflect the suggested changes and alleviate areas of confusion.

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.

Proposed Staff Revisions to ATCP Interim Update since 1st Council Reading

To address the concerns of citizen representatives and the Council offices, NPZD staff reconvened members of the Interim Update SPOC group after Council's 1st reading and reevaluated areas of the document in question. Commentary has been expanded under various policy statements, minor grammatical changes have been made, and terminology has been revised in order to produce an accurate and informative update. Staff has grouped the revisions into three categories of changes, which are listed below with the respective policies that are affected:

- Expansion of 'grey commentary' to further explain the driving reasons for the original change – policy 214.1, policy 322.7, policy 363.5, policy 364.1, policy 364.2, policy 364.3, policy 364.4, objective 412.0, policy 412.7, policy 421.4, policy 422.1, policy 511.4, , policy 623.1, policy 713.6, policy 713.9, policy 713.11, deleted policy 813.2, deleted policy 813.4
- Minor grammatical and language changes to correct syntax and update nomenclature of current City programs/policies – policy 413.1, policy 441.3, policy 512.3, policy 521.1

- Replacement of the outdated terms “public transit” and/or “mass transit” with the general term of “transit”: policy 215.1, policy 711.2, policy 711.3, policy 711.7, policy 714.1, policy 715.4

In addition to changes proposed by staff, further revisions may be presented from the dais by Council during the 2nd reading on September 25th. Since the 1st Council reading of the Interim Update, staff has worked with Council offices to address concerns and refine the proposed policy changes. The collaboration efforts have expanded policy commentary while giving greater emphasis to the original vision of the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

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.

Additional Information

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at 974-2387 or Garner Stoll at 974-2397.



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