

Comments
following the
February 12th
presentations
at City Council



City of Austin

Comprehensive Plan Consultant Finalists — Comment Card

Which consultant(s) are you commenting on? (circle as appropriate)

ACP Visioning+Planning

HNTB

WRT

Your name: Steve Beers (anonymous comments will not be accepted)

Please print legibly. This page will be scanned and provided electronically to City Council, the Mayor, and the public.

Your comment about the consultant finalists:

None of them should be selected until more information about the planning process is disseminated.

We need an assessment of the existing master planning, its strengths & shortcomings.

Once we have assessed what is good & bad about the last 30 years of "Austin Tomorrow," then we can move forward on the next iteration.

Other comments:

Comments can also be submitted by email

through the end of the day on Tuesday, February 17.

Send your thoughts to: Mark.Walters@ci.austin.tx.us

Please include the name or names of the consultants you are commenting on in the subject line.



City of Austin

Comprehensive Plan Consultant Finalists — Comment Card

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ACP Visioning+Planning

HNTB

WRT

Your name: CHRIS JACKSON (anonymous comments will not be accepted)

Please print legibly. This page will be scanned and provided electronically to City Council, the Mayor, and the public.

Your comment about the consultant finalists:

THE ACP TEAM LOOKS TO HAVE THE MOST THOROUGH
EXPLANATION FOR A PLAN → RESEARCH, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT,
EXISTING CONDITIONS, ANALYSIS ETC.

THIS FOUNDATION IS NECESSARY... AND AS THE POPULATION OF
AUSTIN IS EXTREMELY PASSIONATE AND EDUCATED, TWO QUALITIES
THAT CAN BE THE DRIVING FORCE OF A QUALITY CITY
GROWTH PLAN.

Other comments:

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Your name: JAN ADLER (anonymous comments will not be accepted)
Please print legibly. This page will be scanned and provided electronically to City Council, the Mayor, and the public.

Your comment about the consultant finalists:

- HIGHEST PRIORITY - TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION/CLEAN AIR
- THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE RAPID TRANSIT/LIGHT RAIL.
- THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE PURCHASE/ACQUISITION OF NEW PARK LANDS/GREEN SPACE
- THE PLAN MUST PRIORITIZE THE ENVIRONMENT & DISCOURAGE NEW DEVELOPMENT ON THE RECHARGE ZONE/AQUIFER.
- THE PLAN SHOULD RESPECT NEIGHBORHOODS & NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS THAT ARE BOTH IN PLACE & IN PROGRESS.
- THE PLAN SHOULD EMPHASIZE DENSITY ONLY IN CERTAIN AREAS/NOT ENCOURAGE GROWTH WITHIN THE WATERFRONT OVERLAY/ON THE AQUIFER OR IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ZONES.
- HEAR THE CITIZENS FIRST / BUSINESS-2ND.

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City of Austin

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Which consultant(s) are you commenting on? (circle as appropriate)

ACP Visioning+Planning

HNTB

WRT

Your name: Kirk D. Cleman (anonymous comments will not be accepted)

Please print legibly. This page will be scanned and provided electronically to City Council, the Mayor, and the public.

Your comment about the consultant finalists:

Representatives of the ACP Visioning+Planning Team have familiarity w/ Leader's Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This may serve Austin well during the Comp. Plan process.

Other comments:

Comments can also be submitted by email

through the end of the day on Tuesday, February 17.

Send your thoughts to: Mark.Walters@ci.austin.tx.us

Please include the name or names of the consultants you are commenting on in the subject line.

Walters, Mark

From: David Kobierowski [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:51 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Feedback on Comprehensive Plan Consultants

Hello,

Overall, none of the applicants hit a home-run with what I was looking for. But after hearing the three consultants present today regarding their strategies for the Comprehensive Plan RFP, it was clear that **ACP Visionary and Planning group was the best of the three.**

ACP clearly was most in touch with the "inclusively" community layer, which is arguably the most challenging, most critical, and most beneficial element of this overall exercise in front of them.

I was also impressed that ACP has worked with cities similar to Austin recently, notably Columbus, OH, which is similar to Austin in population and is also a large college town like Austin. ACP also worked on a project in Amhurst, MA recently, another college town.

ACP also seemed most qualified to answer questions without adding a ton of "consultant-speak" like HNTB did. I would steer very far from HNTB based on what I saw today.

The only info I have to base my decision is watching these three presentations today. I don't know any of these groups and don't have any previous knowledge of their work beyond the content presented today.

Best,
David Kobierowski

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 5:09 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: City of Austin Comprehensive Plan Consultant Finalists

After hearing last evenings presentations and comments and reading each of their websites regarding the projects they have completed, I have come to the conclusion that the **ACP Visioning+Planning Team** is the most qualified. Their experience and qualifications touch every area from planning to environmental sustainability and having chosen Clarion and TBG, I am confident they will be successful in working together for the future of Austin's growth while maintaining Austin's outstanding quality of life and retaining the assets that make Austin special. I also appreciate that ACP welcomes and involves public participation as well....

Helene Mandras

Nothing says I love you like flowers! **Find a florist near you now.**

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Patricia Buchholtz [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 9:49 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mark,

Let me first start by saying that I applaud Austin for taking the initiative to pull together a team to create a new comprehensive plan for the city. I have been long disappointed in smaller towns that at one time had been charming, interesting, walkable places, and through the years have only shown sprawl, car-oriented, and hodge-podge development. Fredricksburg is one example – there is a heart to the town, but its so very obvious where the heart stops and where folks stopped caring about how the town grew. Austin is an interesting city with districts blooming. This isn't such a bad thing, as long as each district is celebrated. Paris has a similar layout via the arrondissements. Each one seems to have a unique personality and identity, but all of them have charm, are walkable, are connected – all of the important factors when creating a world-class city. Our districts seem to grow a bit more organically – East Austin, Downtown, South Austin, UT, and even the neighborhoods within them – Clarksville, Rosedale, Great Hills, Arboretum. Each very unique in their offerings, but also beautiful.

There are areas of Austin that need some attention such as Burnet and Lamar – particularly in North Austin. The traffic is terrible; there is virtually no connectivity to the neighborhoods adjacent to these retail-busy areas.

A comprehensive plan should work on all levels to address how the city will interact as a whole, how each district will develop within its own area and then how traffic patterns, transportation, and place-making will occur ongoing.

My team preference to the comprehensive plan is ACP. They have a strong “outside of Austin” visioning team with a strong “inside of Austin” visioning team. Having grown up in Austin, but with an International Business background, I appreciate Austin's strengths – and love them – and realize that if we plan with only Austin eyes, we will get only Austin results – this could be limiting. Austin is quickly becoming a world-class city; however, its heart is local and small town in feel. A team that integrates with Austin's community, its current leaders (and not just city council leaders – but also area business, neighborhood, and simple strong voices) will be critical in building a comprehensive plan that Austin can get behind. A team that also pulls experience from other cities will be key in utilizing that experience to take the best of the successes and mitigate the areas that didn't work. ACP has the components to build bridges while developing the comprehensive plan.

patricia buchholtz
partner/marketing strategist
lookthinkmake, llc
dir. 512.740.4156
fax. 512.672.6112

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: William Mandras [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 4:29 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: City of Austin Comprehensive Plan Consultant Finalists

I would respectfully like to recommend the appointment of **The ACP Visioning+Planning Team** for the Austin project. I base this recommendation upon the following:

1. Having attended and then recorded the entire meeting, it is my opinion that ACP directly answered every question posed by the City Council. Representatives from the other two firms at times were rambling in their answers and did not directly address the questions.
2. Before the meeting, I walked up to each of the group's tables in the Lobby and read their poster board displays. The ACP Team was the only group that came up to me and asked me if I had any questions. At the WRT booth I had to approach them and at the HNTB booth, I was totally ignored. One of the key points in a successful plan is going to be the input from the diverse populous of Austin's citizens. If the actions of the three teams are a precursor as to how they relate to people, my money would be on ACP.
3. Having visited the websites of all three groups, I do not feel that HNTB is really qualified for the Austin project based upon the size and scope of the success stories outlined on their website.

At both their presentation and information from their website, WRT touts the Baltimore inner harbor project as being one of their best. Before moving to Austin my job took me to calling on a number of customers in and around the Baltimore area. The inner harbor is a great tourist attraction, however, if you travel two to three blocks in just about any direction you would experience a blighted and unfriendly City.

Having lived in the New York area for most of my 62 years, the ACP success at the World Trade Center site speaks volumes of their ability to communicate and include a large and diverse variety of groups in its final solution.

Respectfully,

William A. Mandras

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Mindy Cooper [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 4:40 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Austin Comprehensive Plan - ACP team

Hi Mark,

I finally had the opportunity to see the video of the Austin Comprehensive Plan finalists presenting and wanted to send a few of my thoughts your direction in support of the ACP team.

Of the 3 teams interviewing, ACP seemed to be most aligned with the kind of public involvement that Austinites want and need to have their voices heard. I liked that they had plenty of national experience but clearly had plenty of local experience as well. They also seemed to understand our need for help developing zoning code that compliments the comp plan, and I appreciated the fact that they said rather than just giving us a big comprehensive plan at the end of their project and saying, "Good luck, here you go" ... they'll be developing the zoning code with us so that Austin will have an enforceable set of codes to put the plan into practice.

ACP stood out to me as the clear choice for developing Austin's comprehensive plan. I'm looking forward to hearing which team is chosen by Council.

Thanks for allowing our input!
Mindy

--
"Only those who risk going too far can possibly know how far they can really go." T.S. Eliot
"Listen to your heart. Because, wherever your heart is, that is where you'll find your treasure." Paulo Coelho
"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." Harold Whitman
"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." Mark Twain

<http://cooperella.wordpress.com>

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Robert Pilgrim [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 4:58 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Comp Plan

Mark:

I thought the presentations were very good by all teams. However, the ACP team stood out above the other two. What sent The ACP Visioning+Planning Team over the edge for me were the answers to Mike Martinez about the Code Re-write after the Comp Plan is finished. There is a strong need and desire after the Comp Plan is finished to have a code re-write and this should be a big push item for the city during the days ahead. I think that the development community and hopefully our elected officials understand that a code re-write is inevitable.

Thanks - Robert

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Elliott Doerle [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 9:28 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Austin Comp Plan

Dear Mr. Walters,

Upon watching all three presentations and the Q and A session that followed, I felt the ACP Visioning Team was the most qualified candidate to create the framework for Austin's Comprehensive Plan. In my opinion they were the most qualified having successfully completed several comp plans for very similar cities and they also seemed to have a good balance of national experience coupled with local knowledge. I felt that the Q and A session gave us a good preview of how the candidates would react under the pressure of the public forum and again I was most impressed with this team.

Sincerely,

David

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: juli ott [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 10:20 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: austin comp plan

Mr. Walters,

I just wanted to write and express comments regarding the Austin Comp Plan presentations from last week. All of the finalists were well qualified and the city should be commended for their work to bring this level of talent to such an complex project.

Having watched all three finalists present, I wanted to go on record for recommending the team of ACP Vision + Planning. I feel that their balance of local experts along with national experts make them the best qualified team to work through this difficult process.

Having lived here most of my life, I know that the public process, and inclusion of the community is one of the most difficult and but most rewarding tasks that design teams face, and I believe this is the team that can accomplish it best.

In addition, I felt they understand best what it will take to not only craft the vision of the plan, but also understand the steps it takes to implement this into strategies that the City can take forward and make zoning, code and financial decisions.

Thanks again for allowing public participation in this exciting step in Austin's future.

Juli Ott

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2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: samueltperkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2009 11:51 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: comprehensive plan

I applaud the city for this breathtaking, needed and effort.

I am however taken aback by the size and the complexity of the teams.

I have real concerns about their complexity given Austin's dynamicism and complexity.

And I have real concerns that the people who do the presentations are the ones doing the sale,

but the people who will be outsourced to work on this for the city may in fact be students (as in the case of

Johnathan Barnett) or new hires or people simply collecting frequent flyer miles.

You all need to realize that Austin's planning history is layer upon layer of patch work.

I think only the most committed people will truly address this issue.

It may be in fact why in a time where the profession is reeling from the loss of work that you all shockingly

only received 5 qualified RFPs.

I would suggest reformatting the RFP, maintaining an organizational oversight (after all it will be staff;s plan) and soliticiing the best for the sustainability, transit and mobility and energy issues.

The invisible grunt work is best done by those on staff who are committed.

Thanks

Looking for work? [Get job alerts, employment information, career advice and job-seeking tools at AOL Find a Job.](#)

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: sara partridge [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 9:03 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Austin Comp Plan

I just wanted to weigh in on which team I believe brings the best national talent while also best represents Austin's interests and attitudes. WRT has proven talent as seen in projects throughout the country, however the most important value expressed was that of sustainability. This is something that cannot be overlooked and I know the other two firms have very little experience. As an Austinite I want to be known for living in a city that is as sustainable as possible and I feel that WRT is the right choice.

Good luck!

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Ryan Parr [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 10:15 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: ACP Visioning + Planning

Dear Mr. Walters,

As a citizen of the City of Austin who cares greatly about our collective future, I am using this valuable opportunity to submit my thoughts for consideration by the City Council with regard to selecting a team to work with the community to create a new Comprehensive Plan.

The development of a far-sighted and enduring Comprehensive Plan is critical to the smart growth of the greater Austin metro area. Accordingly, the team charged with developing such a plan ought to be well in tune with the local culture and politics while simultaneously having the experience and wherewithal of a preeminent national entity.

The ACP Visioning + Planning team uniquely meets these qualities through its fusion of national experience and local knowledge/investment. Moreover, the assembled ACP team has demonstrated, through its presentation to the Council, a sagacious approach that considers not merely planning for the future, but establishing a vision through public input, which represents a critical component of any comprehensive municipal plan of merit.

The ACP team has distinguished itself from its very worthy and illustrious competition, and it is my hope that the Council will have the keen judgment to select the team that best represents the City of Austin's future – and that team is ACP Visioning + Planning.

Sincerely,

David Parr

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Tyler Anthony [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 10:58 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Austin Comprehensive Plan - team comments

Mr. Walters,

I wanted to offer some quick comments regarding what I saw during last Thursday's comprehensive plan presentation.

While all 3 firms vying for the CoA comprehensive plan appear to have the necessary background and appropriate credentials, Thursday night's public vetting process began to highlight ACP staff qualifications and their extremely approachable demeanor. It appeared quite clear that they made the strongest connection with the audience on a number of occasions. Given the large stake that the public will no doubt play in this process, I feel that this helps me distinguish ACP from HNTB or WRT.

One of the speakers for ACP, Mr. Longo (don't know if I have the spelling correct) provided an excellent first hand account of a similar planning process conducted for Chattanooga, TN. His description of the positive change from pre-plan to post-plan and his specific example of an excited taxi driver as the new tour guide in a revitalized community really stood out among the other stories I heard.

Good luck with the final decision!

Best regards,

Tyler Anthony

2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Ron Thrower [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 12:58 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Comp Plan

Mark,

I stayed for most of the presentations to council and the subsequent Q/A from the 3 finalists about the Comp Plan. All three were good and informative. After talking with all three companies and re-watching the presentation I believe that one team stands out more than any others. Obviously, this is my opinion and the city has far more data than what is being made public. None the less, the team that I would prefer is ACP Visioning & Planning Team. They seem to have the better aptitude, skill sets, and team members to pursue this daunting task. They also seem better fit to carry us to the next step with the eventual outcome of the Comp Plan being the code re-write.

You and I both know that the existing code is archaic and anti-new urbanism. The outcome of the Comp Plan is inevitable to support sustainable development for Austin. Therefore, the code re-write is inevitable. I'm deeply interested in the Comp Plan and the code re-write and it would seem fitting that a single team ultimately be responsible for making both of these happen. I understand that the current proposal is solely for the Comp Plan but if the chosen team went forward with the single biggest outcome of the Comp Plan being the code re-write, then a lot of discussion can be formulated to that end.

Thanks for the opportunity to express my opinion about the choice for the team to be awarded with the contract for the Comp Plan.

Ron Thrower

Thrower Design

4608-A South Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78745
512/476-4456
512/476-4454 fax

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2/17/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Carrie Schnoor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 3:02 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: ACP Visioning + Planning

Dear Mr. Walters,

I would like to see the city council choose ACP Visioning + Planning team as the group hired to help the City of Austin with their new comprehensive growth plan.

Carrie Schnoor

2/17/2009

February 17th, 2009

City of Austin Council Members and Staff,

On behalf of the nearly 800 members of AIA Austin (American Institute of Architects – Austin Chapter) and the design community that it serves, I applaud Council for the range and depth of questions directed to the three very qualified planning teams who presented last week as part of the Comprehensive Plan RFQ.

AIA Austin has been and will continue to be an interested stakeholder in the development of the new Comprehensive Plan. We look forward to being able to participate and provide valuable resources to the team ultimately selected. In watching HNTB, ACP and WRT present their qualifications and values, it was apparent that all three teams support the impact of mixed-use urban infill development, measures for sustainability – both environmental and economic, and growth management. Council Members, Staff and other stakeholders have stated in the past that they too share in these values which are also supported by the stated policies of the AIA membership.

It will be critical in moving into the planning process that we understand the importance of Council Member Martinez's comments regarding the alignment between vision, policies, and codes as a key instrument in the early stages. In order to meet our goals, it is vital that we keep the vision and the codes aligned and properly tuned together.

All three presentations were impressive in scope and quality and obviously there will be difficult decisions to be made in the upcoming weeks. In making such a decision, I believe it is important, when the teams are so close in skill sets, that we consider two important issues:

- Staff's recommendation, particularly in how we can best work with the culture of the team to maximize efficiency of the process
- During these difficult economic times, we consider how key local firms are involved in the process and utilize the teams who are best at bringing to the table local talent.

Thank you for your time and AIA Austin welcomes the beginning of a new Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,



Stephen Oliver, AIA | LEED AP
AIA Austin President 2009
OPA Design Studio | Principal

Walters, Mark

From: Jack Williams [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 5:22 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Gianni Longo & ACP Visioning and Planning

Mark,

In regards to last Thursday's presentation of the Austin Comprehensive Plan, it appears that ACP Visioning is the right fit for this endeavor. Their background and past projects, both nationally and locally, show that Mr. Longo and his team are suitable and worthy of this undertaking.

Their team also has a local influence and understands the spirit of what Austin is and what its future should hold. I hope the City of Austin makes the right choice when selecting a team. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jack Williams

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2/18/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Susan Moffat [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 10:32 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Comments on Comprehensive Plan Finalists/Process

Dear Mr. Walters,

I strongly support the effort to produce a new Comprehensive Plan for Austin, but have a several reservations about the timing and process regarding the selection of a team to lead this effort.

For a comprehensive plan to be successful, several critical factors must be in place, including (1) a top-tier planning team who can approach the project without bias or conflicts of interest; (2) sufficient funds to implement the plan in a timely fashion; (3) full public buy-in for the plan. These factors do not seem to be in place at this time.

CONCERNS ABOUT FINALISTS

Regarding the three finalists, I have several questions/concerns:

1. Austin is a popular city and many top-flight teams have worked here or have connections here - yet none of them applied to do the Comprehensive Plan. Why did we have so few applicants? Did we offer too little? Did they not think the plan would be implemented? Was the RFP drafted in a way that might have inadvertently discouraged them? Were there other concerns? At this point, I'd say WRT is best bet, but I'm frankly surprised and a bit dismayed that we don't have a better crop of finalists from which to choose.
2. The public has had only five days (two of which fell over the weekend) to vet the finalists and give input. For a project that requires substantial public buy-in to succeed, this does not seem like an auspicious start. Even two weeks would have been better than five days.
3. Some of the finalist teams seem to have acquired local members who may bring their own biases to the plan or who may be involved in subsequent projects that could benefit from aspects of the plan. Though I'm normally a huge fan of buying locally, conflicts of interest are much more apt to arise when you have local players crafting rules for areas in which they may later have financial interests.

FUNDING CONCERNS

1. Absent funds for timely implementation, any new comprehensive plan is likely to wind up in the same cycle as its predecessors - being shelved until it has become obsolete, at which time a new plan is then commissioned. Do we really want to spend \$1+ million for another plan that sits on a shelf?
2. As currently proposed, this project will require over \$1 million just to craft, at a time when the City is facing budget cuts in essential services due to the most severe economic crisis of that

last seventy years. Under the circumstances, I believe it would be prudent to defer any spending for this project at least until after the fall budget cycle. By then, the full extent of this year's budget cuts will be known and we may have more clarity regarding the nation's economic outlook. We can re-evaluate at that time - ideally, with some new outreach to a few of the top flight teams.

PUBLIC BUY-IN

As noted above, public buy-in would be enhanced by: providing adequate time to vet prospective teams; an explanation as to why better teams did not apply and/or effort to recruit better teams; deferring this expenditure to be reevaluated after the fall budget cycle.

Please note that this does not mean we can't move forward in the meantime. Austin knows how to do public process. A well-designed task force comprising members of the Planning Commission, city staff and community leaders could begin public outreach to build consensus for the community's visions and goals. This could be accomplished without the expense of hiring an outside firm and we would have an important piece of the process already in place when and if the budget picture is brighter.

In short, this project is too important to risk doing poorly. Many thanks for your consideration of these suggestions.

Best,
Susan Moffat
4112 Speedway
Austin TX 78751
barbaro@bga.com

I really think this effort is too important to risk doing poorly. Again, I urge the city to defer any decisions or expenses and reevaluate after the fall budget cycle.

Comments
following the
consultants'
responses to
City Council's
March follow-
up questions

Comprehensive Plan Public Forum Comments

7 April 2009

Meeting notepads

The following comments were recorded by staff on four notepads during the meeting. Commenters and the audience were able to watch the scribing as it happened.

ACP

Took Question 12 most seriously and had the best response.

Did not address multimodal need for transit/transportation.

Declined to answer Question 10.

Went over same territory that community went over in the past (Question 16).

Question 12: Who defines “appropriate”, when talking about how to incorporate neighborhood plans into the comprehensive plan?

Emphasis on Envision Central Texas out of balance with the lack of emphasis on the neighborhood plans?

Did not address the zoning capacity question.

Not geared toward public involvement.

Removal of regulatory barriers not good for affordable housing.

Answer on health dealt only with the built environment.

Sub-consultant has conflict of interest.

HNTB

Last response wasn’t really a response.

Did not answer zoning capacity analysis question.

May not be able to apply boilerplate plan for Austin.

WRT

Strong response on the question regarding the lack of income tax in Texas, especially on the role of education in economic development.

Only team to address existing zoning capacity.

Recognized the need to contrast population projections with the community's desires for the future.

Good handle on participation and community decision-making—"broad-based buy-in," staff for "administrative support", good response on developer buy-in.

Other comments

Re: Question 12: Want a consultant that will respect the neighborhood plans and the importance of neighborhood-based planning.

One subconsultant was on all three teams, in different capacities.

Re: Questions to Staff: staff response to the community advisory committee question was eloquent but a little unclear on the answer.

UT has the time and interest in working on the plan.

Goals: economic and sustainability – consultants must be on board with the city's goals.

Consultants must be adept in multimodal transportation analysis

Agreement among teams on the need for zoning capacity analysis.

No teams addressed water as a resource constraint.

Hispanic Quality of Life meeting taking place right now

Existing neighborhood plan: respect the hard work of those plans.
Implementation of neighborhood plans through CIP process.

Carefully consider following up the Comp Plan with implementation by updating the zoning code, etc. Choose a consultant with extensive experience in that area.

Are the teams aware that the State demographer says that the majority of adults in Texas will not have a high school education by 2020 [scribe note: unclear on the year stated]

Other comments (continued)

Comprehensive Housing Market Study: 29,000 units short for families earning less than \$20,000 per year. All teams seem unable to address this. Teams also seem unable to address healthcare.

Need to carefully consider site synergy and connectivity—one big system that works together. Zoning of properties to relate to one another, not as isolated parcels. Look at getting rid of dedicated parking requirements.

Planning Commission: considering a statement that it is the citizens who own the comprehensive plan.

East Austin planning for years and years and year ... then someone comes along and tears it down and gentrifies the neighborhood. Consultant processes produce paper and turmoil. Stop, look, and listen to the community.

To whoever is chosen: Austin is special in its priorities: environment and culture over economics and transportation.

Follow through on our vision.

Rely on council and staff to absorb what is said tonight and choose.

Look for the team that (1) shows the clearest respect and commitment to the neighborhood plans and process; (2) most innovative insight into taking advantage of downtown planning; (3) respect for Austin's long-standing sense of place; (4) appreciate existing and long-term commitment to well-distributed, usable, and accessible open spaces for all citizens.

One of the reasons Austin is so great is the neighborhood associations—NE quadrant dinner the other night to recognize their effort—neighborhood associations are here to stay and are valuable to the city.

None of the consultants had an answer to CM Cole's question about the divide in Austin.

Next bond election: implementing the Comp Plan. We have a problem with plan implementation. If it becomes real because people know it will result in something, then it becomes meaningful and draws people in. Need to overcome years of neglect.

Increased income segregation; tremendous population growth. All parts of town need to be healthy. Large parts of the city could themselves be a small city. Need close neighborhood involvement. Some challenges are larger than a neighborhood—need integrated planning that includes the small scale.

Other comments (continued)

Need to plan for all kinds of housing in all parts of town—no concentrations of poverty. Consultant needs expertise in housing.

Continued divide in Austin—unwanted projects, often initiated by the City, put on the east side because that it is the path of least resistance.

Reject the teams: we have a budget crunch.

NE Austin – need better roads – see city crews working on the other side of I-35.

Consider the potential for a bond election and code changes – high priority in developing the scope of work. Plan can't sit on the shelf.

Lots of talk of “implementation,” but need to figure out “what” we're implementing.

Bias in land use planning – product is beautiful maps and perspective sketches, but the process sees people as ants that can be moved around.

Concentrations of unwanted uses in parts of town, based on zoning decisions, etc.

Interdisciplinary planning is needed—departments have to work together. Need to look at how the whole system is structured. Larger than what a consultant can do.

Experience with East Cesar Chavez plan. Skeptical of doing a Comp Plan based on that experience. Not being addressed: crime and drug. East Austinites being pushed out.

Benefits of nearby businesses—walkable, allows multimodal transportation. Challenge to work with neighborhood plans, but also look at what is good for the City as a whole.

Cost: downtown plan budget (\$1.4 million) vs. budget for the Comp Plan (\$1.3 million). Can Austin's issues be covered with this budget? Down the line: don't shortchange the process. Fund it to make it comprehensive.

Economic consultants: no experience building an economic model that incorporates all of our concerns. Need a model that builds a better future and doesn't just draw people in who make it worse.

Where are the other Council members?

Other comments (continued)

Divide in Austin goes back years—want something done. Who established the criteria for the consultants?

Why not bring UT in?

Consultants don't know this community.

Q: models in the US for the Comp Plan in Austin?

Citizen-training on planning?

Geographic boundaries in other cities create different land use dynamics.

Comment cards

The following comments were handed to staff on comment cards provided at the meeting. Speakers were asked to give their comments to staff on paper after speaking, so several comments reiterate points captured on the notepads (above). One commenter brought a printed copy; it is attached.

NUNA wants a consultant that will respect the Central Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan enacted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in August 2004, and recognize the importance of neighborhood-based planning in considering further changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Based on the responses to Question 12, ACP appears to have taken the issue most seriously, but we would like the council to exercise its best judgment taking into account all that is known about the three candidate firms.

While we were told at this meeting that there is no preconceived comp plan for the city—that this is to be a citizens plan—this is not how it came across from the beginning—it came across as elitist—without involvement by the ordinary citizens and little if any acknowledgement that the neighborhood associations are just as vital to Austin's future as the business community.

Comment cards (continued)

1. City has a responsibility to decide on all procurement rules before issuing the RFP. Changing the rules at the end of the process is problematic. Austin is risking getting a bad reputation.
2. Council is turning to citizens to choose the consultant?
3. People seem to think that a comp plan should solve all problems—education, healthcare, affordable housing, poverty, etc. Without realistic expectations, and understanding what the Planning Commission's role is, nobody can get a Comp Plan done.

* GOOD LUCK * !

-
1. Our part of Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003. We have a Review committee that monitors the implementation of that plan. We want that plan to stay intact and be integrated into whatever overall City plan is created. Any new “teams” must include our Review Comm.
 2. Implementation-C.I.P. is vehicle for implementation. Will plan use CIP to implement?

I would like to stress that no matter who we choose for our potential consultants, we must follow up on the final plan with a real and timely effort to change ALL our city codes. We have some of the most complex and confusing code of any large city in the US and we will find ourselves here again if we don't fix our code in conjunction with our planning.

Priorities – environment, culture, economy, transportation

With the City having budget problems

Why?

The plan needs changes

Memorandum

To: The Austin City Council

From: Mark Yznaga

Re: Informal Comments Regarding Comprehensive Plan Teams and Staff Responses
(Liveable City will meet next week and forward final comments)

Date: April 7, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to evaluate additional information on the proposed Comprehensive Plan's finalist teams. We appreciate the efforts the finalist teams made to respond to the citizens of Austin. We believe this is important information that should inform the Council's final team selection.

Comments on Finalist Teams and City Staff Responses:

- ACP-Visioning transportation sub consultants do not demonstrate multi-modal transportation planning experience needed to address the traffic circulation and mass transit element.
- ACP Visioning did not respond to Question 10 regarding team member's advocacy in specific local planning, development, transportation projects, initiatives, or organizations.
- Carter Design Associates are part of all three finalist teams, but address different elements in each proposal - cultural, housing, and urban design. It is unclear whether this firm can perform each of these functions effectively.
- Staff response was not clear whether they support Council appointing a Community Advisory Committee.
- Staff response shows that the top-scoring team dropped to second place (4.5 point difference) as result of a 20 minute optional subjective interview. Given the length and complexity of the written proposal, this seems to give undue weight to a 20-minute interview.
- Staff response to lack of inclusion of University of Texas planning school was incomplete. Time and resources are available from UT faculty and students to benefit the plan.

Suggested for Successful Plan Completion:

- Ensure that economic, environmental, and social sustainability are the central criteria for team selection.
- Ensure that the selected team's track record is consistent with the City's economic, environmental, and social sustainability objectives. For example, if any are involved in local advocacy efforts that are inconsistent with these objectives, they may not be willing or able to consider them appropriately in plan development.

- Ensure that team sub-consultants charged with addressing the traffic circulation and mass transit element have demonstrable multi modal experience.
- Evaluate the implementation of finalist team's plans and client satisfaction with plan development and implementation.
- Commit to implementation. The Council's commitment to fully funding and scheduling implementation of the plan is key to its success."

Walters, Mark

From: Patricia A. Wilson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 4:37 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: weighing in on consultants choice for Comp Plan

Hello, Mark,

Carol asked me for my opinion on which firm would do the best job on citizen engagement. I have reviewed all the materials, responses, presentations, and websites. To me it is clear that the best firm with respect to citizen engagement is WRT. A distant but still acceptable second would be ACP. I would exclude HNTB from further consideration for Austin's Comp Plan.

I may not make it to the hearing this evening, so please include my comments and forward this to Carol. I'm available for further input on this and would be happy to serve on a community advisory committee or technical advisory committee for the Comp Plan.

Thanks,

Patricia

Dr. Patricia A. Wilson, Professor

Director, Civic Engagement Initiative of the UT Center for Sustainable Development

Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning

University of Texas

Austin, TX 78712

4/13/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Claxton, Gregory
Sent: Thursday, April 09, 2009 9:24 AM
To: 'Larry Kleinkemper, AIA'
Cc: Walters, Mark
Subject: RE: Thanks for attending & send Council your thoughts

Larry,

Thanks--we'll include this with the rest of the comments we receive.

-- Greg

-----Original Message-----

From: Larry Kleinkemper, AIA [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2009 6:14 PM
To: Claxton, Gregory
Subject: RE: Thanks for attending & send Council your thoughts

Gregory,

Thanks again for listening. Please print the following main point from my speech.

The planner chosen should not base their findings solely off other cities solutions - because we are one of the best! We are a city to be studied, as one of the greatest places to live in the world. Ego's aside, this has been stated by a number of publications.

I recognize the benefits of looking outside our home town for solutions, as long as we consider long and hard about how they impact us...considering our goal is not necessarily to be like everyone else. If we copy all the great solutions that everyone is adapting now, throughout the world (not just the USA), we will not only copy their successes but also their failures, and may water down our own greatness.

The ultimate fear is turning Austin into yet another highway strip mall town dotted by a repetition of national chains in standard order of appearance: Home Depot across from Lowes with a McDonald's and Starbucks in between, repeat in 2 miles.

I appreciate your patient hard work as a planning organization.

Sincerely,
Larry Kleinkemper, AIA

3006 Perry Lane
Austin, TX 78731
407-683-9860

-----Original Message-----

From: gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us [mailto:gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us]
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2009 5:28 PM
To: webapp@ci.austin.tx.us
Subject: Thanks for attending & send Council your thoughts

Thanks to everyone who came to last night's Comprehensive Plan public forum!

If you weren't able to make it, the forum was recorded for Channel 6 and will be broadcast:

--Thursday at 7 p.m. - 8:48 p.m.
--Friday 9 a.m. - 10:48 a.m.
--Saturday at 8 p.m. - 9:48 p.m.
--Sunday at 8 p.m. - 9:48 p.m.

The comments from last night are available on the Comp Plan website:
<http://www.cityofaustin.org/compplan>

City Council will be deliberating on which consultant to choose on April 23. In order to ensure that your comments are distributed to Council, we need to receive them by Monday, April 13. You can email your thoughts to Mark Walters (Mark.Walters@ci.austin.tx.us) or call him at 974-7695

Please forward this message on to anyone who might be interested in helping Council select a consultant.

--Greg Claxton
Neighborhood Planner

City of Austin
Neighborhood Planning & Zoning Department
505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78704
E: gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us
T: 512-974-7630
F: 512-974-7757

Walters, Mark

From: Toni House [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2009 11:29 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Cc: Morrison, Laura; Levinski, Robert
Subject: Comprehensive Planning Consultants

After reviewing each team's responses to the questionnaire, checking out their websites, and listening to the comments made at the Comprehensive Plan Forum held April 7, 2009, I believe the firm of Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC is the one that can best address Austin's unique challenges. I was most impressed by their response to Question 2 concerning developer buy-in and agree wholeheartedly that Austin should strive to attract "innovative developers." The other teams' overall responses did not give the impression that neighborhoods' input would truly be welcomed or seriously considered.

I am encouraged by Council Member Morrison's commitment that this will be a community-wide project, that it will be the citizens of Austin who make the decisions and that every neighborhood will have a voice in its future. Based on my experience with the Riverside Corridor Study, however, I am very worried that the comprehensive planning effort will encounter the same problems that have arisen with the Study – insufficient time allotted for stakeholder Q&A during the meetings; stakeholders' input and preferences being acknowledged and then ignored; commitments being made to address stakeholder concerns and later tossed aside; and a failure to provide sufficient information when specific questions and concerns were raised.

Toni House
E. Riverside/Oltorf Combined NPA
Austin TX 78741

Walters, Mark

From: Linda J. Watkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 9:51 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Comprehensive Planning Consultants

After reviewing each team's responses to the questionnaire, checking out their websites, and listening to the comments made at the Comprehensive Plan Forum held April 7, 2009, I believe the firm of Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC is the one that can best address Austin's unique challenges. Their response to Question 2 concerning developer buy-in impressed me and I agree wholeheartedly that Austin should strive to attract "innovative developers." The other teams' overall responses did not give the impression that neighborhoods' input would truly be welcomed or seriously considered.

Based on my experience with the Riverside Corridor Study, I am very worried that the comprehensive planning effort will encounter the same problems that have arisen with the Study – insufficient time allotted for stakeholder Q&A during the meetings; stakeholders' input and preferences being acknowledged and then ignored; commitments being made to address stakeholder concerns and later tossed aside; and a failure to provide sufficient information when specific questions and concerns were raised.

Linda Watkins, Member of the EROC Neighborhood Planning Contact Team

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See yours in just 2 easy steps!

4/13/2009

Walters, Mark

From: Frances Ferguson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 3:57 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Cc: Claxton, Gregory
Subject: RE: Comprehensive plan -- public comments

Attachments: HW ULI RECA AARO ltr to City Council re Comprehensive Plan.doc



HW ULI RECA
AARO ltr to City C...

Hello Mr. Walters -- attached is the letter that documents the recommendations developed by a collaborative team of HousingWorks Austin, Urban Land Institute, AARO and RECA.

We believe this approach of large planning areas w numerical goals serves many good needs --- liveability across town; involvement; and achieve housing affordability throughout town so that people can live near their jobs.

a) The larger areas can be used to ensure that all parts of town meet certain liveability goals of the comprehensive plan --- affordability, walkability, distance from jobs and service (health care, education, etc)

b) The larger planning areas give a framework for the social process of idea exchange, visioning, and planning at a local involvement level -- where in each area people representing a wide range of perspectives could be involved -- neighborhoods, schools, health care, real estate community, etc, transit, parks

c) Larger planning areas COMBAT the market practice of concentrating poverty -- but at the same time gives large ENOUGH areas to be able to figure out where various types of affordable homes can be included (purchase existing apartments for deeper affordability; build new higher density family ownership options; buy an older hotel or nursing home to provide supportive housing)

Attached is our letter and we respectfully request that the definition of larger planning areas and the assignment of numerical housing goals be made in ALL planning areas.

Thank you,

Frances Ferguson
Board President
HousingWorks Austin
512 466 0574 (cell)

-----Original Message-----

From: gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us
[mailto:gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us]
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2009 5:28 PM
To: webapp@ci.austin.tx.us
Subject: Thanks for attending & send Council your thoughts

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Please forward this message on to anyone who might be interested in helping Council select a consultant.

--Greg Claxton
Neighborhood Planner

City of Austin
Neighborhood Planning & Zoning Department
505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78704
E: gregory.claxton@ci.austin.tx.us
T: 512-974-7630
F: 512-974-7757



HousingWorks
AUSTIN

April 13, 2009

TO: Mayor Will Wynn and Members of the Austin City Council
FROM: HousingWorks Austin
RE: Austin's Comprehensive Plan

Board of Directors

Andrew Childers
Oxford Commercial
Ashton Cumberbatch,
Seton Family of Hospitals &
Austin Bridge Builders Alliance
Catharine Echols
Liveable City
Frances Ferguson
NeighborWorks America
Frank Fernandez
Community Partnership for the
Homeless
John Limon
Plaza Saltillo Redevelopment
Terry Mitchell
MOMARK Homes;
Real Estate Council of Austin
Karen Paup
Texas Low Income
Housing Information Service
Thuy Phan
Vietnamese American
Community Austin Texas
Glenn Reynolds
Cool River Custom Homes
Clint Smith
Family Eldercare
Kathy Tyler
Gray Panthers &
Motivation Education and
Training, Inc

HousingWorks Austin is working with Urban Land Institute, Real Estate Council of Austin and Austin Area Research Organization on a joint effort to ensure that Austin is able to provide the housing infrastructure it needs to remain a healthy and sustainable city. We believe that Austin needs housing for all kinds of people, at all income levels, in all parts of the city, and as such we feel the city's upcoming comprehensive plan will be a critically important tool for our future. As the city continues to deliberate the selection of a consultant team to undertake a new comprehensive plan for Austin, we would like to make the following suggestions:

- **Move forward with the comprehensive plan** with all deliberate speed. We have gone far too long without a well-crafted plan, created with community support, to help the city make decisions and coordinate its investments. Further delay will cost the City money in the long run and lead to lost opportunities that can never be replaced.
- Establish as a core principle that **diverse housing at all income levels throughout the city** must be facilitated by the Comprehensive Plan. Austin has undertaken many creative and successful initiatives to promote new housing in certain locations and price ranges. But, we still lack the tools necessary to meet our growing city's housing needs — which we feel can only be done by ensuring the availability of sufficient housing choices for all citizens in all parts of town.
- Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan includes **an intermediate planning level** of geographic divisions within the city that are larger than current neighborhood planning areas. Effective planning needs to allow Austin to make decisions that acknowledge the linkages between housing, schools, health care and social services, transportation, public safety, parks and libraries, and jobs and retail. Working with engaged citizens and leaders in all these areas to produce integrated planning solutions will require working at a scale smaller than the whole city but larger than the neighborhoods.
- Combining the previous two points, establish **reasonable numerical goals** for new housing units to be produced in each of these intermediate planning areas. The City's incentive programs and tools can then be aligned with these goals.

We are happy to learn that ideas and principles being advanced as part of our effort are also included in the City's Comprehensive Housing Market Study that was presented to the City Council on March 5. We would like to know how both City staff and the consultant teams view the need for intermediate planning areas and for diverse housing throughout the city as elements of their envisioned scope of work.

In our view, housing is not just one of a long list of items that should be considered by the consultant teams as they undertake our planning effort. Rather it — along with transportation — sits at the very top of the community's list of priorities. Like many other citizens of Austin, while we appreciate the City Council's commitment to the policy goals we think are vital for our future. We feel the City needs more clarity than has been provided so far as to how those goals will be addressed and prioritized during a comprehensive planning effort. We appreciate the opportunity to help achieve that clarity now so that this ambitious and essential planning effort can get off to a good start.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Frances Ferguson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frances Ferguson,
Board President
HousingWorks Austin

Walters, Mark

From: G M [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2009 9:44 PM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: ACP Visioning Team

Mr. Walters

I have reviewed your comprehensive plan website and saw the March 4 response to the City Council questions on TV. I also took the time to review the consultant websites. Following that research I was a little perplexed to see all the negative responses to the ACP team on the TV broadcast of the March 4 meeting. Their experience in dealing with such emotional situations such as the post 911 planning for Lower Manhattan and the Louisiana Katrina recovery planning would make them much more qualified to deal with all the neighborhood experts that Austin seems to have, much more than the other teams. I found it interesting and a little alarming that all of the negative responses to ACP seemed to have strong ANC connections. It seems like it was an organized attempt to discredit ACP. WRT looks like a good team, but they did not focus on the all inclusive public outreach that Austinites demand.

I whole heartedly recommend that the City Council choose the ACP Visioning team.

Thank you,
Gary Vaughn

4/14/2009

Walters, Mark

From: danette [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2009 12:28 AM
To: Walters, Mark
Subject: Feedback on Comprehensive Plan Finalists

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I spoke at the April 7 Public Forum but wanted to briefly reiterate my comments concerning public participation and neighborhood plans.

At the April 7 forum there were two prevailing concerns – 1) that the process be community oriented, the end result being the community's plan not the consultant's plan and 2) that all the effort that has gone into neighborhood plans be respected.

In terms of public participation process and philosophy, I found ACP to be the weakest of the three teams. Their comment in answer to question 23 that states "We will provide staff with needed resources and expertise as we together identify and analyze issues, develop alternatives, discuss trade-offs and choices, and make decisions." is especially troubling. It is key to the success of this process that the community plays a vital role and that our elected city officials (City Council) make the decisions rather than providing a rubber stamp on a plan where city staff and the consultant have made the decisions.

I also found ACP to be the weakest of the three teams when it came to respecting existing neighborhood plans. All three finalists said that neighborhood plans might need to be tweaked after adoption of the comprehensive plan but ACP was the only one that mentioned the possibility of not even continuing the neighborhood planning process after the adoption of the comprehensive plan. In comments about removing regulatory barriers to affordable housing, ACP mentions tools that exist today already in neighborhood planning. Some neighborhoods in East Austin have adopted these tools only to find them to be ineffective and even detrimental to retaining affordable housing.

All of the folks who spoke at the forum specifically about the finalist candidates had negative things to say about ACP except one. The one positive comment was by the first speaker. His primary concern was that neighborhood plans be respected and he later retracted his initial positive comment about ACP, deferring to Council and folks who had done a more in-depth study of the responses to ensure that the team chosen would be one that would make sure existing neighborhood plans are protected.

Danette Chimenti
ANC President

Danette Chimenti

Email: [REDACTED]
Cell: 512-565-0217

4/14/2009