AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	**Item ID**	6904	**Agenda Number**	115.
Meeting Date:	8/25/2011	**Department:**	Planning and Development Review	

Subject

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Downtown Austin Plan, directing the City Manager to process code amendments recommended in the Downtown Austin Plan, and initiating re-zonings of properties as recommended in the Downtown Austin Plan. The planning area includes properties bounded approximately by Interstate 35 to the east, the west side of Lamar Blvd. to the west, Lady Bird Lake to the south and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to the north.

Amount and Source of Funding

Fiscal Note

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	December 15, 2005 – Council approved Resolution 20051215-056 authorizing the initiation of the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP) and directing the City Manager to present the proposed scope of work for an RFQ to Council. December 13, 2007 – Council directed the City Manager to begin development of an interim Density Bonus Program under Resolution No. 20071213-062. January 31, 2008 – Council adopted the "Interim Density Bonus Ordinance" under Ordinance No. 20080131-132. February 28, 2008 – Council amended professional services agreement related to the Downtown Austin Plan to add additional transit planning outside the scope of the DAP. March 27, 2008 – Council authorized Phase 2 planning services for the DAP.
For More Information:	Jim Robertson, 974-3564; Sylvia Arzola, 974-6448
Boards and Commission Action:	Reviewed by Design Commission, Downtown Commission, Parks Board, Urban Transportation Commission, Waterfront Planning and Advisory Board, Arts Commission, Music Commission, and Community Development Commission. Recommended by Planning Commission.
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	

Additional Backup Information

Council Resolution 20051215-056 directed the initiation of the Downtown Austin Plan ("DAP"). The Resolution stated that the DAP should include recommendations related to: development standards modernization; infrastructure funding; mobility; utilization of government-owned land; and affordable housing, and prescribed the project boundaries.

The planning process began with a nine-month "diagnostic" phase to assess existing conditions, analyze opportunities and constraints, identify priorities and craft the work program for subsequent phases of the project. The resulting "Downtown Austin Plan Issues and Opportunities" report was presented to the community and City Council in February 2008.

Through subsequent actions the City Council acted to advance specific elements of the DAP, including a Downtown Transportation Framework Plan and an Urban Rail Study, a Downtown Affordable Housing Strategy, a Downtown Density Bonus Program and a Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

The draft DAP is the result of a three-year dialogue with the general public and the Downtown community and stakeholders. It has involved six Town Hall meetings and scores of smaller meetings and workshops, soliciting input on a wide range of issues and geographic subareas. The DAP process has provided the opportunity for the community to refine its vision for Downtown and to formulate an action plan that addresses the challenges facing Downtown, while building on the momentum of the past ten years.

The draft Plan establishes action priorities for the next 10 years to ensure Downtown's long-term economic and social vibrancy and sustainability. It recommends more than 100 steps to make Downtown livable, walkable, connected, inclusive, affordable, culturally alive and economically strong.

Recommendations of the plan are organized into seven subject areas that relate closely to those City departments, divisions and programs that will undertake their implementation. These elements are:

- Historic Preservation
- Activities and Uses
- Density and Design
- The Public Realm
- Transportation and Parking
- Utilities and Infrastructure
- Leadership and Implementation

The DAP was finalized as a draft document in mid-2010 and was presented to the City Council at a work session in November 2010. Presentations to various city boards and commissions began in January 2011 and were completed in late-April 2011.

At the Planning Commission public hearing held on April 26, 2011, Staff presented a list of Staff-recommended amendments to the DAP to be considered by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission accepted the Staff-recommended amendments to the DAP as part of their motion and action.