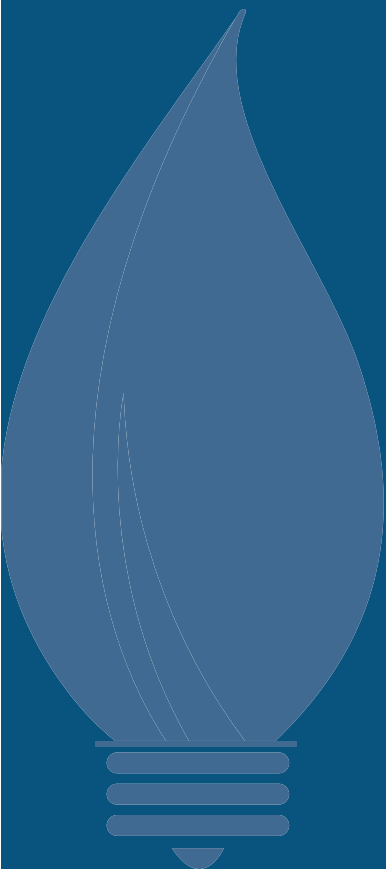


IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Imagine Austin Vision Statement

We Will Become a City of Complete Communities



IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

For many years our community vision has been “to be the most livable city in the country.” However, defining “livability” is difficult and a simple statement cannot sum up all that we are or could be. Austin is a big city and is growing larger and more complex. When we imagine our future, our vision must be more detailed, comprehensive, and reflect this complexity. We can begin by saying “the most livable,” but it’s only a first step. Our new community vision must point toward the complete city we want to become.

IMAGINE AUSTIN VISION STATEMENT

The process to develop a new vision for Austin engaged thousands of residents over a nine-month period beginning with the kickoff of the Imagine Austin planning process in October 2009. Through community forums, social media, surveys, focus groups, small meetings between neighbors and friends, and special events, residents described their ideas for Austin in 2039—our bicentennial.

The Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force, appointed by City Council to help guide and champion the process, worked directly from the public input to develop a draft vision statement. The public reviewed and rated each vision component and the revised vision was further reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and endorsed by City Council. More details about these meetings and the entire planning process can be found in Appendix B and online.

The Imagine Austin vision statement embodies our commitment to preserving the best of Austin and changing those things that need to be changed. The vision statement answers the question, “What sort of city do we want Austin to be?” with a series of principles that address the physical and social evolution of the city and the overall well-being of its residents. The importance of Austin’s people lies at the heart of the vision statement. It acknowledges that the city is a place *for people* and that inclusion and community leadership will be critical to realizing our long-term goals.

The importance of Austin’s people lies at the heart of the vision statement.

A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.





LIVABLE



AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles and reducing sprawl, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day and night time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear guidelines support both quality development and preservation that sustain and improve Austin's character and provide certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and affordable healthcare.



NATURAL

AUSTIN IS NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE:



Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks throughout our city.
- We protect the beauty of the Colorado River watershed, Hill Country and Blackland Prairie and value our farmland, critical to local food production.
- Our open spaces and preserves shape city planning, reduce infrastructure costs, and provide us with recreation, clean air and water, local food, cooler temperatures, and biodiversity.
- We conserve water, energy, soil, and other valuable resources.
- Austin is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We use and inspire new technologies that create more sustainable communities while reducing our dependence on environmentally costly practices.

AUSTIN IS CREATIVE:



Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

- As a community that continues to stimulate innovation, Austin is a magnet that draws and retains talented and creative individuals.
- Our creative efforts reflect, engage with and appeal to the ethnic, gender and age diversity of Austin and to all socioeconomic levels.
- Residents and visitors participate fully in arts and cultural activities because the opportunities are valued, visible, and accessible.
- Our buildings and places reflect the inspirational and creative spirit of who we are as Austinites, through design excellence, public art and beautiful, accessible public spaces.

CREATIVE

EDUCATED



AUSTIN IS EDUCATED:

Education is the hope for Austin's future. Austin provides everyone with an equal opportunity for the highest quality of education that allows them to fully develop their potential. Networks of community partnerships support our schools and ensure that our children receive the resources and services they need to thrive and learn.

- Our school campuses provide safe and stable environments enabling future success.
- Neighborhood schools and libraries serve as centers for community collaboration, recreational, and social events, as well as educational and learning opportunities.
- In partnership with private entities and the broader community, institutions of higher education continue to be incubators for innovation in the cultural arts, medicine, industry, business, and technology.
- Every child in Austin has the chance to engage with other cultures, communities, and languages, providing pathways for healthy development, and the critical thinking skills students need as future citizens of Austin and the world.



AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED:

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

- Interconnected development patterns support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.
- Our integrated transportation system is well-maintained, minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, and remains affordable for all users.
- Austin promotes safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin area. These routes are part of our comprehensive regional transportation network.

MOBILE



AUSTIN IS PROSPEROUS:

Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole – including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions. Development carefully balances the needs of differing land uses with improved transportation to ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable.

- Our economy is resilient and responsive to global trends thanks to its diverse and thriving mix of local entrepreneurs, large and small businesses, educational institutions, government, and industry.
- Innovation and creativity are the engines of Austin's economy in the arts, research and development, and technology.
- Our ecology is integrated with our economy-the preservation of the environment and natural resources contribute to our prosperity.
- Equitable opportunities are accessible to all through quality education, training, and good jobs.

AUSTIN VALUES AND RESPECTS ITS PEOPLE:

Austin is its people. Our city is home to engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential.



- Austin government is transparent and accountable.
- People across all parts of the city and of all ages and income levels live in safe, stable neighborhoods with a variety of affordable and accessible homes with access to healthy food, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, and transportation.
- We stand together for equal rights for all persons, especially acknowledging those who have been denied full participation in the opportunities offered by our community in the past.
- The history of the people of the Austin area is preserved and protected for future generations.

Each level of our complete communities . . . will be livable, safe, and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; ensure that amenities and services are easily accessible to all; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.

WE WILL BECOME A CITY OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

To successfully realize Imagine Austin, all of our residents must benefit from its outcomes. To help fulfill the vision statement, the comprehensive plan points us toward becoming a city of complete communities throughout Austin. Such communities are defined by amenities, transportation, services, and opportunities that fulfill all Austinites' material, social, and economic needs. They achieve these outcomes while protecting our important environmental resources and preserving our identity, culture, and sense of place. A complete community provides access to employment, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services. Establishing complete communities will require monitoring different services at different scales. Some needs, like parks and healthy food, should be within or near every neighborhood. Others, like hospitals, will draw from many neighborhoods.

These communities will be for Austinites of all ages. They will provide environments that support children at every stage of their development, young adults beginning their professional lives and families, and seniors aging gracefully in the neighborhoods where they raised their families. These places will be safe and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; make amenities and services easily accessible to everybody; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.

LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity and Affordability
- Access to Community Amenities
- Quality Design / Distinctive Character
- Preservation of Crucial Resources

MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

- Range of Transportation Options
- Multimodal Connectivity
- Accessible Community Centers

VALUES AND RESPECTS PEOPLE

- Access to Community Services
- Employment, Food, and Housing Options
- Community/Civic Engagement
- Responsive/Accountable Government

PROSPEROUS

- Diverse Business Opportunities
- Technological Innovation
- Education/Skills Development

EDUCATED

- Learning Opportunities for All Ages
- Community Partnerships with Schools
- Relationships with Higher Learning

CREATIVE

- Vibrant Cultural Events/Programs
- Support for Arts/Cultural Activities

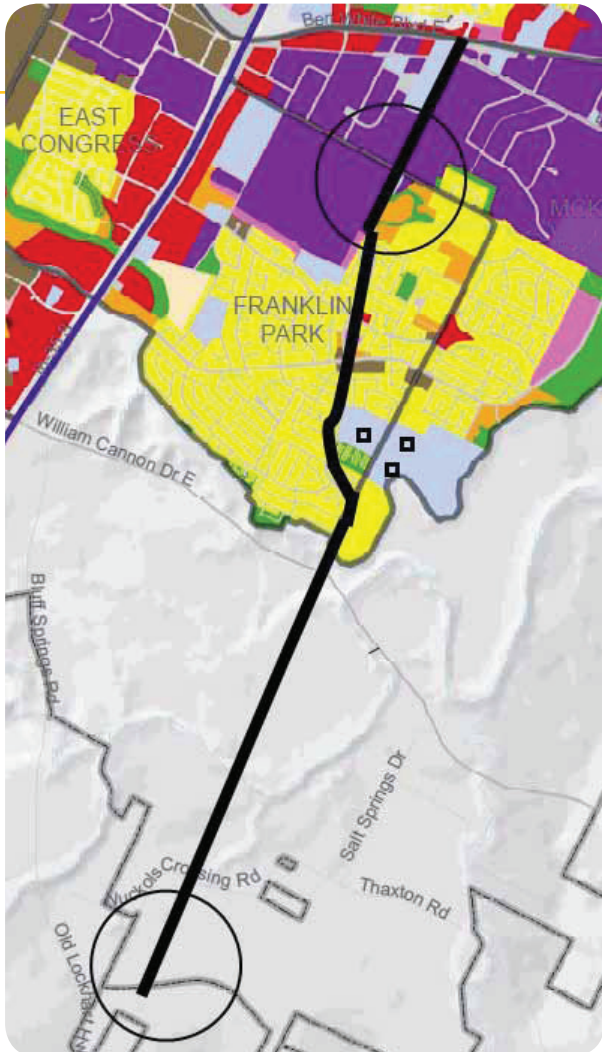
NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE

- Sustainable, Compact, and Walkable Development
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

COMPLETING COMMUNITIES IN PRACTICE

Dove Springs

Imagine a large neighborhood of approximately 50,000 people. Once full of middle-class families, it is now troubled by poverty, school overcrowding and violence, isolation from the rest of the city, crime, lack of access to health care services, and the highest rate of childhood obesity in the city. Despite this, residents are devoted to the neighborhood where they raise their families, with its affordable homes, proximity to jobs, schools, recreation center, and library. Schools and community-based organizations have mobilized to support residents' expressed needs and interests. By fulfilling these identified needs, the community is moving closer to completion.



The Imagine Austin Growth Concept Map and Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan Work together to guide how and where development should occur. New neighborhood centers are identified by Imagine Austin at the north and south ends of the neighborhood. Through a plan amendment or plan update, initial parcels for these centers will need to be identified on the Future Land Use Map of the neighborhood plan.

Not every new or needed service can be located at these centers. Updates to the neighborhood plan should also identify other opportunity sites, as well as infrastructure needs to support them.

A Community Speaks

On December 15, 2011, Dove Springs residents assembled to identify what their community needed to turn around and become successful. Six priorities emerged:

1) Address Safety Issues: In the following order:

- a) Violence
- b) Theft
- c) Gang Activity
- d) Vandalism
- e) Speeding
- f) Code Enforcement

2) A comprehensive health facility, centrally located within the neighborhood.

3) In order of priority, build the following schools: a high school, another middle school, another elementary school and a community college in the community.

4) Additional retail and community services

5) Another library and recreation center

6) Improved public transportation service