

IMAGINE AUSTIN PROVISIONS ADDRESSING FOOD & AGRICULTURE

CHAPTER 3

VISION STATEMENT

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.

- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and affordable healthcare.

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.

- 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.

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.

- 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.

CHAPTER 4

Building Block Policies

LUT P5. Create healthy and family-friendly communities through development that includes a mix of land uses and housing types, affords realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel, and provides both community gathering spaces, neighborhood gardens and family farms, parks and safe outdoor play areas for children.

LUT P23. Integrate citywide and regional green infrastructure to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands, and the trail system into the urban environment and the transportation network.

LUT P29. Develop accessible community gathering places such as plazas, parks, farmers' markets, sidewalks, and streets in all parts of Austin, especially within activity centers and along activity corridors including Downtown, future TODs, in denser, mixed use communities, and other redevelopment areas, that encourage interaction and provide places for people of all ages to visit and relax.

LUT P34. Integrate green infrastructure elements such as the urban forest, gardens, green buildings, stormwater treatment and infiltration facilities, and green streets into the urban design of the city through "green" development practices and regulations.

HN P10. Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to healthy food, schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options.

E P18. Develop a sustainable local food system by encouraging all sectors of the local food economy, including production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste recovery.

CE P1. Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.

CE P3. Expand the city's green infrastructure network to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and agricultural lands.

CE P5. Expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream and water quality protection, and wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture.

CE P13. Incent, develop, and expand the market for local and sustainable food, which includes such activities as farming, ranching, and food processing.

CFS P47. Extend existing trail and greenway projects to create an interconnected green infrastructure network that include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands that link all parts of Austin and connect Austin to nearby cities.

S P6. Promote the availability of and educate the community about healthy food choices, including "slow food" (local food traditions, small-scale food processing, and organic agriculture) and nutritional education programs.

S P7. Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 5

Implementation Actions

LUT A11 Develop land use and transportation policies and regulations that promote the development of projects that promote more active and healthy lifestyles such as community gardens, tree-shaded sidewalks and trails, bicycle parking, showers within office buildings, and having daily needs within proximity to home and work.

LUT A36 Incentivize appropriately-scaled and located green infrastructure and public spaces, such as parks, plazas, greenways, trails, urban agriculture and/or open space in new development and redevelopment projects.

HN A24 Establish a regulatory environment that creates communities across Austin that:

- support walking, bicycling, and transit
- live/work spaces
- are in proximity to daily needs
- include a variety of employment opportunities
- provide a range of housing (duplexes, townhouses, row houses, small-scale apartments, etc.) integrating market-rate and affordable housing for people of all ages, abilities, and means
- utilize sustainable building practices
- are stable with low crime and safe buildings
- provides a range of facilities and services such as schools, parks, community gardens, and other public gathering spaces

CE A11 Develop regulations and incentives to protect prime farmland such as transferable development rights, farmland trusts, farmland mitigation, and conservation easements.

CE A12 Support local farmers by creating incentives and removing regulatory barriers, offering tailored small business support, and creating public information campaigns to promote local food.

CE A13 Expand existing and facilitate the establishment of new distribution avenues for local farm products.

CE A14 Identify and map food deserts and provide incentives for full service grocery stores and farmers markets to locate in these underserved areas.

CE A15 Expand the City of Austin's acquisition of environmentally significant land, conservation easements, and/or development rights for the protection of sensitive areas, including:

- floodplains
- riparian areas
- wetlands
- prairies
- land that supports recharge of the Edwards Aquifer
- wildlife habitat and corridors
- bottomland forests and priority woodlands
- critical environmental features

- agricultural land

CFS A35 Create a green infrastructure plan for public land or in public rights-of-way to preserve Austin's ecosystem, improve the water cycle, reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, enrich public space, and provide for traffic calming. Examples include open space, trails, wetlands, community gardens green streets, infiltration facilities, and the urban forest.

CFS A38 Develop incentives and coordinate regulations to promote innovative water and greywater re-use options for building and site design, landscape maintenance, and agricultural irrigation.

S A9 Make healthy and local foods accessible, particularly in underserved areas by removing barriers and providing incentives for the establishment of sustainable community gardens, urban farms, neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and farm stands and mobile vegetable sales carts.

S A10 Facilitate a strong and sustainable local food system by linking farmers, distributors, and markets and create programs and partnerships to ensure profitable local food enterprises throughout all five food sectors—production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste recovery.

S A11 Develop partnerships with public and private stakeholders to promote awareness and educate residents about healthy food choices, sources, and preparation, including keeping up-to-date and accessible data on community garden plot availability, cooking classes, and city and county property for neighborhood gardens and family farms, and the sale of sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile vegetable carts, and at neighborhood grocery stores.

S A12 Reduce obesity and other diet-related diseases by establishing local fresh food initiatives in institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, city and county departments and facilities and by implementing and encouraging purchasing policies that support local and sustainable foods.

S A13 Remove regulatory barriers and provide incentives to improve and rebuild local food production, processing and distribution systems appropriate to the local context.

S A50 Develop educational and public information programs focusing on promoting nutrition, healthy food, and local food sources.

S A51 Work with local school districts to use locally-grown produce and increase the quality and nutritional value of food served to school aged young people.

7. Create a “Healthy Austin” program.

Making healthy choices should be affordable and easier than making unhealthy ones. A “Healthy Austin” program will reduce chronic and diet-related diseases and risk factors by coordinating access to community and health services, local and healthy food, physical activity, and tobacco-free living. It will also support a “healthy community code” that promotes active living, access to healthy food, and prevention of chronic and diet-related diseases in all aspects of community life.

This program will look beyond nutrition to help develop a strong local food system in which food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of Austin and Central Texas.

The chronic diseases associated with the risk factors of tobacco use, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity (including some cancers, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and asthma) are the underlying causes of most deaths in Travis County. Though these diseases affect everyone in the region, they take a heavier toll on poorer and minority communities. These preventable diseases increase healthcare costs, lower worker productivity, contribute to family stress, and diminish quality of life. In order for the city to be healthy, environmental and lifestyle factors that contribute to serious diseases need to be addressed.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Create a Healthy Austin Program plan to develop and document program priorities, findings, recommendations, and outcomes related to:
 - a. Increasing healthy behaviors;
 - b. Educating the public and providing better access to information on healthy lifestyles and community health resources;
 - c. Expanding access to health care services in underserved populations;
 - d. Promoting healthy foods and discouraging unhealthy ones; and
 - e. Improving coordination between the Health and Human Services Department, other City of Austin and Travis County departments, non-profits, and the community.
2. Enact strategies and policies to boost the impact of federal food and nutrition assistance programs.
3. Create a healthy community code, including revisions to Austin’s land development ordinances that make it easier to produce and access healthy, sustainable food and to lead a more active lifestyle.
 - a. Support and expand farm direct programs (such as farm-to-work and farm-to-school) that link local farmers and food vendors to consumers; and

LEAD
Health and Human Services Department
PARTNERS
Planning and Development Review Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Neighborhood Housing and Community Development; Office of Sustainability, Transportation Department; Health, Sustainable Food, and Social Service Organizations; School Districts.
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable Values and Respects its People Mobile and Interconnected
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P5, P7, P10, P13-P15, P29, P32, P33, P36; HN P3, P4, P13; CE P3, P8, P13; CFS P37, P40-P48; S P1-P3, P6, P7, P9-P13, P20, P21, P23, P25, P28; C P10.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A1, A3, A5, A8, A11, A12, A14, A17-A19, A21-A23, A27, A32, A36, A40; HN A23, A24; E A21; CE A10, A12-A14; CFS A2-A9, A12; CFS A23, A35; S A1, A3-A13, A19, A34, A50-A55; C A17.

GOALS
Improve Public Health.
METRICS
Rates of disease, obesity, tobacco use by ethnicity and income
GOALS
Improve opportunities for active lifestyles.
METRICS
Miles of walking / biking trails
GOALS
Improve nutrition and food access.
METRICS
Units within 1/4 and 1/2 mile of a grocery store or farm to consumer location Enrollment numbers in, and/or dollars from, federal food and nutrition assistance programs.
GOALS
Strengthen local food system.
METRICS
Number of farmers markets/stands, healthy food carts Number and acreage of community gardens, plots, and local farms
GOALS
Improve access to healthcare.
METRICS
Percent of residents with access to health care coverage Percent of residents not able to see a doctor in the past year due to cost

b. Expand the market for local food producers by connecting them to hunger-relief organizations, community institutions, restaurants, and retail food markets.

4. Increase the number of tobacco-free environments including outdoor areas, worksites, schools, and multi-unit housing to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.
5. Encourage use of public land for community gardens.
6. Encourage successful formation and patronage of healthy-food retail establishments, such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture, corner and neighborhood stores, and supermarkets, throughout the city—with emphasis placed on underserved areas.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

7. Implement joint use agreements for public facilities to be used by residents for recreation and physical activity.
8. Expand urban farms and community gardens.
9. Promote community connectivity through complete streets design for new developments and integrate into redesign plans for existing developments.
10. Increase the safety and amenities of parks, trails, playgrounds, bike paths, and recreation centers.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ACTION PROGRAMS:

- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Investing in accessible walking and biking networks and open space will provide residents increased opportunities for outdoor exercise as part of their daily routines.
- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. The revised code will include standards and guidelines to make walking and biking safer and more attractive for residents. Through improved land use, transportation, and urban design, Austin's places can contribute to healthy lifestyles by encouraging walkable communities, parks and open space, and recreation.
- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas, integrate nature into the city, and include opportunities for community gardens and urban farms.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Healthy Austin Code
- African American Quality of Life Study
- Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Pedestrian Master Plan