

Item 109
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Zoning Case Request Compliance with IACP

C14-2013-0031 & C14-2013-0032

Late Backup

The South Lamar Neighborhood Associations supports IACP because:

A comprehensive plan confronts big issues in a big picture way. Only a comprehensive plan fully considers how the whole community's values, needs, people, and places are interrelated and interdependent.

"Sustainability" has been established as the central policy direction of IACP by City Council.

The concept of Complete Communities that are Livable, Mobile and Interconnected, Value and Respect People, are Prosperous, Educated, Creative and Natural and Sustainable.

A Growth Concept Map that focuses most new development in Activity Corridors and Centers and includes the definition of "Other Development Within the City Limits".

The concept of Complete Streets designed to work well for cars, but also to provide safe paths for the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit vehicles and riders of all ages and abilities.

The use of the IACP Appendix E Checklist as a framework for making clear and objective decisions when zoning case recommendations, and other City of Austin decisions, are made.

IACP Implementation Questions and Concerns:

According to staff, the elements that create a complete community are the daily conveniences that cities throughout time have always provided citizens. In the broadest terms the concept speaks to creating communities across Austin that have access to employment, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services within a short trip.

- Where is the concurrent core value of sustaining and improving the quality of life within the neighborhoods/communities from which all these short trips will originate?

Complete Communities do not have pre-determined boundaries because of the different scales and service areas of the various elements that create Complete Communities.

- The scales and service areas of the various elements that create Complete Communities are geographic, and many of the goals of IACP have a geographic component. How can the geographic scale and service areas of services and amenities prevent us from having geographic boundaries for Complete Communities?

Neighborhood elements like sidewalks, drainage, water, wastewater, roads, sidewalks, etc. are handled at the Site Plan stage of the development process.

- IACP Policy HN P12 states that the City will identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability. The site plan process focuses on specific sites and does not address the infrastructure issues of older neighborhoods in a comprehensive manner. This is not the big picture analysis of a comprehensive plan.

The Complete Streets concept refers to the design of the public right-of-way to provide safe paths for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit vehicles and riders of all ages and abilities. A more complete study of Clawson Rd., Lightsey Rd., and Del Curto would be needed to assess the issues and expenses associated with completing these streets.

- An assessment of the streets in older neighborhoods should be an integral component of the Imagine Austin implementation process. The process could identify Complete Streets or streets that can become complete, and, therefore support new development and promote pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel to services and amenities?

IACP does not attempt to project the amount of growth that might be achieved in the identified corridor and activity centers, but PDRD staff is developing a process to measure the amount of growth that is occurring in the City and ETJ. This information will be utilized for the IACP five-year update to evaluate the degree to which the plan has been implemented.

- IACP does not project the amount of growth that will occur in the identified corridor and activity center. If that is the case, how will a measurement of the development that has taken place enable us to evaluate the degree to which the plan has been implanted?

Comprehensive Planning basis for Zoning Case Compliance with IACP

Do these zoning requests comply with the goals of IACP?

The Comprehensive Planning section review comments state that based on the surrounding uses, the Growth Concept Map, and Imagine Austin policies LUT P5, H P1, H P5, HN P11 and N P1, staff believes that the proposed residential use is in compliance with IACP.

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 community gathering spaces, neighborhood gardens and family farms, parks and safe outdoor play areas for children.

- The project will not afford realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel because Clawson Rd. is the exact opposite of a Complete Street, and staff has provided no specific numbers on the mix of land uses and housing types in our community.

H P1. Distribute a variety of housing types throughout the City to expand the choices able to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of Austin's diverse population.

- The stated price range for these units is from 350K to 400K. High price housing units are well distributed in our community already, and many more units with similar price ranges are in the development process.

H P5. Promote a diversity of land uses throughout Austin to allow a variety of housing types including rental and ownership opportunities for singles, families with and without children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and multi-generational families.

- The proposed unit pricing will eliminate any ownership and rental opportunities in this project for many Austin families. Staff has provided no data on the diversity of housing types throughout our community or Austin.

HN P11. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to "areas of change" and ensuring context sensitive infill in such locations as designated redevelopment areas, corridors and infill sites.

- What is an "area of change"? We asked staff if there is an IACP definition or to provide us with the properties/characteristics that would identify such an area, but did not get a response. Is an "area of change" the same as the Growth Concept Map definition of "Other Development within the City Limits?"

N P1. Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options.

- The project is not building affordable housing and does not provide any realistic transportation options for access to schools, retail, employment, community services or park and recreation options. The overwhelming majority of trips from this project to services and amenities will be by automobile trips.

IACP Appendix E Checklist, Framework for Decision Making:

As potential Capital Improvements Projects, budget priorities, bond packages, programs, regulatory changes, initiatives, plans and **even zoning cases** are considered, it is important for the City of Austin to have a clear and objective framework for making decisions.

We asked the Comprehensive Planning staff if they had utilized the Appendix E Checklist to review the zoning cases. The answer was no, but the review was based on conformance with the Growth Concept Map, the maps associated text, and Chapter 4 policies which correlate to Appendix E.

After reviewing Appendix E, staff stated that the zoning case requests complied with 1 of 31 criteria in Appendix E.

According to staff, the proposal results in compact and walkable spaces, use of public transit, infill development or reuse of previously developed sites.

- As stated before this project does not result in compact and walkable spaces or realistic use of public transit.
- The only compliance with the Appendix E Checklist criteria is that the project is infill and is reusing a previously developed site.

Is that sufficient to state that the project is in compliance with IACP?

Growth Concept Map, definition of Other Development Within the City Limits:

The staff response to our follow-up questions was to state that the project was found by staff to be contextually appropriate for an infill project not located in a designated activity corridor or center and therefore in conformance with Imagine Austin. IACP contains descriptive text of the plan Growth Concept Map which applies the vision statement to the city's physical development pattern and defines how to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years. On page 107, the plan states:

- “While most new development will be absorbed by centers and corridors, development will happen in other areas within the city limits to serve neighborhood needs and create complete communities. Infill development can occur as redevelopment of obsolete office, retail, or residential sites or as new development on vacant land within largely developed areas. New commercial, office, larger apartments, and institutional uses such as schools and churches, may also be located outside of centers and corridors. *“The design of new development should be sensitive to and complement its context.”*

The staff citation to page 107 of IACP is the Growth Concept Map definition of “Other Development within the City Limits” but is not the complete definition.

- *“The design of new development should be sensitive to and complement its context. It should also be connected by sidewalks, bicycle lanes and transit to the surrounding area and the rest of the City.”* Not all land within the City Limits will be developed. Some may remain or enter into agricultural production, continue as single-family houses, duplexes, and apartments; or become part of the planned open space network. The Growth Concept Map not only guides where Austin may accommodate new residents and jobs but also reflects the community intent to direct growth away from environmentally sensitive areas, and to protect the character of neighborhoods by directing growth to areas identified by small area plans.