



DOWNTOWN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20131120-010

Date: November 20, 2013

Subject: Report from the Downtown Alleys Working Group

Motioned By: Commissioner Mandy Dealey

Seconded By: Commissioner Martin Barrera

Recommendation

Encourage Council support of the policy recommendations as written in the report.

Description of Recommendation to Council

Policy recommendations in the report are:

- Amend the Downtown Austin Plan to add the following policy goal: With support of the surrounding businesses, establish a program for renovating and enhancing downtown alleys to serve as lively pedestrian walkways, new spaces for artists and small businesses, and vibrant gathering spaces.
- As part of the Downtown Alley Master Plan under development, adopt and implement a comprehensive ten-year strategy to revitalize five to ten of Austin's downtown alleys as vibrant, activated public spaces.
- Through the Public Works Department and in collaboration with downtown stakeholders, develop a template for design standards to facilitate the installation of physical improvements in alleys across downtown to enhance safety and create more pedestrian oriented experiences, such as better lighting, special paving, and seating.
- In partnership with the surrounding businesses, the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association, and other stakeholders, select one to two alleys as "catalyst" projects for permanent activation in the next two years.
- While preserving the role of alleys for trash pick-up, create a program to remove and consolidate trash dumpsters located in alleys downtown and, over time, to change the appearance of the remaining dumpsters to make them more attractive.
- Ensure that the unique historical features and facades of alleys are incorporated into the City's historic preservation programs for downtown.
- Adopt a process for naming Austin's downtown alleys and creating street signs at the entrances of the alleys.
- For new development, adopt design standards or guidelines for new development along alleys.
- Include funding in the next transportation bond initiative for improvements to alleys and the creation and implementation of the downtown alley master.
- Develop a plan for how city staff could support temporary and permanent alley activation projects.
- Evaluate the new changes to the City's special events permit process to ensure that they facilitate the ability of organizations to host special alley activation events.

- Create an alley event handbook to highlight how to navigate the city permitting process and put on an alley activation event.

Rationale:

The policies and practices will support the activation of Austin's downtown alleys.

Vote: 11-0

For: Martin Barrera, Mandy Dealey, Jude Galligan, Dale Glover, Joel Sher, Myron Smith, Lindsey Sokol, Owen Snell, Bart Whatley, Heather Way, Bruce Willenzik

Against: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Dan Leary, Rich MacKinnon, Sunshine Mathon

Attest: Michael Knox

Michael R. Knox
