

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW REPORT

Amendment: CPA-2014-0008 (Colony Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines)

Description: Consider an ordinance amending the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan by the adoption of the Colony Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines as a component of the comprehensive plan.

Proposed Amendment: The proposed amendment will:

- Attach the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan
- Add the area covered by the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines and adjacent parkland to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan's Growth Concept Map as a Neighborhood Center
- Add "Colony Park" to the list of Growth Concept Map Centers Key and to the reference map in Appendix D: Centers and Corridors
- Add the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines to Appendix G: Attached Plans.

Summary Background: In 2012 the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department was awarded a \$3 million Community Challenge Grant to fund the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative. The subsequent public planning process captured the community's desire for a walkable, mixed-use community. These ideas, as developed through the planning process, provide the basis for the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines. With a strong focus on sustainability, the plan and design guidelines embody the goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. The new neighborhood envisioned through the planning process, upon build-out, will create a complete and sustainable community. Participants in the process see this plan as a positive catalyst for change in northeastern Austin and eastern Travis County. .

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends the proposed amendment to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

Board and Commission Actions:

September 3, 2014—The Environmental Board approved the environmental superiority of the Colony Park PUD

September 16, 2014—The Zoning and Platting Commission approved the superiority of the PUD

September 18, 2014—Planning Commission Neighborhood Sub-Committee Meeting gave their approval of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines

October 28, 2014—Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the City Council to amend the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Colony Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines

Previous Council Actions:

August 25, 2011—City Council passed a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for a \$3,000,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Challenge Planning Grant

December 15, 2011—City Council passed an ordinance authorizing acceptance of a \$3,000,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Challenge Planning Grant.

June 26, 2014—City Council presentation and discussion of development assessment of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Planned Unit Development

August 7, 2014—Council adopted a resolution directing the inclusion of “neighboring connectivity, public amenity maintenance and governance, and financing options within and adjacent to the 208 acre Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative PUD in the scope of the Colony Park planning effort”

September 25, 2014—Council received a briefing on the Colony Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines

September 25, 2014—Council approved the Colony Park Planned Unit Development on the 1st reading. Vote: 7-0 (Riley- 1st, Cole- 2nd)

November 20, 2014— Council approved the Colony Park Planned Unit Development on the 2nd reading: Vote: 7-0 (Cole- 1st, Spelman- 2nd)

Additional Background Information:

The creation of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines was informed by an existing conditions report and market assessment and analysis. The master plan and guidelines recommends a mix of residential housing types, mixed-use commercial locations, institutional/office uses, community solar power, gardens, new streets, and a transportation network that promotes walking and bicycling. The plan identifies five future centers connected by paved and unpaved bicycle and pedestrian connections that also connect to schools, natural areas, and multiple urban parks.

Community Challenge Planning Grant program

Beginning in 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) partnered to develop the Community Challenge Planning Grant program. According to HUD, the grant program “. . . fosters reform and reduces barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities.” In 2012, the City of Austin was awarded a three-year, \$3 million Community Challenge Grant for the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative.

Study Area

The study area for the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative is a five-census tract study area bounded by US Highway 183 to the west, US Highway 290 to the north, SH 130 to the east, and FM 959 to the south. In the middle of the study and the focus of the initiative are 208 acres of publically-owned, undeveloped land and 93 acres of parkland that is generally located between Johnny Morris Road, Decker Lane, and Loyola Lane.

Project Principles

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative addresses sustainability through a number of different lenses. In 2009, HUD issued a list of six livable principles which informed the Colony Park planning process:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods.

The Initiative's focus on sustainability placed it in strong alignment with the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. The resulting plan and design guidelines promote the comprehensive plan's concept of complete communities and support its Vision Statement principles:

- Livable
- Mobile and Interconnected
- Prosperous
- Educated
- Creative
- Natural and Sustainable
- Values and Respects Its People.

In addition to the HUD and Imagine Austin principles, the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative also employed the One Planet Living Principles created by the World Wildlife Fund and BioRegional to develop recommendations for sustainable development and living:

- Zero carbon - Making buildings more energy efficient and delivering all energy with renewable technologies
- Zero waste - Reducing waste, reusing where possible, and ultimately sending zero waste to landfill
- Sustainable transport - Encouraging low carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions, reducing the need to travel
- Sustainable materials - Using sustainable healthy products, with low embodied energy, sourced locally, made from renewable or waste resources
- Local and sustainable food - Choosing low impact, local, seasonal and organic diets and reducing food waste
- Sustainable water - Using water more efficiently in buildings and in the products we buy; tackling local flooding and water course pollution
- Land use and wildlife - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and natural habitats through appropriate land use and integration into the built environment
- Culture and community - Reviving local identity and wisdom; supporting and participating in the arts

- Equity and local economy - Creating bioregional economies that support fair employment, inclusive communities and international fair trade
- Health and happiness - Encouraging active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and well-being

(<http://www.oneplanetliving.net/what-is-one-planet-living/the-ten-principles/>)

Additionally, the project promoted strong cross-department and agency coordination to create successful models for sustainable and equitable development. This was achieved by establishing a Technical Advisory Group that consisted of 28 City departments and local agencies. Besides land use planning, the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative calls for programs to build capacity and leadership for residents within a targeted area.

Vision Statement and Goals

Vision Statement

“We seek to create a healthy, safe and active community where families and neighbors enjoy an ever-improving quality of life supported and sustained through education; cultural enrichment; job growth and business opportunities; shared prosperity; mobility choices; neighborhood amenities and recreation.”

Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines Goals

- Further land-use planning and development of 208 acres of publically-owned land at Colony Park inspired by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Livability Principles
- Foster cross-department/agency coordination and create successful models of comprehensive systems change to support sustainable and equitable development
- Support capacity building and community transformation goals of Colony Park residents and stakeholders

Plan Implementation

Concurrent with the adoption of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines, there is a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning case to implement the plan’s land use recommendations scheduled for City Council action. Additionally, the project will also deliver an implementation plan that:

- Recommends funding structures, project phasing, and a community governance structure, engineering designs for subdivision and site plan review and City of Austin approval
- Contains phase one infrastructure construction plans
- Presents architectural design guidelines for new sustainable residential and commercial development.

Public Participation

Public involvement was an essential part of creating the plan. Area residents engaged in the process through one-on-one discussions with professional staff, responded to door-to-door surveys, and attended small and large community meetings. Through their input, they expressed a preference for a walkable, mixed-use community that can also act as a

catalyst for bringing new jobs and essential services such as a grocery store and medical facilities to an underserved part of Austin and eastern Travis County.

Community Meetings

The public planning process to create the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative Master Plan and Design Guidelines involved four community-wide workshops. The plan's development culminated with a widely-attended Master Plan Open House & Community Resources Fair. Attendees commented on the master plan and received information on a number of topics such as CPR and community gardens.

DATE	WORKSHOP	PARTICIPANTS
October 19, 2013	Community Planning Workshop I: Listening Session	60
December 9, 2013	Community Planning Workshop II: Building Blocks	60
February 24, 2014	Community Planning Workshop III: Scenario Planning	70
April 14, 2014	Community Planning Workshop IV: Presentation of the Draft Master Plan	70
June 23, 2014	Master Plan Open House & Community Resources Fair	250 adults and children

Citizens Advisory Committee

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was established for the project. It is comprised of representatives from neighborhood associations, schools, and civic organizations within the Study Area. The CAC responsibilities include:

- Advise the City of Austin and design team on policy matters and community issues
- Review draft plan elements and reports
- Act as a sounding board for the City of Austin and Design Team
- Advise the City of Austin on public participation and involvement
- Promote the planning process
- An ongoing role in the master plan implementation.

Public Engagement Team

A Public Engagement Team was formed to expand community participation. It was comprised of:

- The University of Texas Division of Diversity and Community Engagement
- Representatives from the Colony Park Neighborhood Association
- City of Austin staff
- Faculty and students from the University of Texas at Austin (UT) and Austin Community College (ACC).

This working relationship between the City of Austin, UT, and ACC was formalized by Austin's City Council through the execution of an Interlocal Agreement. The team implemented the project's public participation plan through:

- Service-Learning through UT and ACC
- Public workshop publicity and support
- Colony Park Community Survey
- Block walking

- Community-wide mail outs
- Neighborhood meet and greets
- Community capacity building activities
- Community forums
- Cultural programming.

Outstanding Issues And Concerns

Although the planning process is complete and the resulting plan widely supported by the community, there are a number of outstanding issues and concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the long-term success of the project:

- Funding for the implementation of the Master Plan
- Commitment for the Community Governance Structure
- Commitment of City staff
- The type and scope of economic development incentives
- Commitment for additional bus routes from Capital Metro
- Commitment for connectivity internal to the project site and adjacent neighborhoods
- How to ensure long-term affordability as the site is developed
- Solicitation and contracting with a Master Developer.

Ordinance Number: NA

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