


Code Prescription: Household Affordability

June 21, 2016



**Developing Complete Communities
for all Austinites:**
Household Affordability Code Prescription

CODENEXT
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Affordability affects everyone directly or indirectly including seniors, those on a fixed income or in the low and middle income brackets, musicians and artists, service workers, and families with children. A revised Land Development Code can provide flexibility to build more affordable housing options and reduce regulatory barriers so more resources can go toward providing housing that is affordable to more people.

What We Will Cover

This presentation will cover:

1. Imagine Austin and affordability.
2. Existing conditions and challenges.
3. Code Prescriptions.

Imagine Austin: Household Affordability

Vision:

Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options, where all residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices.



IMAGINEAUSTON
Vibrant. Livable. Connected.

Imagine Austin: Household Affordability

Priority Program No. 6: Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.

“[A] comprehensive approach is needed to define and provide household affordability for Austinites. Such an approach must take into consideration transportation, utilities, and access to daily and weekly needs as essential and inter-related components of household affordability.”

Policy HN P1:

Distribute a variety of housing types throughout the City to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of Austin’s diverse population.

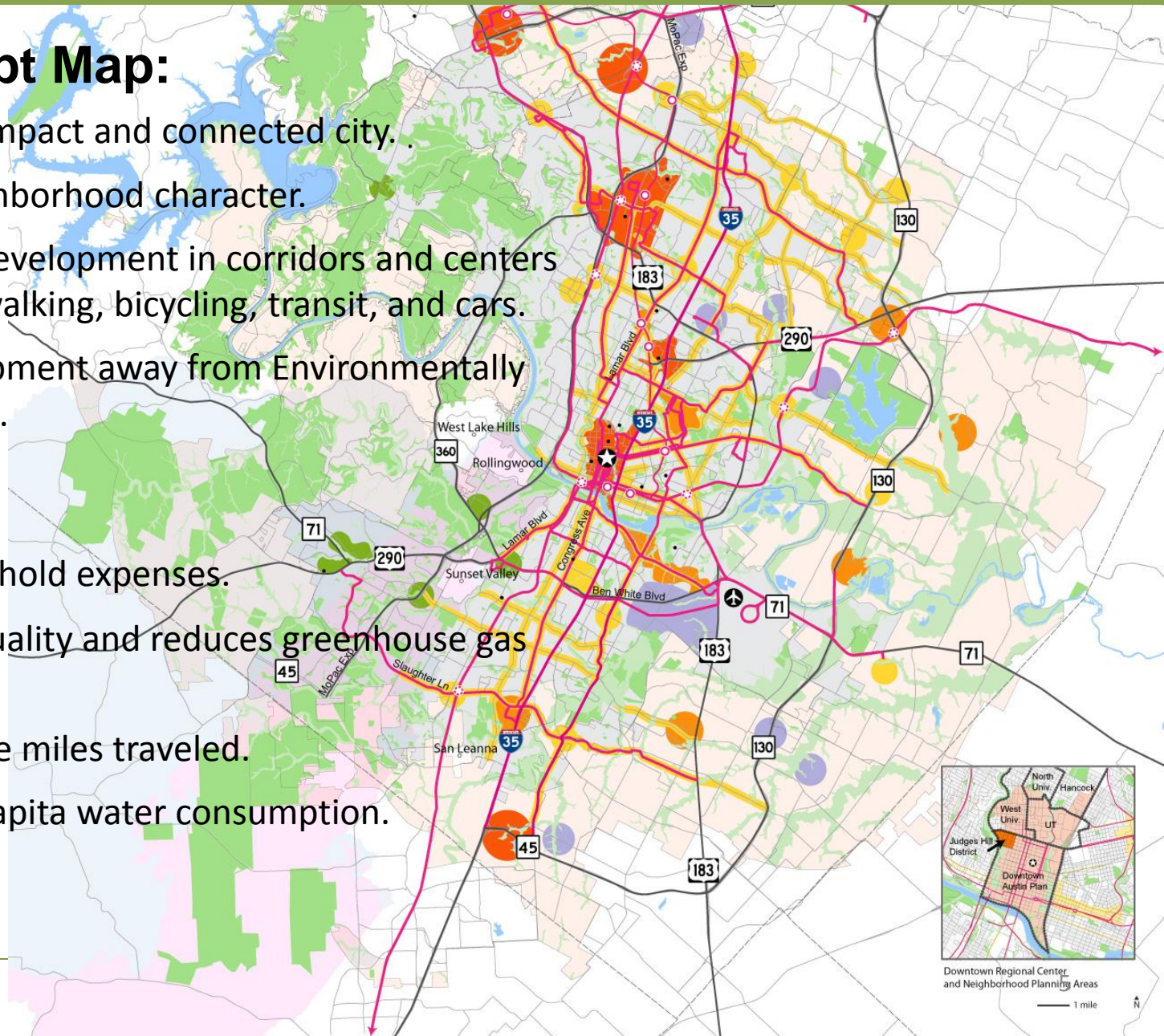
Imagine Austin: Household Affordability

Growth Concept Map:

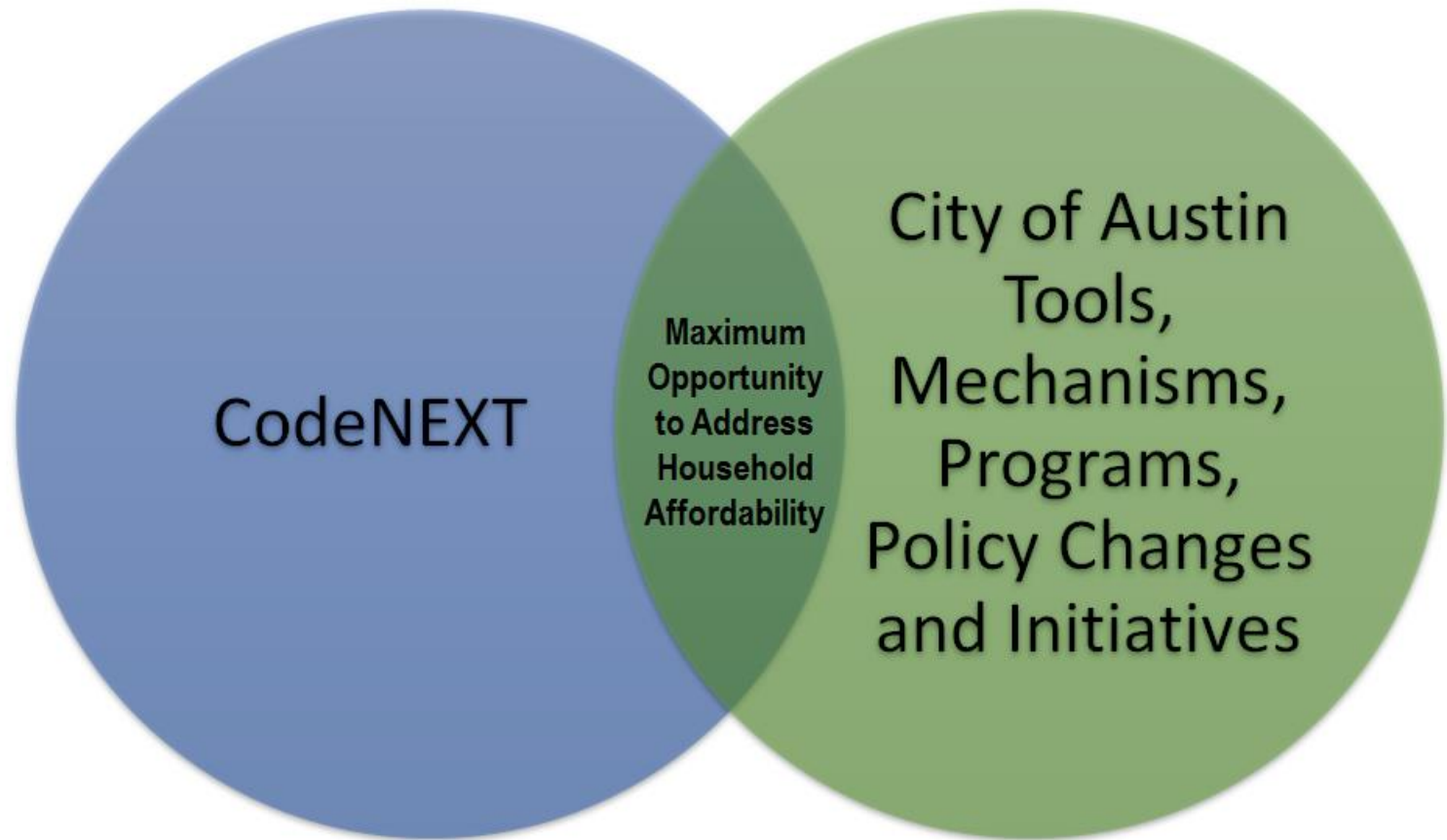
- Promotes a compact and connected city.
- Preserves neighborhood character.
- Focuses new development in corridors and centers accessible by walking, bicycling, transit, and cars.
- Directs development away from Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

As a result, it . . .

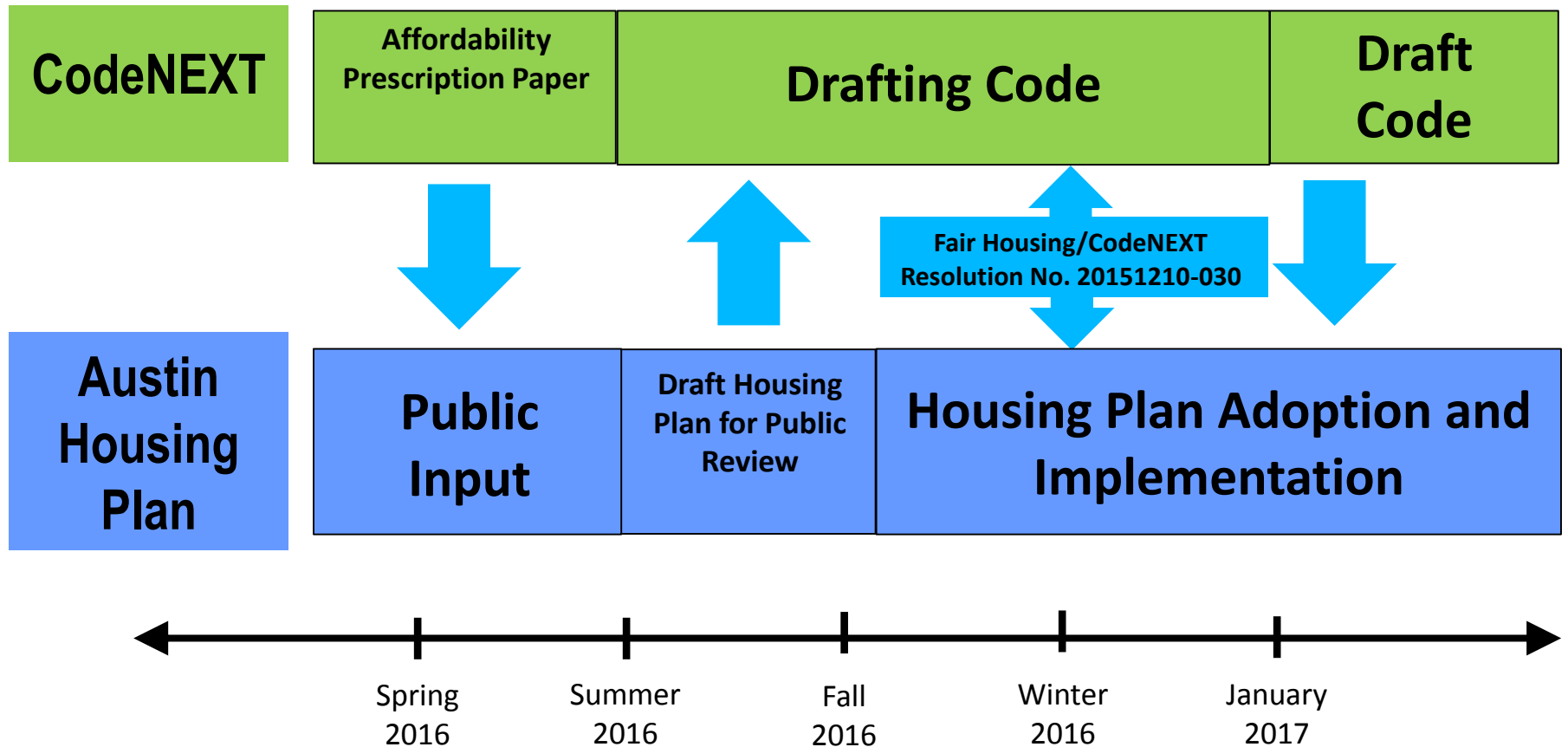
- Reduces household expenses.
- Improves air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduces vehicle miles traveled.
- Reduces per capita water consumption.



Code Prescription: Household Affordability



Relationship between the Austin Housing Plan and CodeNEXT



Code Prescription: Household Affordability

Affordable Housing:

Housing in which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30% of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities and no more than 45% of his or her income including transportation.

Definition from HUD



Income Restricted Affordable Housing

Housing for which renters or buyers must meet specific income guidelines to be able to live in the unit. This guideline is generally defined in terms of a percent of median family income, or MFI.

Market Rate Housing

Housing that is rented or owned by people who pay market rates to rent the property or paid market value when they bought the property.



Household Affordability (Priority Program #6):

Household affordability is about the costs of housing, utilities, taxes and transportation.

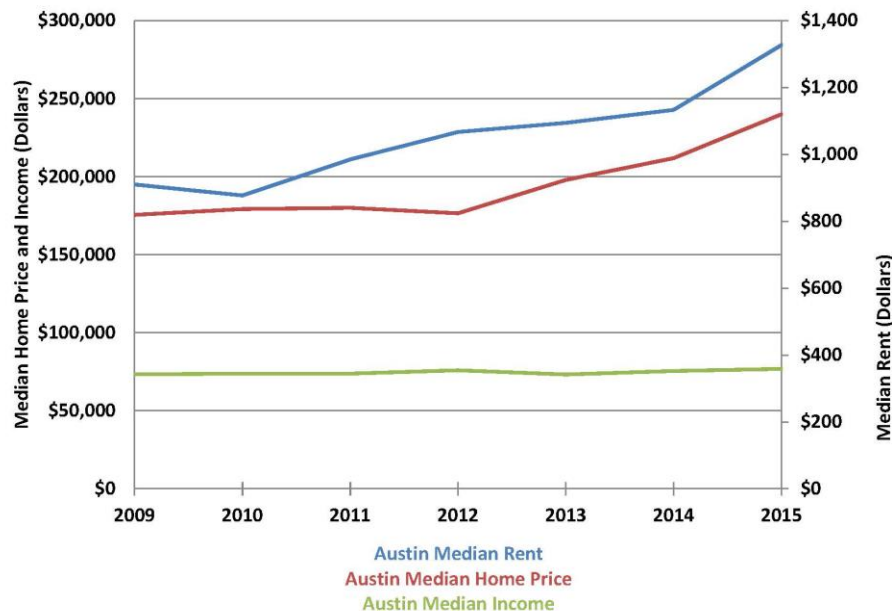
Definition from Imagine Austin

CodeNEXT Advisory Group Participation

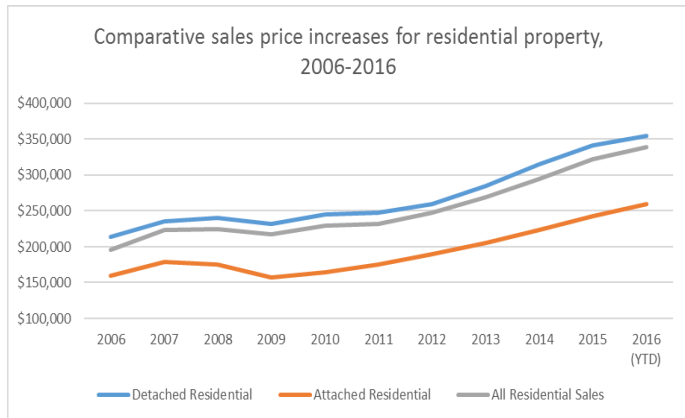
- CodeNEXT Advisory Group (CAG) formed **Household Affordability Working Group**
- Major Responsibilities:
 - Provide feedback to staff on development of the Household Affordability Prescription Paper (May 2nd)
 - Develop Community Engagement/Public Input Session (May 23rd)
 - Facilitate CAG discussion of Prescription Paper (June 20th)
- May 2, 2016 Presentations:
 - Mandy De Mayo
 - Liz Mueller
 - Terry Mitchell
 - Nuria Zaragoza

Key Community Challenges

- Changing demographics
 - socio-economic segregation
 - loss of families with children
- Large stock of “market affordable” housing
 - 21,500 Subsidized Units**
 - 65,000 Unsubsidized Units**
- Increasing housing costs (rental and ownership) with flat incomes

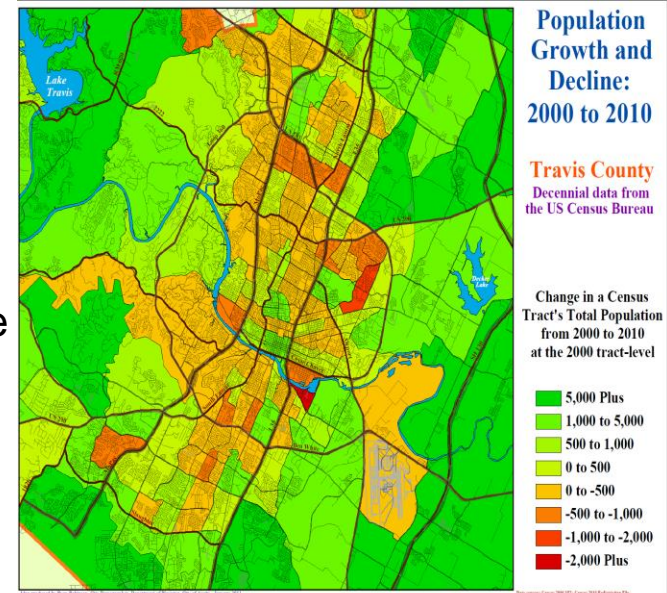


Key Community Challenge Themes



- Declining viability of affordable single family housing
- Ensuring that increased density/entitlements results in affordability
- Aligning housing and transportation
 - How do we create household affordability in auto-centric Austin?
 - As we invest in transit rich areas, how do we prevent displacement?

- Aligning jobs and affordability
 - Concentration of jobs in the urban core
 - Increased pressure on traffic and mobility
- Economic segregation perpetuated through land use
 - Ensuring access for renters and moderate income homebuyers in greenfield development
 - Preserving access of low-income renters in corridors and centers

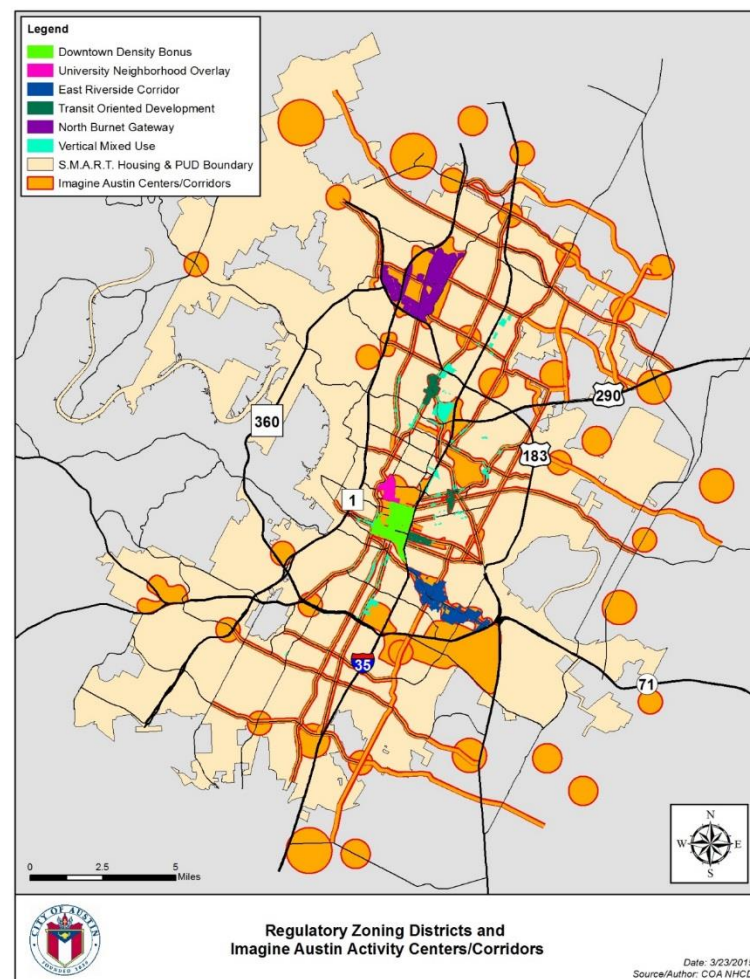


Prescriptions in general

1. Revise the Density Bonus Programs.
2. Map the form-based zones to Centers and Corridors.
3. Refine regulatory restrictions on density.
4. Align with the Fair Housing Action Plan.
5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards.
6. Reduce parking requirements in targeted areas.
7. Preserve the natural environment.
8. Improve development review process.

1. Revise the Density Bonus Programs

1. Replace inconsistent density bonus programs with a new program to promote affordable housing in Activity Centers and along Corridors while promoting fair housing.
2. Align bonus programs and formulas for calculating the number of units, accessibility requirements, affordability periods, and on-site requirements.
3. New density bonus program promotes legally-binding Missing Middle affordable units.
4. Revise density bonus programs to preserve and promote cultural venues and spaces



2. Map the form-based zones to Centers and Corridors to promote housing affordability and diversity

1. Promote diversity of housing options in form-based districts and recommend mapping those districts into *Imagine Austin* Activity Corridors and Centers as well as transition areas near Corridors and Centers.
2. Consider the local context such as the type of neighborhood and other features such as environmental and transportation.
3. Promote transportation options including transit and bicycle.
4. Allow for compatible retail and commercial uses by right including arts, culture and creative uses in areas where some form-based zones are applied.



3. Refine regulatory restrictions on density



3. Refine regulatory restrictions on density

1. Incorporate new lot size standards into each form-based district to support the various neighborhood contexts.
2. Reduce lot sizes in certain contexts to promote small and Missing Middle residential uses as well as fit within the context of the neighborhood.
3. In the form-based districts, promote appropriate density through the form standards contained within each district.

4. Pursuant to the City of Austin's Fair Housing Action Plan, the revised code will replace the opt-in/opt-out programs

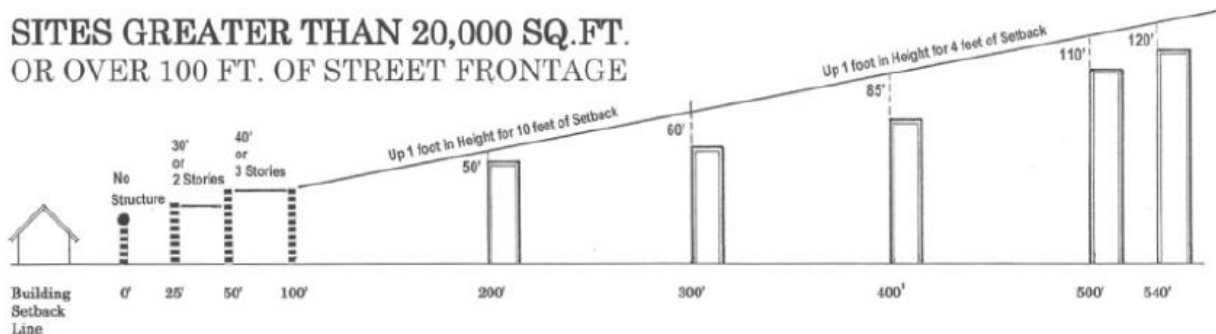
Provide a more refined set of zoning districts (form- and use-based) that replace the complicated “opt-in, opt-out” regulations and processes in order to affirmatively further fair housing choice throughout Austin.



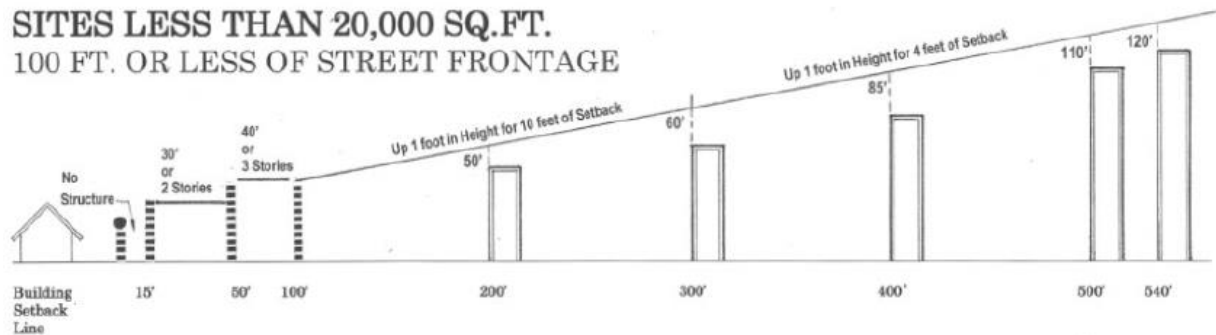
5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

COMPATIBILITY: HEIGHT + SETBACKS

**SITES GREATER THAN 20,000 SQ.FT.
OR OVER 100 FT. OF STREET FRONTAGE**



**SITES LESS THAN 20,000 SQ.FT.
100 FT. OR LESS OF STREET FRONTAGE**



Notes:

Compatibility Standards are applicable to all property adjoining or across the street from a lot zoned or used as a SF-5 or more restrictive or within 540 feet from a lot zoned SF-5 or more restrictive.

Compatibility includes:

- (1) Height (2) Setback Provisions (3) Scale & Clustering (4) Buffering (5) Recognition of passive uses within flood plain (6) Design of Signs (7) Noise of Mechanical Equipment (8) Lighting (9) Parking & Driveways.

5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

Limitations:

- Compatibility Standards are “generic,” and thus fail to take into account context-specific factors such as topography, vegetation, and building design.
- Because they are tied to use or zoning, which can change, the Standards fail to provide long-term predictability.
- Narrow, and sometimes mis-placed, reliance on two simple factors – height and building placement.
- Detrimental impact on achieving Imagine Austin’s directive to accommodate new growth along Corridors and in Centers.

5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

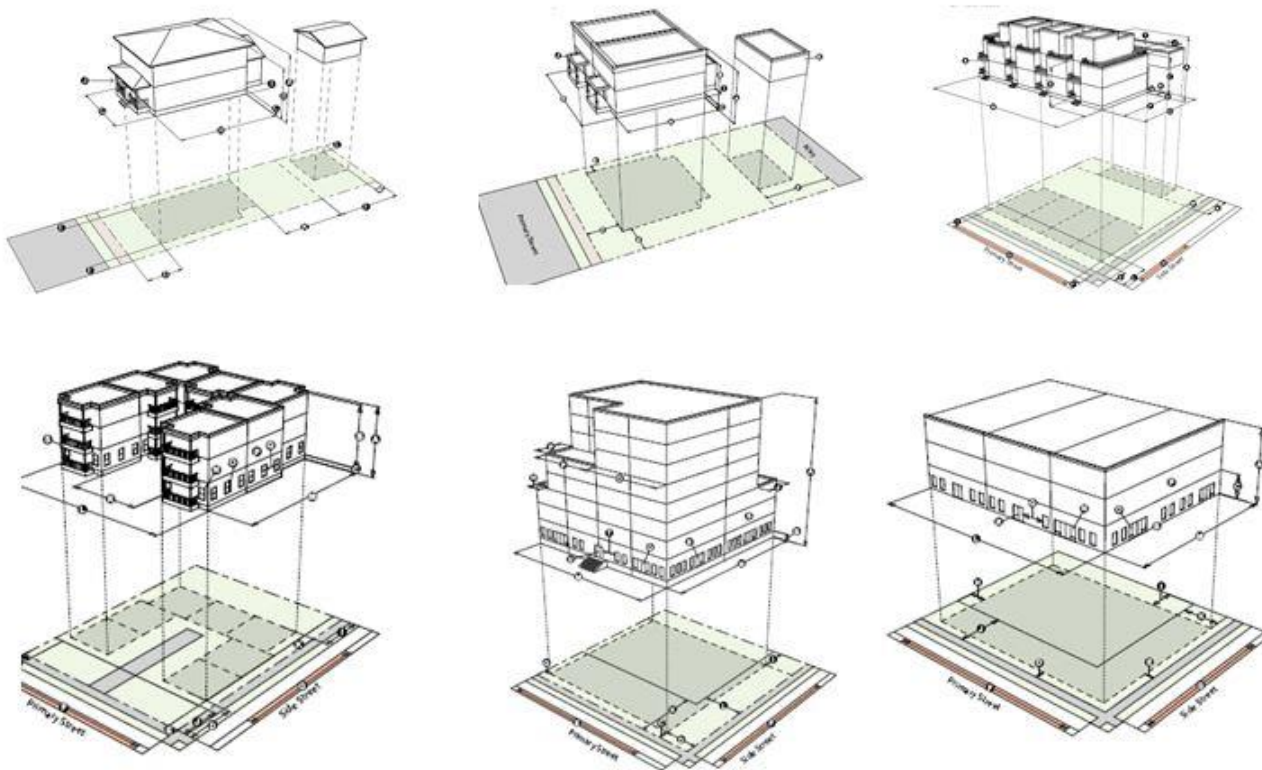
Limitations:



Burnet Road – showing influence of Compatibility Standards

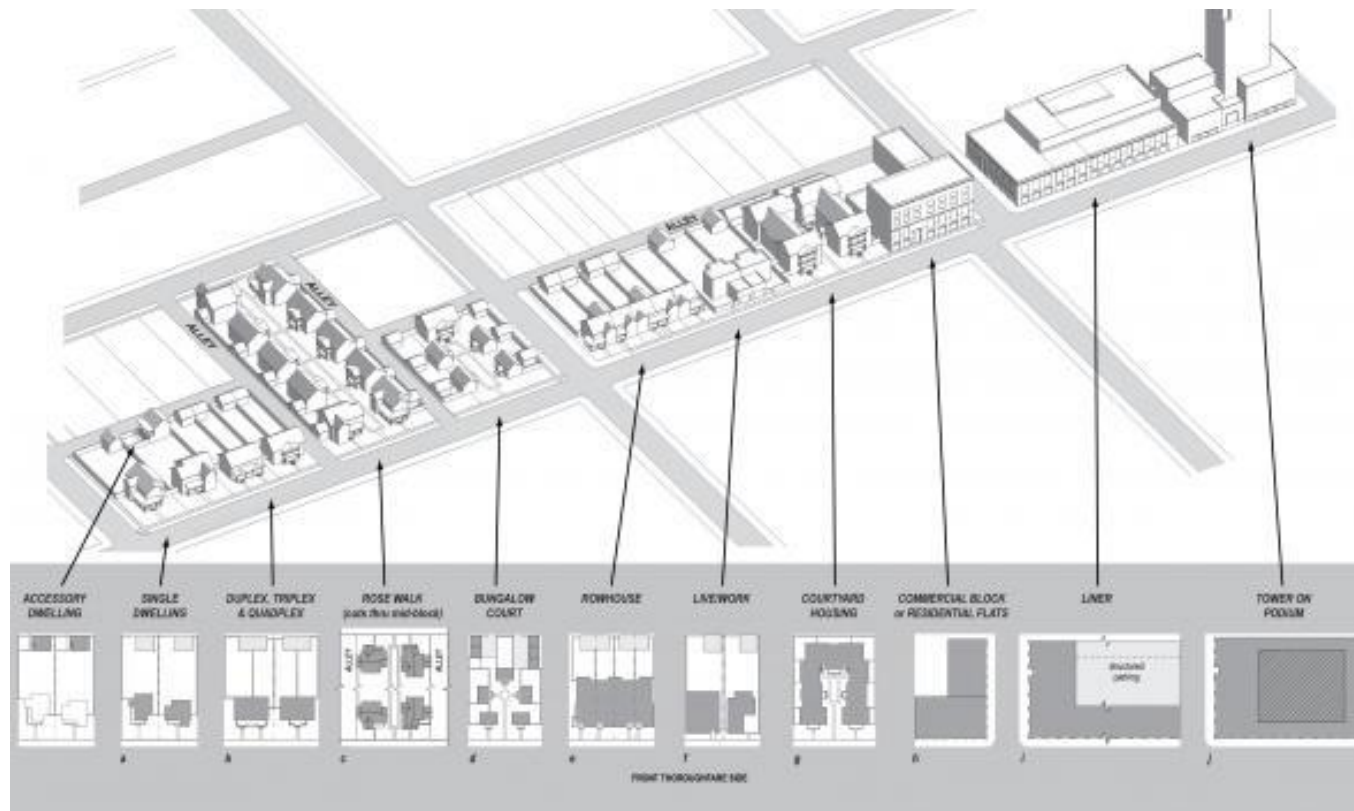
5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

1. In areas where form-based zoning districts are applied, achieve compatibility through the development standards built into the district (e.g., building height and placement, mass, parking placement) rather than generic Compatibility Standards.



5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

2. Further ensure compatibility by tying specific Building Types to specific zoning districts.



5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

3. Utilize a greater array of housing types, including “missing middle,” to promote compatibility.



5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

4. In use-based zoning districts, retain something similar to current compatibility standards.



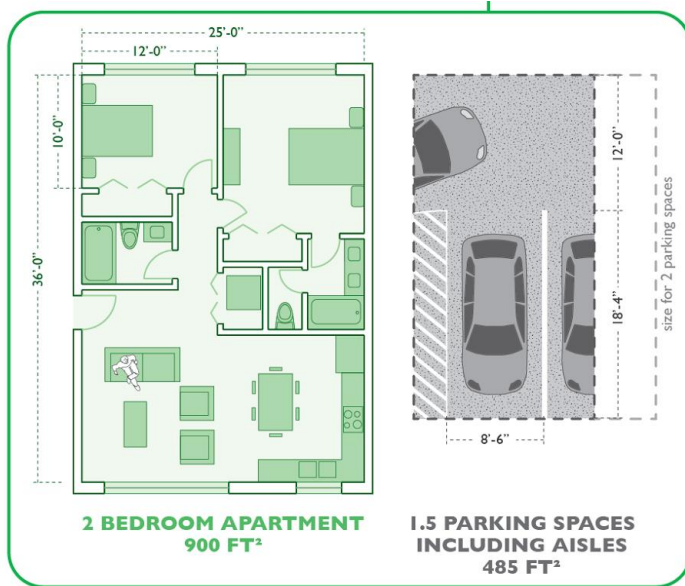
5. Improve the effectiveness of Compatibility Standards

5. Evaluate the impacts of compatibility standards in the use-based districts on household affordability especially affordable housing.



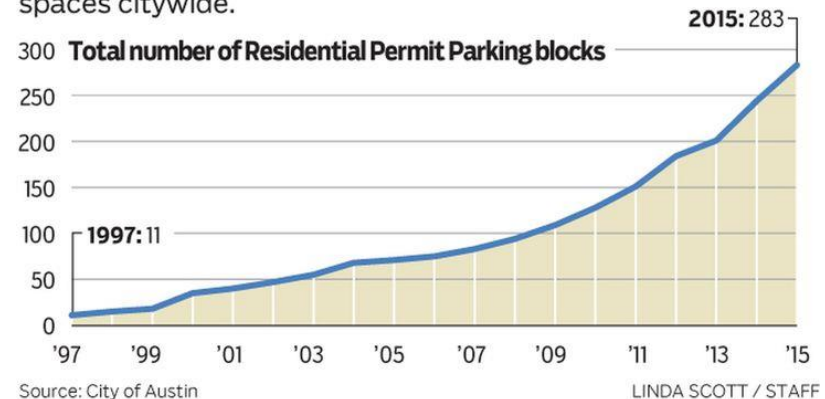
6. Reduce parking requirements in targeted areas

1. Reduce parking minimums in areas targeted for compact development that have robust mobility choices.
2. Waive parking minimums for developments that build affordable housing near transit stops.
3. Evaluate shared parking and Residential Parking Permit programs to balance various needs.



Residential Permit Parking growth

The city's Residential Permit Parking program covered 11 blocks in its first year, allowing only residents with a permit to park on those streets during specified hours. With a growing number of neighborhoods petitioning for permit-only street parking, such permits are now required on 283 city blocks, accounting for about 5,246 parking spaces citywide.



7. Maintain environmental prescriptions identified in the Natural and Built Environment Code Prescription

1. Maintain Austin's historic watershed regulations and recent Watershed Protection Ordinance improvements.
2. New and redevelopment sites will be required to retain and beneficially use stormwater onsite.
3. Incorporate green streets throughout Austin that are calibrated for context.
4. Integrate landscape elements throughout a site in lower-density development rather than relying solely on a “streetyard”; use a palette of urban green options closer to the core.



8. Improve the development review process

1. Simplify the permitting process for Missing Middle Housing (3 to 10 units).
2. Reorganize and re-format the Land Development Code to make code requirements clear and understandable.
3. Consolidate or restructure conflicting code provisions to increase the simplicity of applying the new code.
4. Provide a more refined set of zoning districts that replaces the complicated “opt-in, opt-out” regulations and processes.

Ongoing and Future Efforts

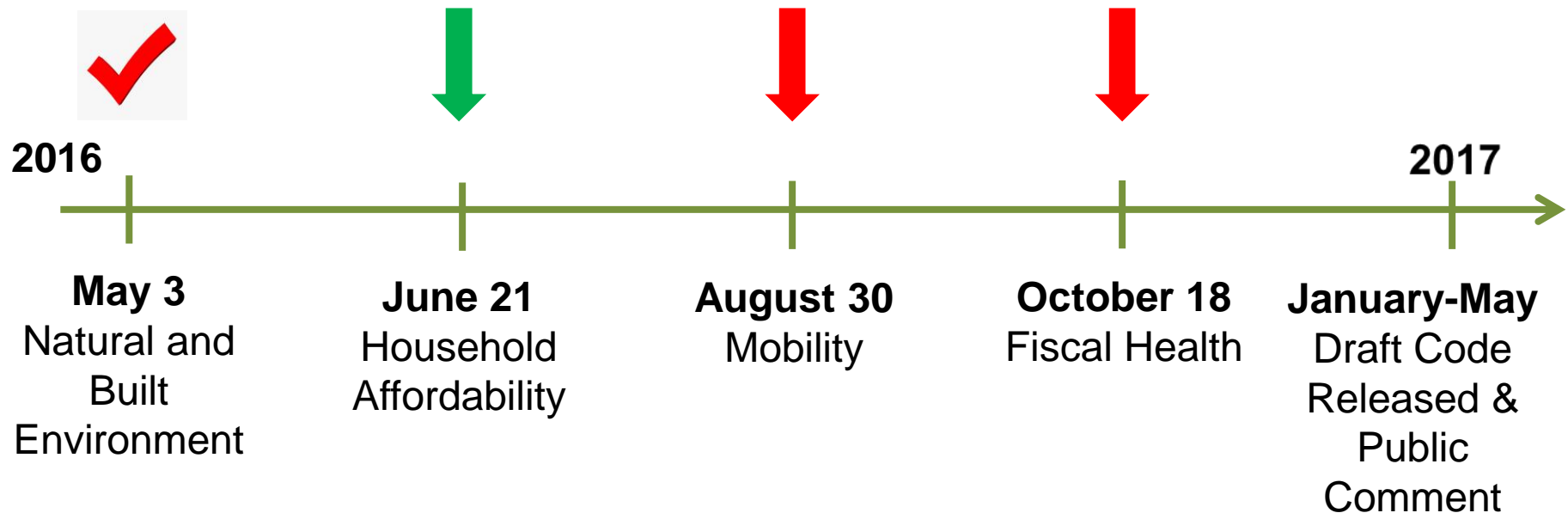
- May 2nd CAG Presentation
- May 14th CodeNEXT Walk (Zilker)
- May 23rd CodeNEXT CAG Public Engagement Session
 - Interactive session (four breakout, facilitated sessions)
 - 100+ people attending
 - Feedback solicited (why did you choose where you live? who lives in your neighborhood? who cannot live there?)
 - What prescriptions address affordability challenges identified? What is missing?
- June 20th CAG Meeting
 - Consolidation of feedback
 - CAG reaction to prescriptions
 - Next steps
- Ongoing feedback
- SpeakUp Austin!

Collecting and Use of Feedback

- Collecting Feedback
 - Compiled and Summary Reports
- Sharing Feedback
 - Code Development Team
 - CodeNEXT Advisory Group
 - Public
 - City Council

Code Prescriptions: General

Schedule for Council Briefings



Questions?

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