

City of Austin

Strategic Planning Workshop

January 11-12, 2017

The City Council held a two-day joint workshop with City executives from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on January 11 and 12, 2017, to discuss strategic focus areas and governance for the City of Austin.

The following slides and a full audio recording are provided for reference. This was an interactive workshop where slide content and meeting format was sometimes adjusted or drafted collaboratively during the session. The Council did not vote or take action on any items. These slides capture initial work; the draft content is expected to evolve as the City of Austin continues its adaptive strategic planning work. For more information, contact performance@austintexas.gov.



Day 1: Jan. 11, 2017



Introductions





Objectives for the Workshop

- **Build understanding and buy-in among Council and Executive Team regarding City's forthcoming strategic planning efforts**
- **Seek consensus regarding Citywide strategic priorities**
- **Identify potential indicators to gauge City's progress at achieving the selected strategic priorities**
- **Review opportunities for Council to use and strengthen its governance levers to improve alignment to Citywide priorities**
 - Council meetings and work sessions
 - Council committees and/or other Council work outside of the whole
 - Budget development process
 - Stakeholder engagement
- **Strengthen connections among City Council and Executive Team members**



Proposed Agenda

Day 1 – 9AM to 3PM

Call to Order

Introductions

Objectives & Agenda for the Workshop

Participant Roles and Workshop Principles

Discussion of Opportunities & Challenges for City's Strategic Planning Efforts

Discussion of Citywide Priorities and Indicators of Progress

Recap and Adjourn

Day 2 – 9AM to 3PM

Review Results from Day 1

Discussion on Using Governance Levers to Improve Alignment to Citywide Priorities

Discussion on How This Alignment Can Strengthen:

- Council Meetings and Work Sessions
- Council Committees
- Budget Process
- Stakeholder Engagement

Review and Confirm Next Steps

Adjourn



Workshop Principles

- **The workshop is more likely to be successful if we follow these guiding principles:**
 - Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the discussion; having said that, there will be times when the facilitators ask specifically for input from just the City Council
 - Be fully present when at the table; please handle email or texts away from the table.
 - There will be designated breaks throughout the two days; please return to the table on time.
 - Stay focused on the topic at hand; the facilitators can capture other issues in a “parking lot” for future consideration.
 - Remain open to the ideas of others, recognizing that we each bring our own perspective to the table; seek first to understand - asking for clarification if unsure of what someone said – even if you might ultimately disagree.
 - Speak with each other candidly, respectfully and concisely - to make the time we have together as productive as possible.
 - Trust the facilitators to keep the group focused on the agenda so that we can achieve the workshop objectives.



Testing for Consensus

We will not make formal decisions during the workshop. However, from time to time, we may want to test the level of consensus for a particular proposal, which could then be brought forward for formal consideration at a future Council meeting. An effective tool for doing this is called “Fist to Five” and it works as follows:

- Someone puts forward a proposal, usually after discussion around a particular issue. The facilitator then invites others to pose "clarifying questions" – not arguments for or against it - regarding the proposal until all such questions have been asked and answered.
- The facilitator asks everyone to display their level of support for the proposal by holding up a hand and showing from zero (fist) to five fingers, based on this scale:

5	I am very enthusiastic about the proposal and would be a champion for it.
4	I like the proposal and would actively support it.
3	While the proposal is not my preferred choice, I would support it.
2	I do not support the proposal, but could probably accept it. However, I have suggestions for improvement that I would like the group to consider.
1	I do not support the proposal and have serious reservations before I could accept it. But I would not seek to block it.
Fist	I do not support the proposal and would actively work to block it

- The facilitator calls upon those who held up fewer than 3 fingers to individually state their concerns and/or recommended changes to the proposals that would raise their level of support to at least a three.
- Once all suggestions have been heard, the facilitator states a modified proposal that incorporates the outcome of the discussion and asks for a new Fist-to-Five test for consensus.

Approaching Strategic Planning in Austin





Supporting the City's Strategic Planning Efforts

- **Preparation for this workshop**
 - Individual interviews with City Council, City Manager and Executive Team
 - Group interviews (3) with all Department Directors
 - Focus groups (4) with front-line City employees {total of 40 individuals}
 - Review of *Imagine Austin* and other key plans, budget and performance reports
- **Facilitation of workshop**
- **Post-workshop design work to develop proposed strategic framework to align:**
 - Citywide priorities and indicators
 - Key strategic initiatives
 - Departmental business plans and performance measures
 - Annual budget
 - Technology
- **Development of roadmap for engaging stakeholders and completing strategic plan**
- **Presentation of strategic framework & planning roadmap package to Council**



Current Timetable

- **Mid-December to mid-January:** Data gathering and workshop
 - **Rest of January:** Design of proposed strategic framework
 - **During February and March:**
 - Use of results of workshop to inform budget discussions & City Manager search
 - Refinement of strategic framework and development of planning roadmap
 - **By mid-April:** Presentation of framework and planning roadmap to Council
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- **Mid-April to ?? (TBD based on roadmap):**
 - Establishment of targets for indicators
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Development of strategies to achieve the outcomes
 - Creation, adoption and roll-out of strategic plan



What We Heard from Council and Staff

■ There is Currently A Lack of Clear, Shared Citywide Strategic Priorities

- “Everything is a priority, so nothing is a priority.”
- “We have an abundance of plans – including *Imagine Austin*, but it doesn’t feel like there is an overall alignment and coherence among them.”
- “We use terms like ‘Affordability’ & ‘Mobility’ but we don’t define exactly what we mean by them.”
- “I feel like I have to read the tea leaves to know what will be a priority week to week.”
- “Departments generally collaborate well when asked to do so; however, without clear, cross-cutting priorities, we have the tendency to default to just operating as a collection of 40 or so siloed departments.”
- “I am happy and even excited that the Council wants to set these priorities; it will help us move forward.”

■ There is A Growing Sense that the City is Not Dealing Effectively with Significant Critical Issues that Will Determine its Future

- “We have enjoyed incredible success for the past 15 years – i.e., barely felt the pain of the recession – but we are facing a day of fiscal reckoning because we have not considered the cumulative long-term consequences of our decisions.”
- “People can’t afford to live here anymore, we have huge economic disparities, and traffic is a mess!”
- “We spend more time debating marginal issues that are important to a few vocal constituents than thoughtfully considering how we are going to address the big issues facing our City.”
- “With the developments at the federal and state level, we need to get ready to respond if we want to be successful.”

It's in the DNA

Organizations produce exactly the results they are designed to produce – and none other

It's in their DNA

Getting different results requires a different design embedded in its DNA





Elements of Organizational Design

Ensuring that City government makes a powerful difference in the lives of the people of Austin requires a design that addresses:

Purpose

How does the organization define its purpose?

Accountability

To whom is the organization accountable?

Incentives

What matters and how are they made to matter?

Power

What is controlled and by whom?

Culture

What are the unwritten rules?



Clarity of Purpose: Proposed Elements for Austin's Strategic Framework

- **Vision** – a brief qualitative statement of what Austin aspires to become
- **Citywide Priorities** – the key outcomes that the City seeks to achieve on behalf of the people of Austin; ideally there should be no more than 7 or 8 priorities
- **Indicators** – quantifiable measures of the degree to which Austin is making progress; there should be only 3-5 indicators for each priority outcome
- **Targets** – specific, numerical goals that the City aspires to achieve for each indicator by a certain time period – say, 3 or 5 years from now
- **Strategies & Initiatives** – the key approaches that the City plans to leverage in each priority area in order to achieve its targets; these strategies should be based on evidence (from Austin or elsewhere) of what works
- **Programs** – specific department activities that are to be performed in support of the strategy - with defined, measurable objectives and resources allocated



Citywide Strategic Priorities: A “Strawperson” Proposal (Draft v1)

In working toward the vision of Austin being the most livable city in the country, we strive to create a community where every Austinite is able to say that he or she is experiencing all of the following outcomes:

- I have economic opportunities that make Austin an affordable place for me to live.
- I can get where I need to go safely and efficiently.
- I feel safe in my home, at work and in my community.
- I am able to lead a healthy life.
- I have access to enriching cultural and learning opportunities at every stage of my life.
- I trust that my city government is a good steward of its resources, has a high-performing workforce, and engages with the public with high degrees of transparency and collaboration.

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Economic Opportunity & Affordability

I have economic opportunities that make Austin an affordable place for me to live.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “So many people – including many long-time residents – are leaving Austin and moving to the suburbs because they can no longer afford to live here. We need more good-paying jobs.”
- “We not only need to have clearly defined goals for the number of affordable housing units to be created; we also need to hold developers accountable for maintaining them as affordable.”
- “The rise in homelessness is causing significant issues for downtown businesses and visitors to the point that it could jeopardize our status as a convention and tourist destination.”
- “There is a lot that the City can’t control when it comes to affordability; but we definitely influence it in terms of taxes, fees and utility rates as well as the burdens we place on businesses.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Economic development
- Job training
- Energy
- Tourism

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Mobility

I can get where I need to go safely and efficiently.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “We hurt ourselves by operating like we are still a town, but we’re not anymore... we’re a big city, but we don’t have the infrastructure we need to operate efficiently.”
- “The traffic situation is terrible... I shouldn’t have to sit in traffic for an hour to get to work.”
- “We are so far behind other cities and regions our size when it comes to transit; we need to give people more options so they don’t have to drive to work.”
- “I love that we have set an ambitious goal with Vision Zero; we are really going to need so many different departments and others working together to make it happen.”
- “Getting the mobility bond passed was a big deal - even if it is far short of what we really need to address the problem. I just hope we focus it on the things that will really make a difference.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Traffic congestion
- Public transportation
- Road maintenance
- Bicycle network
- Pedestrian safety

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Safety

I feel safe in my home, at work and in my community.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “Relative to other large cities, we are pretty safe, but we had a significant increase in homicides this year. So, we need to focus on the safety issue before it really gets out of hand.”
- “I really like the success of community policing efforts in my part of the city; I would like to see us expand it to other areas.”
- “What I hear from the public is that they experience code enforcement to be very inconsistent; it makes them question the fairness of city government.”
- “We know that we are going to experience floods and other emergencies; we need to continue to plan and stay vigilant so we can respond when we are confronted with the next one.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Crime prevention and response; community policing
- Fire prevention and response
- Emergency preparedness
- Disaster response
- Code compliance
- Court administration

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Health

I am able to lead a healthy life.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “We have invested a lot more resources in health and human services in the past few years, but I am not sure we know whether it is having the impact that we expect.”
- “We need to make sure that everyone in Austin has access to great parks and trails so that they can stay active.”
- “As we continue to grow as a city, we need to make sure that we don’t jeopardize things like our air and water quality; obviously, the City is not the only player in this but we need to lead.”
- “Zero Waste 2040 is a big goal and a big opportunity to demonstrate the leadership and innovation it will take to achieve it.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Promotion of healthy behaviors
- Access to health care services
- Water and wastewater
- Solid waste
- Environmental protection
- Recreational facilities

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Cultural and Learning Opportunities

I have access to enriching cultural and learning opportunities at every stage of my life.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “I absolutely love the incredible diversity of the arts and culture of Austin. Whatever we do, we can’t lose those things that make us special.”
- “People thought libraries would go away because of the internet; it turns out they are maybe even more relevant and important now.”
- “I know that we don’t run the schools, but everyone assumes that we do. If we don’t help the districts improve the academic skills of the next generation, we are not going to succeed.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Library services
- Early childhood development
- Cultural and music events
- Public art

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Trustworthy Government

I trust that my city government is a good steward of its resources, has a high-performing workforce, and engages with the public with high degrees of transparency and collaboration.

We heard Council and staff say...

- “The level of deferred maintenance on City facilities is huge, and the condition of some of our buildings is an embarrassment.”
- “We have been fortunate up to now that we have not had to face the kind of scarcity budget-wise that other cities have. But we need to get our fiscal house in order soon.”
- “Peoples’ trust in government – including Austin city government – is pretty low. We need to convince them that we can deliver what they expect for their tax dollars.”
- “We are experiencing a lot of turnover from some of our most experienced folks, and I don’t feel like we have a strong succession plan in place to address that.”

Some critical issues that fall under this priority area:

- Financial management
- Maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure
- Human capital management
- Technology management
- Performance management
- Stakeholder engagement

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30



Citywide Strategic Priorities: A “Strawperson” Proposal (Draft v1)

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- I have economic opportunities that make Austin an affordable place for me to live.
- I can get where I need to go safely and efficiently.
- I feel safe in my home, at work and in my community.
- I am able to lead a healthy life.
- I have access to enriching cultural and learning opportunities at every stage of my life.
- I trust that my city government is a good steward of its resources, has a high-performing workforce, and engages with the public with high degrees of transparency and collaboration.

*Updated “version 2” content on slides 23-30

Day 1: Jan. 11, 2017 (Version 2)





Citywide Strategic Outcomes: Draft Version 2

In working toward the city's long-term vision as articulated in *Imagine Austin* and our aspiration of being one of the most unique, thriving, livable cities in the country, this City Council has chosen to pursue these strategic outcomes at this time.

Together we strive to create a community where every Austinite has choices that allow them to experience and contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Having economic opportunities and resources that enable the sustainability of their lives and communities.
- Getting them where and when they want to go safely and cost-effectively.
- Being safe in their homes, at work and in their community.
- Being able to maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally.
- Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, environmental, cultural, ethnic and learning opportunities at every stage of life.
- Believing that city government works for everyone: that it is fair and equitable; a good, continuously improving and innovating, steward of its resources; has a high-performing, ethical workforce; effectively collaborates with the public; and delivers the results people expect and an experience they welcome.

DRAFT



Economic Opportunity & Affordability

Having economic opportunities and resources that enable the sustainability of their lives and communities.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Employment
- Poverty
- Cost of living (housing, transportation, food, child care, etc.)
- Homelessness
- Perception of economic opportunity and affordability



Mobility

Getting them where and when they want to go, safely and cost-effectively.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Road congestion
- Commute time
- Accidents/injuries/fatalities for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists
- Roadway condition
- Perception of mobility



Safety

Being safe in their homes, at work and in their community.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Crime
- Responsiveness of police, fire and EMS to emergency calls for service
- Compliance with codes and other regulations
- Court administration
- Perception of personal safety



Health

Being able to maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Prevalence of disease and/or unhealthy conditions
- Health care quality
- Access to parks/trails/recreational opportunities
- Environmental quality
- Perception of personal physical and mental health



Cultural and Learning Opportunities

Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, environmental, cultural, ethnic and learning opportunities at every stage of life

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Attendance at cultural events
- Usage of and satisfaction with City libraries
- Educational attainment
- Perception of civic, environmental, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities



Government that Works

Believing that city government works for everyone: that it is fair and equitable; a good, continuously improving and innovating, steward of its resources; has a high-performing, ethical workforce; effectively collaborates with the public; and delivers the results people expect and an experience they welcome.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

- Financial health of City government
- Condition of City facilities
- Satisfaction with City services and user experience
- Employee engagement
- Trust in City government

Day 2: Jan. 12, 2017





Feedback from Yesterday - Wishes

- Would like broader participation
 - More from staff (x6)
 - More balanced among Council members (x4)
 - Less from facilitators (x4)
 - Use of small groups (x3).....
 - Stay in large group (x1)
 - More time for discussion (x2)
 - Less “housekeeping” talk (x1)
- Quicker pace (x2)

- More clarity on steps in the process
 - During workshop (x3)
 - Post-workshop (x2)

- Items to work on
 - Prioritize among outcomes/ initiatives (x5)
 - Committees (x2)
 - Work on indicators (x2)
 - More work on outcomes (x2)

- Make room temperature warmer (x5)
- Too crowded at the table (x1)
- More soup (x1)



Proposed Agenda

Day 1 – 9AM to 3PM

Call to Order

Introductions

Objectives & Agenda for the Workshop

Participant Roles and Workshop Principles

Discussion of Opportunities & Challenges for City's Strategic Planning Efforts

Discussion of Citywide Priorities and Indicators of Progress

Recap and Adjourn

Day 2 – 9AM to 3PM

Review Results from Day 1

Discussion on Indicators

Discussion on Using Governance Levers to Improve Alignment to Citywide Priorities

Discussion on How This Alignment Can Strengthen:

- Council Meetings and Work Sessions
- Council Committees
- Budget Process
- Stakeholder Engagement

Review and Confirm Next Steps

Adjourn



Clarity of Purpose: Proposed Elements for Austin's Strategic Framework

- **Vision** – a brief qualitative statement of what Austin aspires to become
 - Use the 30-year vision outlined in *Imagine Austin*
- **Strategic Outcomes** – the key outcomes that the City seeks to achieve on behalf of the people of Austin
 - Use the v2 proposal presented at the end of Day 1
- **Indicators** – quantifiable measures of the degree to which Austin is making progress; there should be only 3-5 indicators for each priority outcome
 - To be discussed this morning
- **Targets** – specific, numerical goals that the City aspires to achieve for each indicator by a certain time period – say, 3 or 5 years from now
- **Strategies & Initiatives** – the key approaches that the City plans to leverage in each priority area in order to achieve its targets; these strategies should be based on evidence (from Austin or elsewhere) of what works
- **Programs** – specific department activities that are to be performed in support of the strategy - with defined, measurable objectives and resources allocated



Citywide Strategic Outcomes: Draft Version 2

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- Having economic opportunities and resources that enable the sustainability of their lives and communities.
- Getting them where and when they want to go safely and cost-effectively.
- Being safe in their homes, at work and in their community.
- Being able to maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally.
- Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, environmental, cultural, ethnic and learning opportunities at every stage of life.
- Believing that city government works for everyone: that it is fair and equitable; a good, continuously improving and innovating steward of its resources; has a high-performing, ethical workforce; effectively collaborates with the public; and delivers the results people expect and an experience they welcome.

DRAFT



Indicators

Terminology	Personal Example	City Example
Outcome	Peter is healthy	Economic opportunities
Outcome Indicator	Measure of his weight in proportion to his height	Measure of employment
Outcome Metric	His Body Mass Index (BMI)	Percentage of working age people employed
Outcome Target	Between 19 and 25	75% or better
Strategy	Eat healthy and workout regularly	Train the unemployed for tech-related jobs
Programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Join a gym 2. Healthy meal delivery 	Job training program by XYZ non-profit
Program Metrics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of times attending gym per month 2. Compliance rate of eating healthy meals 	Number of program “graduates” obtaining jobs within 6 months





Expected Characteristics of Chosen Outcome Metrics

You should expect that the specific outcome metrics selected by the City will meet the following criteria:

- They are considered **valid**; there is evidence that they accurately measure what they purport to measure
- The data can be collected with enough **timeliness** so as to be useful; there is not a long gap between the moment in time being measured and when the data is available
- The data can be collected with enough **frequency** so as to be useful; there is not a long gap between data points
- The data can be collected **reliably** over repeatable cycles; it is possible to ensure that the same thing is being measured the same way each time
- The data can be **segmented** by geography and/or demographic variables; to enable deeper analysis beyond a Citywide number
- The data can be collected in a **cost-effective** manner; the value of the information to City leaders and the public exceeds the cost to acquire the information



Economic Opportunity & Affordability

Having economic opportunities and resources that enable the sustainability of their lives and communities.

Citywide Indicators could include measures of:

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Ways to Align Budget

- ✓ **Expect departments to describe how what they do contributes to each outcome and drives improvement in the indicators**
- ✓ **Ask departments to identify 1 primary outcome for each “activity” in their current budget**
 - **Collect all of the activities under each outcome (independent of department) and look at them together – separate from department-specific meetings**
 - **Ask departments to rank order the activities based on their contributions to the outcome (as measured by the indicators) to which they are assigned**
 - **Discuss up front how much should City invest toward each outcome**
 - **Budgeting for Outcomes (way to integrate all of these):**
 - **Determine how much City has to spend in total**
 - **Allocate the full budget amongst the 6 outcomes**
 - **Invite proposals from departments for activities to advance each outcome**
 - **Review and rank the activity proposals within each outcome**
 - **When the money in each outcome “runs out,” the activities above the line get funded, the ones below do not**

DRAFT CONCEPTS FOR DISCUSSION



Ways to Align Meetings

- ✓ **Every agenda item is identified as primarily about 1 of the 6 outcomes; could also include a secondary outcome, if desired**
- **Organize the agenda around the 6 outcomes – group items together**
- **Once per month, dedicate 1 work session to a single outcome. Review performance information, discuss strategy, etc. on that area at that meeting. Each outcome would get a dedicated meeting 2x per year.**
- **Time budgeting (plan) with the Council; possibilities include:**
 - **Overall for year**
 - **Amount of time expected for specific items**
 - **Proportionally assigned to the 6 outcomes**
- ✓ **Gather and review data on how Council is doing against its time budget (potentially excepting the time spent hearing public testimony)**



Ways to Align Committees

- **Potential purposes of Committees:**
 - ~~Delegated to act on behalf of the whole Council~~
 - **Do work on behalf on Council and make recommendation to Council**
 - **Prepare the Council to make a decision (gather and report information relevant to making a decision – but not make a recommendation)**
 - **Study a subject/topic/issue and share what they learn to Council**

- **Charter each Committee**
 - Its purpose (drawn from above list)
 - The authority it has
 - What it is responsible to achieve
 - Resources available to the committee

- ***Clarify and honor role of boards and commissions***

DRAFT CONCEPTS FOR DISCUSSION