

**Downtown Commission Review Priorities
Working Group Recommendation**

Recommendation regarding Downtown Commission Review Priorities

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council adopted the Downtown Austin Plan (“the Plan”) in December 2011 to promote redevelopment of the area bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, the Interstate Highway 35, Lady Bird Lake, and Lamar Boulevard as a dense urban neighborhood and economic center; and

WHEREAS, the Plan envisions the downtown serviced by a convenient, sustainable and affordable multi-modal transportation system and comprised of districts and destinations that manifest our shared priorities for plentiful venues for artistic expression, a wide range of housing choice accessible to a socio-economically diverse range of individuals and families, a supportive environment for innovative businesses large and small, preservation of historic places, buildings and landscapes, exceptional connectivity, and an extensive network of enhanced public spaces, parkland and trails; and

WHEREAS, the Plan contemplates a thirty-year implementation horizon and review at five-year intervals; and

WHEREAS, although the city has achieved significant progress towards many of the Plan’s transformative steps and tasks slated for implementation/completion by 2021, several are yet to be initiated; and

WHEREAS, various downtown stakeholder groups have voiced requests for additional progress on connectivity and congestion mitigation, historic preservation, retention and cultivation of artistic venues, and incentives to promote an appropriate mix of uses, greater parkland and affordable housing within the downtown; and

WHEREAS, coordination with CodeNEXT and ongoing public and private planning initiatives is essential to address these calls for action and ensure implementation of the Plan consistent with the community’s vision, priorities and values; and

WHEREAS, City Code 2-1-140 charges the Downtown Commission to advise city council and staff regarding policies and projects impacting downtown Austin, to serve as a sounding board for implementation of the Plan and to recommend amendments to it, as needed;

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Downtown Commission identifies the following review priorities.

Affordable Housing

Permanent supportive housing initiatives serving the downtown homeless population and strategies for provision of on-site affordable housing at all income levels within the downtown

Economic Development

Downtown Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Austin Alliance EDC, Capital City, Inc., job creation and worker and service industry protections

Health

The Sobriety Center and the Medical District

Homelessness

The Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) and Housing First

Land Development Code

CodeNEXT transect zones for the downtown, changes to the Downtown Density Bonus Program, Agent of Change and other ordinances related to sound and compatibility, and development projects seeking changes in entitlement

Master Plans

Updates to the Downtown Austin Plan, district and campus master plans, IH-35 transformation efforts, and relocation of the Austin Police Department and Fire Station #1

Parks and Open Space

Park master plans, interpretive planning efforts and enhancements, programming and maintenance

Public Safety

Aggressive panhandling and public order initiatives

Support for small and local businesses

Updates on existing and proposed TIFs, PIDs, grant and loan programs

Tourism and Culture

Adoption and implementation of the Austin Convention Center Master Plan, Visitor Impact Task Force recommendations, and historic preservation, art, music and theater initiatives

Transportation

Urban Rail, Project Connect, downtown parking studies and initiatives, wayfinding, Capital Metro Connections 2025, Dedicated ROW, sidewalks and improvements to the pedestrian environment

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in order to fulfill its advisory duties regarding implementation of the Plan and provide additional opportunities for downtown stakeholders and the public to participate in that process, the Downtown Commission recommends that projects, plans and policy initiatives related to its review priorities be presented to the commission before presentation to the Planning Commission and/or Austin City Council for action.

DRAFT