

Annual Internal Review of the City of Austin Planning Commission

The commission shall provide advisory recommendations to the city council as requested by the city council to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment.

The Planning Commission is to serve as the Land Use Commission, as required by Title 25 of the City Code, and to carry out the following duties assigned by City Charter Article X (Planning):

- (A) *Review and make recommendations to the council regarding the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof prepared under authorization of the city council and under the direction of the city manager and responsible city planning staff.*
- (B) *After a comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof has been adopted:*
 - (i) *Review and make recommendation to the council on all amendments to the comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof.*
 - (ii) *Review and make recommendations to the council on all proposals to adopt or amend land development regulations for the purpose of establishing the relationship of such proposal to, and its consistency with, the adopted comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof. For purposes of this article and subsection, "land development regulations" includes zoning, subdivision, building and construction, environmental, and other police power regulations controlling, regulating, or affecting the use or development of land.*
- (C) *Pursuant to ordinances adopted by the council, exercise control over platting and subdividing land within the corporate limits of city areas that are: (i) covered by or in the process of developing Neighborhood Plans; the former Robert Mueller Airport site; and (iii) a Transit Oriented Development district. See: City Code Sections 25-1-46(C)-(D) & 2-1-187(B). The board must insure the consistency of any such plats or subdivisions with the adopted comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof.*
- (D) *Submit annually to the city manager, not less than ninety (90) days prior to the beginning of the budget year, a list of recommended capital improvements, which in the opinion of the board are necessary or desirable to implement the adopted comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof during the forthcoming five-year period.*
- (E) *Monitor and oversee the effectiveness and status of the comprehensive plan and recommend annually to the council any changes in or amendments to the comprehensive plan as may be desired or required.*
- (F) *Prepare periodic evaluation and appraisal reports on the comprehensive plan, which shall be sent to the council at least once every five (5) years after the adoption of the comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof.*
- (G) *Require information from the city manager relative to its work.*
- (H) *The board shall be responsible to and act as an advisory body to the council and shall perform such additional duties and exercise such additional powers as may be prescribed by ordinance of the council not inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter.*

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

Specific outcomes of significance:

- A. Reviewed and made recommendations to the council regarding the annual update to Imagine Austin, our comprehensive plan.
- B. Made recommendations to City Council regarding code amendments regarding zoning and other land use regulations to be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan.
- C. Reviewed approved subdivisions and plats which were found to be compliant with state and city land development regulations.
- D. Submitted to the City Manager a list of recommended capital improvements and method of prioritizing such improvements as all resources are valuable and limited so that we can better align the CIP planning process with Imagine Austin goals.
- E. Recommended that the 5 year update to Imagine Austin be taken up in 2018 as CodeNEXT activities require significant attention of the Commission.
- F. Reviewed the progress of the development of CodeNEXT thru the following:
 - a. Reviewed the four Prescription Papers and provided feedback to staff after convening Work Groups
 - b. Some Commission members attended CAG Meetings
 - c. Engaged with the community at District events during the Draft 1 release of the text and mapping
 - d. Created Work Groups for reviewing Draft 1 text, mapping and the review process.
 - e. Convened several additional special called meetings or CodeNEXT "Work Sessions" of the Planning Commission held jointly with the Zoning and Platting Commission beginning in November of 2016.
- G. Reported to Council regarding the progress and relevant issues related to CodeNEXT specifically assessment of CodeNEXT progress, connectivity of the Draft 1.0 with previous CodeNEXT efforts such as the Code Diagnosis, Prescription Papers as well as Imagine Austin policies.
- H. Recently established Joint Committees with Zoning and Platting Commission continued to meet during 2016 and 2017 (Small Area Planning Joint Committee, Codes & Ordinances Joint Committee, Comprehensive Plan Joint Committee).
- I. Reviewed and made recommendations to Council on the Austin Strategic Housing Plan.

2. Evaluation of 2016-2017 Planning Commission efforts and actions.

- A. It was found to be difficult to maintain attendance and involvement in Joint Committee efforts while juggling significant increased Commission workload due to CodeNEXT review and meeting schedule. Commission activity level with joint committees decreased as a result.
- B. The Planning Commission, specifically thru Small Area Planning Joint Committee assessment, identified the critical need to have a "Plan for Planning" the city of Austin. Planning efforts remain under resourced, seemingly misallocated and without necessary direction for clear understanding of deliverable goals of planning critical areas of need while updating older or outdated plans.

- C. The Planning Commission encourages the better use of metrics to evaluate available resources against identified planning needs. This is largely in part because of the consistent presentation to the Commission by many community members as well as our own internal assessment that a strategy for addressing future needs has not been sufficiently formalized and requests to update older plans go unmet.
- D. The "collision" of the CodeNEXT Draft review during the same year as the first 5-year update of Imagine Austin caused considerable concern regarding available resources and time to spread to invest into both critical efforts. Some commissioners advocated parallel review or potentially delaying CodeNEXT efforts to align 5-year update outcomes into CodeNEXT. It was ultimately determined to strongly recommend the 5-year update of the Comprehensive Plan to be more holistically reviewed immediately following the Draft 3 CodeNEXT recommendation to Council. In doing so Planning Commission can devote a more focused effort into looking deeply into areas that the CodeNEXT effort will also highlight as potentially needing review and updates.
- E. Planning Commission strongly encourages an analysis of potential case loads be prepared for all applicable commissions due to CodeNEXT outcomes impacting types and quantities of cases requiring public hearings and/or commission review. We have witnessed our case load increasing in the last several years. The need for this analysis should be viewed in light of the effectiveness of commission deliberation when late evening cases require extensive review. We respect the need for a transparent review process and public involvement. Achieving a "balance of caseload" can increase the effectiveness of the public process.

The Planning Commission (PC) successfully achieved the goals and objectives as set forth by the City Council regarding recommendations on comprehensive and land development code updates and amendments. PC continues to provide critical input on issues related to zoning within the City of Austin, establishment of new planning areas, updates to small area plans, capital improvements and review of subdivision and platting cases.

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

- A. Work with City Staff and consultants to continue our review process of CodeNEXT drafts 2 and 3 in as timely a fashion as possible while preparing a confident recommendation to council.
- B. Continue to receive and review public and other board/commission input regarding CodeNEXT to best inform our Draft 3.0 recommendation to council.
- C. The Planning Commission will support the analysis of future planning needs thru the lens of successful planning post CodeNEXT. We believe more resources should be directed to city planning efforts once a "Plan to Plan" has been identified and approved.
- D. Due to the complexity, unpredictability and often confusion found in the current and possibly future development review process, the Planning Commission strongly recommends that a thorough testing phase be planned prior to full implementation of an adopted code. In doing so conflicts and inefficiencies can be corrected prior to full implementation. The Commission where possible can assist in the calibration of the new land development code.
- E. Review the upcoming Transportation Plan in early 2018 and assess its impact on other related future planning and code efforts.
- F. Work effectively with Comprehensive Planning Staff in making recommendations on the 5 year Imagine Austin update, specifically in areas related to review of Centers and Activity Corridors as well metrics of success for both Small Area Plans and the entirety of the Comprehensive Plan Area. Align Comprehensive Plan Updates with knowledge learned from CodeNEXT mapping conversations.
- G. Work with staff to notify commission of multiple cases related to one property as awareness of subsequent cases to follow may impact our deliberations.

- H. Work with staff to understand remaining Conditional Use Permits after CodeNEXT adoption and evaluate if future planning or zoning efforts can systematically address these properties over time.
- I. Consider options for future planning efforts related to areas surrounding local schools.
- J. Better manage our workload such that city wide and local planning efforts receive increased attention without diminishing the level of review of individual property zoning other such cases.
 - a. Potentially recommend an alternate case/briefing schedule
 - b. Increase coordination with City staff on upcoming cases/briefings to balance commission agendas.
- K. Improve the alignment of CIP Planning and Implementation with planning decisions.
- L. To continue to uphold all duties of the Planning Commission as identified by the City Charter.

4. List the 2017-2018 Planning Commission actions related to achieving the above goals and objectives.

- A. Prior to Draft 3 recommendation, identify the CodeNEXT issue areas that are largely agreed upon so that focus can be directed to issue areas requiring more attention.
- B. Report to Council Work Session on the progress of the Draft Code Review.
- C. Coordinate with the Staff, Consultants and ZAP regarding Draft Code Review.
- D. Meet with City Planning Staff regarding necessary steps in a "Plan to Plan".
- E. Receive briefings on Transportation Plan upon completion of Draft 3 Recommendation. Designate a review work group to assist Planning Commission in gaining additional depth of analysis prior to recommendation to Council.
- F. Receive and review Council decision reports from PC Liaison to better inform our decision-making process.
- G. Begin preparations for review and coordination of Imagine Austin 5 year analysis so proper steps can be taken to prepare the Planning Commission and the public for key review, input and recommendation to Council.