

Late Backup

Thanks for the posted suggestions of Topics from the MPT and CMs Alter, Pool, Houston and Kitchen. They're good lists and a good start. This should be a living list, meaning that we can add to the Topics list over the course of June to help us focus on a search for consensus opportunities.

My post, here, is to lay out a way that we could approach the Topics, by focusing on Questions that arise from each of the Topics. This post sets out some examples of what such possible Questions following from the "Topics" could look like.

Just like with the Topics lists, these Questions are neither exhaustive nor complete. They are only examples and only deal with some of the "Topics." (Btw, it follows the outline of the "Key Goals" document CM Alter referred to in her initial post in this string, above.)

For each Topic and Question, the council's deliberation in search of consensus opportunities could start with the consultants/staff laying out how these topics/questions are addressed in the current Land Development Code, how they are addressed by the Staff Recommendation, and what, if any, changes were recommended by the Commissions.

For discussion and consideration of what possible Questions could look like:

Provide more housing choices and supply for Austinites at all stages of life and incomes

- Should we focus new, denser, mixed-use development on transportation corridors and in activity centers, while generally not increasing entitlements in the core of existing single family neighborhoods?
- What degree of change should be allowed to accommodate transitions between centers and corridors and residential house-scaled neighborhood cores?
- Should we be seeking to allow some measure of additional by-right market rate housing?
- Should we incentivize the development Accessory Dwelling Units and/or multiple units in residential house scale zones (LA - R4)?
- Where should more intense Residential House Scale Zones (R4) and Residential Multi-Unit Zones (RM1 - RM5) be mapped so as to allow for additional housing choice in appropriate places?
- In what way should sites on transportation corridors be able to achieve zoned entitlements/density if there are multiple, competing layers of non-zoning requirements that would otherwise impose a limit?

Encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing

- Should we be seeking to maximize the development of income-restricted housing in all parts of the city?

- How should density bonuses be calibrated to maximize the production of income restricted units?
- Should density bonuses be available for residential house scale zones (LA – R4) within existing single family neighborhoods?
- How should we revise S.M.A.R.T. housing to better incentivize affordable housing projects?
- What preservation incentives should be in the new land development code sufficient to discourage demolition of existing single-family homes?
- Should the Eastern Crescent be mapped to reflect existing entitlements? Would this help prevent accelerated displacement of existing residents?
- Should minimum lot sizes be reduced in residential house scale zones (LA – R4)?

Reduce time and cost of permitting by providing more clarity, certainty, and ease of use

(...no suggested questions yet)

Better manage the costs of growth and provide more effective planning tools

(...no suggested questions yet)

Preserve and respect neighborhood identity and quality of life

- How can we deal with compatibility so as to allow sufficient entitlements/density on transportation corridors, while providing carefully considered transitions between existing single family neighborhoods and new mixed-use developments.
- In addition to height and size, how should we minimize the impact of noise and light pollution, deliveries and trash collection in areas of transition?
- How should the existing "McMansion" standards for regulating the scale and form of infill housing in the urban core be carried over into the proposed new code?
- What should the minimum parking requirement be for residential house scale zones (LA – R4)?
- What should be the parking requirements be in residential house scale zones (LA – R4) near schools? in areas with narrow streets? and in areas lacking sidewalks?
- Should minimum parking requirements be reduced or eliminated in areas near transit?
- Should minimum parking requirements for small commercial (office) uses near existing single family neighborhoods be reduced or eliminated?
- In which zones should Cooperative Housing be allowed by-right? or allowed with a Minor Use Permit? or Conditional Use Permit?
- In which zones should small (by number of children) child care uses be allowed by-right? or allowed with a Minor Use Permit? or Conditional Use Permit?

- In which zones should Short Term Rentals be restricted? By STR type?
- In which zones should Level 1 and 2 Bar/Nightclubs be allowed by right? or allowed with a Minor Use Permit? or Conditional Use Permit?
- Should we require a higher level of review for Level 1 and 2 Bar/Nightclubs within 200 feet of residential house scale zones (LA – R4)?

Reduce wildfire and flood risk and manage runoff as a resource

- Should we require beneficial reuse of storm water on-site for large developments?
- How can we modify our code to better incentivize redevelopment of properties in a manner that yields improved water quality and storm water controls?

Support small, local businesses and the creative community

(...no suggested questions yet)

Enable transportation choices, improve safety, and prepare for our mobility future

(...no suggested questions yet)

Strengthen environmental protections, increase public open spaces, and conserve natural resources

(...no suggested questions yet)

(Separate Note: At our public hearings this week, speakers may raise what they wish. Different Council Members may have different things they want to hear. For me, I am hopeful that speakers will help Council identify topics, issues, areas or ideas where Council might find consensus opportunities so as to help us with our June deliberations.)