



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: Jeff Engstrom, Planning and Zoning Department, (512) 974-1621

DATE: July 5, 2018

RE: North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan
Case #: NP-2016-0031

Description of Backup Information

Backup information for the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan is attached, including:

- Participation summary, plan summary, summary of major themes, issues, and concerns (this document)
- [Draft plan](#), NP-2016-0031
- Draft ordinance to adopt the plan and FLUM
- [Character District Map \(FLUM\)](#)
- Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department's [Affordability Impact Statement](#)
- Letters received by staff in support or opposition to the draft plan
- Note that additional background information, including an in-depth profile of the planning area and detailed recaps of all workshops, presentations, and exercises can be found on the plan web page: <http://austintexas.gov/northshoalcreek>

Participation Summary

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan was initiated by City Council Resolution (20140612-032) in June 2014. The kickoff meeting was held in October, 2016. Over the subsequent six months, Planning and Zoning staff conducted 6 workshops 3 online/print surveys. This was followed by release of draft plan elements and culminated in a draft neighborhood plan presented at the December 2017 open house.

DATE	WORKSHOP	PARTICIPANTS
October 1, 2016	Kickoff Workshop	49
November 5, 2016	Workshop #2 (Food Systems, Mobility)	30
December 3, 2016	Workshop #3 (Community Character, Housing)	39
January 21, 2017	Workshop #4 (Character Districts, Environment)	40
February 25, 2017	Workshop #5 (FLUM, Compatibility, NPCTs)	47
April 22, 2017	Workshop #6 (Discussion of Concerns)	33
December 9, 2017	Open House (Draft FLUM, Actions)	49

Please see plan appendix for summaries of meetings. See the plan web site for all meeting presentations and public input.

DATES	SURVEY	RESPONDENTS
Sept 15 – Oct 10, 2016	Initial Survey	325
Dec 3, 2016 – Jan 8, 2017	Visual Preference Survey	162
Jan 15 – Feb 1, 2017	Send-Home Survey	43
March 15 – April 17, 2017	Business Survey	13
Dec 1, 2017 – Jan 8, 2018	Final Survey	70

Other Outreach

- Web Site with all meeting dates, presentations, and collected input
- Postcards
- City and Neighborhood Association yard signs
- Business and Apartment Complex Flyers
- Press releases and coverage by *Community Impact*, *Austin Chronicle*, KUT, and *Imagine Austin* blog
- Focus group discussion in Spanish with parents of Pillow Elementary school children
- Regular email updates (288 people signed up on list)
- Neighborhood Association meetings, newsletter, emails
- Nextdoor.com announcements

Plan Summary

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan recommends action by community members, the City, and by other agencies to preserve and improve community character, plan for growth, and establish a complete community. The plan follows the principles of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*, and builds on other City plans (such as the *Strategic Housing Blueprint* and the 2016 *Sidewalk Master Plan*). The community character visions and complete community goals emerged from these workshops and surveys. Each element of the plan vision corresponds to plan chapters and is summarized below.

Community Character: Seven distinctive areas were identified through the planning workshops. For each of those areas, participants developed Community Character vision and policies to achieve that vision.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM): In furtherance of the community character visions, a Future Land Use Map was created, taking into account the needs and desires of all stakeholders (residents, businesses, renters, property owners). The FLUM consists of character districts, which are the land use categories that have been established after the adoption of *Imagine Austin*. North Shoal Creek's character districts focus on built form and broad groupings of compatible land uses.

Complete Community Goals: The remainder of the plan focuses on goals, policies and actions to make North Shoal Creek a more complete community. These are places that Areas that provide amenities, transportation, services, and opportunities that fulfill residents' material, social, and economic needs. Policies are to be considered during public review of proposed developments, or when public funds are invested in the area. Actions will be carried out by City Departments, public agencies, community groups, and individual property owners, and are to be shepherded by a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team. Goals are listed below:

Mobility and Connectivity:

- (1) Improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- (2) Make streets safer for all.

Housing Opportunity:

- (1) Maintain a balance of housing types for a variety of household sizes and incomes.

Environment:

- (1) Enhance and increase open space and greenery throughout the neighborhood.
- (2) Protect environment quality and reduce the effects of flooding.

Quality of Life:

- (1) Maintain and add quality public facilities and services.
- (2) Provide a diverse range of shops and services for area residents and visitors.
- (3) Provide quality jobs in commercial areas so residents can walk or bike to work; continue to provide job opportunities along Shoal Creek Boulevard.
- (4) Promote health throughout the neighborhood by promoting active lifestyles, improving access to recreational spaces and opportunities, and increasing the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- (5) Encourage a sense of community.
- (6) Provide safety and maintenance.

Summary of Major Themes

- The planning area is well on its way to becoming a complete community. Some stakeholders felt that it was already perfect.
- Preserving the strong sense of community among residents, businesses, and students.
- Enhancing natural spaces and adding trees while reducing impacts of flooding.
- Directing growth to the corridors.
- Improving walkability and ease of bicycling.
- Making streets safer for all.
- Maintaining compatibility and reducing impacts of development.
- Improving park amenities for both students and residents.
- Adding residential units in smart locations to take advantage of high capacity transit.
- Utilizing Shoal Creek as an amenity.
- Preserving existing and expanding the amount of affordable housing.
- Providing new open space opportunities, especially south of Steck Avenue.
- Taking advantage of community resources, including North Village Branch Library and Pillow Elementary.

- Promoting and expanding local businesses.
- Celebrating community successes, such as the new community garden.

Issues and Concerns

Trees & Open Space – The desire to maintain and expand the tree canopy came up constantly throughout the process. The Arizona Ash trees planted in the 1960's are reaching end of their lifespan throughout the planning area. The plan contains recommendations to fill out the tree canopy through City and non-profit programs.

There is a strong desire for access to nature and open space. Pillow Elementary School Park is the only public park in the area. Residents south of Steck Avenue are not within ¼ mile of a park. Acquiring land to develop a new park would be prohibitively costly, but there are opportunities for natural and open spaces as larger parcels develop. Through existing and proposed open space requirements and parks set-asides, larger redevelopments can help meet this need. This would be especially effective along Shoal Creek.

Shoal Creek Access – Shoal Creek is a hidden gem. Residents want access the creek; however, it runs through private property as it crosses the planning area. Most of the creek is within rear yards of single-family homes. The plan identifies two potential trail connections between Anderson Lane and Steck Avenue: one along Shoal Creek (behind large commercial tracts), and one along a drainage ditch connected to The Summit condominiums.

Connectivity & Safety – Stakeholders identified a lack of pedestrian connectivity from the residential core to commercial corridors. Some of these connections can be fixed by installing missing sidewalks, and the plan identifies segments that are top priorities. In other cases, the lack of connectivity is due to 1960's era street layouts.

Cut-through traffic speed and volume is frequent concern. Plan recommendations include traffic calming and adding protected bike lanes (in accordance with the Bicycle Master Plan). New development should not impact the core of the planning area; instead it should be built along the edge corridors, and ideally clustered near high-capacity transit stops.

Housing Affordability – The plan calls for a balanced approach to housing affordability: additional units along Activity Corridors, promotion of density bonuses for affordable units, and infill accessory dwelling units where there is space and access available. While most single-family homes in the planning area are of above-average cost, apartments and condos in the area are mostly of an older vintage and run below city-wide cost averages. Stakeholders agreed that strategies from the Strategic Housing Blueprint to maintain those market-rate units as affordable are important. Other provisions of the Strategic Housing Blueprint were more controversial. Some residents feared the call for increased missing middle housing within ¼ mile of core transit corridors could alter community character. And a few stakeholders were against addition of multi-family housing along the Burnet Road and Anderson Land Mixed-Use Activity Corridors. Other stakeholders felt the plan did not go far enough to promote affordable housing, and would like to have seen an expanded Neighborhood Transition district in places currently

occupied by single-family homes to support townhomes and small apartments. These two diverging opinions could account for some of the respondents who do not fully support the plan.

Managing Growth Impacts/Compatibility – There is a strong desire among homeowners to preserve the single-family nature of the residential core, which has not seen teardowns common in other neighborhoods. Through the plan, the residential core would remain predominantly single-family, although duplex and accessory dwelling units would be allowed in some areas.

Stakeholder also had concerns about redevelopment adjacent to residential uses. Transition districts were used in the FLUM to buffer low-density residential from the Mixed-Use Activity Corridor or Commerce districts wherever possible. There are only a few areas (shown in Figure 6, p. 57) that will rely on compatibility standards to separate homes from potential higher-intensity redevelopment.

Another concern related to aesthetic impacts of redevelopment along corridors. Stakeholders did not want to see a solid, 5-story wall of development along Burnet Road. While the FLUM cannot impose arbitrary height restrictions on different parcels within the Mixed-Use Activity Corridor district, the plan contains suggested typical design features (based on the visual preference survey), which should be consulted during any design review by the City. Additionally, lot sizes and parking requirements will limit the amount of development, especially on small to medium sized lots.

Final Survey Results (61 responses)

The Planning and Zoning Department surveyed the North Shoal Creek planning area stakeholders at the end of the planning process. The survey intends to assess stakeholders' satisfaction with the plan and their agreement with its recommendations. Overall, participants were satisfied with the process; on a scale of 1 to 5, the average satisfaction level was 3.6. Below are the results of responses to the question, "Do you support the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan as a whole?" (66 total responses):

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully Supportive	20%	13
Support Most of the Plan	42%	28
Don't Strongly Oppose or Support	6%	4
Cannot Support Parts of the Plan	21%	14
Oppose the Plan	11%	7
<i>answered question</i>		66

Recommendation

The Small Area Planning Joint Committee of Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Committee reviewed the plan on January 10th and voted four to one to recommend approval of the plan as presented by staff. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 10th, April 24th, and June 12th, and voted ten to two to recommend approval of the plan with the following changes:

Page 18 – Add discussion of the appropriateness of missing middle housing along Steck Avenue. Change policy RI P2 to allow for accessory dwelling units throughout the entire residential interior.

Page 19 – Add a definition for missing middle housing. Add text to spell out the advantages of accessory dwelling units.

Page 71 – Add a discussion regarding the importance of connecting the residential interior to the surrounding activity corridors, and a call for those connections to be established with redevelopment of major commercial parcels.

The proposed changes are marked in the [draft plan](#).