



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018**

### **Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission**

**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

Advise the City Council on implementation of the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Master Plan, the 1996 Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Process and Goals Task Force Report, and other redevelopment issues at Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, including proposed amendments to the Master Plan, land disposition strategy, traffic, urban design and zoning issues, demolition of existing facilities; and at the request of the City Council, make recommendations on amendments to the Master Plan and other matters related to Robert Mueller Airport redevelopment. Section [2-1-169](#) of the City Code.

The Robert Mueller Municipal Airport (RMMA) Plan Implementation Advisory Commission (PIAC) was created in 2000 to provide oversight at a time when the Redevelopment and Reuse Plan for Mueller had been accepted, and the City was preparing to seek a master developer. In 2002 the master developer, Catellus, was selected and approved by City Council, and in December of 2004, the Master Development Agreement (MDA) between the City of Austin and Catellus was approved by City Council and executed. Because the MDA contractually obligates the City and Catellus to develop the property per the provisions in the agreement, the practical role of the PIAC has evolved to encompass the following:

1. Advise Council on items that come before Council, including those needing formal approval, such as proposed zoning revisions;
2. Advise Council on any items that require Council approval stipulated in the MDA, such as selling land within the Mueller boundary to another governmental entity;
3. Advise Council on bigger picture topics that may impact the ability to implement the plans as fully anticipated, such as, but not limited to, transit or Interstate 35 improvements; and
4. Serve as a venue for the master developer and City staff to report progress, hear concerns and receive feedback. This last role is paramount and provides a unique opportunity to

problem-solve as Catellus, together with the community and City staff, work to implement the Mueller vision.

## **Background**

The plans to redevelop the airport were guided by a vision and goals developed with extensive community input. In 1996, a Council-appointed 16-member task force representing a broad spectrum of Austin interests called for the creation of a compact, pedestrian-oriented, and mixed-use community.

The task force challenged the City to create a district that would be a model for responsible urban development - an alternative to land-consumptive and automobile-dependent development patterns throughout the region that could influence the form and pattern of growth within Austin as it entered the new millennium. With this vision, the task force and the City Council articulated some clear goals, stating the redevelopment of RMMA must marshal long-term market forces through an effective public-private partnership to promote:

- *Fiscal Responsibility:* Redevelopment must create a positive revenue stream that will fund on-site infrastructure and increase the City's tax base for the benefit of all citizens.
- *Economic Development:* The project should serve to reinforce Austin's role in an increasingly global marketplace and create a wide range of employment opportunities for a diversity of the community's citizens.
- *East Austin Revitalization:* The project must promote economic development opportunities within East Austin, giving local residents a direct stake in redevelopment.
- *Compatibility with Surrounding Neighborhoods:* Development must maintain and enhance the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods, providing complementary linkages, land uses and transportation patterns.
- *Diversity:* Redevelopment must offer a wide range of housing choices in order to create a new community of socially and economically diverse residents.
- *Sustainability:* Development should be planned in a way that promotes energy and water efficiency, environmental quality, reduced auto dependency, watershed protection and green space preservation.

In 1997, the City initiated the redevelopment master planning process that included comprehensive public participation at all stages of the work. Specific planning principles were established that became the structuring elements of the master plan to support a vision of a new community within a community—one that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive, that complements and extends the surrounding neighborhoods and that becomes an integral part of the urban and social fabric of Austin.

Redevelopment of the airport was also intended to achieve broader public objectives for economic development and revitalization, helping to overcome the perceptual barrier of the IH-35 freeway, and providing an alternative to the outward expansion of the City.

In 2000, the City Council accepted the “Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Redevelopment and Reuse Plan” and directed implementation of it, which subsequently led to the solicitation for a Master Developer for Mueller. Today, the Mueller Design Book serves as the Master Plan and encompasses and incorporates the 2000 Redevelopment and Reuse Plan along with refinements that have been made to the Plan since its adoption.

## **2017 PIAC Activities**

The following is a summary of the past year's activities by the PIAC toward implementation of the Master Plan:

**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.**

*(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)*

The Commission sent the following communications to the Mayor and City Council, available on the City’s RMMA PIAC Boards and Commissions website (<http://www.austintexas.gov/rmmapiac>), under Meeting Documents by month:

- A resolution encouraging the City Council to postpone adoption of the 2015 International Fire Code Local Amendments was approved by a 7-0 vote at the October 10, 2017 meeting. The initial proposal presented to City Council eliminated exceptions to the 25-foot street width requirement. In light of the 28 pedestrian fatalities and two bicycle deaths in 2016, the RMMA PIAC noted the need to balance the objectives of enhanced traffic safety and emergency responders. The resolution also noted that the City Council-approved Mueller Master Development Agreement envisions Mueller as a compact, pedestrian-friendly urban village. In compliance with that vision, Mueller streets are designed to distribute traffic in a cyclist and pedestrian friendly environment through the use of narrower streets and cycle tracks. In November 2017, City Council delayed implementation of sections 503.2.1 and 503.2.2 of the Fire Code Local Amendments. Council also directed the relevant city departments to review the issue, solicit stakeholder input and provide an update to Council in June 2018.
- A resolution urging the City Council to support the Austin Transportation Department’s application for additional funding under the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s 2019-2022 Project Call to complete East 51<sup>st</sup> Street Complete Street improvements was approved at the January 8, 2018 meeting on a 9-0 vote. The initial funding for the improvements included in Proposition 12 of the 2012 Transportation and Mobility bond were determined by city staff to be insufficient.

The East 51<sup>st</sup> Street corridor impacts neighborhoods in City Council Districts One, Four and Nine.

- o A resolution recommending City Council approval of historic zoning overlay for the Mueller Control Tower was passed at the April 10, 2018 meeting on a 9-0 vote. The Historic Landmark Commission and the City Planning Commission also supported historic zoning status for the fifty-seven-year-old structure.

Besides the action on the Mueller Control Tower, there were no Master Plan amendments, land dispositions, rezonings, or demolitions that required action by the Commission in 2017.

The Commission continued to monitor and receive updates from Catellus and City staff on compliance with the Master Development Agreement goal of ensuring that twenty-five percent of all Mueller housing units are affordable. The Commission also received presentations on the Vision Zero Action Plan, and the Mueller Parking and Transportation Management District.

In addition, RMMA PIAC also received briefings and updates on the University of Texas at Austin's planning process for use of its Mueller lease site, the development of the Foundation Communities' 132-unit affordable apartment complex, the Pecan Street Circulator Service Pilot, the AISD Bond Planning outreach efforts and Capital Metro 2018 service changes.

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

*(If any of the board's actions were outside the scope of the mission statement, the report should explain the non-compliance issues.)*

The resolution in support of the funding for the 51<sup>st</sup> Street supports the Master Plan goal of Compatibility with Surrounding Neighborhoods by promoting improvements to a major corridor that connects Mueller and two adjacent neighborhoods.

The Mueller Control Tower resolution supports the East Austin Revitalization goal by promoting the preservation of an East Austin landmark with long-standing associations with various persons, organizations and businesses in the greater East Austin community.

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

*(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)*

The Commission's mission is to advise the city council on implementation of the Robert Mueller Airport Master Plan, including proposed amendments to the Master Plan, land disposition strategy, traffic, urban design and zoning issues, demolition of existing facilities, and at the request of the City Council, to make recommendations on amendments to the Master Plan.

Accordingly, the Commission's goals and objectives for the new calendar year are to monitor and when appropriate, advise the City Council on the following topics, informed by the Master Plan, the Mueller Development Agreement (MDA), and are organized below under each of the six community aspirations the 1996 RMMA Process and Goals Task Force established for the redevelopment of Austin's former airport:

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

The Commission will request an update from the City of Austin Financial Services Department and the Economic Development Department on Mueller's overall project costs and tax increment financing (TIF) debt to assure the revenue stream continues to adequately fund on-site infrastructure; that the City of Austin continues to face minimal financial risk; and that the City's tax base will benefit all City of Austin residents once Mueller's TIF debt is retired.

### **Economic Development**

The Commission will request updates on the types of business recruited to and locating at Mueller to assure they offer a variety of employment opportunities in line with Austin's position in the global marketplace, and to verify that Catellus continues to make a good faith effort that at least thirty percent of businesses in the Town Center are defined as local as specified in the MDA. In addition, the Commission will request updates on contracting and employment opportunities for Minority and Women Owned Businesses (MWBE).

### **East Austin Revitalization**

Noting the successful commercial environment at Mueller, the Commission will encourage the solicitation of local businesses to locate at Mueller to offer services, goods and employment opportunities not readily available in the area. The Commission may seek information on where those employed at Mueller reside to determine if the east Austin community is benefiting as envisioned.

### **Compatibility with Surrounding Neighborhoods**

The Commission will request updates from the City of Austin Transportation Department, Catellus, and their transportation and planning consultants to ensure Mueller's parks, Farmer's Market and community spaces remain accessible to the larger Austin community, that Mueller's land uses are complementary to the adjacent communities, and that Mueller's roadways provide serviceable connections and accessibility via multiple transportation modes, with a particular focus on the E. 51st Street Mobility Improvement project.

The neighborhoods surrounding Mueller expressed the desire to preserve the Control Tower very early on in the planning discussions. With the City Council recently granting historic zoning to the property, the Commission will continue to receive updates on the planning for the Tower block, and the progress towards opening the facility to the public.

Though many aspects regarding the proposed Austin Independent School District middle school at Mueller fall outside of the City's jurisdiction, we will encourage collaboration for potential joint-use facilities at a Mueller school.

The Commission will continue to serve as a venue for public input and for the dissemination of information regarding Mueller-related issues.

### **Diversity & Affordability**

The Commission will continue to receive updates on Mueller's affordable program, and to advocate continuation of the successful efforts to date in reaching or exceeding the goal that twenty-five percent of Mueller's dwelling units be affordable initially and to make a best effort for long-term affordability. Commissioners may request further information on the audit of the Mueller Foundation, as well as any additional information regarding the program's sustainability. The Commission, again limited by jurisdictional constraints, will urge continued communication between the City, Travis Central Appraisal District, Mueller Foundation and affordable-homeowners to maintain long-term affordability.

The Commission may explore how Mueller's success could provide examples for increasing affordability options in Austin, and may request available data to determine if enhancing the mix of housing types might provide affordable market-rate housing for a more diverse population, including older residents and families.

### **Sustainability**

Commissioners may seek data on Mueller's existing and expected workforce to consider recommendations to better accommodate the housing, utility, transportation and daily needs of those living and working at Mueller.

The Commission will continue to request updates on best practices for sustainable development, park planning, energy and water conservation, and watershed protection, and will explore and encourage alternative transportation solutions within, through, and to Mueller. The Commission may explore how the urban planning successes at Mueller could provide examples for better land use options throughout the City of Austin.

A particular focus for this year will be exploring the Commission's and community's understanding of the timing and process for how the Commission will transition once the MDA is completed, in accordance with Council's previous 2014 action.