

Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) Recommendation:

Reforming the City of Austin Land Development Code to provide affordable options for all Austinites to live in safe, walkable neighborhoods

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) is to advise the City of Austin on pedestrian planning, policy, design, funding, education, and enforcement efforts regarding the creation, maintenance and operation of pedestrian facilities;

WHEREAS, all people who live, work, or visit the City of Austin deserve safe options to access all elements of the city on foot, wheelchair, or other pedestrian means;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has a shameful history of using segregation and using use-based zoning to continue this history well beyond the point that explicit race-based segregation was outlawed in the United States, in ways that have been detrimental to quality of life of people living in all neighborhoods, but especially harmful to underserved populations;

WHEREAS, all kids growing up in Austin should be able to walk to schools, parks, stores, and their friends' houses, all people wishing to live in the city of Austin should have affordable options to live in healthy, walkable neighborhoods, land use and transportation policy largely dictate the amount of vehicle miles traveled, carbon emissions, and victims of traffic violence in our region, and the piecemeal approach to land development has failed the people of Austin for several decades;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's history of policies that encourage car-dependent single-family housing and ban or discourage multi-family housing across most of the city has caused significantly more traffic, crashes, emissions, personal transportation and housing costs, and public expenditures, creating a situation where demand far outstrips the supply of dense, walkable housing;

WHEREAS, all types of housing units, including "Big A" affordable, missing middle, and accessible housing, are needed in all neighborhoods to create vibrant walkable communities that offer amenities and opportunities, foster social cohesion and neighborliness, and combat loneliness;

WHEREAS, all people regardless of age, ability, or financial situation deserve walkable access to services and opportunities, but compatibility standards keep neighborhoods from being complete, connected, and affordable;

WHEREAS, minimum parking requirements have ongoing, significant negative consequences on quality of life, air quality, traffic crashes, and traffic – especially negatively impacting walkable access – with no documentation available of the proposed social benefits of this policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the PAC recommends that the Austin City Council ask the City Manager to prepare a comprehensive, new land development code as soon as possible, according to these responses to his questions:

Option 1, A, i - Adopt a new Land Development Code, consisting of a new Land Development Code (text) and Zoning Map, to take effect concurrently;

Option 2, C - Provide greater housing capacity than Draft 3, through enhanced measures to allow construction of additional residential units – in a manner which ensures plentiful capacity such that a majority of growth expected in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization region over the next ten years could occur within the City of Austin, along with complementary amounts of jobs, schools, and services;

Option 3, C - Provide for a greater range of housing types than Draft 3;

Option 4, C - Reduce the impact of compatibility standards on development to a greater degree than Draft 3;

Option 5, C - Reduce the impact of minimum parking requirements on development to a greater degree than Draft 3 – and specifically to end the practice of minimum parking requirements as part of comprehensive parking policy reform, while ensuring resulting policies will improve access by all modes for people of all abilities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the PAC recommends that Council use this opportunity to strongly, clearly state a policy preference for eliminating all policies that limit walkable access for people in all neighborhoods and replacing them with policies that reasonably allow access to walkable, urban housing, school, and work to be the norm as soon as possible;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the PAC recommends Council ask the City Manager to examine all reasonable ways to end the practice of dictating separation of uses, to instead allow all neighborhoods the traditional, sustainable form of human habitat – walkable urbanism.

Date of Approval:

Vote:

Attest:

