



CODENEXT

SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Gregory I. Guernsey, AICP
Director, Planning and Zoning Department

DATE: July 16, 2015

SUBJECT: CodeNEXT: Monthly Update

Greetings from the CodeNEXT team! This is the first of what will be monthly update memoranda from our team. We want you to stay informed and engaged in this project. We hope that our monthly memos can serve as a useful tool for your involvement. Each memorandum will provide an update on recent and upcoming events, and we will often use the memo to feature a key issue or challenge embraced by the project.

CodeNEXT Team

We have assembled a top-notch staff team to ensure the success of the project. Our Planning & Zoning Team is as follows:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Project Lead: Matthew Lewis | Code Development: Jorge Rousselin (lead) | Communications and Engagement: Paul DiGiuseppe (lead) |
| Project Manager: Jim Robertson | Jennifer Todd | Paulina Urbanowicz |
| | Francis Reilly | Darrick Nicholas |

We also have assembled a multi-departmental “Core Team,” the group of City staff that will be highly involved in the creation and review of the new draft code. The Core Team includes representatives from the following departments: Public Works; Transportation; Watershed Protection; Capital Planning; Economic Development; Development Services; Neighborhood Housing; Law; and Public Information.

Communications

Please always feel free to contact myself or Assistant Director Matthew Lewis for an update on the project. We would enjoy providing, at your request, periodic briefings to the Planning and Neighborhoods Committee or to the full Council. In an upcoming update memorandum, we will share with you our overall CodeNEXT Communications and Engagement Plan. The success of this project demands a robust and diverse plan for reaching and engaging Austin citizens of all ages and various stakeholder groups. The Code Advisory Group will continue to play a key role through its advisory and outreach functions. We also want to take advantage of your knowledge and community contacts to broaden our scope and reach.

Upcoming CodeNEXT Events

Phase I of the project focused on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of our existing Land Development Code, finding out what works and does not work from the perspective of different users of the code, and measuring the Code against our community's vision for its future – Imagine Austin. The key documents of Phase I included the Listening to the Community Report, the Community Character Manual, the Code Diagnosis, and the Code Approach report.

During Phase II, the CodeNext Staff team and the consultant team will work together to create an Administrative Draft (draft for internal Staff review) of the new Land Development Code. Phase II is expected to conclude in approximately May 2016. The major milestone of Phase II will be the Code Workshop, currently scheduled for November 2015. At this event, our team will be testing the draft code elements developed to date. We will do that by applying the draft code in a diverse set of Focus Areas that will enable us to answer some key questions such as: Does the code produce desired outcomes? Are there gaps or conflicts? How does the code handle key issues such as compatibility and transitions? The Workshop will be an interactive and educational event.

Phase III, which we anticipate will follow right on the heels of Phase II, will result in a Public Review Draft for public review and comment.

Feature Issues

In each of the upcoming CodeNEXT update memoranda, we will feature a key issue or challenge that the new code will help our community address. Because this initial memorandum has had quite a bit of introductory material, we will not include a Feature Issues here. But the types of issues we anticipate featuring include: How can the new Land Development Code improve the development review process? What is "Missing Middle?" What is a "Form-Based Code?" What is the relationship between CodeNEXT and neighborhood planning? If you have issues you would like us to address, please let me know.

Conclusion

We are excited about working with you and the community to further enhance Austin's future with CodeNEXT.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
Robert Goode, Assistant City Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager
Mark Washington, Acting Assistant City Manager
Matthew Lewis, Assistant Director, Planning and Zoning Department