

**Land Development Code Rewrite Project**  
**Public Engagement Plan Outline**  
**DRAFT 8-16-13**

**I. About This Document**

The outline below provides an overview of the elements of the Public Engagement Plan for the Land Development Code rewrite process. Over the next two months, the Consultant Outreach Team will work closely with the Code Advisory Group and City Staff to develop the Preliminary Engagement Plan. The Outreach Team will then present the Preliminary Engagement Plan to the public for comment and refinement during the initial Listening Sessions. After the Listening Sessions, the Outreach Team will present proposed changes to the Code Advisory Group, City Staff, and the community before completing the Final Public Engagement Plan.

**II. Introduction**

This section of the Public Engagement Plan will introduce the existing land development code and its revision process to set the stage for meaningful engagement by existing stakeholders from Imagine Austin and other City code-related efforts, as well as Austin residents and other stakeholders who were not previously involved in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan process.

Focusing on the difficulty and cost of using the present code by businesses, residents, and City staff, it will convey the importance of the code revision to the long-term health and viability of the community. As one of eight Priority Programs of Imagine Austin, this section will identify some of the longstanding issues that are facing our community while beginning to set expectations of the types of problems the code revision can and cannot address.

**III. Public Engagement Approach**

*a. Principles*

This section will outline the City of Austin's public participation principles, as well as the philosophy and guiding principles that will inform the approach to public engagement, highlighting key principles such as:

- Inclusion
- Transparency
- Openness to learning
- Multiculturalism

*b. Goals*

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This section will lay out the overarching goals of the public engagement process, such as understanding:

- what people value about their community, and areas of concern
- experiences people have had with the code, and areas of needed improvement
- how to accommodate growth, and the degree of change

*c. Participants*

This section will include brief descriptions of the participants that will be engaged throughout, such as:

- the general public
- homeowners
- businesses
- civic groups
- nonprofit organizations

*d. Public Engagement Team*

This section will include brief descriptions of the groups with key roles in the process, such as:

- the City Council
- Planning Commission
- Code Advisory Group
- City Staff
- the Consultant Team

*e. Engagement Process*

This section will include a diagram that lays out the engagement process and a timeline of key activities and opportunities for input. It will also make clear how the input will be used at key points throughout the process.

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**IV. Public Participation Framework and Strategies**

*a. Strategies*

This section will lay the framework for the public participation strategies to be used in fulfilling the project goals. This will include strategies for:

- Communication and raising awareness about the project.
- Education and discussion about the code and key community issues impacted by the code.
- Gathering input about what people like and value about specific places, as well as what concerns them.
- Gathering input on broader topics of concern related to the code and the process of working with the code.
- Gathering input on the analysis of existing community character.
- Diliberate possible approaches to preserve and enhance changes envisioned in Imagine Austin, and exploring possible approaches and, ultimately, rules that are appropriate for achieving desired community character and accomodating change.

*b. Methods*

Each of the methods used to implement the engagement strategies will be designed to integrate the guiding principles of engagement. Potential methods include:

- **In-depth interviews** to understand perceptions and attitudes for effective messaging and communication
- **Stakeholder interviews** to understand detailed issues, concerns with, and possible approaches to the new code
- **Listening sessions** with the general public to understand likes and concerns about specific places and gather feedback on the public engagement plan
- **Small-group meetings** with existing and new stakeholder groups to gather input on what they value and are concerned about on both specific places and related to the code itself
- **Educational speaker sessions** to foster more in-depth learning and discussion about hot topics related to the land development code
- **Ambassador program** to engage leaders from traditionally underrepresented communities to foster greater involvement in those communities

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- **Booths and presentations** at neighborhood and community events and presentations at existing meetings of community organizations

*c. Tools and Platforms*

This section will also highlight the specific tools and platforms that will be used to inform and engage the community about the project, which include:

- **Website**, including online engagement platform, surveys, etc.
- **Social media** (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Vine)
- **Traditional media**, including news releases, press conferences, media interviews and public service announcements
- **Peer-to-peer toolkit to support ambassadors**
- **Newsletters**
- **Channel 6**

**V. Documenting Input and Improving the Process**

The final section of the Plan will include the approaches that will be used to gather and document input provided by the public and the methods to help foster a two-way conversation in which questions are answered in a timely, transparent and informed fashion.

Also included in this section will be the mechanisms for continually learning from what's working and what needs improvement in the public engagement process. It will include documentation methods for gathering quantitative and qualitative data about participation and strategies for process improvement.

**VI. Continuing the Process**

Later in the Listening, Understanding, and Analysis process will offer a number of public engagement opportunities currently under development. They include:

- **Listening to the Community Report** - The Outreach Team, in coordination with the City, will analyze and summarize the comments, concerns and questions expressed by stakeholders and participants engaged by the outreach efforts and draft a preliminary Listening to the Community report for review by the Management Team, the City, and Code Advisory Group.
- **Community Character Workshops** - The Community Character Workshops will present the Community Character work completed to date and the preliminary "Listening to the

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Community Report.” The purpose of the meeting is to gather and respond to feedback from the community, and to begin to demonstrate how this work will serve as a foundation for the code update.

- **Envision Tomorrow Baseline** - The Consultant team, working with City Staff, will calibrate the Envision Tomorrow software to better understand and create a baseline scenario of development potential and impacts in parts of the City.
- **Big Community Events** - The Code team and Outreach team, in close coordination with the City, will conduct public workshops to present, discuss and receive feedback on the following items: Community Character Analysis, Initial Code Diagnosis, Place Types Analysis, and the Scenario Baselines.
- **Code Alternatives Memo** - Based on the work completed in prior tasks, the Code Alternatives Memo will summarize up to three alternative approaches to coding the city. The memo will be presented to the Code Advisory Group.
- **Annotated Outline of Code** - The Consultant team will present the Annotated Outline of the Code, a summary of the proposed code structure and organization for the preferred approach, to the Planning Commission and City Council for review and consideration.

The outreach team looks forward to working with the Code Advisory Group and City Staff to revise this Public Engagement Plan over the next few months.

**VII. Contact Information**

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