SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

AUSTIN *LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE*

CodeTEXT
Code Draft Preview
Spring 2017

CODE NEXT

IN THIS PRESENTATION

1

PROCESS

how we got to this point

2

PRIORITIES

to improve quality of life

3

OVERVIEW

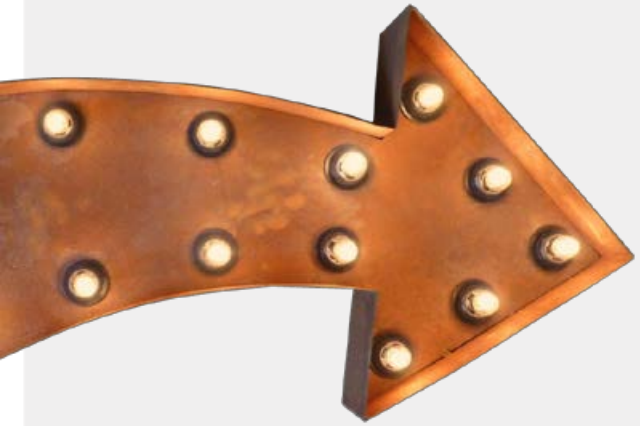
understanding the new code and how to contribute

CODE NEXT

PART 1

PROCESS

CODE/NEXT



What sort of city do we want Austin to be?

2009

2012

The imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan was adopted by Austin City Council in June 2012

Imagine Austin *lays out our citizens' vision for a complete community that responds to the pressures and opportunities of our growing modern city.*

Core Principles for Action

Grow as a compact, connected city

Integrate nature into the city

Provide paths to prosperity for all

Develop as an affordable and healthy community

Sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources

Endorse innovation and creativity throughout the city

CODE NEXT
SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

In 2013, the City engaged the help of both national and local experts to work with elected officials, staff, appointed representatives, and the community at large on how best to align our land use standards and regulations with the goals of Imagine Austin.

Process To Date

2013 – 2014
Listening to the Community

2014
Code Diagnosis

2014 – 2015
Community Character Manual

2015
Alternative Approaches to the Code

2016
Code Prescriptions

2017
Draft Code

Past reports and documentation of the CodeNEXT process can be reviewed at **austintexas.gov/codenext**

CODE DIAGNOSIS SUMMARY

Top 10 Issues

1.
Ineffective Base Zoning Districts

2.
Competing Layers of Regulations

3.
Complicated "Opt-in, Opt-out" System

4.
Lack of Household Affordability and Choice

5.
Auto-Centric Code

6.
Not Always In Line with Imagine Austin

7.
Lack of Usability and Clarity

8.
Ineffective Digital Code

9.
Code Changes Adversely Affect Department Organization

10.

Incomplete and Complicated Administration and Procedures

LIMITATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL ZONING

The conventional, use-based approach to zoning has been shown to be ineffective for regulating diverse, urban, mixed-use environments.

These three parcels have "CS – Commercial Services" as their base zone.

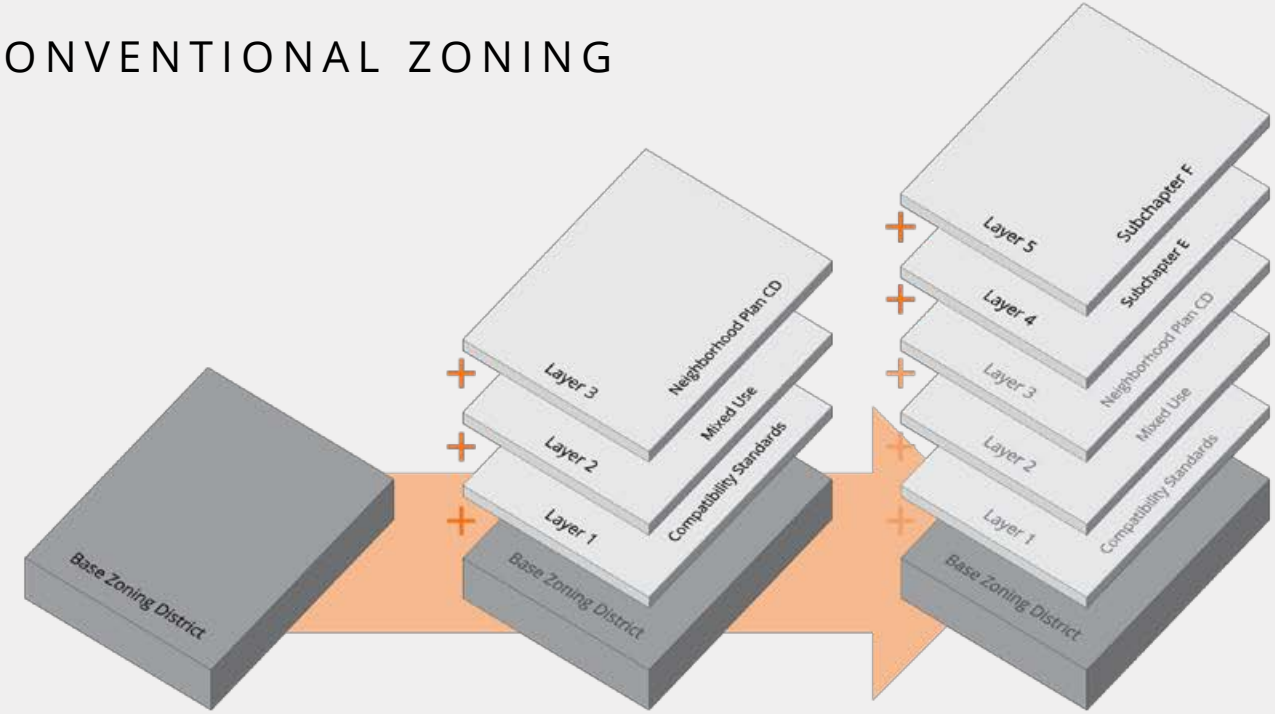
CS-V-CO-NP

CS-1-MU-CO-HD-NP

CS-1-V-NP

LIMITATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL ZONING

Over the years, supplemental layers of regulations have been added to address incompatibilities and issues of the day, resulting in complexity and reduced usability.



Base Zoning District — Conditional Overlay — Combining District

SF-3 - CO - NP

Family Residence

Limits Land Uses or Other Zoning District Standard

Neighborhood Plan Combing District

Other SF-3 Combinations

SF-3
SF-3-CO
SF-3-CO-H-NP
SF-3-CO-NCCD-NP
SF-3-H
SF-3-H-CO-NP
SF-3-H-HD-NCCD-NP
SF-3-H-HD-NP
SF-3-H-NCCD-NP
SF-3-H-NP
SF-3-HD
SF-3-HD-NCCD-NP
SF-3-HD-NP
SF-3-NCCD-NP
SF-3-NP

LIMITATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL ZONING

Existing Base Zoning Districts

RESIDENTIAL

LA	Lake Austin Residence District
RR	Rural Residence District
SF-1	Single Family - Large Lot
SF-2	Single Family - Regular Lot
SF-3	Family Residence
SF-4A	Single Family - Small Lot
SF-4B	Single Family - Condominium
SF-5	Urban Family Residence
SF-6	Townhouse and Condominium
MF-1	Multifamily - Limited Density
MF-2	Multifamily - Low Density
MF-3	Multifamily - Medium Density
MF-4	Multifamily - Moderate Density
MF-5	Multifamily - High Density
MF-6	Multifamily - Highest Density
MH	Mobile Home Residence

COMMERCIAL

NO	Neighborhood Office
LO	Limited Office
GO	General Office
CR	Commercial Recreation
LR	Neighborhood Commercial
GR	Community Commercial
L	Lake Commercial
CBD	Central Business District
DMU	Downtown Mixed Use
W/LO	Warehouse/Limited Office
CS	Commercial Services
CS-1	Commercial - Liquor Sales
CH	Commercial Highway

INDUSTRIAL

IP	Industrial Park
LI	Limited Industrial Service
MI	Major Industrial
R&D	Research and Development

Combining and Overlay Districts

- ☐ Central Urban Redevelopment (CURE)
- ☐ Conditional Overlay
- ☐ Historic Landmarks
- ☐ Historic Area
- ☐ Neighborhood Conservation
- ☐ Capitol Dominance
- ☐ Capitol View Corridor Overlay
- ☐ Congress Avenue
- ☐ East Sixth / Pecan Street
- ☐ Downtown Parks
- ☐ Downtown Creeks
- ☐ Convention Center
- ☐ Planned Development Area
- ☐ Criminal Justice Center Overlay
- ☐ Barton Springs Zoning District Overlay
- ☐ Waterfront Overlay
- ☐ University Neighborhood Overlay
- ☐ Neighborhood Plan
- ☐ Mixed Use
- ☐ Vertical Mixed Use

Special Purpose Zoning Districts

DR	Development Research
AV	Aviation Services
AG	Agricultural District
P	Public
PUD	Planned Unit Development
TN	Traditional Neighborhood
TOD	Transit Oriented Development
NBG	North Burnet/Gateway
ERC	East Riverside Corridor

400+

Combinations Found in the Existing Code

CODE NEXT: PRIMARY OUTCOMES

1. Promote character by introducing form-based transect zones
2. Update, simplify and roll forward existing use-based zones
3. Improve organization of code and introduce graphics to demonstrate intent

PART 2

PRIORITIES

CODE NEXT

Creating a framework to help improve quality of life.

- **M** MOBILITY
- **C** COMMUNITY
- **E** ENVIRONMENT
- **H** HOUSING
- **P** PERMITTING

MOBILITY

walkable+ CONNECTED

> *"It creates a certain community pride where there are shops around you and it's affordable to live there... you can walk there."*

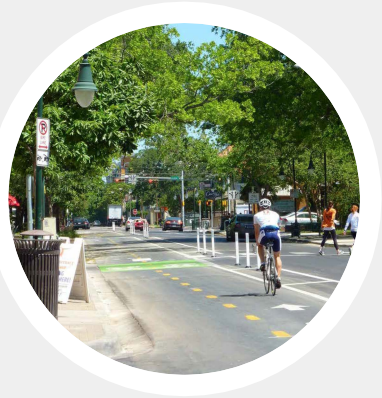
Eiler Rodriguez
Barista and renter

MOBILITY

Urban Trail Connections

Walk to Shops and Services

Design for People



Getting Around

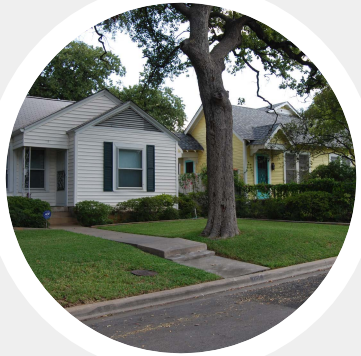
COMMUNITY

vibrant+ PROSPEROUS

> *"We create a lot of culture here, and there's a lot of innovation. If we squeeze people out, we'll lose that."*

Amanda Lewis
Homeowner, Community Organizer

COMMUNITY



Strengthen Neighborhoods

Enable Small Businesses

Focused on Context

Diverse Places for People

Anticipate Future Growth

ENVIRONMENT

natural+ RESILIENT

> *"Trees clean our air and water, lower hot summer temperatures, and are our first line of defense against flooding. It's important to plant new trees and help them grow, and more important to protect the ones we have inherited."*

Thais Perkins
Executive Director, TreeFolks

ENVIRONMENT

Water Stewardship

Urban Forest Preservation

Nature in the City

Flood Mitigation

Open Space and Parks

HOUSING

inclusive+ AFFORDABLE

> *"People are really constricted in their housing choices— making a lot of sacrifices and barely getting by."*

Thomas Echolz
Musician and renter

HOUSING

More Diverse Housing Choice

More Units

Affordability Incentives

Flexible Live/ Work Places

Connected Subdivisions

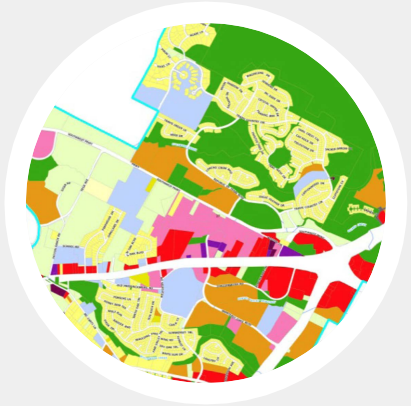
PERMITTING

streamlined+ USER-FRIENDLY

> *"The code shouldn't stand in the way. It should be neutral, so that those who are engaged in the community, trying to inspire, be inspired, can excel at those things and allow it to happen."*

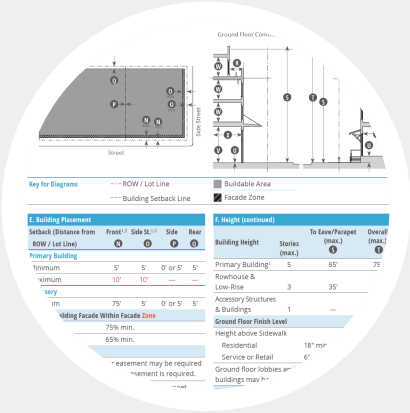
Scott Ginder
Principal/Founder
Forge Craft Architecture + Design

PERMITTING



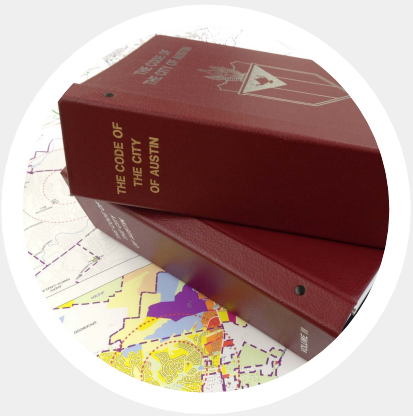
Clearer Zoning Districts

Site Planning Process



Organized Graphic Code

Fine-Tuned Uses in Zones



Simplified Permitting

austintexas.gov/codenext/**permitting**

CODE NEXT

PART 3

OVERVIEW

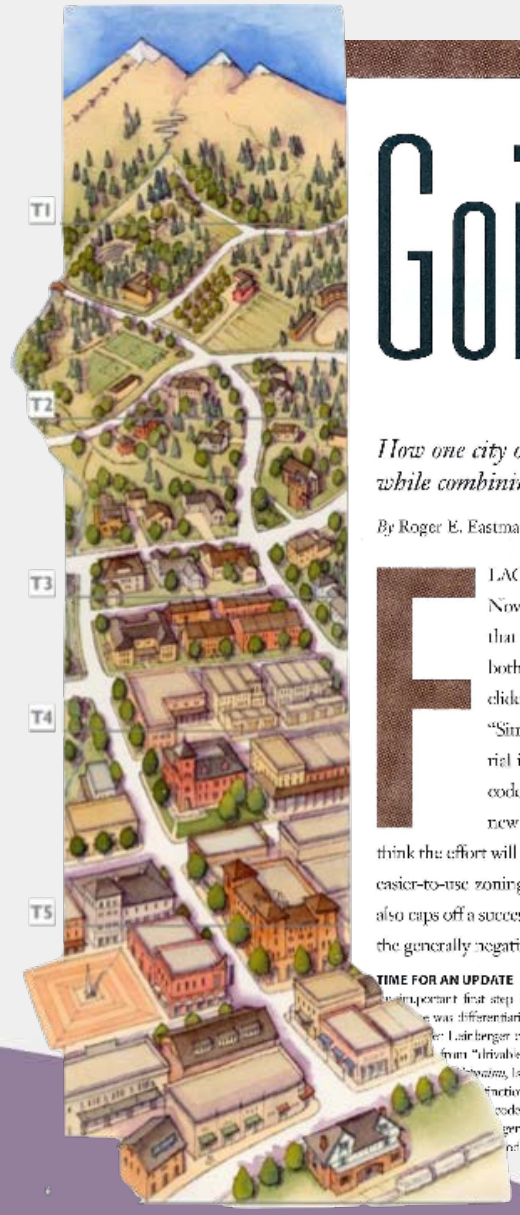
CODE/NEXT

A Hybrid Approach

Hybrid codes apply different zoning tools in different places within a city.

Ability for city to “right-size” the zoning tools needed in a predictable and clear manner.

Form-Based + Euclidian (Use-based) Districts



PLANNING PRACTICE

Going Hybrid

How one city overhauled its zoning code while combining form-based and conventional elements.

By Roger E. Eastman, AICP, with Daniel Parolek and Lisa Wise

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA, entered an exclusive club in November. It is now one of the few cities in the U.S. that have adopted a hybrid zoning ordinance with both form-based components and conventional Euclidean elements as part of a complete code rewrite. “Simplified, streamlined, predictable” raved an editorial in the *Arizona Daily Sun* while praising both the code and the process used to adopt it. Getting the new code adopted wasn't easy, but many city residents think the effort will be repaid in a more efficient, more equitable, and easier-to-use zoning system. The adoption of the new zoning code also caps off a successful public engagement process that has changed the generally negative perception of city planners.

TIME FOR AN UPDATE

Flagstaff (pop. 62,000), at an elevation of about 7,000 feet, is the regional hub of northern Arizona. Established as a stop on the early transcontinental railway in 1882 and later Route 66 and Interstate 40, Flagstaff quickly grew as a logging and ranching town, and as a gateway for travelers visiting the Grand Canyon and other national parks and monuments. Residents appreciate the natural beauty of the area and enjoy outdoor pursuits such as hiking, skiing, hunting, fishing, and camping.

The downtown and oldest neighborhoods were planned with small blocks and lots, and today are valued for their historic buildings and inherently walkable urban character. Typical of many American cities, Flagstaff's urban form changed after World War II as auto-oriented suburban developments were added to the periphery of the city. Until recently Flagstaff's zoning ordinances have actively promoted these driveable suburban development patterns.

The need for a comprehensive update of the city's land development code had been apparent for some time as developers, contractors, design professionals, and residents complained about the code's complexity and inconsistency. Some even blamed the cumbersome nature of the code for contributing to the high cost of development and the failure of big projects and economic develop-

CODE NEXT

Form-Based Zoning (Transect)

Emphasis is on the design and form of development in order to shape desired character or, in some instances, maintain character

Development Standards include:

- Lot Width and Depth
- Building Type
- Building Placement (Setbacks)
- Height
- Encroachment
- Street Frontage
- Parking
- Impervious Cover
- Open Space
- Signage
- Site Constraints
  - Drainage
  - Water Quality
  - Tree Protection
  - Landscape
- Use Types

Use-Based Zoning (Non-Transect)

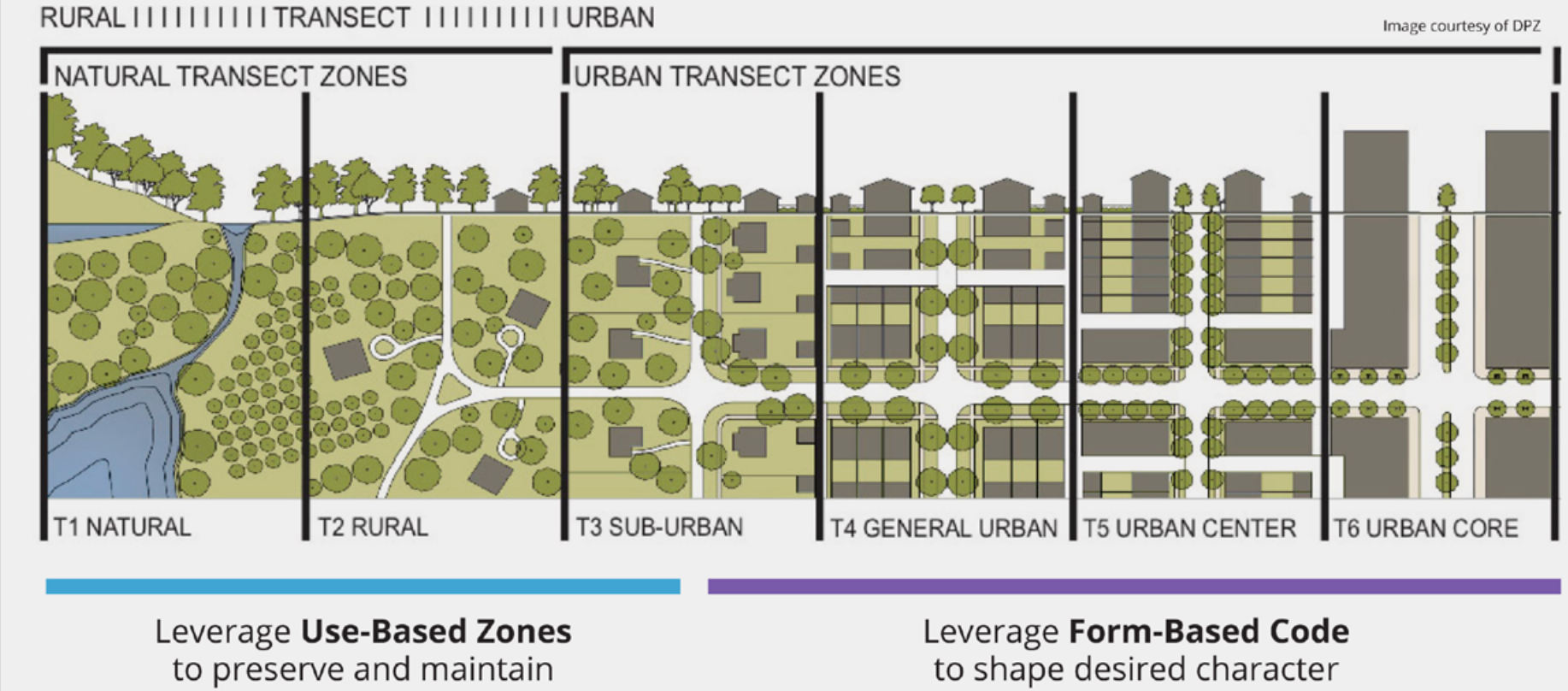
Emphasis is on the use of land in order to preserve and maintain character

Development Standards include:

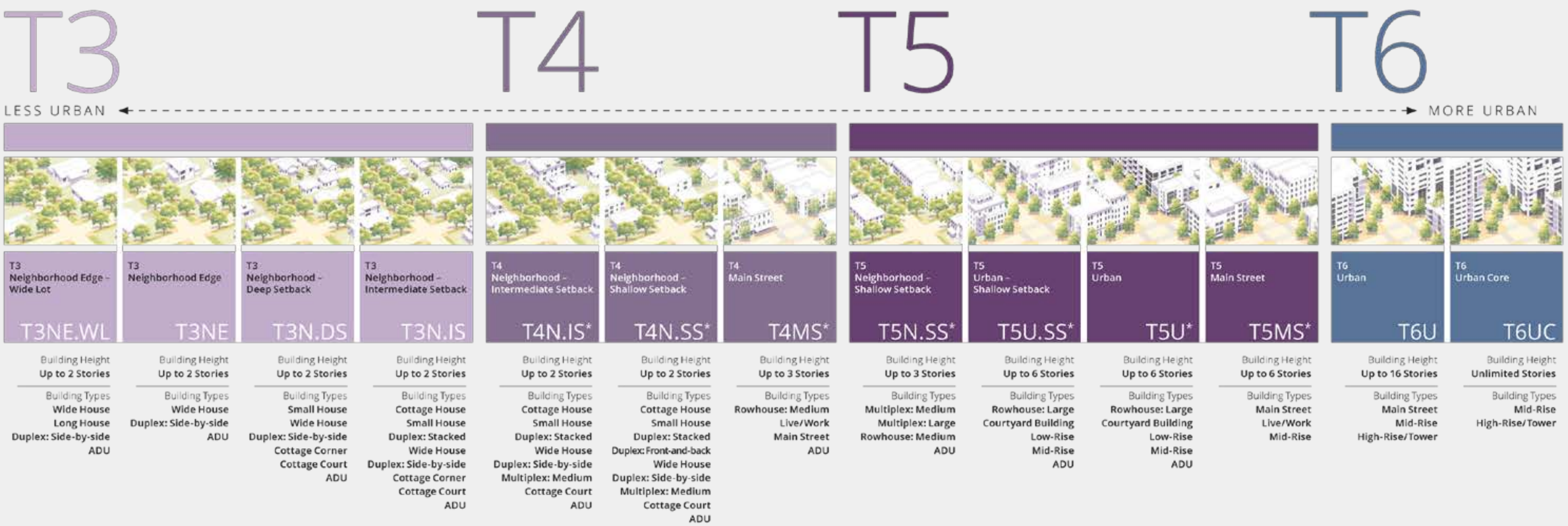
- Use Types
- Parking
- Dwelling units per acre
- Floor to Area Ratio
- Lot Size
- Building Placement (Setbacks)
- Height
- Landscaping and Screening
- Outdoor lighting
- Signage
- Site Constraints
  - Drainage
  - Water Quality
  - Tree Protection
  - Landscape

The Natural-to-Urban Transect: Framework for Form-Based Code

This diagram illustrates a continuum of place types from the most natural to the most urban from left to right.



transect zones AT-A-GLANCE



* *Zone may be designated with "Open" sub-zone having the same building form regulations but allowing for a more diverse mix of uses.*

CODE NEXT

non-transect ZONES

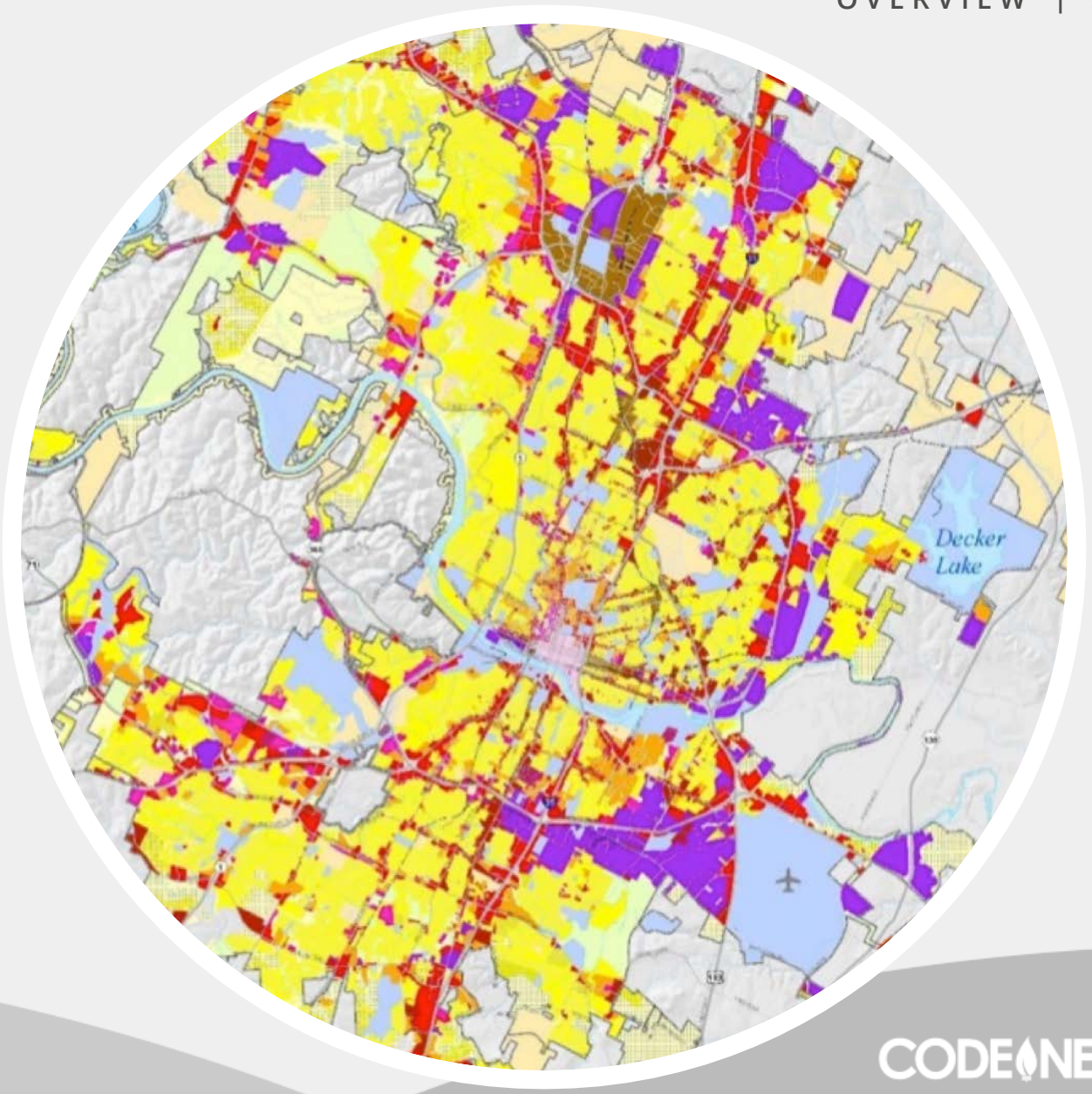
Goal:

Update and roll forward existing Use-Based Zones (Title 25)

42 ▶ 32

Base Zoning Districts (Title 25)

Non-Transect Zones (Title 23)



non-transect ZONES

Non-transect zones are consolidated and refined, and will continue to be utilized primarily in suburban areas.

Low to Medium Intensity Residential

Zone	Similar to
Rural Residential	RR
Very Low Density Residential	SF1
Low Density Residential	SF2
Low to Medium Density Residential	SF3, SF4B
Low to Medium Density Residential - Small Lot	SF4A

Medium to High Intensity Residential

Zone	Similar to
Medium Density Residential	SF5, SF6
Medium to High Density Residential	MF1, MF2
High Density Residential	MF3, MF4
Very High Density Residential	MF5, MF6
Manufactured Home Park	MH

Restricted Commercial

Zone	Similar to
Neighborhood Commercial Sub-Zone **Limited, Open**	NO, LO, LR
Local Commercial Sub-Zone **Limited, Open**	GO

Retail and Office Commercial

Zone	Similar to
General Commercial Sub-Zone **Limited, Open**	GR
Regional Commercial	new

Mixed-Use Commercial

Zone	Similar to
Commercial Core	DMU
Downtown Core	CBD

Service and Highway Commercial

Zone	Similar to
Warehouse Commercial	W/LO
Service Commercial Sub-Zone **Limited, Open**	CS, CS-1
Highway Commercial	CH

Special Commercial

Zone	Similar to
Commercial Recreation	CR

Industrial Zones

Zone	Similar to
Flex Industrial	LI
General Industrial	IP
Heavy Industrial	MI
R&D	R&D

Other Zones

Zone
Agricultural
Aviation Services
Development Reserve
East Riverside Corridor
North Burnet/Gateway
Open Space
Public
Planned Unit Development

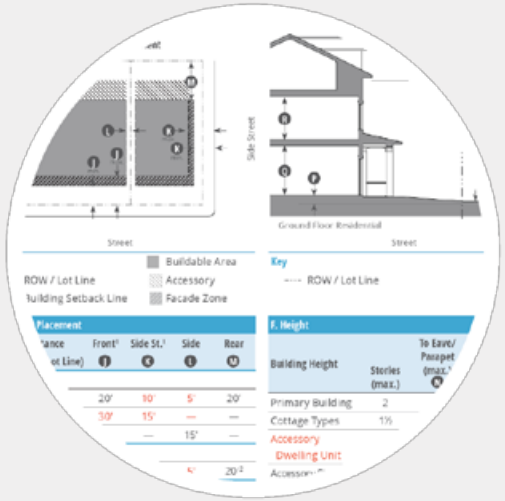
anatomy of THE CODE

How it's organized:
Relocated under a different title number, an extensive reorganization of the Land Development Code elevates community priorities, consolidates procedures, and introduces a hybrid zoning code with new form-based standards.

Title 23

1. **Introduction**
2. **Administration and Procedures**
3. **General Planning Standards for All**
4. **Zoning Code**
5. **Subdivision**
6. **Site Plan**
7. **Building, Demolition and Relocation Permits and Special Requirements for Historic Structures**
8. **Signage**
9. **Transportation (Mobility)**
10. **Infrastructure**
11. **Technical Codes**

next steps



Draft Code

Public Review Draft
Released January 2017

Mapping

April 18, 2017

Adoption Process

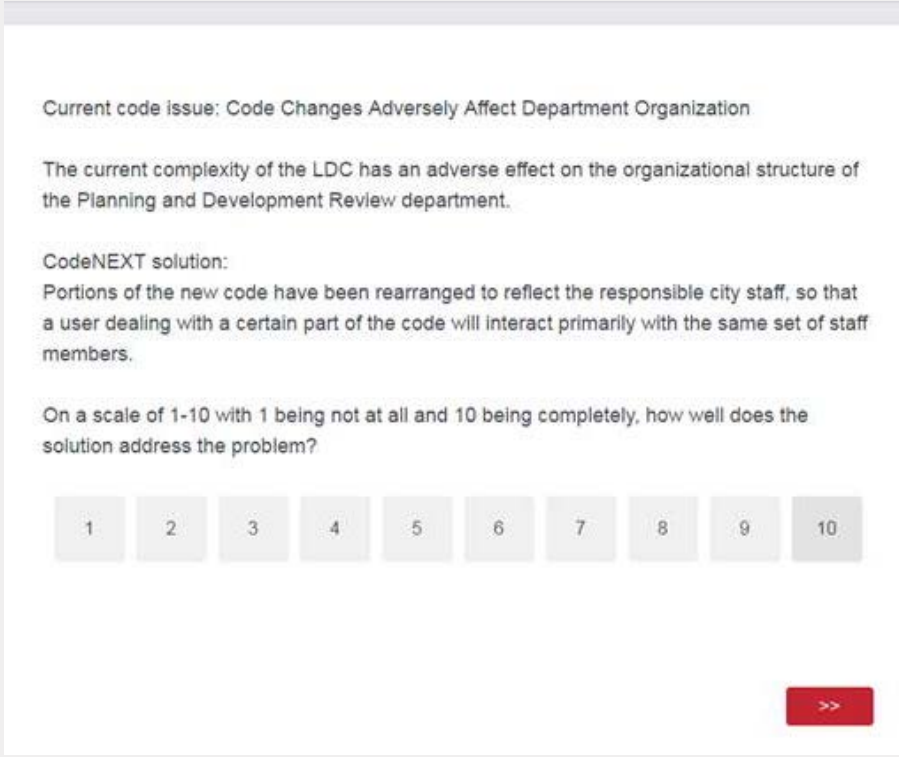
September 2017 –
April 2018

Outreach Toolkit

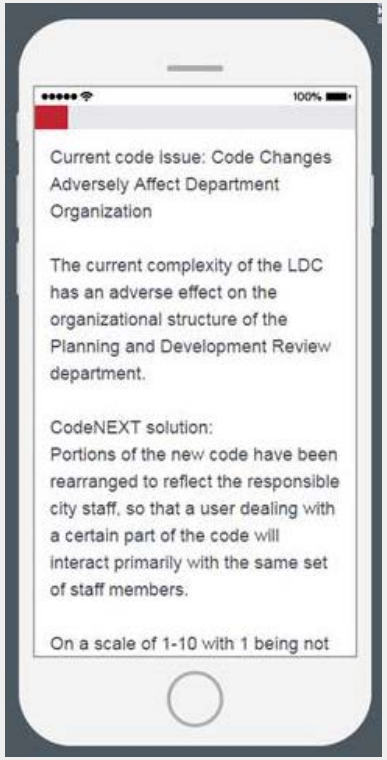
This toolkit includes an FAQ, code preview, and timeline. While these materials alone do not equip Austinites to become code experts, they provide a simple, consistent way for interested residents to share basic information about CodeNEXT and initiate a dialogue with their communities.

Survey Tool

The survey is focused on how the draft code implements the Imagine Austin Priority Programs and alleviates the 10 major issues identified in the Land Development Code Diagnosis.



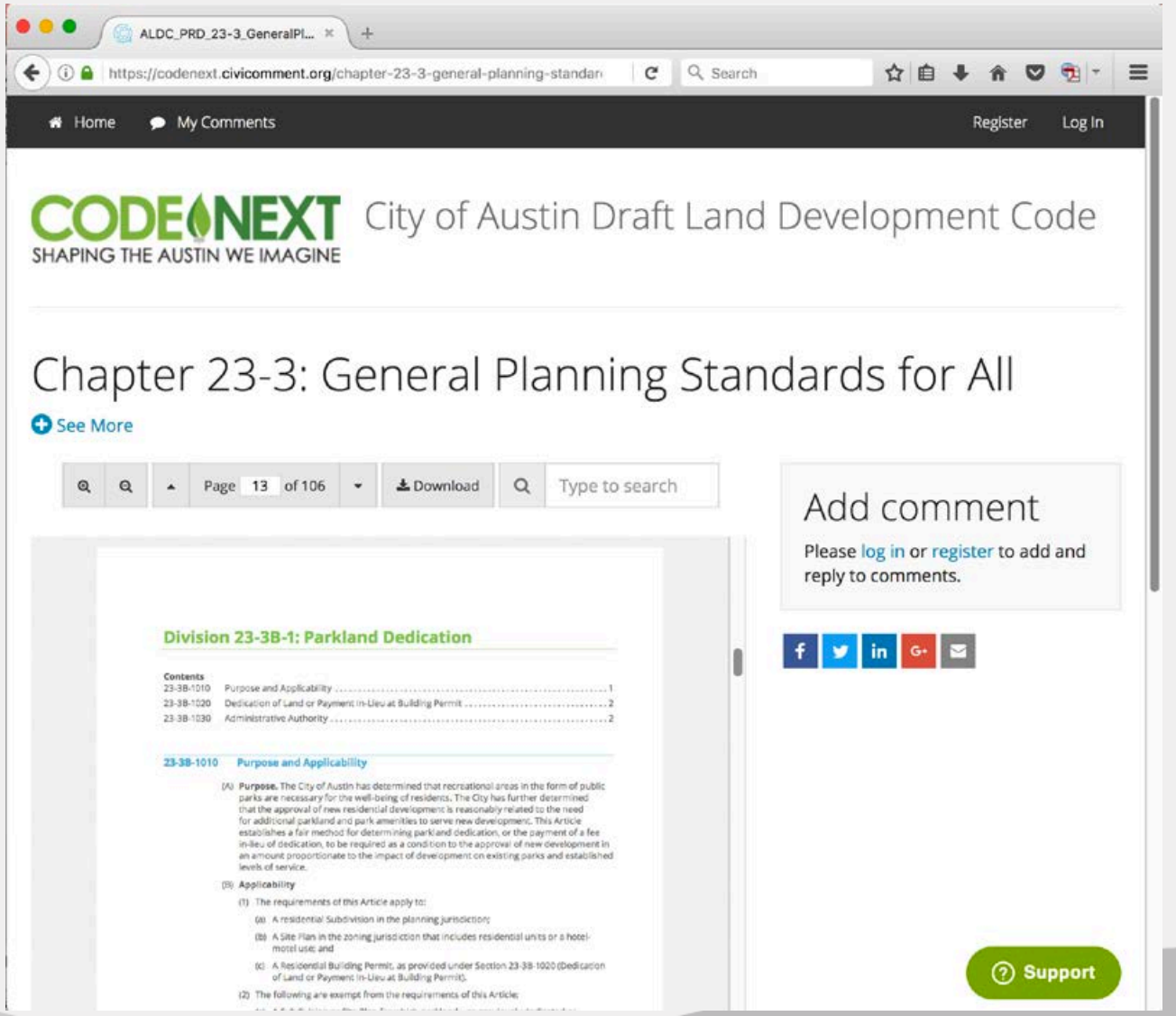
Online and Print



Mobile

Code Comment Tool

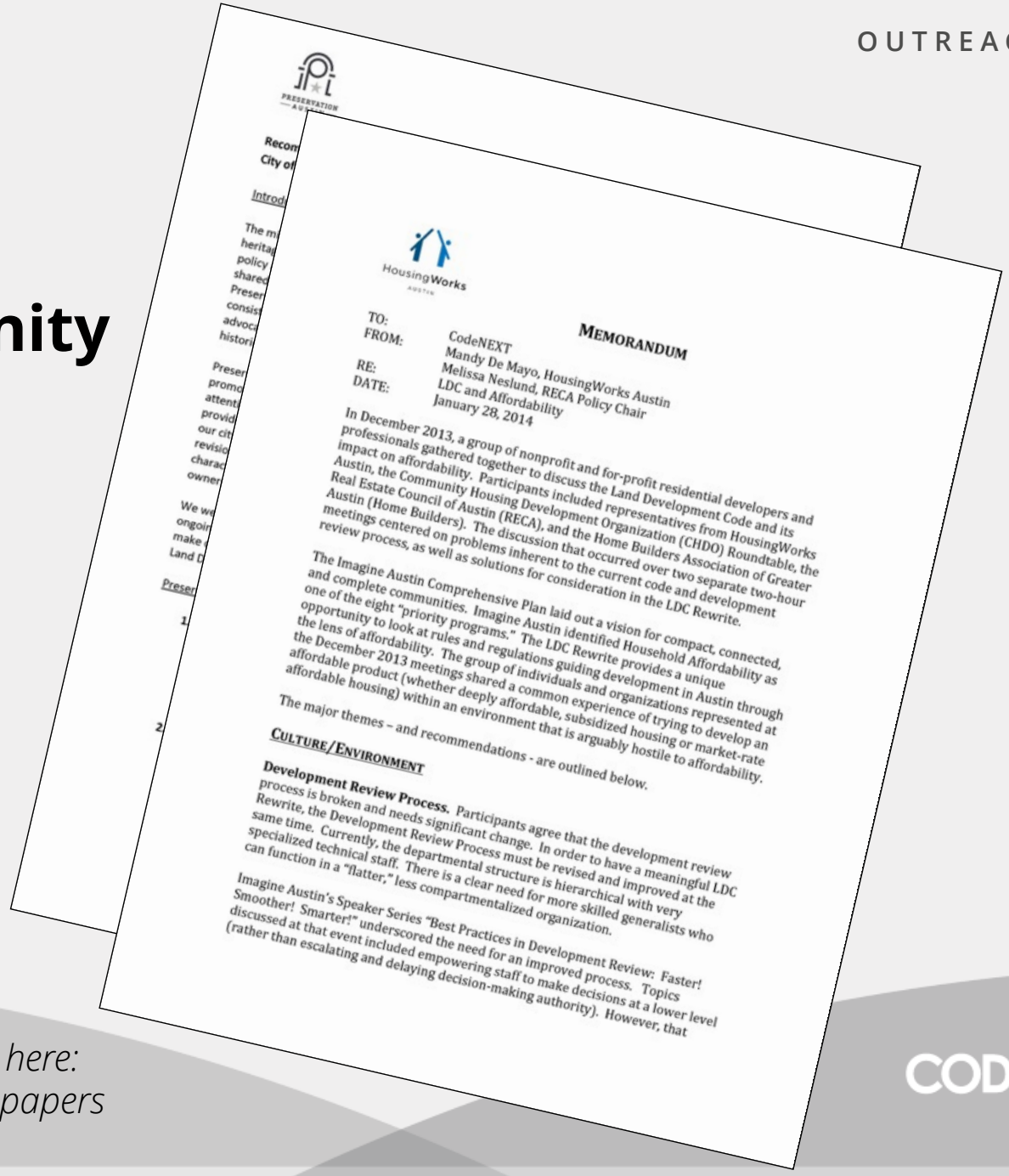
Using a tool (CiviComment) that has been implemented in code rewrites across the country, staff will receive comments on the actual code document from Austinites.



https://codenext.civicomment.org/

Viewpoints & Community Issues Papers

In the interest of transparency, all group position papers and suggestions will be posted on the CodeNEXT document-hosting site.



HousingWorks AUSTIN

MEMORANDUM

TO: CodeNEXT
FROM: Mandy De Mayo, HousingWorks Austin
Melissa Neslund, RECA Policy Chair
RE: LDC and Affordability
DATE: January 28, 2014

In December 2013, a group of nonprofit and for-profit residential developers and professionals gathered together to discuss the Land Development Code and its impact on affordability. Participants included representatives from HousingWorks Austin, the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Roundtable, the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA), and the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin (Home Builders). The discussion that occurred over two separate two-hour meetings centered on problems inherent to the current code and development review process, as well as solutions for consideration in the LDC Rewrite.

The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan laid out a vision for compact, connected, and complete communities. Imagine Austin identified Household Affordability as one of the eight "priority programs." The LDC Rewrite provides a unique opportunity to look at rules and regulations guiding development in Austin through the lens of affordability. The group of individuals and organizations represented at the December 2013 meetings shared a common experience of trying to develop an affordable product (whether deeply affordable, subsidized housing or market-rate affordable housing) within an environment that is arguably hostile to affordability.

The major themes – and recommendations - are outlined below.

CULTURE/ENVIRONMENT

Development Review Process. Participants agree that the development review process is broken and needs significant change. In order to have a meaningful LDC Rewrite, the Development Review Process must be revised and improved at the same time. Currently, the departmental structure is hierarchical with very specialized technical staff. There is a clear need for more skilled generalists who can function in a "flatter," less compartmentalized organization.

Imagine Austin's Speaker Series "Best Practices in Development Review: Faster! Smoother! Smarter!" underscored the need for an improved process. Topics discussed at that event included empowering staff to make decisions at a lower level (rather than escalating and delaying decision-making authority). However, that

Previous Group Position Papers can be found here: http://www.austintexas.gov/department/issue-papers

CODENEXT

PUBLIC MEETING TOOLS

CodeTEXT Open Houses

Dates

- **February 18th**

  Crocket High School
- **February 25th**

  Lanier High School
- **March 4th**

  LBJ High School
- **March 25th**

  Stephen F. Austin High School
- **April 1st**

  Westwood High School
- **April 8th**

  Anderson High School

CodeNEXT Topic Talks

Dates

- 5 Events
- Between March and May 2017

SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

Help us get it right.

We invite you to review and comment on the draft code document, ask questions, and stay connected.

www.austintexas.gov/codenext

codenext@austintexas.gov

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