

Imagine Austin Plan Framework Building Blocks – Working Paper Draft

Final – Revised 3/11/2011 (Changes by Comprehensive Plan Citizen Task Force , Planning Commission, and City Council)

Introduction

As Austin approaches its 200th anniversary in 2039 it is at a critical juncture in its history. Since the adoption of its current comprehensive plan (Austin Tomorrow) in 1979, the population of the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)¹ has grown from 407,195 in 1980 to 990,576 (2010 estimate), and over the next 30 years about 750,000 more residents and 300,000 new jobs are projected. While Austin Tomorrow has been amended numerous times through the adoption of neighborhood, transportation, and other plans, the time is right for a new comprehensive plan to set the direction for managing growth and change as the 21st century unfolds.

The Austin City Council established three goals for the *Imagine Austin* planning process: engage the whole community in developing the plan; set the direction to achieve a sustainable future; and create a plan that will be implemented. Since the initial public open house in October 2009, almost 15,000 residents have participated in community forums, online and print surveys, social media groups, neighborhood meetings, and informal gatherings throughout Austin. In August 2010, *Imagine Austin* reached a major milestone with the City Council endorsement of a community-based Vision Statement describing Austin in 2039 – crafted from the input and ideas of thousands of residents.

With the Vision Statement defining in broad strokes what residents want Austin to be in 30 years, the remainder of the planning process will establish how to get there:

- How can the City accommodate the projected 750,000 new residents and 300,000 new jobs in a way that supports the Vision Statement?
- How can Vision Statement goals such as sustainability, affordability, and equal opportunity for all residents be achieved?

The current step in the planning process, creation of a **Plan Framework** and **Preferred Growth Scenario**, sets the course to answer these questions. In very general terms, the draft Preferred Growth Scenario expresses the ideal direction for Austin's future physical development and preservation. The draft Plan Framework establishes strategic directions to address the full range of challenges that must be surmounted to achieve an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable future as defined by the Vision Statement.

The **Plan Framework** is organized into seven “building blocks” incorporating elements (subject areas) required by the Austin City Charter to be included in the Comprehensive Plan and

Plan Framework

A set of “topical” building blocks (land use and transportation, housing and neighborhoods, economy, etc.) that identify strategic directions for action to achieve the Imagine Austin Vision.

Preferred Growth Scenario

The overall concept for the direction of growth and preservation over the next 30 years in Austin and its ETJ, based on community input.

¹ As defined by the Texas Local Government Code, Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated area that is contiguous to and located within five miles of its corporate boundaries (city limits) and not within another city or another city's ETJ. The combined area within the city limits and the ETJ constitute the study area for the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

several others added based on public input (see *Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks and Elements* below). The Plan Framework is based on public input combined with analysis of current and projected conditions and trends shaping Austin's future. It represents the "bridge" between the Vision Statement and full Comprehensive Plan to be developed in 2011, which will include more detailed strategies and an action component specifying the steps needed to implement the plan.

Both the Preferred Growth Scenario and the Plan Framework are "works in progress" rather than definitive documents. They will be used by the Working Groups in the Building Blocks Workshop and follow up meetings to guide development of the full Comprehensive Plan (see *Next Steps* below).

Preferred Growth Scenario

The Preferred Growth Scenario is a map accompanying the Plan Framework that sets out, conceptually, how Austin should grow in the future. It represents the most desirable way, based on Austin's Vision for 2030, in which the City can accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use areas, open space, transit, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years. The Preferred Growth Scenario reflects public input received in two series of community forums and associated public outreach activities, including the *Which Way, Austin* newsletter and survey.

In Community Forum #2 and follow-up meetings, residents worked from resource materials to create over 60 maps depicting the development patterns and transportation network they felt would best accommodate projected future growth.

During Community Forum #3 and accompanying surveys, residents were asked to compare five growth scenarios (a projected trend and four alternatives constructed from the Community Forum #2 maps) and provide input on a preferred growth direction for the future. Residents selected their preferred scenario based on a series of sustainability indicators (see Sustainability and the Comprehensive Plan below). Scenario "D" (referred to as the linear scenario) was their first choice, followed by the Scenario "C" (centers) as their second choice. City staff and the Citizens Advisory Task Force took the public input and created a blended scenario that serves as the Preferred Growth Scenario depicting Austin's Vision for 2039.

As an alternative to the way in which Austin could be expected to grow if it follows the growth patterns of the past several decades (Trend Scenario), the key directions of the Preferred Growth Scenario include:

- Protect existing open space and natural resources (e.g., creeks, rivers, lakes, and floodplains)
- Direct development away from the Edwards Aquifer
- Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase transit use and reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Reduce water consumption
- Develop mixed-use corridors and centers accessible by walking, biking, and transit
- Provide convenient access to jobs and employment centers
- Provide parks and open space close to where people live and work

In addition to reflecting public input, this scenario takes into account planned development and existing neighborhood plans. In essence, it represents a blending of the alternative scenarios and reality on the ground. In general, the Preferred Growth Scenario favors north-south redevelopment and new development that takes advantage of Austin's existing transportation and infrastructure network. There is very limited development to the environmentally-sensitive west, and development to the east takes place in compact, clustered patterns. This type of development helps to protect creeks and rivers in the eastern

part of the study area, as well as existing farmland. New growth along Austin's north-south axis is directed to centers and mixed-use corridors to preserve established neighborhoods and support a more robust public transportation network. The Preferred Scenario introduces a wider variety of alternatives to Austin's congested routes (e.g., I-35 and MoPac) supports existing investments in Downtown Austin, Mueller, North Burnet Gateway, the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the Red Line, and the San Antonio to Georgetown Lone Star Rail.

Several different development types are included: mixed-use centers (i.e., Regional, Town, and Neighborhood Centers), Mixed-Use Corridors, Job Centers (predominantly office, retail, and industrial uses), infill residential, and greenfield residential uses. All of the mixed-use centers and corridors are intended to be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly and supportive of transit, and should all include well-designed streetscapes, plazas, and parks.

- **Regional Centers** are the major urban hubs of the region. They have the highest densities of jobs and residents, are highly walkable, support high-capacity transit, and include a full spectrum of employment uses. Downtown, Lakeline, Robinson Ranch, North Burnett Gateway, Highland Mall, and Southside are Regional Centers. Some Regional Centers are entirely urban, like Downtown, while others (like Robinson Ranch or the southern center at the intersection of IH-35 and SH 45) are likely have urban cores surrounded by well-connected but lower density development.
- **Town Centers** have a mix of commercial and residential uses supporting high-capacity transit. They include townhouses, rowhouses, apartments, as well as some single-family houses, in addition to offices and community serving retail. The Mueller redevelopment is a local example of a Town Center.
- Like Town Centers, **Neighborhood Centers and Mixed-Use Corridors** are highly walkable and support transit, but are less dense and have more local focus than Town Centers. They have community-serving retail and services (e.g., dry cleaners, beauty salons, coffee shops, restaurants) along with moderately dense housing types, such as small-lot single-family, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. Neighborhood centers are concentrated on several blocks or around one or two intersections, while mixed-use corridors extend along a linear corridor (e.g., South Congress Avenue).
- **Job Centers** are predominantly office and industrial uses. Development can occur at a range of scales, depending on zoning and neighborhood plans. Job center uses include major employers (e.g., IBM in North Austin) and industrial uses such as warehouses, offices, and manufacturing that need to be located further from residences. While these areas are currently best served by car, the Preferred Growth Scenario increases public transit options (e.g., light rail, bus rapid transit) to shift the reliance away from the automobile.
- **Infill Residential** is residential development that occurs as redevelopment or alongside existing development (e.g., new residences built on vacant land next to existing homes, redevelopment of a 1-story office building for several townhouses or apartments). Housing types may include the broad range of single-family houses, duplexes, secondary apartments, townhouses, and apartments.
- **Greenfield Residential** refers to residential development on undeveloped land. Residential housing types may include single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments.

Sustainability and the Comprehensive Plan

Sustainable development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987

Sustainability is one of three overall goals for the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* set by the City Council. As a community, Austin is distinguished by a strong environmental ethos dating back to the 1960s. It enacted one of the country's first green building programs in 1985; adopted an aggressive climate protection plan calling for city operations, facilities, vehicle fleets, and utilities to be totally carbon neutral by 2020 in 2007; and created the Office of Sustainability in 2010. SustainLane (an online community dedicated to sustainability) ranked Austin as the 13th most sustainable city in the nation in 2008, lauding its leadership in addressing climate change, green building, and renewable energy, but noting traffic congestion, transit ridership, and local food/agriculture as areas needing work.

The Comprehensive Plan defines sustainability as integrating **Economy**, **Environment**, and **Equity** (the three “Es”) in a mutually supporting, enduring manner. Thus, the sum of the Plan Framework’s strategic directions, while presented in separate Building Blocks, are designed to work together to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity that is passed on to future generations. At the same time, a sustainable future will maintain Austin’s unique local character and spirit.

The Austin Spirit

As captured by the monikers “Live Music Capital of the World” and “Keep Austin Weird,” a spirit of creativity is at the heart of what differentiates Austin from other communities. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, this spirit transcends Austin’s vibrant arts scene, creative community, and home-grown businesses to embody a broader, innovative mindset and approach to solving problems.

Resilience – the ability to adapt to challenges and change – will be a hallmark of successful communities in the 21st century, and innovation has been identified as one of the key attributes of resiliency.² Whereas a sustainable future is the ultimate goal of the Comprehensive Plan, creativity and innovation are essential to the process of realizing it. By harnessing the collective energy of Austin’s people the plan and its implementation will address the big issues facing the City. As part of this process, the community will be asked in the Building Blocks Workshop and follow-up Working Group meetings to brainstorm and discuss creative strategies and actions to achieve a sustainable, resilient future Austin.

A Regional Perspective

The geographic scope of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* is Austin’s current city limits and its ETJ, which is mostly located in Travis County but also encompasses parts of Bastrop, Hays, and Williamson Counties. Looking beyond this study area, Austin is the principal city in the five-county area covered by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and the larger ten-county region covered by the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG). Other significant cities in the region include Round Rock, Cedar Park, Kyle, San Marcos, Georgetown, and Pflugerville. At an even larger scale, Austin is part of the dynamic, fast growing Dallas/Fort Worth-San Antonio-Houston Texas Triangle “mega-region.” Consequently, it is important that the Comprehensive Plan incorporate a regional perspective that considers the impacts of the future growth and development of Austin on the larger

² Brian Walker and David Salt, *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World*, Island Press, 2006

region, and vice versa. Towards this end, the full Comprehensive Plan will incorporate a regional component developed through coordination with surrounding jurisdictions and regional agencies (e.g., Travis County, Round Rock, CAMPO, and CAPCOG).

Implementation and Complete Communities

Consistent with City Council direction that the *Imagine Austin* planning process result in a plan that will be implemented, the full Comprehensive Plan to be developed in 2011 (see *Next Steps* below) will include an Implementation Element specifying actions, timeframes, and responsibilities to carry out the Building Block strategic directions. The effectiveness of plan implementation will ultimately be measured by the extent to which it positively impacts the day-to-day lives of Austin's residents and families.

To assist in this process, the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force has put forward the concept of **Complete Communities** as a tool to assess the **outcomes** of the actions taken to implement the plan. Simply stated, this concept is designed to measure the extent to which residents' needs are met in all parts of the city using key metrics or indicators of community health (e.g., educational attainment, employment, public health, housing affordability, environmental quality, and tax base) that can be tracked over time.

The Complete Communities concept will be fleshed out with specific indicators tied to the Building Blocks as the Comprehensive Plan is developed in 2011.

The five-county Capital Region is at the beginning of a three-year process to refine and implement the Envision Central Texas (ECT) regional plan using a \$3.7 million grant awarded by the federal 2010 Sustainable Communities Partnership (the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency). Regional partners in developing the plan include the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG); Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO); the Cities of Austin, Round Rock, and San Marcos; the University of Texas; Envision Central Texas; and IBM. Developing and implementing the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* will be coordinated with the regional sustainability planning process as it moves forward. The Imagine Austin Vision Statement is consistent with six "Livability Principles" established by the Sustainable Communities Partnership, which will guide the regional planning effort.

Next Steps

Review and endorsement of the Preferred Growth Scenario and Plan Framework by the City Council is anticipated in March 2011. While these two work products are being finalized, Working Groups open to all interested citizens will be formed for each of the seven Building Blocks. Beginning in late March and early April of 2011, the Working Groups will participate in a Building Blocks Workshop and follow-up Working Group meetings, scheduled to run through the summer. Each group will identify strategies related to its Building Block's Strategic Directions to carry out the Vision Statement and make recommendations for prioritizing actions to be included in the implementation component of the Comprehensive Plan. Using the ideas and recommendations of the Working Groups and feedback from the Task Force, city staff and consultants will prepare working drafts to be assembled and integrated in the complete Comprehensive Plan. A public review of the complete draft of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* (Community Forum #4) is planned for late 2011, followed by Planning Commission and City Council review and adoption.

Plan Framework

Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks and Elements

Austin's City Charter requires that the Comprehensive Plan include the City Council's policies for growth, development, and beautification of land within the corporate limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the city, or for geographic portions thereof including neighborhood, community, or area-wide plans.

According to the Charter, the comprehensive plan shall include the following elements:

- 1) Future Land Use element;
- 2) Traffic Circulation and Mass Transit element;
- 3) Wastewater, Solid Waste, Drainage, and Potable water element;
- 4) Conservation and Environmental Resources element;
- 5) Recreation and Open Space element;
- 6) Housing element;
- 7) Public Services and Facilities element, which shall include but not be limited to a capital improvement program;
- 8) Public Buildings and Related Facilities element;
- 9) Economic element for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment; and
- 10) Health and Human Service element.

The Austin City Council endorsed the inclusion of new elements not required by the Charter but established through the public input process:

- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Children, Families, and Education
- Arts, Culture, and Creativity
- Urban Design

These elements have been grouped into the "Building Blocks" of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*. The plan's seven building blocks are:

- **Land Use and Transportation** (*includes Future Land Use, Urban Design, Traffic, and Mass Transit*)
- **Housing and Neighborhoods** (*includes Housing*)
- **Economy** (*includes Economic element*)
- **Conservation and Environmental Resources** (*includes Conservation and Environmental Resources*)
- **City Facilities and Services** (*includes Wastewater; Solid Waste, Drainage, Potable Water; Public Service and Facilities; Public Buildings and Facilities; Recreation and Open Space*)
- **Society** (*includes Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Education*)
- **Culture** (*includes Arts, Culture, and Creativity; Historic and Cultural Preservation*)

For each Building Block, the Plan Framework identifies strategic directions to realize Austin's Vision for 2039 and address challenges facing the City. The draft Building Blocks draw on the Imagine Austin Community Inventory (www.imagineaustin.net/inventory.htm); existing city plans (e.g., *CreateAustin*, the *Climate Protection Plan*); public input as synthesized in the Common Ground Working Paper (www.imagineaustin.net/commonground-paper.htm) and Community Forum #3 survey; and the Strategic Issues Working Paper (www.imagineaustin.net/strategic-issues.htm).

BUILDING BLOCK 1: Land Use, Transportation, and Urban Design – Draft

The Land Use and Transportation Building Block addresses the connection between land use patterns, urban form, and the transportation network.

Building Block Elements:

- Land Use and Transportation
- Urban Design

Land Use and Transportation

Austin must create an efficient and sustainable land use pattern and transportation network that:

- Reduces sprawl and land consumption;
- Promotes infill and redevelopment;
- Preserves significant undeveloped land and protects sensitive environmental features;
- Encourages compact, mixed-use neighborhoods providing local-serving retail, schools, parks, and services that are accessible by transit, walking, and bicycling and promotes community health;
- Maintains Austin as a center of employment, government, commerce, entertainment, and recreation in the region;
- Supports all modes of transportation; and
- Reduces vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

From the Vision Statement - Austin is Livable:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day and night time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear rules guide sustainable development and preservation, and they provide compatibility and certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and affordable healthcare.

Strategic Directions

- LUT 1. Align land use and transportation planning and decision-making to achieve the Preferred Growth Scenario/Growth Concept Map.
- LUT 2. Promote regional planning and increased coordination between municipalities to address major land use and transportation challenges.
- LUT 3. Promote development in compact centers, communities, or along corridors that are connected by transit service, are designed to encourage walking and bicycling, and reduce housing and transportation costs.
- LUT 4. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change (e.g., designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites). Recognize that different neighborhoods have different characteristics, and infill and new development should be sensitive to the predominant character of these neighborhoods.

- LUT 5. Create healthy and family-friendly communities through development that includes a mix of land uses and housing types and affords realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel and provides both community gathering spaces and safe outdoor play areas for children.
- LUT 6. Ensure that lower income neighborhoods have a mix of local-serving retail, employment opportunities, and residential uses.
- LUT 7. Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities that place residential, work, and retail land uses in proximity to each other to maximize walking, bicycling, and transit opportunities.
- LUT 8. Develop land development regulations and standards that are clear and predictable and support the intent and goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.
- LUT 9. Direct housing and employment growth to sites appropriate for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)³ and at intersections of major roadways and preserve and integrate existing affordable housing where possible.
- LUT 10. Promote complete street design (e.g., traffic calming elements, street trees, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access)⁴ throughout Austin, considering the safety needs of people of all ages and abilities.
- LUT 11. Achieve the goals of area transit plans through effective planning, sufficient funding, and continued partnerships between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, and other area transportation providers.
- LUT 12. Coordinate with area school districts in the placement of schools and facilities.
- LUT 13. Promote safer routes to schools for students of all ages.
- LUT 14. Incorporate provisions for bicycles and pedestrians into all roads (e.g., freeway/toll roads, arterial roadways, etc.), and to and from transit stations and stops, and major activity centers.

From the Vision Statement - *Austin is Mobile and Interconnected:*

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens.

Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

- Interconnected development patterns support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.
- Our integrated transportation system is well-maintained, minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, and remains affordable for all users.
- Austin promotes safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin area. These routes are part of our comprehensive regional transportation network.

³ Transit-Oriented Development is defined by the Federal Transit Administration as compact, mixed-use development within walking distance of public transportation.

⁴ Roads that are designed to safely accommodate necessary street functions for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit riders.

- LUT 15. Educate the public on the long-range need for commitment to a community fully served by a range of transportation modes and the benefits of each mode.
- LUT 16. Develop intermediate transit solutions that allow the City to reach the ultimate goal of a complete transit network over the long term.
- LUT 17. Continue efforts to implement future intercity rail and High Speed Rail in the Austin region.
- LUT 18. Reduce traffic congestion and encourage alternative transportation modes (e.g., using Transportation Demand Management approaches).
- LUT 19. Locate industry, warehousing, logistics, manufacturing, and other freight-intensive uses in proximity to adequate transportation infrastructure.
- LUT 20. Ensure that redevelopment in the Edwards Aquifer's recharge and contributing zones maintains the recharge of the aquifer.
- LUT 21. Protect Austin's natural resources and environmental systems by limiting land use and transportation development in sensitive environmental areas and preserving new areas of open space.
- LUT 22. Integrate a citywide/regional green infrastructure (e.g., preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands, etc.) and the trail system into the urban environment and the transportation network. (*See also Conservation and Environmental Resources*).
- LUT 23. Direct hazardous materials/cargo that are being transported through Austin away from heavily populated or environmental sensitive areas.
- LUT 24. Develop a comprehensive network of evacuation routes for all areas of Austin.
- LUT 25. Strengthen planning processes by recognizing that the Comprehensive Plan and small-area plans (e.g., neighborhood plans, corridor plans, and station area plans) need to respect, inform, and draw from each other.

Urban Design

Austin must preserve and enhance the character of Austin's downtown, neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and public spaces through design that:

- Promotes pedestrian activity, healthy communities, and fosters a sense of community;
- Reflects the local heritage, landscape, history, and values of Austin;
- Results in high-quality, socially active public places;
- Supports the economic vitality of the city's neighborhoods and commercial and mixed-use districts;
- Creates inviting public spaces that are physically, culturally, socially, and economically accessible;
- Accommodates all modes of transportation on the city's streets; and
- Provides open space and transportation linkages between mixed-use and commercial districts, neighborhoods, and parks and recreational areas.

Strategic Directions

- UD 1. Develop accessible community gathering places (e.g., plazas, parks, farmers' markets, sidewalks, and streets) in all parts of Austin, especially in the Downtown, future TODs, in denser, mixed-use communities, and other redevelopment areas, that encourage interaction and provide places for people to visit and relax.
- UD 2. Protect and enhance the unique qualities of Austin's treasured public spaces and places such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes; and, where needed, enrich those areas lacking distinctive visual character or where the character has faded.
- UD 3. Define the community's goals for new public and private developments using principles and design guidelines that capture the distinctive, diverse local character of Austin.
- UD 4. Assure that new development is walkable and bikable and preserves the positive characteristics of existing pedestrian-friendly environments.
- UD 5. Apply high standards of urban design to ensure that "complete streets" are safe and accessible for all users. Encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation that are sensitive to the demands of the Central Texas climate.
- UD 6. Integrate green infrastructure elements such as the urban forest, green buildings, and green streets into the urban design of the City through "green" development practices and regulations.
- UD 7. Infuse public art into Austin's urban fabric (e.g., streetscapes, parks, plazas).
- UD 8. Transform all major streets into vibrant, multi-functional, pedestrian-friendly corridors.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a "triple bottom line" of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Land Use, Transportation, and Urban Design Building Block, the focus is on environmental quality and social equity that supports economic prosperity. Examples include:

- **Create healthy, family-friendly communities** that improve air quality through reduced transportation emissions (environmental quality), provide access to quality schools and health services (social equity), and encourage diverse, neighborhood serving businesses (economic prosperity).
- Promote **complete street design** to encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation and reduce emissions (environmental quality), provide safe transportation options (equity), and reduce congestion (economic prosperity).

BUILDING BLOCK 2: Housing and Neighborhoods – Draft

The Housing and Neighborhoods Building Block covers housing and neighborhoods in Austin, including issues related to affordable housing, services, demographics, mix of uses, character, and preservation.

Building Block Elements:

- Housing
- Neighborhoods

Housing

Austin must provide a range of energy and resource-efficient housing options and prices in all parts of the city to sustainably meet the needs of all segments of Austin's diverse population.

Strategic Directions

- H 1. Distribute a variety of housing types throughout the City to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of Austin's diverse population.
- H 2. Expand the availability of affordable housing throughout Austin by preserving existing affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons.
- H 3. Increase the availability of affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons, through new and innovative funding mechanisms (e.g., public/private partnerships).
- H 4. Connect housing to jobs, child care, schools, retail, and other amenities and services needed on a daily basis, e.g.:
 - Direct housing and employment growth to sites appropriate for Transit Oriented Development.
 - Coordinate in planning for housing near public transportation networks and employment centers to reduce household transportation costs and vehicle miles traveled.
- H 5. Promote a diversity of land uses throughout Austin to allow a variety of housing types ranging from permanent supportive housing to rental and ownership opportunities for singles, families with and without children, seniors, and person with disabilities.
- H 6. Address accessibility issues and other housing barriers to persons with disabilities or special needs.

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Livable:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day and night time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear rules guide sustainable development and preservation, and they provide compatibility and certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and affordable healthcare.

- H 7. Reuse former brownfields, greyfields (previously developed properties such as strip centers or malls that are not contaminated) and vacant building sites to reduce negative impacts of vacancy and provide new mixed-use and/or housing options.
- H 8. Encourage green practices in housing construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes. (*See also Children, Families, and Education*).
- H 9. Renovate the existing housing stock to reduce utility and maintenance costs for owners and occupants.

Neighborhoods

Austin must sustain distinct, stable, and attractive neighborhoods that preserve and reinforce the livability, character, and special sense of place of the City.

Strategic Directions

- N 1. Create complete neighborhoods across Austin with a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options. (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- N 2. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change and ensuring context sensitive infill (e.g., designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites). (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- N 3. Identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability.
- N 4. Protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the City. (*See also Historic and Cultural Preservation*).
- N 5. Strengthen Austin's neighborhoods by connecting to other neighborhoods, quality schools, parks, and other community-serving uses that are accessible by transit, walking, and bicycling.
- N 6. Strengthen planning processes by recognizing that the Comprehensive Plan and small-area plans (e.g., neighborhood plans, corridor plans, and station area plans) need to respect, inform, and draw from each other.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Housing and Neighborhoods Building Block, the focus is on equity that supports environmental quality and economic prosperity. For example,

- **Increase accessibility and affordability of housing** by connecting housing with employment (economic prosperity), concentrating housing in sites appropriate for Transit Oriented Development to consume fewer acres of land (environmental quality), and increasing housing/transportation affordability (social equity).

BUILDING BLOCK 3: Economy – Draft

The Economy Building Block covers Austin's economic growth sectors and employment, as well as related issues such as education, transportation, and housing.

Economy

Austin must build a vibrant, resilient, and diverse economy that celebrates innovation and creativity; provides equitable opportunities for people; and protects the environment. Sustainability includes not only environmental stewardship and social equity but economic prosperity for Austin residents and businesses.

Strategic Directions

- ECO 1. Promote and measure business entrepreneurship, innovation and a culture of creativity.
- ECO 2. Implement policies that create, nurture, and retain small businesses.
- ECO 3. Build on the Austin metropolitan area's position as a leader in global trade.
- ECO 4. Continue to strengthen partnerships among Chambers of Commerce, state and local governments, and major employers and leverage incentives to attract and retain major employers.
- ECO 5. Enhance Austin's draw as a premier national and international tourist destination by strengthening cultural (arts, music, film) and entertainment offerings, enhancing natural resources, and expanding the availability of family-friendly events and venues.
- ECO 6. Encourage Austin's creative economy and culture through flexible, place-based policies (those directed at specific geographic areas) as well as policies directed toward virtual reality and digital media.
- ECO 7. Promote Downtown as the premier business district in the region and expand the presence of global finance and trade.
- ECO 8. Invest in and expand major cultural facilities in Austin's Downtown.
- ECO 9. Spur medical and life science technology investments by establishing a medical school.

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Prosperous:

Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole—including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions.

Development carefully balances the needs of differing land uses with improved transportation to ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable.

- Our economy is resilient and responsive to global trends thanks to its diverse and thriving mix of local entrepreneurs, large and small businesses, educational institutions, government, and industry.
- Innovation and creativity are the engines of Austin's economy in the arts, research and development, and technology.
- Our ecology is integrated with our economy—the preservation of the environment and natural resources contribute to our prosperity.
- Equitable opportunities are accessible to all through quality education, training, and good jobs.

- ECO 10. Cluster or co-locate educational facilities (e.g., high schools, vocational schools, colleges or universities) near employment centers (e.g., healthcare facilities, biotech and green technologies, etc.) to better connect students to potential employment opportunities.
- ECO 11. Expand the educational offerings and establish cooperative partnerships between Austin Community College, the University of Texas, and other institutions of higher learning to support target industries' education and training requirements.
- ECO 12. Engage major employers and institutions of higher education to provide leadership in meeting the needs of chronic unemployed and underemployed residents, such as people with disabilities, and former clients of the criminal justice or foster care systems.
- ECO 13. Promote "start-up districts" where new businesses benefit from locating near transportation infrastructure, services, suppliers, mentors, and affordable support facilities.
- ECO 14. Encourage and support innovation through flexible city rules, adaptive reuse of buildings, and up-to-date infrastructure so that creativity thrives in actual as well as virtual reality and digital media.
- ECO 15. Improve regional transportation planning and financing for infrastructure (e.g., air, rail, and roads) in order to ensure the reliable movement of goods and people.
- ECO 16. Invest in sustainable, affordable utility sources (communications, power, water, wastewater) to meet the needs of increasing population and employment bases.
- ECO 17. Expand connectivity within the Texas Triangle (Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston) in order to facilitate movement of ideas, goods, and people for economic prosperity.
- ECO 18. Promote convenient and affordable child care for working families.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a "triple bottom line" of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Economy Building Block, the focus is on economic development that supports equity and environmental quality. For example,

- **Promote business growth** in Austin's target industries to expand the clean energy sector (economic prosperity), reduce dependence on non-renewable energy sources (environmental quality), and create new skilled jobs (social equity).

BUILDING BLOCK 4: Conservation and Environmental Resources – Draft

The Conservation and Environmental Resources Building Block covers Austin's natural resources (e.g., waterways, tree canopy, plant and animal habitat) and green infrastructure systems.

Conservation and Environmental Resources

Austin must conserve, protect, and support the City's natural resource systems. This includes protecting our land, water, and air, and developing and adopting better practices for long-term stewardship of Austin's environment.

Strategic Directions

- CER 1. Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.
- CER 2. Conserve Austin's natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas (e.g., Edwards Aquifer and its contributing and recharge zones; endangered species habitat). (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- CER 3. Expand the city's green infrastructure network (e.g., preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands, etc.).
- CER 4. Maintain and increase Austin's urban forest as a key component of the green infrastructure network. (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- CER 5. Expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream/water quality protection, wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture.
- CER 6. Enhance the protection of creeks and flood plains to preserve environmentally and other sensitive areas and improve the quality of water entering the Colorado River through regional planning and improved coordination.
- CER 7. Protect and improve the water quality of the City's creeks, lakes, and aquifers for use and the support of aquatic life.
- CER 8. Improve the urban environment by fostering safe public uses of waterways (e.g., for public recreation that maintains the natural and traditional character of the floodplain).

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Natural and Sustainable:

Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks throughout our city.
- We protect the beauty of the Hill Country and blackland prairie, and value our farmland that nurtures local food production.
- Our parks, open spaces, and preserves shape city planning, reduce infrastructure costs, and provide us with recreation, clean air and water, local food, cooler temperatures, and biodiversity.
- We conserve water, energy, and other valuable resources.
- Austin is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We use and inspire new technologies that create more sustainable communities while reducing our dependence on environmentally costly practices.

- CER 9. Reduce the carbon footprint of the City and its citizens by implementing Austin's *Climate Protection Plan* and develop strategies to adapt to the projected impacts of climate change.
- CER 10. Improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from vehicle use, traffic and congestion, industrial sources, and waste.
- CER 11. Reduce noise pollution from transportation, construction, and other sources.
- CER 12. Decrease light pollution from apartments and single-family houses, signage, commercial buildings, parking lot lights, and street lights.
- CER 13. Integrate development with the natural environment through green building/site planning practices (e.g., tree preservation, reduced impervious coverage) and regulations. Ensure new development provides necessary and adequate infrastructure improvements. (*see also Land Use and Transportation*).
- CER 14. Adopt innovative programs, practices, and technologies to increase environmental quality and sustainability through the conservation of natural resources.
- CER 15. Incentivize, develop, and expand the market for local and sustainable food production (e.g., farming, ranching, food processing).
- CER 16. Establish policies that consider the benefits provided by natural ecosystems, such as ecological processes or functions (e.g., wetlands, riparian areas) having value to individuals or society.
- CER 17. Reduce the overall disposal of solid waste and increase reuse/recycling to conserve environmental resources. (*See also City Facilities and Services*).
- CER 18. Expand and improve regional collaboration and coordination in preserving Central Texas' natural environment.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a "triple bottom line" of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Conservation and Environmental Resources Building Block, the focus is on environmental quality that supports social equity and economic prosperity. For example:

- **Integrate development with the natural environment** by limiting removal of trees (environmental quality), ensuring new development provide necessary infrastructure improvements (economic prosperity), and reducing stormwater runoff and flooding (social equity).

BUILDING BLOCK 5: City Facilities and Services – Draft

The City Facilities and Services Building Block addresses the many different public facilities, utilities, and services that impact the development and character of Austin, including water and wastewater, drainage, solid waste, public buildings and facilities, and recreation and open space.

Building Block Elements:

- Wastewater, Potable Water, Drainage, and Solid Waste
- Public Services, Buildings, and Facilities⁵
- Recreation and Open Space

Wastewater, Potable Water, Drainage, and Solid Waste

Wastewater, Potable Water, Drainage

Austin must provide safe, reliable and high quality water and wastewater services to residents while conserving and protecting the City's natural water resources and protecting lives and property.

Strategic Directions

- WPD 1. Deliver potable water to Austin's residents as the population grows and maintain an efficient and sustainable water system in support of the Preferred Growth Scenario.
- WPD 2. Replace and maintain water and wastewater pipes and infrastructure.
- WPD 3. Develop decentralized wastewater processing sites to complement centralized facilities.
- WPD 4. Plan for and develop alternative water sources other than the Colorado River.
- WPD 5. Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather, and other potential impacts of climate change on the water supply.
- WPD 6. Protect the public water supply and the health and safety of users.
- WPD 7. Reduce the public safety threats of flooding in the 100-year floodplain.

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Livable:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day and night time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear rules guide sustainable development and preservation, and they provide compatibility and certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and affordable healthcare.

⁵ Combines two Charter-required elements, "Public Buildings and Facilities" and "Public Services and Facilities."

- WPD 8. Reduce existing and future pollutant loads in all creeks from stormwater runoff, overflow, and other non-point sources.⁶ (*See also Conservation and Environmental Resources*).
- WPD 9. Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation, and other water resource stewardship programs.
- WPD 10. Protect and improve Austin's streams, lakes, and aquifers for sustainable uses and the support of aquatic life.
- WPD 11. Protect the health of creek channels by minimizing their expansion and preventing public and private property damage resulting from erosion.
- WPD 12. Maintain or enhance the existing rate of recharge in the Edward's Aquifer. (*See also Conservation and Environmental Resources*)
- WPD 13. Meet or exceed all local, state, and federal permit and regulatory requirements (e.g., Designated Use Support status, National Flood Insurance Program).
- WPD 14. Integrate erosion, flood, and water quality control measures into all City of Austin capital improvement projects.

Solid Waste

To realize the Vision, Austin must provide safe and efficient solid waste services and reduce, re-use, and recycle to decrease the amount of landfill waste by 90% over the next 30 years.

Strategic Directions

- SW 1. Address the waste management implications of continued growth in Central Texas through a regional solid waste management plan.
- SW 2. Expand recycle rates and services:
- Require recycling at apartment complexes, retail establishments, restaurants, and manufacturers
 - Increase the types of materials that can be added to curbside collection
 - Develop more effective recycling practices for construction and demolition debris
 - Increase composting at homes and businesses
 - Improve recycling of material and food scraps in public spaces, in trash receptacles on city streets, and at public events
- SW 3. Divert hazardous waste from landfills and increase participation in recycling hazardous materials (e.g., develop an on-call door-to-door hazardous waste collection program).
- SW 4. Divert bulk items such as furniture and other household items from landfills and consider ways to recycle or reuse these materials.
- SW 5. Improve awareness and participation in the City's recycling programs through traditional and emerging methods such as a large-scale media, social marketing campaigns, and presence at public events.

⁶ Pollutants from a source that is difficult to pinpoint such as chemicals from lawns and fields, trash, oil, and animal and human wastes.

- SW 6. Continue to work with the Texas Product Stewardship Council and others to advocate for statewide “extended producer responsibility” (EPR) initiatives that require manufacturers and retailers to stop using “hard to recycle” and/or toxic products.

Public Services, Buildings, and Facilities

Energy

Austin must continue to provide reliable, affordable electricity and energy services to its residents, while promoting energy efficiency and conservation and continuing to shift to renewable energy sources.

Strategic Directions

- EN 1. Support the Preferred Growth Scenario and provide affordable, reliable electricity to Austin's residents and businesses.
- EN 2. Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and improvements that make buildings more energy efficient.
- EN 3. Reduce peak energy demand / total electric generation capacity that Austin Energy needs to maintain by encouraging users to use electricity during off-peak hours.
- EN 4. Increase the share of renewable energy sources (e.g., wind, solar, biomass) used by Austin Energy to generate electricity, including on-site sources throughout the city.

Public Safety

Austin must increase the safety of its residents, workers, and visitors by improving collaboration with the community, other public safety providers, and other jurisdictions.

Strategic Directions

- PS 1. Reduce crime rates, thereby improving the perception of safety in neighborhoods across Austin.
- PS 2. Continue to improve community outreach and build trust between the police force and Austin's minority communities.
- PS 3. Provide public safety services to newly annexed areas and areas with increased activity, such as new neighborhoods, redevelopment areas, transportation corridors, and mixed-use centers.
- PS 4. Provide preventive safety education (fire, police, and emergency services) to Austin residents.
- PS 5. Increase the use of joint or shared facilities between public safety and other city service providers, when possible, to provide residents with efficient services, reduce costs, and maintain public safety infrastructure.

- PS 6. Improve collaboration between public safety providers and city planners to incorporate best development practices to reduce crime (e.g., lighting, density, neighborhood ingress/egress, “eyes on the street” Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design⁷, etc.).
- PS 7. Collaborate and coordinate with other public safety agencies (i.e., county, state) to share resources and address the increasingly regional nature of crime.
- PS 8. Maintain quality standards in recruiting and training new public safety officers, and strive for a public safety workforce that reflects Austin’s changing demographics.
- PS 9. Continue to improve education and training of public safety employees and build new skills in using technology to improve public safety.

Public Buildings

Austin must improve access to its public buildings and use them as models of sustainable design.

Strategic Directions

- PB 1. Improve access to neighborhood libraries to support development of Complete Communities throughout Austin.
- PB 2. Distribute public buildings where services are offered in neighborhoods and other accessible locations throughout the city.
- PB 3. Improve multi-modal public transportation access to the City’s public buildings and facilities, including the Austin Bergstrom International Airport.
- PB 4. Integrate public buildings and facilities into active, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and complete, healthy communities.
- PB 5. Reduce energy consumption and waste generation in all public buildings to meet the City’s climate and Zero Waste goals.
- PB 6. Develop public buildings and facilities that create healthy work environments and educate the public about energy-efficient, sustainable building and landscape best practices.

⁷ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to designing the physical environment that has proven to be effective in helping to deter criminal behavior. Key CPTED principles include natural surveillance and access control.

Recreation and Open Space

Austin must provide an accessible park and recreation system with quality recreational, cultural, and outdoor experiences and promote healthy lifestyles and provide access to natural areas.

Strategic Directions

- RO 1. Operate, maintain, and upgrade new and existing parks and preserved open space and develop new parks to serve Austin's diverse, growing population.
- RO 2. Ensure and increase equitable access to and opportunities for cultural arts, recreation and leisure activities for all ages throughout the City.
- RO 3. Increase connectivity between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to parks and greenways through the use of sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, and trails.
- RO 4. Maximize the role of parks and recreation in promoting healthy communities and lifestyles.
- RO 5. Feature superior design in parks and recreational facilities and include opportunities for public art and green/sustainable design solutions.
- RO 6. Expand the amount of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas for use as open space and passive recreational areas.
- RO 7. Foster the use of creeks and lakes for public recreation and enjoyment in a manner that maintains their natural character.
- RO 8. Extend existing trail and greenway projects to create an interconnected green infrastructure network (e.g., preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands, etc.) linking all parts of Austin and linking Austin to nearby cities. (*See also Conservation and Environmental Resources*).
- RO 9. Maintain existing partnerships and develop new relationships with other City of Austin departments, community organizations, and volunteers to support recreational services and maintain high levels of service.

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Natural and Sustainable:

Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks throughout our city.
- We protect the beauty of the Hill Country and blackland prairie, and value our farmland that nurtures local food production.
- Our parks, open spaces, and preserves shape city planning, reduce infrastructure costs, and provide us with recreation, clean air and water, local food, cooler temperatures, and biodiversity.
- We conserve water, energy, and other valuable resources.
- Austin is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We use and inspire new technologies that create more sustainable communities while reducing our dependence on environmentally costly practices.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the City Facilities and Services Building Block, the focus is on environmental quality and social equity that supports economic prosperity. For example:

- **Strengthen connectivity from and between neighborhoods** to improve access to parks and trails (environmental quality), raise home values by increasing access to parks and recreation (economic prosperity), and improve mobility options through transit, bike lanes, and sidewalks (social equity).

BUILDING BLOCK 6: Society – Draft

The Society Building Block includes components that impact a person or family's quality of life and satisfaction with living in Austin, including health and human services, children, families, and education.

Building Block Elements:

- Health and Human Services
- Children, Families, and Education

Health and Human Services

Austin must improve community health through equal access to services and education about health care and healthy lifestyles.

Strategic Directions

- HHS 1. Provide access to primary, preventive health, trauma, specialty care, and urgent care.
- HHS 2. Attract and retain high-quality health service providers (including doctors, dentists, specialists, medical technicians, and nurses) and promote the development and expansion of medical education opportunities.
- HHS 3. Encourage more active lifestyles through development patterns that support walking and biking. Locate retail, services, and public facilities (e.g., parks, health services, libraries, etc.) in or near neighborhoods to reduce traffic congestion and contribute to an improved sense of community.
- HHS 4. Increase availability of quality early education, child care, after school, and preschool programs for all residents, especially low and middle income households and families with children with disabilities.
- HHS 5. Reduce homelessness through long-term supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.
- HHS 6. Develop close relationships between public safety personnel and neighborhoods to promote cooperation and safety.
- HHS 7. Promote the availability of and educate the community about healthy food choices, including “slow food” (local food traditions, small-scale food processing, and organic agriculture) and nutritional education programs.

From the Austin Vision Statement:

Austin Values and Respects its People:

Austin is its people. Our city is home to engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential.

- Austin government is transparent and accountable.
- People across all parts of the city and of all ages and income levels live in safe, stable neighborhoods with a variety of affordable and accessible homes, healthy food, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, and transportation.
- Austin ensures that no person is without such basic necessities as healthy food, clothing, shelter, physical and mental healthcare, or basic civil rights.
- We stand together for equal rights for all persons, especially acknowledging those who have been denied full participation in the opportunities offered by our community in the past.
- The history of the people of the Austin area is preserved and protected for future generations.

- HHS 8. Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods.
- HHS 9. Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations and provide better services for at-risk segments of our community.
- HHS 10. Develop and promote tobacco cessation programs and regulations to support tobacco-free environments.

Children, Families, and Education

To realize the Vision, Austin must foster complete communities through access to healthy foods, community services, safe neighborhoods, and quality education.

Strategic Directions

- CFE 1. Develop public transportation options that link all areas of the City, are affordable to economically disadvantaged groups, and provide access to job opportunities and services. (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- CFE 2. Increase the variety of housing options (i.e., housing type and number of bedrooms) to meet the needs of family and non-traditional households including households with children.
- CFE 3. Provide opportunities for seniors and persons with disabilities to live in affordable neighborhoods and housing to meet their special needs (e.g., mobility).
- CFE 4. Locate emergency services within close proximity to all neighborhoods and continue to improve community outreach and relationships between police and neighbors. (*See also City Facilities and Services*).
- CFE 5. Increase access to educational opportunities for higher education, technical education and vocational training in Austin area public schools, colleges, universities, and other educational facilities. Match job training with current and expected employment needs for existing and emerging “target industries.”
- CFE 6. Increase the availability of continuing education.
- CFE 7. Work with the school districts on planning for long-range student population growth from kindergarten through high school. Maintain and/or secure new educational facilities to support the direction set by the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.
- CFE 8. Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations.
- CFE 9. Increase the availability of quality early education, child care, after school, and preschool programs for all residents, especially low and middle income households and families with children with disabilities.
- CFE 10. Enact land use and other planning policies that enhance the quality of life for families with children and promote family-friendly neighborhoods and services.
- CFE 11. Increase dense, compact family-friendly housing in the urban core by creating standards and guidelines that encourage private interests to create more family-friendly development.
- CFE 12. Improve access to quality child care services near homes and workplaces.

- CFE 13. Partner with local school districts to transform public school yards into enhanced, multi-use outdoor resources for children and the community and to share public amenities such as parks, landscaping, pools, and athletic courts.
- CFE 14. Partner with local school districts, non-profits, and civic groups to expand after school and summer programs for children of all ages and abilities.
- CFE 15. Increase sidewalks and bike lanes in neighborhoods for safe routes to schools, parks, and transit stops. (*See also Land Use and Transportation*).
- CFE 16. Ensure that Austin children in every part of town have access to excellent public schools.
- CFE 17. Partner with Austin-area schools districts to enhance policies and practices that support neighborhood-based schools.
- CFE 18. Collaborate with school districts and with public and private entities to create joint-use partnerships at existing and new public school campuses.
- CFE 19. Create public spaces that attract and engage children and serve as gathering places for children and families.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Society Building Block, the focus is on social equity that supports environmental quality and economic prosperity. For example,

- **Encourage more active lifestyles** to promote development patterns that support shorter trips (economic prosperity), provide opportunities for physical activity (social equity), and reduce land consumed for development (environmental quality).

BUILDING BLOCK 7: Culture – Draft

The Culture Building Block includes arts, culture, creativity, and historic preservation, as they relate to the City's heritage, "vibe", spirit, and character, quality of life, downtown, and neighborhoods.

Building Block Elements:

- Arts, Culture, and Creativity
- Historic Preservation

Arts, Culture, and Creativity

Austin must support and value the City's arts, culture, and creativity as vital contributors to the city's identity, economy, and quality of life.

Strategic Directions

- ACC 1. Continue to grow artists, micro-enterprises, small cultural organizations as businesses, and iconic cultural institutions, in order to sustain and grow Austin's economic and cultural vitality.
- ACC 2. Increase and enhance coordination and resource sharing, and partnership among artist and creative individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses.
- ACC 3. Increase philanthropic, public, and citizen support and participation in arts, culture, and creative activities in Austin.
- ACC 4. Continue to sustain and grow the city's successful live music scene, festivals, theater, film and digital media, other cultural offerings.
- ACC 5. Continue to explore and identify solutions to support live music venues and while addressing sound abatement issues.
- ACC 6. Encourage new or existing art forms, new approaches to the creation or presentation of art, or new ways of engaging the public with art.
- ACC 7. Grow Austin's regional and global cultural efforts in order to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community. (*See also Economy*).
- ACC 8. Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance space, and office space for arts and culture organizations, artists, and creative industries businesses.

From the Vision Statement -

Austin is Creative:

Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life and economy.

- As a community that continues to stimulate innovation, Austin is a magnet that draws and retains talented and creative individuals.
- Our creative efforts reflect, engage with and appeal to the ethnic, gender and age diversity of Austin and to all socioeconomic levels.
- Residents and visitors participate fully in arts and cultural activities because the opportunities are valued, visible, and accessible.
- Our buildings and places reflect the inspirational and creative spirit of who we are as Austinites, through design excellence, public art and beautiful, accessible public spaces.

- ACC 9. Encourage and support artists, artist live/work spaces, creative industry hubs/districts/clusters, etc. as retail, community, or neighborhood anchors and activity generators to attract and support other economic and community enterprises. (*See also Economy*).
- ACC 10. Improve access to affordable living to include housing, healthcare, and effective transportation in order to develop and retain Austin's creative organizations, industries, and individuals.
- ACC 11. Encourage cultural, creative and arts-based education in schools and neighborhoods throughout Austin to sustain Austin's "culture of creativity" as fundamental to Austin's spirit and mindset.
- ACC 12. Sustain and grow Austin's multicultural and artistic heritage (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnic and culturally-specific groups) as the city develops and grows.
- ACC 13. Create avenues for cultural variety and provide the opportunity for all groups to benefit from the different cultures present in Austin.
- ACC 14. Encourage grassroots, neighborhood-based cultural development and activity and recognize and enhance the role the arts play at the center of community life.
- ACC 15. Maximize the recognition of arts and creativity as part of Austin's "Creative Economy." (*See also Economy*).
- ACC 16. Increase the availability of significant public art to designate districts and/or their entrances and to assist visitors in navigating the area.
- ACC 17. Define Austin's sense of place through high standards for architecture and urban design, public art, public spaces and public parks, and arts education. (*See also Urban Design*).
- ACC 18. Explore existing city policies, processes and regulations regarding the arts to determine what changes can be made to coordinate these with other goals such as historic preservation, affordable housing, and high-density development.
- ACC 19. Collaborate with AISD, local businesses, and cultural organizations in developing programs that encourage lifelong active engagement and participation in the cultural arts.

Historic Preservation

Austin must preserve the historic buildings, neighborhoods, and sites that reflect the City's diverse historical, architectural, and cultural heritage; maximize the benefits for the economy; and provide opportunities for cultural and historic education and recreation.

Strategic Directions

- HP 1. Promote historic and heritage-based tourism and cultural events.
- HP 2. Preserve and interpret historic resources (those objects, buildings, structures, sites, places, or districts with historic, cultural, or aesthetic significance) in Austin for residents and visitors.
- HP 3. Maintain and update inventories of historic resources, including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries, archeological sites, etc.
- HP 4. Increase opportunities for historic and cultural learning at the City's public libraries.

- HP 5. Protect historic resources in neighborhoods throughout the City. (*see also Housing and Neighborhoods*).
- HP 6. Retain the character of National Register and local Historic Districts and ensure that development and redevelopment is compatible with historic resources and character.
- HP 7. Continue to protect and enhance important view corridors (e.g., Capitol Overlay District, Lady Bird Lake, and public waterfronts).
- HP 8. Preserve and restore historic parks and recreational areas.

Achieving Sustainability

The strategic directions are designed to work across Building Blocks to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental quality, social equity, and economic prosperity. In the Culture Building Block, the focus is on social equity that supports environmental quality and economic prosperity.

For example, **retain Austin’s multicultural and artistic heritage** to improve diversity in arts and culture (social equity), increase participation at events (economic prosperity), and integrate new facilities integrating low-impact development practices into new facilities (environmental quality).