



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Rosie Truelove, Director
Housing and Planning Department

Subject: Update regarding Council Resolution No. 20201112-043, regarding North East Austin district planning process

Date: July 8, 2021

On November 12, 2020, Austin City Council voted to approve Resolution No. [20201112-043](#) (resolution). The resolution directs the City Manager to develop a scope for a potential Northeast Austin District Plan. This memo covers the district planning process, in particular the direction to the City Manager to present a work program for the North East Austin district planning process and any necessary resources to develop the plan.

A preliminary work program and scope for this project has been developed in coordination with key staff from Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Watershed Protection, Office of Real Estate Services, Development Services, Austin Energy, Austin Resource Recovery, and Austin Transportation. In addition, Housing and Planning Department staff have consulted with staff from Travis County as well as the City's Equity Office. Moving forward, the North East Austin district planning process will continue to be undertaken as a joint effort bringing together expertise across the multiple departments who are involved in placemaking activities in the area, as well as the expertise of additional external stakeholders identified in the workprogram.

Attached to this memo is a work program including scope and proposed budget for the North East Austin District Planning Initiative. Because of the significant geographic scale and level of complexity of this planning effort, the Housing and Planning Department recommends retaining a consultant team to support this work, and the approximate cost is \$1,080,000.

It is important to note that the department does not currently have the necessary resources to execute the proposed scope of work. If additional funding is not available to support the estimated project cost, staff would not be able to initiate this project within existing staff resources and priorities. Housing and Planning Department staff is available to provide additional details in support of this planning initiative to assist in operationalizing Council's directive.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 512-974-3064 or rosie.truelove@austintexas.gov or Erica Leak, Development Officer, at 512-974-9375 or erica.leak@austintexas.gov.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
J. Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager

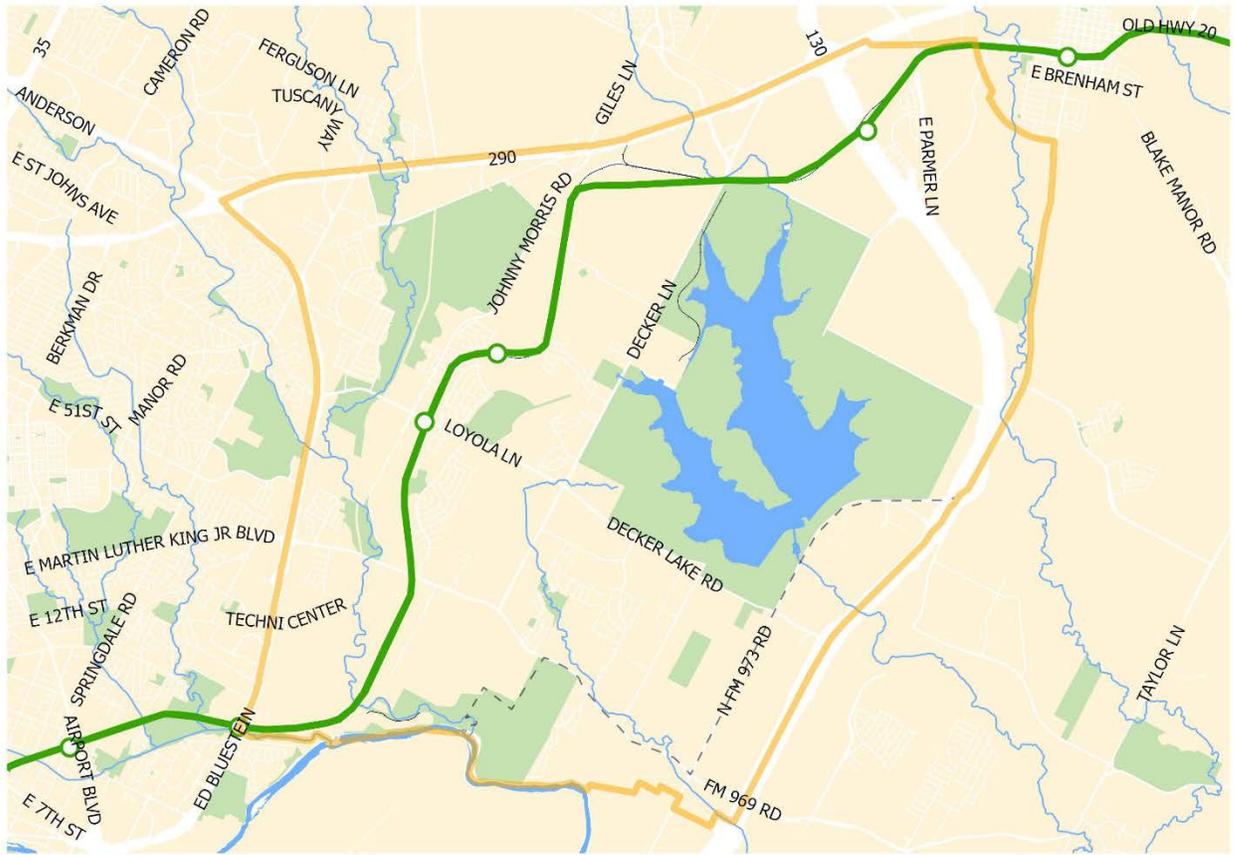
DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE NORTHEAST AUSTIN DISTRICT PLANNING PROCESS

1. PURPOSE

The equity-centered planning process to create the *Northeast Austin District Plan* (NEADP) called for in [Resolution No. 20201112-043](#) will engage a broad range of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive small area plan. The area covered by the plan (the District) consists of the five census tracts surrounding the 208-acre [Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative](#) project site. The 25.75 square mile District is roughly bounded by U.S. Highway 183 to the West, US Highway 290 to the North, SH 130 to the East and FM 969 and the Colorado River to the South. The NEADP will be a long-range guide for regulations, investments, subsequent planning efforts, and public-private partnerships to support the future evolution of northeast Austin.

The objective of the plan is to address past inequities of long-standing lack of investment in services and infrastructure in the District and provide guidance for creating and maintaining great neighborhoods, spurring economic development, creating and retaining stable jobs, improving connectivity, retaining long-term residents and businesses, and providing high-quality public spaces. It will have general and specific responses that will address and implement the City Council's policy directions contained in the [Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan](#) and its elements such as the [Strategic Housing Blueprint](#) and the [Austin Strategic Mobility Plan \(ASMP\)](#) and the goals presented in the [resolution](#) calling for the plan.

When a planning process and subsequent plan is centered on racial equity and community wealth building, it can drive the evolution for more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient communities. The process and plan can also champion the District's business needs and current entrepreneurs. The planning process' equity-focused approach will build on communities' strengths and needs. This focus will help ensure that the plan supports local businesses, improves the quality of life of current and future residents, and for underserved populations—especially existing communities of color. The approach requires the planning process to be grounded in current market conditions with an understanding of market opportunities for future residential and commercial development. Once an inclusive planning approach and a market strategy are combined with strategies for zoning, financing, and capital investments, opportunities can be created that lead to resilient and equitable outcomes.



NORTHEAST AUSTIN DISTRICT PLANNING AREA

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2. BACKGROUND

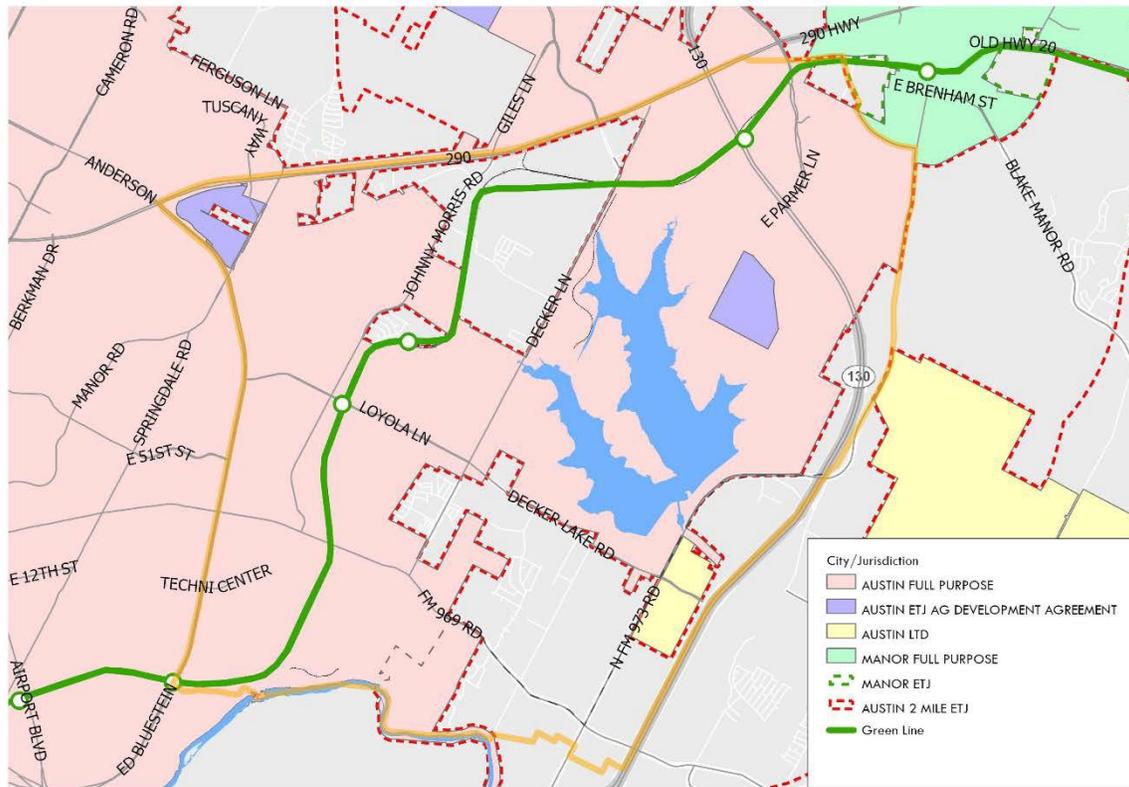
On November 12, 2020, the Austin City Council approved [Resolution No. 20201112-043](#) directing the City Manager to develop a comprehensive small area plan for the five census tract geography described in the **Purpose** section above. The resolution lists multiple factors that will affect this planning process. Staff has also identified additional factors that will affect the process.

Gentrification Pressures. As Austin housing becomes increasingly more expensive, the District will face increased gentrification pressures, including potential displacement of longtime residents and businesses, and shifts in the demographic and cultural characteristics of the area. An important long-term goal of this planning process is to develop goals and recommendations to maintain long-term affordability for current residents as well as businesses. Because of significant differences in the tools available within and outside of City limits, varying approaches will be needed to address gentrification pressures within Austin and in unincorporated Travis County.

Equity. The resolution sets forth equity as the guiding principle for the planning process. The resolution calls for *equitable land use practices* which tasks the planning process, resulting plan, as well as its

implementation to consider the local communities’ assets, aspirations, and potential. The plan and its implementation should strive to provide an opportunity for current residents to remain in the community as desired, and generate projects promoting health, well-being, and prosperity. The plan should promote **equitable transportation practices** which enhance healthy living within underserved communities by integrating transit into walkable, livable, and affordable land use practices. The plan should result in **equitable housing practices** with all District households spending no more than 30% of their income for housing. The fourth equity element is **Equitable Transit Oriented Development (eTOD)** which allows people regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status, or ability to experience the benefits of dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit. To achieve these, there will also need to be an **equity-based public engagement process**. This engagement process should ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of equity and that participation in the process mirrors the population as a whole, and should elevate the voices of vulnerable communities that are most impacted by the decisions made as part of the planning process.

Jurisdictional Considerations.



NORTHEAST AUSTIN DISTRICT PLANNING AREA

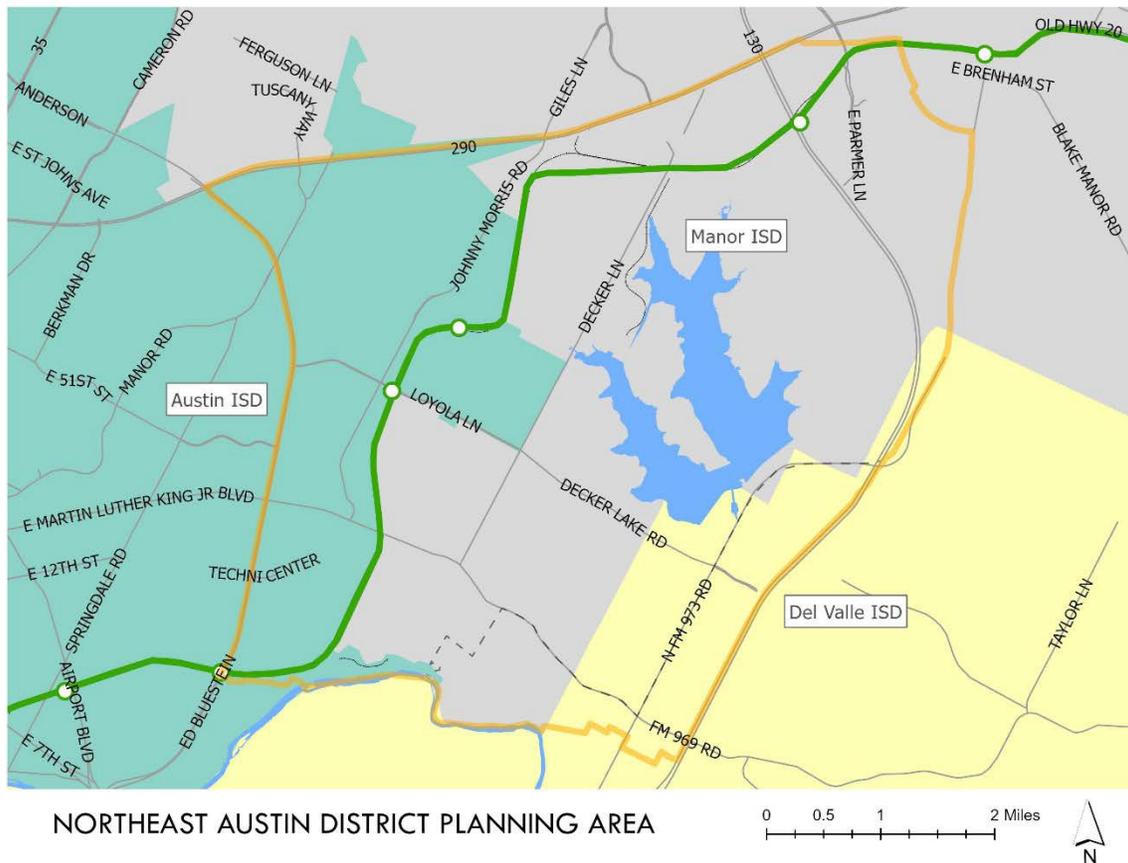
Travis County

There are several jurisdictional opportunities and challenges within the District. While the City of Austin has regulatory authority over most of the District, there are large sections, particularly in the northern and southeastern parts of the planning area, that are unincorporated Travis County and fall within the

City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). In these unincorporated areas, regulation of land use is quite limited as counties do not have the authority to apply zoning regulations and city annexation authority is limited under State law. The City/County jurisdictional considerations involve annexations, public improvement districts (PID), infrastructure, and transportation. Within the unincorporated areas, [Travis County’s Land, Water, and Transportation Plan](#) provides guidance for growth. Fair housing goals for the incorporated areas are contained in the [Central Texas Assessment of Fair Housing](#). As the planning process moves forward, separate, but coordinated, analysis of the areas with the City of Austin and those in unincorporated areas will be needed due to the different level of services, amenities, and investments available in the two areas. Recommendations to address similar issues in these areas will probably require differing responsible parties, strategies, and solutions.

School Districts

There are three school districts with boundaries in the district. Austin Independent School District and Manor Independent School District have the greatest presence, while Del Valle Independent School District has a smaller area in the District’s southeastern corner.



Other Jurisdictional Organizations

The northeastern corner of the planning area also abuts the City of Manor’s ETJ. Cap Metro will be operating two high-capacity transit lines running through the District which are discussed in greater

detail in the **Project Connect** section on the following page. Other jurisdictional organizations also have a presence in the District: the State of Texas, the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), and the Lower Colorado do River Authority (LCRA).

Planned Unit Developments. In addition to multiple layers of government jurisdictions, there are Planned Unit Developments (PUD) within the district that could affect the planning process. In the District's northeast corner between FM 973 and SH 130 is the western portion of Wildhorse Ranch PUD. The other PUD is the for Colony Park Sustainable Communities site which is located adjacent to Overton Elementary, Turner Roberts Recreation Center, and Colony Park District Park.

Former Freescale Site. At the November 12th, 2020 meeting, the City Council passed [Ordinance No. #20201112-048](#) that could result in dramatic changes to the nearly 109.69-acre former Freescale Campus at 3443 Ed Bluestein Boulevard/US 183. The zoning change now allows buildings ranging from 120' to 400' tall as compared to 60' allowed under the previous zoning. Residential uses were not included in the zoning change and are not allowed due to a private restrictive covenant. There are currently zoning case (C14-2020-0150) and neighborhood plan amendment case (NPA-2020-0015.03) for a 15.69-acre tract south of this site that are in the preliminary stages. If the requests are approved by the City Council, the entitlements could allow residential and/or mixed use buildings as tall as 200 feet.

Project Connect. The November 2020 successful referendum for Proposition A set in motion the implementation of [Project Connect](#), Cap Metro's long-range transit plan. An element of Project Connect is the MetroRail Green Line. The [Project Connect's Initial Investment System Map](#) shows the Green Line linking Downtown Austin to Colony Park with a possible extensions to Manor and Elgin. The Green Line MetroRail will run on existing tracks and have up to three stations: 183, Loyola, and Colony Park. Cap Metro recently completed the Federal Transit Administration-funded *Green Line Corridor Plan Transit Oriented Development Study*. The Study's station concept plans examined the ½ mile buffer surrounding the Loyola and Colony Park station areas and looked at opportunities to compliment the higher-density, walkable, and transit-supportive design of the adopted [Colony Park Sustainable Community Master Plan and Design Guidelines](#) and PUD ([Ordinance No. 20141211-150](#)). The Expo MetroRapid Line will run down Loyola Lane to the Travis County Expo Center and will also serve the Colony Park Sustainable Community. Project Connect identifies a potential future expansion of the MLK MetroRapid line east of US 183 along FM 969.

Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park. On October 15th, 2020 the Austin City Council adopted the [Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park Vision Plan](#) for Austin's largest park (3,695 acres). The plan calls for improvements and amenities such as "enhanced trails, additional water-related recreation, fitness opportunities, camping, special event venues, and educational and cultural exhibits."

Travis County Exposition Center. Located adjacent to Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park is the 128-acre Travis County Exposition Center site. In 1983 voters approved the City of Austin to enter into a 50-year lease agreement with Travis County for the portion of land on which the Travis County Exposition Center was constructed. This lease agreement will expire in December 2033. In November 2019 voters passed Travis County Proposition A which enabled the County to collect hotel occupancy tax (HOT) to fund

redevelopment of the Exposition Center; however, the timing of that collection depends on a number of factors as total HOT collections are limited under State law.

Decker Creek Power Station. Also adjacent to Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park is the Decker Creek Power Station. It opened in 1970 and is located on Walter E. Long Lake. The current [Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan to 2030 \(2030 Plan\)](#) proposes that the Decker Creek Power Station’s Unit 1 cease operation at the end of October 2020 and Unit 2 cease operation after the end of the peak 2021 summer energy usage. The four gas turbine generating units at Decker will remain in service for the foreseeable future. Other substation and transmission facilities will remain operational. Like other City of Austin decommissioned power plants, the Decker Creek Power Station has redevelopment potential after all units are retired; however, there may be a need for environmental mitigation.

John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch. The [Vision Plan for John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch](#) was adopted by Austin City Council on October 15, 2020. The park is approximately 330 acres.

Public Stakeholders. The resolution identifies public sector or non-profit stakeholders who should be included in the planning process. Additional stakeholders may be identified and consulted.

- Colony Park/Lakeside Community Development Corporation
- Contact teams
- Mobile home communities
- Travis County
- Rodeo Austin
- Chambers of commerce
- Manor ISD
- Austin ISD
- Del Valle ISD
- Travis County African American Cultural Heritage Commission
- Local businesses
- Equidad ATX
- Austin Revitalization Authority
- 100 Black Men of Austin
- RBI Austin
- Andy Roddick Foundation
- Relevant higher-learning institutions
- Central Texas Allied Health Institute
- Central Health
- Cap Metro

Business Stakeholders. Although not mentioned in the resolution, there are multiple businesses in the District that need to be engaged in the planning process. This is a preliminary list which will be expanded as more businesses are identified.

- Tex-Con Oil
- Balcones Resources
- Flint Hill Resources
- Brown Distributing Co. Inc.
- Dollar General
- Old Dominion Freight Line
- Safesite, Inc.
- Green Gate Farm
- Farm Share of Austin
- JD's Market
- Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems
- Loyola Grocery
- Mi Pueblo Meat Market

- Austin Glass and Mirror

Community Group Stakeholders. Along with the public sector stakeholders identified in the resolution and the businesses identified by staff, it also directed the process to engage neighborhood and civic organizations within the District. Staff identified 23 registered groups as well as other organizations within the District. In addition to these organizations, staff also identified faith-based organizations, non-profits, and multiple athletic and hobbyist groups with facilities in the district, but they are not included on this list. This list is not all-inclusive, and as other community organizations are identified they will be added.

- Imperial Neighborhood Association
- Heritage Village of Austin Homeowner’s Association
- Reissig Group
- Neighbors United for Progress
- Austin Neighborhoods Council
- Senate Hills Homeowners' Association
- Friends of Northeast Austin
- Friends of Austin Neighborhoods
- East MLK Combined Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
- Lincoln Garden Association
- L.B.J. Neighborhood Association
- Lower Boggy Creek Neighborhood Association
- University Hills Neighborhood Association
- University Hills Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
- Walnut Place Neighborhood Association
- Colony Park Neighborhood Association, Inc
- Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation
- Scenic Point Homeowners Association
- Agave Neighborhood Association
- Cavalier Park Neighborhood Association.
- Del Valle Community Coalition
- Community First! Village
- E.A.C.H. (East Austin Community Hills)
- Thunderbird Farms
- Woodland Hill Neighborhood

3. RECOMMENDED STAFF RESOURCES AND CONSULTANT SERVICES

The process to create the *Northeast Austin District Plan* will require staff resources and consultant services.

City of Austin staffing

- Project Coordination – Housing and Planning Department
- Communications/Marketing/Outreach Coordination and Support/Meeting Facilitation – Housing and Planning Department, Communications and Public Information Office
- Subject Matter Experts – Various Departments and Offices including Equity Office, Office of Sustainability, Parks and Recreation Department, Economic Development Department, Austin Transportation, Austin Energy, and Development Services Department

Necessary Consultant Services

- General Planning Services (lead consultant)

- Graphic Design
- Marketing/Public Information
- Meeting Facilitation
- Equity-Focused Community Engagement
- Architectural/Urban Design/Landscape Architecture
- Transportation Planning/Modeling
- Economic Development/Market/Real Estate Analysis
- Infrastructure Analysis
- Zoning and Code Writing

4. DELIVERABLES.

- The *Northeast Austin District Plan* will be adopted as an attachment to the [Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan](#). Being adopted as an attachment to Imagine Austin is consistent with the approach that has been used for previous council-adopted small area plans, and will allow the *Northeast Austin District Plan* to provide area-specific policy guidance to city land use and investment decision making. The plan will promote well-designed future investments, development, and infrastructure that improves the quality of life for existing and future residents, and supports City of Austin goals, without imposing a cost burden to residents.
- A public participation plan (PPP) will be developed identifying the different demographic groups and stakeholder groups (e.g., business owners, houses of worship, non-resident property owners, institutions, etc.) within the District, especially historically hard to reach populations including renters, communities of color, and people whose primary language is not English. The PPP will also present strategies and methods to engage groups in the planning process given the foreseeable need for social distancing.
- Recommendations as to how the *Northeast Austin District Plan* fits within the City's regulatory framework and existing plans and how the plan fits within Travis [County's Land, Water, and Transportation Plan](#).
- Possible amendments to [Imagine Austin](#) to support the plan's outcomes and which advance its implementation.
- District-specific possible changes to the [Austin Strategic Mobility Plan \(ASMP\)](#) that can include an evaluation of proposed roadway connections and rights-of-way requirements, and evaluation of ASMP street elements (e.g., bicycle facilities) and Transportation Criterial Manual (TCM) street cross sections to determine if changes are needed such as new roadway cross-sections, and development of a roadway collector plan for the District.
- Recommendations for public finance strategies based on market analysis and property tax and sales tax revenue forecasts.
- An annexation analysis for unincorporated parts of the District.

- Code amendments and other regulatory changes needed to implement the *Northeast Austin District Plan's* vision and goals.
- Detailed station area plans and regulatory changes to promote the development of equitable Transit Oriented Development (eTOD) for Cap Metros MetroRail Green Line Loyola and Colony Park stations, which could be applicable elsewhere.
- A market analysis, trade area definition, and market strategy that will guide land use, infrastructure, and public financing recommendations.
- Recommendations supporting job growth and retention, incentivizing the location of a full-service grocery store in the District, and adopting strategies to preserve long-term commercial and residential affordability.
- An analysis to determine how implementation of the plan could affect fair and affordable housing in the District.
- Possible recommendations for amendments to the adopted [Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park Vision Plan](#) and the [Vision Plan for John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch](#) that advance the more comprehensive District planning effort.
- Recommendations for the future of the Travis County Exposition Center site that take into consideration timing of future use of HOT funds, and the November 2019 vote authorizing the County to use HOT funds to redevelop the site.
- A District-wide analysis of City of Austin assets and prioritization criteria for identifying community goals for the sites.
- Recommendations for comprehensive infrastructure investments to support planned and future development that will include \$52M in Capital Improvement Projects (water/wastewater, parks, transportation, electrical, environmental) previously identified for Colony Park Sustainable Community. Financing this infrastructure will be catalytic in promoting complete communities in the District, and that identify possible funding timelines for investments.
- Identification of neighborhood-level transit-supportive anti-displacement strategies consistent with City Council [Resolution No. 20200807-003](#) which created the Austin Transit Partnership.

Guiding Principles. [Resolution No. 20201112-043](#) directing staff to develop a scope and planning process to create a long-range comprehensive plan for the District included several guiding equity principles.

- Equitable land use practices require that the overall vision, plan, and implementation includes local communities' assets, aspirations, and potential. They aim to keep current residents in the area and develop projects that promote people's health, well-being, and prosperity.
- Equitable transportation practices integrate transit into walkable, livable, and affordable land use practices to enhance healthy living within underserved communities.
- Equitable housing practices provide families of all income levels access to housing that costs no more than 30% of their household income.

- Anti-displacement Strategies and Equitable TOD (eTOD) are tools to enable all people regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status or ability to experience the benefits of dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs. These tools will elevate and prioritize investments and policies that close the socioeconomic gaps between neighborhoods that are predominately people of color and those that are majority white. When centered on racial inclusion and community wealth building, anti-displacement strategies and eTOD can be a driver of positive transformation for more vibrant, prosperous, and resilient neighborhoods connected to opportunities throughout the city and region. To ensure the success of eTODs programmatic and statutory approaches are needed to maintain long-term residential and commercial space affordability.

5. TIMELINE

Months (6 Months)	Months 1-2	Months 3-6	Months 7-10	Months 11-13	Months 14-16	Months 17-18
Task 1: Pre-Planning						
	Task 2: Visioning					
	Task 3: External Stakeholder Engagement					
	Task 4: Active Planning					
				Task 5: Draft Review		
						Task 6: Adoption

The process to develop the Northeast Austin District Plan will have six major tasks. Each of these consists of multiple subtasks which will be expanded upon in a more detailed work program based on the resources and funding available for the project.

Task 1: Pre-Planning. This task will help lay the foundation of the planning process. Many of these tasks are iterative and build upon one another. It includes such tasks as researching and writing a detailed community inventory for the planning area, consultant selection, engaging other City departments and outside agencies, initial outreach to community leaders, web site development, creating a public participation plan (PPP) based—in part—on the demographic findings in the community inventory and initial outreach results, developing the planning process, etc.

Task 2: Visioning. This task will engage stakeholders and the broader community to develop a vision for all and/or parts of the District.

Task 3: External Stakeholder Engagement. This task will be continual and ongoing throughout the planning process and will employ the methods outlined in the Public Participation Plan to engage community stakeholders.

Task 4: Active Planning. This task will engage stakeholders and the community to develop the substance of the plan.

Task 5: Draft Review. This task will include the final drafting and layout for the plan, technical advisory group (TAG) review, public comment period, and final edits based upon comments to create an adoption draft of the plan.

Task 6: Adoption. This task will include presenting the draft plan to all applicable boards and commissions, the Planning Commission for their recommendation to the City Council, and the City Council for adoption. This process could also result in amendments to *Imagine Austin*, the [East MLK Combined Neighborhood Plan](#), other Council-adopted plans, and code amendments.

6. Estimated Cost

The estimated cost assumes adequate City staff resources and consultant support to engage the public and develop the Northeast District Austin Plan as an attachment to *Imagine Austin*. The estimate includes funding for robust equity-focused community engagement, visualization of alternative future scenarios, technical analysis of outcomes including transportation analysis, and analysis supporting future implementation of the plan including regulatory analysis, real estate market and value capture analysis, and infrastructure analysis.

Service	Estimated Cost
General Planning Services, Including Equity-Focused Community Engagement Services	\$550,000
City of Austin Project Costs (project staffing, contract management, review, supplies)	\$60,000*
Graphic Design/Writing/ Copyediting Services	\$20,000
General Communications/Marketing/ Outreach Services/Meeting Facilitation	\$100,000
Architectural/Urban Design/Landscape Architecture Services	\$85,000
Transportation Planning/Modeling Services	\$60,000
Market Analysis/Real Estate Services	\$100,000
Infrastructure Analysis Services	\$55,000

Zoning and Code Writing Services	\$50,000
Totals	\$1,080,000
<p>* Executive and senior level staff will be required for duties such as coordination across City departments and outside agencies, decision making, contract management, review of deliverables, data analysis, and augmenting public engagement. Beyond staffing, additional City resources will include such expenses as technology licenses, printing, office supplies, postage, and funds for focus groups and/or stipends.</p>	

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