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East 11th and 12th Streets Development Strategy Page 1 of 1

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East 11th and 12th Street Development Strategy: RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Austin wants your input on the [DRAFT Summary of Findings and Recommendations](#) for the [East 11th and 12th Street Development Strategy](#). The City is taking public comments on the draft through **February 13, 2012**.

The EPS Team recognizes the potential of the Study Area to enhance livability in East Austin generally, and to participate more fully in the economic vitality of the City and region. We believe the vision for the community – a mixed-use environment of moderate scale that offers community services and employment opportunities and respects the adjacent residential neighborhoods, as reflected in the various planning documents and regulations – represents an appropriate and achievable future for the Study Area. As such, no major overhaul to the vision is recommended. However, numerous steps can be taken that can help realize that positive vision.

The EPS Team recommends efforts be undertaken to facilitate desired revitalization of the East 11th and 12th Streets Study Area. **To read and comment on the 9 Recommendations, scroll down below "Analysis" and "Issues" until you see headers labeled "Recommendation."**

0 answers

Reply to this question:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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East 11th and 12th Streets Development Strategy: ANALYSIS

The City has made progress on the vision of East 11th Street as a visitor-oriented destination consisting of three to five story buildings that provide entertainment, retail and office uses that attract people to this metropolitan area. The vision of East 12th Street as a mixed-use area with combined office, retail and residential uses, which serves the immediate area, has been partially achieved. Through historic preservation of culturally significant structures and several small businesses receiving façade improvement grants dramatically improve the look of the corridor.

Development Strategy

The City through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process, has contracted with Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. (EPS) to prepare an [East 11th and 12th Street Development Strategy](#). EPS has been working with area stakeholders to prepare a plan that responds to the considerable opportunities and challenges facing development within these two corridors.

The Development Strategy will provide a framework for the development of a mixture of commercial, retail and residential component in central east Austin. The assessment of both the current market demand and projections of future demand are critical to developing short-term and long-term strategies.

Scroll down to see 11 key issues identified by stakeholders with analysis conducted by EPS.

2 answers



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

replyI agree 0



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago[-] [0 replies](#)

Austin not long ago was an idiosyncratic, sleepy little town in the middle of Texas with one big building at its center. It was largely ignored by its three prosperous big brothers Houston, Dallas and San Antonio. Over the years -maybe because nobody else was bidding- the city acquired many close-in lots and small land parcels at bargain-basement prices using available federal funds, most of which were earmarked for low income housing. The City now owns over 2500 parcels of real property within its city limits. Think of that: 2563 city-owned parcels as of November 2010! As the city grew, most high-end development occurred centrally and just west of downtown and most new industrial development occurred north and south, but always west of downtown. Areas east of downtown, for many reasons, did not flourish on the same timeline or at the same clip. A couple of years ago, in grownup city style, City of Austin officials rightly and nobly decided to tackle the problem of housing our homeless population. It's the right thing to do; I know of nobody who disagrees. And with some 2000 homeless people and a large number of city owned vacant lots and abandoned properties in inventory, the easy solution -the obvious solution- is to simply build affordable housing on that cheaply bought city-owned property. Problem solved! Right? Well, if nothing had changed, maybe. But during those same years -while Austin was sprouting- individuals, couples, families, builders, and small businesses planted roots in "challenged" close-in neighborhoods, believing that an investment now of effort and time and resources and love would help make the city a better place for all and would help grow healthy urban neighborhoods. And believing that those close-in neighborhoods would evolve naturally with new buildings lining its corridor streets, with retail businesses offering products and services that neighborhoods need Believing that those neighborhoods would evolve to include dress shops and dry-cleaners, beauty shops and movie theaters and coffee shops and restaurants, gas stations and ice cream shops, and banks and and bakeries. And, that the city would allow the free market system to prosper.

Instead, on 12th Street, we have a streetscape that has been described as a Jack o' Lantern: Vast vacant weedy lots. Many shoddy stand alone buildings. Looks like bad teeth. In fact, this sardonic smile is the result of years of bad city policy and inaction.

The suggestion is this:

1. Free up the city-owned land to commercial development.
2. Designate East 12th Street as the Capitol Gateway Corridor.
3. Zone it for retail-anchored mixed use development.
4. Pay back the HUD funding.
5. Use profits from the land sales to rehab dilapidated properties *equally throughout the city* -North, East, West, South- to house our homeless and PSH clients. This policy will put people to work, rehab rundown buildings, provide shelter and improve neighborhoods, while changing the long-running policy of concentrating poverty in East Austin.

replyI agree 2

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Development regulations and process are difficult to navigate

Several planning documents govern development in the Study Area, including the Urban Renewal Plan, two NCCDs, and others.

In some cases, the regulations are inconsistent among these documents, and the process of interpreting their requirements is exacerbated due to multiple modifications to these documents over the years. In many but not all cases, the development regulations have shifted from being highly prescriptive (e.g., this lot should be developed with this many commercial square feet and this many housing units) to less prescriptive (e.g., this lot should be developed for mixed-use). Where proposed projects do not conform to the most prescriptive regulations among the documents, the process for approval has proven time-consuming and costly, as it requires actions by the URB, Planning Commission, and potentially City Council.

Development could be facilitated through reconciliation of the various documents and continuation of the general trend to adhere to the vision for development without being highly prescriptive.

What do you think?

8 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [1 reply](#)

A lot of work went into the prescriptive regulations with the goal of achieving development that is desirable for the community. I think there is value in this work. Instead of changing the regulations, why not do a better job communicating, educating, and clarifying what development is allowed/encouraged and what development is not allowed/discouraged. My concern is that reconciliation might gut the intent of the restrictions and allow undesirable development to occur and the past work by the community to be lost.

[reply](#) [I agree 8](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I agree with Lee Sherman.

If inconsistencies exist between the Urban Renewal Plan ("URP") and the East 12th Street NCCD, then perhaps the community should be permitted to do the work to reconcile them and address ambiguities.

Proposed projects that developers characterize as done in by the development process met with significant community opposition because they sought to exploit very generous development standards to establish uses inconsistent with the vision area stakeholders have for the streets. Those generous building standards were awarded to help corridor property owners comply with the vision and controls of the URP, and if the market study concludes that having waived all compatibility standards is not enough to encourage appropriate development, then significant investment of public resources--rather than further erosion of the few controls still in place--seems the most responsible route to satisfying both neighborhood and corridor property owners' expectations.

[reply](#) [I agree 7](#)



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

Hundreds of hours have been spent on the regulations/projects and what was wanted for the area. We should not start all over again - the stakeholders should reconcile any conflicts.

[reply](#) [I agree 4](#)



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I agree with Lee Sherman.

East 12th Street is a gateway to downtown and should be treated as such. Continuing the "general trend" of adhering to the vision for development without being highly prescriptive only enables further exploitation of this gateway corridor, and undesirable and inconsistent development is a guarantee without appropriate controls. East 12th Street deadends into the Capitol of the Great State of Texas. THE CAPITOL of our state. Would any other street/ area of Austin this close to the State Capitol AND downtown (we are even talking walking

distance) be developed with a "general trend" of adhering to a less prescriptive development vision? Absolutely not! There is no way any other area in such proximity would be treated with a fast and loose vision/ plan for development. So why in the world is this even being thrown out as an option?

There is immeasurable value in the time and work spent on the prescriptive regulations. Again, I concur with Lee Sherman and Tracy Witte.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

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[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Andrea, Lee, and Tracy are on target for my view.

This is the turning point for us. The City Council in a rush to feel good about doing 'something' last year added Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to our neighborhood, in spite of the fact that 50% of the available rental in the 78702 zip code is affordable housing, low opportunity in the area for resident success, high proximity to single sales alcohol and the open drug market at 12th and Chicon is a block away from Marshall Apartments. Public policies in similar sized cities and available studies direct us to use 20% as a saturation point for affordable housing, but Austin Council just ignores that as long as it's not their neighborhood.

Now that Council has shoved PSH down our throats, review with the Neighborhoods is an opportunity to recognize the 12th Street Corridor and surrounding Neighborhoods as having aggrieved status and hear us. Reconciliation for the East Side is one step at a time.

[reply](#) [I agree 4](#)



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

The residents have clearly stated what they want for 12th Street and have for many years - a real neighborhood - past work on this vision should not be thrown out - regulations (ie the City) can be adjusted to the vision - given the will. I agree with Andrea, Lee, and Tracy - this could be a great gateway to the eastside - there is so much potential here - there is no tax being generated by city own land - it needs to be returned to the market.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)



[Angelita](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I would also agree with Lee and add that the redevelopment on E. 11th is a good example of trying to meet the goals of the URP. Now it's time to get started on E. 12th and stay focused on creating a community that provides a sustainable vision for commerce and use with the prescriptive regulations in mind so that we can keep the neighborhood to a high standard.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: [Browse...](#) Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB [Leave comment](#)

Issue: Infrastructure on E. 12th Street is inadequate to support future development

Civil Engineer from the Study Team assessed the capacity of existing infrastructure to meet the vision for the area. Current conditions do not indicate deficiencies/failures for existing development, but assessment also included analysis of demand from development scenarios on vacant and underutilized parcels (up to 680,000 sq ft of new buildings).

For future development:

- Electrical systems do not appear to require any upgrades for future development.
 - Water system on E. 12th Street should be adequate in most cases, but some North-South cross streets may require minor upgrades where lines are 6" or smaller.
 - Wastewater system will need upgrades between Chicon and Poquito, and may need upgrades west of San Bernard.
 - Stormwater system east of San Bernard may need some upgrades for new development, but no current needs are identified.
- Infrastructure is typically improved in response to demand generated by development proposals and funded by developers, but could be considered as a proactive public "investment" to facilitate development through cost and time reductions.

What do you think?

9 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

I think upgrading sewer infrastructure to accomodate maximum buildout conditions makes a lot of sense as an incentive for new development - especially in areas where the existing lines are questionable.

[reply](#) [I agree 7](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

One of the chief tenets of urban renewal is to expend public resources in a manner that engages private sector participation in revitalization. If water and wastewater capacity are insufficient to service mixed-use/retail projects desired by the community, and the city cannot or will not provide comprehensive upgrades along the entire street to jumpstart redevelopment, then there should be a commitment from the city to deliver upgrades in a timely fashion, once a proposal achieves support from the affected neighborhood (s), OCEAN and the URB.

[reply](#) [I agree 9](#)



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Upgrading sewer infrastructure to accomodate maximum buildout does indeed make a lot of sense as an incentive for new development. Do it now or do it later, but find the resouces in the City budget. Placing the burden on the developer will lead to smaller developments and higher even unit prices.

[reply](#) [I agree 9](#)



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with both Jim and Tracy. No developer will want to fund major infastructure expense in a revitalization area which will not likely see a single major development by more likely, multiple smaller mixed use ones.

[reply](#) [I agree 7](#)



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Tracy Witte's statement is true, "One of the chief tenets of urban renewal is to expend public resources in a manner that engages private sector participation in revitalization."

I agree with Tracy, Jim, and Lee. East 12th Street needs infrastructure to ensure the desired development the neighborhood and community expects and was assured would occur. The city cannot just pass the baton or pass the buck, so to speak, on this one.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I think infrastructure improvements to water and waste water capacity must be made first to Phase One of the project - as close to I-35 as possible first. Phase One, is the area from I-35 heading eastward to San Bernard. I envision an improved East 12th street as a real commercial "gateway" to Downtown. It will also serve as a commercial "gateway" for those consumers who work across I-35 but are a short, walkable distance to the East side. Early Phase One commercial emphasis and infrastructure improvements to water and waste water capacity will serve all the neighborhood residents, will attract new consumers from I-35, and will attract those who work across I-35 within a short distance.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with Kris. Upgrade from IH35 to San Bernard along 12th street. Get that waliking into the neighborhood working with mixed use development. The neighborhood work has been done.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

!2th street has been neglected for years - the city has to offer assurances that any needed upgrades will happen in a timely fashion. Neglect breeds suspicion and there is plenty here.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)



[Angelita](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Improvements to the infrastructure on East 12th are long over due! Also, it's the cost of doing business when you want to make the area attractive to potential developers. In the long run, the necessary improvements will be a great investment in the city and neighborhood.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Electrical/ communications infrastructure on E. 12th Street is unattractive

Electrical and communications poles and wires create visual clutter and may impinge on developability of upper floor uses on certain sites due to proximity (i.e., views from the windows). Relocation of electrical transmission lines may be difficult/expensive due to significant easements required, and these lines are also higher above the street and have more space between poles. Relocation of electrical distribution lines and communications lines would significantly improve the aesthetics of E. 12th Street, and enhance the developability of vacant and underutilized sites. Undergrounding can be funded through property owner/developer contribution or City funding.

What are your thoughts?

9 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

I think putting all the lines underground via City funding is the best solution. It would greatly improve the aesthetics of 12th Street without further crowding our back alleys with power lines. I believe this undergrounding was done on 11th Street. Given the amount of money spent on redevelopment downtown and elsewhere in the City, I do not see the price tag of this work as unreasonable. I think the improved aesthetics and City investment would provide incentive for new development, especially if this work was done in conjunction with comprehensive streetscape improvements on 12th.

[reply](#) [I agree 8](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

In December, EPS presented preliminary estimates of \$2-6M to bury utility lines on East 12th Street. Given that the Downtown Austin Plan contemplates expenditure of \$180M for infrastructure and streetscape improvements over the next decade, it seems reasonable for the city to commit \$6M to clearing the East 12th Street development canvas of zigzagging poles and the maze of crisscrossing and sagging utility lines that severely limit what can be achieved on these fairly shallow lots.

Moving the utility lines to the alleys will be viewed by many residential (and commercial) stakeholders as yet another cheap fix for 12th Street. We've waited 14 years for a solution, and surely it will be more elegant and progressive than shoving the problem into the backyards of residential property owners.

[reply](#) [I agree 9](#)



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Of course, put the lines underground and ensure that they are of sufficient capacity to handle 21st century power and communications needs. Underground utilities are initially more costly to install than overhead, but the cost to maintain them is negligible in comparison. No tree trimming, no wned lines in storms, no icing over, etc. And, again, it's time to see 12th Street as a gateway to our city, so the aesthetic improvement is absolutely necessary.

[reply](#) [I agree 7](#)



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Absolutely the electrical should be buried!

[reply](#) [I agree 6](#)



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with my neighbors that ALL power lines on E.12th street should be buried. Council must consider this a priority and pass a substantial 2012 bond measure covering infrastructure and streetscape improvements. I envision an improved East 12th street as a real commercial "gateway" to Downtown, and burying the lines should be high on the list because it will also substantially improve the aesthetics as well as an added bonus.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with all the above responses and echo their detail. East 12th Street, as a corridor to downtown, needs many infrastructure issues resolved for the appropriate development of this gateway, and this one is an absolute must. Residents will not accept a cheap fix. Residents expect and again have been assured in the past that aesthetic improvement and the expenditure for such improvement would occur. It is time for the city to step up, bury all lines and bring East 12th Street into the 21st century.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Of course, put the lines underground and ensure that they are of sufficient capacity to handle 21st century power and communications needs. Underground utilities are initially more costly to install than overhead, but the cost to maintain them is negligible in comparison. No tree trimming, no downed lines in storms, no icing over, etc. And, again, it's time to see 12th Street as a gateway to our city, so the aesthetic improvement is absolutely necessary.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Randall Ward](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

The electrical & communication lines need to be relocated underground, not moved to the alleys. This would be a significant step towards East 12th street becoming an appealing gateway to downtown and would help to make East 12th more attractive to those interested in commercial development there. The cost to the city is reasonable (\$6M) when compared to allowances considered on infrastructure improvement for downtown (\$180M over next decade).

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Bury the lines. Alley is a 'non-starter'.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Streetscape on E. 12th Street is unattractive

Roadways and sidewalks are serviceable, but not of similar quality or character to those on other commercial/mixed-use corridors such as E. 11th Street and E. 7th Street.

Enhancements to streetscape would improve the aesthetics of E. 12th Street and, if publicly funded, could relieve a cost that can facilitate feasibility for new development.

Use of the existing design regulations under Subchapter E may not be appropriate for all properties; a streetscape design plan that unifies the "look and feel" of E. 12th Street could be of benefit in "placemaking" and attracting investment.

What do you think?

11 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Looks like my comment didn't take so I'll try again: Perhaps 12th Street could be used as a model for incorporating Green Infrastructure into the public right of way. Imagine Austin calls for such innovative redevelopment, which combines the function of stormwater treatment with landscaping. For example, raingardens are being incorporated into Rio Grande Street Bicycle Boulevard. Perhaps the Public Works Department and/or Watershed Protection could partner on such an effort for 12th Street. works

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

It's time to start thinking of E 12th Street as a gateway to downtown and to our beautiful Capitol grounds. Visitors come into the heart of our city along 7th Street and 12th Street. What a grand entrance 12th Street makes! Streetscape enhancement is an absolute requirement; however, it falls on the heels of infrastructure and development planning.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 9



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 0



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with my neighbors that ALL power lines on E.12th street should be buried. Council must consider this a priority and pass a substantial 2012 bond measure covering infrastructure and streetscape improvements. I share in the vision that an improved East 12th street will soon be a new commercial "gateway" to Downtown. Burying ALL the lines will make the corridor more attractive, functional and should be high on the list because it will also substantially improve the aesthetics as an added bonus.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

East 7th Street is not the only access and entrance from ABIA to downtown. East 12th **IS** a gateway, too. It's time to give the star treatment to East 12th that was given to East 7th. East 12th Street deadends into the beautiful, lush and historic grounds of the Capitol of the State of Texas. What an impression this city could make if it put the time and resources into East 12th that it has given other central areas! It really could be an amazing sight. I agree with what Jim Morris said, "Streetscape enhancement is an absolute requirement; however, it falls on the heels of infrastructure and development planning."

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

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[reply](#) [I agree](#) 5



[Randall Ward](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

While not the number one issue, enhancing the streetscape through a "design plan that unifies the look and feel" of East 12th is another important element in making this street a gateway to downtown and the State Capitol Building.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 4



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with Jim and Andrea.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I agree with previous posts - this is a gateway to the eastside - aesthetics are a big deal - it is an opportunity for the city to make this a gem as opposed to a dump, which it has been for many years.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Lee Sherman](#) 16 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I think asthetics are ideal for this area to attract new businesses, renters and consumers. I do, however, think costs should be evaluated. Beautiful landscaping doesn't have to cost a fortune.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) 16 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

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[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Study Area has a large concentration of affordable housing units, and would benefit from more marketrate housing

1) The Study Area does have a high concentration of affordable housing units. Fully 22% of all housing units in the Study Area ZIP Code (78702) are in various affordable housing programs, compared to just 6% for the City overall. Still, in the 2010 Census, roughly 80% of all households in the Study Area neighborhoods earned below the City's median income of \$74,000. The demand for affordable housing is high in this area as it is throughout Austin.

2) The prospects for retail development in the Study Area would be enhanced by increases in local spending potential, and occupants of market-rate housing will have higher incomes to support such businesses. A focus on mixed use, mixed-income developments, combined with net growth in the number of households, can help to make the Study Area a more attractive location and increase the supportable square footage for retailers.

Tell us what you think.

9 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

As EPS has stated, subsidized housing is highly concentrated in Central East Austin. I think if the analysis had focused on the study area instead of the entire 78702 zip code, we would see an even higher percentage of affordable housing units. Instead of further concentrating subsidized housing in this lower opportunity area that has high crime and drug activity, we should reintroduce affordability and diversity into other areas of town that were allowed to completely gentrify and are currently under represented with affordable housing. Our area needs the local spending potential provided by market rate housing to support desired retail. We also need committed stakeholders to address the challenges our community faces. In general, people who own their homes have the greatest geographic and financial stake in the area and are more willing/motivated to engage in the hard work of building community. Therefore, I believe our area needs more ownership opportunities as opposed to rental. In general, tenants tend to be more transient in nature and therefore less involved/committed with community efforts to bring about positive change. To prevent further gentrification, I believe we should focus on property tax relief for those in the area struggling with increasing property values. I also believe the City should provide incentives for owner/occupiers that are renovating dilapidated housing, involving themselves in the community, and thus assisting with revitalization efforts.

[reply](#) [I agree 8](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

In its analysis of the amount of retail this area can sustain, EPS cited estimates and figures ranging out to 2035.

It seems reasonable to ask EPS to take a long view on housing, as well. EPS should consider not only the current inventory of deeply affordable housing stock in 78702, but also the additional concentration and intensification contemplated for this area by the Downtown Austin Plan's Affordable Housing Strategy. The DAP posits "intensification" of Housing Authority-controlled properties, potentially adding thousands of units over the next decade to 78702. Additionally, the city's goals for housing the chronically homeless in part rely on converting units in existing project-based Section 8 to permanent supportive housing, and 556 such units are within the study area.

Though councilmembers, staff and concerned citizens are currently working on a plan to more equitably disperse all types of affordable housing stock throughout the city, we should not rely on those efforts alone. **East 11th & 12th Streets are the subject of an urban renewal project, and the exercise of urban renewal powers is meant to cure the effects of concentrated poverty, not sustain and exacerbate them.** Creating ownership opportunities, both residential and commercial, for people from all walks of life is key to fostering a diverse community that is invested for the long-term in sustaining the progress that public investment delivers. And as Lee Sherman has noted, property tax reform will ensure that long-term residents on fixed incomes can keep their homes AND enjoy the benefits that revitalization brings to the neighborhood.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 8



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

As the study confirms again, the East Side has more than its share of affordable housing opportunities. As a city, we should reintroduce affordability and diversity into other areas of town that are now under-represented with affordable housing. Many cities have learned that high concentrations of low income housing is ultimately disastrous, I mean counter-productive.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 10



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I cannot say it any better, so I will just state that I completely agree with Lee Sherman, Tracy Witte, and Jim Morris. Please reread their comments!

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I would just like to add that when I have hit the "I AGREE" button underneath some of the responses on this site, the number has actually decreased rather than increase. Also, if I hit that button again, it just resets it to the number it was before, this no increase in number of those who agree can be made at all. Just wanted to warn other participants and viewers of this survey that some of the numbers of those who agree with these comments is actually higher. How much higher? I am not sure, but the numbers are not accurate.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

First off, East 12th street is a COMMERCIAL "gateway" to Downtown. I agree with all comments above regarding the high concentration of deeply affordable units already located in Central East Austin. I agree with Ms. Witte's comments above that urban renewal projects, such as the project for E.11th and E.12th, are meant to cure the effects of "concentrated poverty in a given area". Council is talking about equitable dispersion of affordable housing, but so far, the rules for this chess game have not been written, nor has scoring guidelines and other criteria been adjusted to prevent the concentration of affordable units in given zip codes. I agree with Jim Morris' comment, FIND A WAY to introduce affordability into other parts of town that are now under-represented with affordable housing.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 4



[Randall Ward](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I agree with the above comments from Lee Sherman, Tracy Witte and Jim Morris on this issue.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I agree with Tracy and Jim and Kris. I am also stating that the 'agree' button is not functioning for me either.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

The east side in gerenarl would benefit market rate housing - BUT NOT 12th STREET - it is a commercial area - we want shopping - restaurants, coffee shops, a dry cleanrs, places to hang - visit with friends and neighbors. The housing on 12th was removed long ago and is not coming back - face it.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Continued gentrification will continue to displace residents, especially elderly

Since 2000, the neighborhoods surrounding the Study Area have become significantly more affluent, and property values have increased dramatically. At the same time, the minority population, seniors, and family households have been in decline. Policies such as the Homestead Preservation Ordinance alone have not yet proven to be effective tools to retain long-time residents in these neighborhoods. Potential responses within the Study Area would be the incorporation of some affordable housing into mixedincome projects, prioritization of housing suitable for families, and provision of housing for seniors.

What are your thoughts?

8 answers



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

I do not believe that existing residents and the elderly desire to leave their homes and move into subsidized rental housing units. The Homestead Preservation Ordinance buys land from beneath a structure, which removes a valuable asset from any family: their land. Instead of taking this approach, why not provide property tax relief? Allow low-income families to retain ownership of their land and instead help them with the burden of property taxes. Also, I have seen two families return to Central East Austin on my street alone. I question whether people are being forced out for economic reasons or if they are choosing to leave for other reasons? Some people are joining the middle class and moving to nicer areas with better schools and less crime. The bottom line is I don't think building more low-income rental housing will encourage people to stay or to move back to the area. I don't think that approach will stop gentrification. Instead provide property tax relief and work on the quality of life issues (crime, schools, etc.) that will encourage people to stay or move back. Building more low-income rental housing may further concentrate poverty and studies show a strong correlation between poverty and crime. Given our existing poverty concentration and crime levels, I don't think further concentration serves the community well.

[reply](#) [I agree 11](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Lee is right: no one struggling with residential property taxes in Central East Austin is pining for an apartment opportunity on East 12th Street. They want to be able to afford the places they have known all their lives as "home."

The Homestead Preservation Ordinance is well-meaning but, when considered in the context of the city's approach to other conundrums of community benefit vs. wealth generation, it is disappointing.

For example, warehouse district property owners downtown would like to maximize the value of their parcels by developing splendid towers. That action might entail demolition/alteration of historic assets, an outcome the city would like to avoid. The Downtown Austin Plan offers a clever solution to both incentivize preservation of the historic structures AND allow the property owners to achieve expected return on investment. In exchange for seeking historic designation and preserving their properties, warehouse district owners can sell their unused development entitlements to downtown core development projects for an undisclosed price. Citizens and tourists get to enjoy the community benefit of a preserved warehouse district and the owners are allowed to reap the economic benefits of their investment. Everybody wins.

When it comes to Central East Austin, though, the solution to maintaining the desired community benefit of affordability for lower income residents is to offer long-time stakeholders the opportunity to sign the most valuable part of their investment, the land beneath their homes, to the City of Austin or a non-profit entity. Homeowners then pay taxes only on the structures diminishing in value over the years and they are obliged to sell these structures to buyers who earn at or below a prescribed level of income, thus limiting the sale price. Essentially, the strapped owners have to decide whether "staying" is worth losing ownership of the most valuable part of his/her asset in Central East. The city values your presence here, but only if you turn over the land. It seems like the city values brick buildings downtown (and their owners) more than it values long-time Central East Austinites, their dignity and desire to leave a real asset to their heirs.

Proponents may argue that land trusts are the best solution we have to maintaining affordability. Even if that is true, land trusts have no place on East 12th Street. Stakeholder after stakeholder has expressed to the city the expectation that retail and commercial line this corridor, not housing. And tax assessments for East 12th Street property average \$5/sq. ft. Whatever gentrification has occurred, no homeowner or commercial property owner on East 12th is looking to sell because the tax bill is too high.

As in the question above: City, please invest public dollars to help East 12th Street owners attract appropriate desired retail development and provide progressive tax relief to help challenged property owners remain in their homes and businesses.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 9



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

More affordable housing is not the answer to gentrification - this area has enough already.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 6



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I agree with the Lee Sherman and Tracy Witte's comments. The city has concentrated poverty to the point of segregation in this area for decades, and more affordable housing only furthers this. My neighbors, some who have lived here for 50 years, have no desire or intention to move, especially to subsidized rental housing units. No one on my block has moved away in over two years, and the only person I know who moved in the past two years did so due to a job transfer. The Homestead Preservation Ordinance takes away a family's most valuable asset. This policy does not work, and East 12th Street will not accept it. (Aren't land trusts are challenged legally all the time?)

[reply](#) [agree](#) 4



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I agree with all comments above.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 3



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I agree with Tracy and Lee.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 2



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I agree with Andrea, Lee and Tracy - no one is going to want to move from a home to an apartment or other type of housing - Tax relief can solve this for older residents - especially seniors.

[reply](#)I agree 2



[Susie](#) 16 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I also agree with Andrea and Lee; However, I would not be opposed to an independent Senior only apartment complex on Chicon. When seniors can't maintain their properties, this is an alternative to owning a house and being in a nursing home.

I am against more family affordable housing projects going up in this area.

[reply](#)I agree 0

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Crime and public safety issues are a major deterrent to future development and neighborhood revitalization

The Austin Police Department recognizes the crime issues around E. 12th Street and Chicon, and has taken several steps to address the issues. Such steps have included the enforcement of trespassing/loitering restrictions on private property, closure of "problem" properties, and creation of a Walking Beat Unit followed by a Tactical Support Team for the area. Potential future activities could include the installation of security cameras as have proven effective in other areas of the City, but the community has not yet achieved consensus regarding such installation. Improvement of these crime issues will be critical to achieving revitalization of this section of the Study Area.

How should we approach this?

12 answers



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Generally, area stakeholders express great appreciation for APD efforts in addressing crime in the 12th & Chicon area and in our neighborhoods.

Whatever tactics the city employs to eradicate the blatant and longstanding open-air drug market in and around 12th & Chicon, thoughtful people mindful of this challenge inevitably question the prospects for long-term effectiveness as well as the possibility of any unintended consequences.

Public safety cameras raise concerns about custody of the footage, invasion of privacy and whether the footage will result in arrests that lead to penalties that effectively deter/curtail such behavior in the area. People would like to know that the potential risks have been minimized.

Many good neighbors also wonder to where the criminal activity will migrate, should cameras or any other tactic prove effective in deterring criminal activity in and around 12th & Chicon. Obviously, we don't want it deeper in our neighborhoods, nor do we wish to pawn it off on an adjacent planning area. The community would appreciate knowing what steps the city and county can and will take to avoid such outcomes.

[reply](#)I agree 6



[Tobias Ford](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Whatever solution is ultimately decided upon, it is very important that it also be applied to the surrounding neighborhoods. The current efforts of APD are very appreciated by most of us, but because of this, 13th St has seen an increase in such activity.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 5



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

APD has done an amazing job at the open-air drug market of 12th and Chicon. But I agree with Tobias Ford - I have seen an increase in suspicious and criminal activity on 13th Street. Crime migration is something to be concerned about, especially with installation of cameras. East 12th Street is a gateway to downtown and the State Capitol, and expects and has been assured infrastructure and desired development. But along with infrastructure and desired development, security is key and is a foundation to it all. I believe some options that would enhance the security of this corridor would be an APD substations somewhere along East 12th Street and 24/7 walking patrols. Also, East 12th Street needs and should be included in the "Stay Away" zone for repeat offenders, and the Sit/Lie ordinance should cover the entire Central East Austin planning area.

Could the city please explain exactly why East 12th Street was not included in the "Stay Away" zone for repeat offenders and in the Sit/Lie ordinance? It does not make any sense to me, so the reasoning behind this exclusion would be appreciated.

Again, I want to reiterate, APD does do an incredible job.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

East 12th street is a commercial "gateway" to Downtown. It is also a "gateway" for newcomers heading eastward ready to spend money on a cup of coffee, spend money at brick and mortar lunch spot, spend money on groceries, spend money on toys for their kids at a local toy store, etc.... These improvements on E. 12th street will be frequented and supported by all neighborhood residents, by those new consumers who work across I-35 and are in walking distance to new retail and dining on E. 12th street, by those visitors and hotel guests at the Sheraton Austin on E. 11th, and by many more. One thing is for sure, consumers won't go and won't spend if they don't feel comfortable and if they don't feel safe. I agree with the comments and recommendations above: last week in late December 2011, the City and Travis County District Attorney's office created a program to improve safety in a large zone, a "stay away zone", as a condition of probation for those repeat felony offenders. If we are going to spend money on and create an economic engine on E. 12th street, then we must include E. 11 and E. 12 within this "stay away zone" to prevent crime and to create a safe environment for consumers. Patrol is great, and I am all for an APD substation on 12th as well, but I feel enhanced prosecution is a better tool for repeat felony offenders. See the story below in the Statesman and view the map on the left side of the screen showing zone from Comal to Lamar and Cesar Chavez to 10th street.
<http://www.statesman.com/news/local/new-program-targets-repeat-offenders-downtown-2064212.html>

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies



[reply](#) [I agree](#) 1



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

Is this not the most elemental of issues? People do not build, live, or work in areas where they feel unsafe. .

HALO cameras have proven very effective downtown and at Rundberg & I-35. If the city will install HALOs and support the effort, then we will build and support an active and supportive Neighborhood Watch program.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 4



[Randall Ward](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I do appreciate the efforts of the APD and the steps they have taken to address crime in the area. The problem, however, persists and is the single most important issue in attracting the kind of business (and patrons) and development we want to see for the area. All possible solutions should be on the table:

>APD substation at or near 12th & Chicon

>HALO cameras

>walking patrols

>expanded "Stay Away Zone" for repeat offenders to include East 12th Street

[reply](#) [I agree 4](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

What can we do to help?

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

What can we do to help?

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

It is well documented that crime is well correlated with concentration of poverty. We must continue to work on our existing crime problems and we should not create new ones by further concentrating poverty in Central East Austin. Instead, reintroduce affordability and diversity into Central West Austin and other areas devoid of both. And I agree with Kris Bowen that Central East Austin should be given the same tools to address Public Order and Drug Crimes as Downtown, West Campus, and East Austin south of 7th Street. That is: special prosecution of repeat drug dealing offenders, Sit/Lie ordinance, Stay Away Zone, and more boots on the ground.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Susie](#) 16 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

A "Walking Beat Unit"? Really? I must be partially blind because I live almost at the corner of New York Ave and Chicon, take our dog on regular walks around the neighborhood yet have never once seen cops on foot.

I am very much for security cameras. These do deter crime and would be a great asset for the neighborhood.

I believe with more security, this area would be more desirable for future development. The community can only do so much, however. We need the Austin Police Department to step it up over here.

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: Local, small and minority businesses are preferred by residents to be placed within the corridor, but there are concerns about their sustainability/long term viability

Most of the retail and office space in the Study Area is occupied by locally-owned businesses rather than regional or national businesses. Future development on sites occupied by these businesses may cause their displacement, and they may not be able to afford the rents required to support new construction. In some other development projects involving City land, development agreements have been created whereby the private developers of the land purchased from the City are required to offer a certain proportion of the retail space within those projects to locally-owned businesses. The City also offers several business assistance programs to provide financial and technical resources to assist local businesses.

What do you think?

7 answers



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Future development is likely going to occur on sites where local business are **NOT** located--on the many, many sites that are vacant. The sites with local businesses are largely owner-occupied, so any displacement will be of their own choosing.

That said, who would not support local businesses in new construction on East 12th Street or on any of the sites where current businesses choose to vacate? **All** the retail space should be for local businesses. Please consider the rent that the City has paid and continues to pay to occupy the offices in the building on East 11th Street and how much has been spent to allow local businesses to modify space on the ground floor of those buildings. That kind of support directed at fostering local businesses on East 12th Street would be much appreciated and long overdue. {No disrespect to East 11th Street businesses--just show the same support for East 12th Street.}

The city could build (or assist in building) structures on East 12th and make them accessible to all kinds of local businesses that provide for retail needs.

[reply](#) [I agree 8](#)



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I have checked I agree with Tracy but I am not so sure **all** the retail space should be for local businesses. If enough land with sufficient infrastructure were available I believe a regional or national grocery, drug store etc would be most welcome to the neighborhood.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

We of course want and will support local and minority businesses, but I have heard nobody express any opposition to suitable retail or service shop regardless of its origin. Banks, grocers, dry cleaners, restaurants, etc. They are all wanted and needed. Local, regional, national.

[reply](#) [I agree 5](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Do I count 17 blocks down South Congress that are filled with LOCAL business? Hmm and they manage to have a little street fair every First Thursday of the month. Gosh, do you think we might be able to develop a similar active commercial development?...with a little infrastructure assistance, some safety from APD and NO MORE PSH.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Everyone wants to support local businesses or we would not live where we do - but I believe we do support anyone willing to invest in the area - an investment by a company is a statement in itself toward the local community and yes those folks will have a higher cost of entry into the market - which in itself supports - NO MORE SUBSIDIZED HOUSING - we will also need some higher income residents - market value - to support these businesses. **Adding subsidized housing is self defeating to this reality - drawing folks from downtown is not.**

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I am all for any type of business opening on 12th Street that is consistent with the desires/vision of the community. Incentives for local and/or minority-owned businesses are great, but I believe we should also be inclusive of non-minority businesses.

[reply](#) [I agree 3](#)[Susie](#) 16 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Regarding Lee Sherman's comment: I agree in businesses that are consistent with the vision of the community. Personally, I'd rather be able to support local neighborhood business by shopping at the grocery and/or hanging out in a future coffee house. This is ideal for me. I also know from speaking to a couple of my elderly neighbors, that this would be ideal for them.

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: The neighborhood needs a grocery store in order to be sustainable

According to the market survey, most neighborhood residents travel well outside the Study Area for their groceries and daily goods and services. The attraction of a grocery store to the Study Area can have a uniquely positive impact on the retail and business prospects for the area, as such stores typically "anchor" commercial centers or districts that also provide other goods and services. Such a store would also significantly enhance the quality of life for neighborhood residents, many of whom are lower-income and may not have convenient access to high quality foods that are mostly available outside the neighborhood.

Do you agree?

10 answers

[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Everyone wants a grocery store. The key is to provide one that serves a wide range of income levels. If the Market Study alludes to rising income levels and gentrification in the Study Area, the kind of grocery store that will succeed and serve the most number of residents is one that provides products desired and is accessible to the entire spectrum of wage earners that live in Central East.

HEB representatives recently discussed the same kind of balance they need to achieve at the proposed store at Mueller.

[reply](#) [I agree 10](#)[Steve Friesen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)[reply](#) [I agree 4](#)[Steve Friesen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

We desperately need a grocery store in the area. It's a food desert. I have to drive miles for groceries, or pay doubled prices at a near-by "convenience" store.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 4



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I agree with Tracy Witte. Many residents drive outside of our own zipcodes to buy the groceries and products we need and desire. To reiterate what Tracy Witte said above, we need a grocery store that serves the entire spectrum of wage earners in Central East, as well as takes into account the expected future growth (just read and watch the news) of Central East Austin and all of Central Austin as a whole.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

It is easier to buy beer than bread over here, and East 12th street is a natural commercial "gateway" to Downtown. I strongly support the idea for a balanced grocery in this immediate area as described above. I would support a co-op grocery such as Wheatsville or the like on E.12th.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 4



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

Yes, we need a grocer, and a baker, and a laundry/tailor/shoe repair. We need the little village that is Westlake but walk up and affordable. And I think we can get it if we build it.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 3



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

This is a no brainer - talk with HEB - everytime we make a purchase at the 41st HEB they ask for our zip code - don't blow this off - they are gathering data to see if is worthwhile to have one in 78702 zipcode (not that sorry one on 7th) - maybe they will share that data.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

It would be great if the parcel at 12th and I35 that used to be a grocery store would become a grocery store again. Even Downtown has a dearth of quality grocery stores, so this would be a prime spot that would provide jobs and high quality food for a wide range of incomes. Bring an oasis to our food desert!

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 2



[ethan smith](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

hello, I sent this to the consultant Darin Smith who did the presentation last night, and I was encouraged to repost it here, so I am doing so. Basically, it pertains to tract 5 as a potential site for the grocery store.

I was particularly interested in the talk about the grocery store, because it seemed to be the kind of silver bullet where city incentives might naturally go since it encourages other businesses to develop. I kind of agree with the consultants view that the lot where 11th and 12th meet that's a CVS and a bingo parlor might be the most naturally suited site, and it could be 25,000 sq. ft. I think the technical study that gets done might agree as well, and that market forces would suggest incentivizing the grocery store to be there, rather than a 10,000 sq. ft. store at tract 5 which was discussed as a potentially viable alternative at the meeting.

That said, I would question the wisdom of developing tract 5 before a deal was done--I think it represents the city's only real leverage in

the situation, and from what someone at the meeting said about the asking price of the other lot, the difference in having tract 5 as a bargaining chip could be quite substantial, maybe in the millions. It seemed to be the only viable alternative location, and as a bonus, the city already owns the land.

Furthermore, if a grocery store ended up actually being on tract 5, I'm not sure it would be the worst thing in the world. I don't know if the technical study addresses this, re: impact, but if you are trying to get some of those empty lots to have businesses on them, and they are starting from not even having a building there, I think you get less impact out of having a lynchpin of economic development (the grocery store) at the very end of the block, by downtown.....I would be inclined to think that it might actually be more helpful farther inside the street, and setting aside for a second the greater planned density of the future, a 10,000 ft grocery store in of itself would be quite useful to the existing residents.

It seems from the public notices I've gotten in the mail that the area closest to the highway is at this time more inclined to develop on its own, and it is. The more difficult spots are going to be as you get farther east on 12th, so maybe if the city really wants to see all of 12th develop, it would be better served to save its silver bullet for a few more blocks inland.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) [0](#)



[Susie](#) 16 days ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

YES to grocery store.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) [0](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: The neighborhood needs more parking to serve businesses

While some community parking has been provided on both East 11th and 12th Streets, other parking has been removed due to bike lane improvements on the limited right-of-way. Meeting all the parking demands of future projects through on-site structured parking would be costly, and may detract from project feasibility. "Tuck-in" parking -- surface spaces provided adjacent to the public right-of-way such as is provided in certain areas on E. 11th Street -- may provide a more cost-effective parking format, as could the provision of additional public parking resources that can be shared by future development projects.

What are you thoughts?

7 answers



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

I think the city should look at some of the innovative parking solutions that are now available. Perhaps underground solutions that are in Budapest, and Madrid, and Dubai are something that could be incentivized to create access. Isn't it odd that people will park and walk to UT for Football, or in our neighborhood to go to the Drum, but they must park right outside the restaurant? Parking on South Congress might require a couple of blocks to your destination.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) [3](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

Yes, we need more and better parking. In particular, parking is poorly lit and not very safe feeling near Sam's BBQ, Galloway Sub Shop, and the White Swan.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 1 reply](#)

There is a parking lot at 12th & Angelina that is almost always empty.

If and when a significant number of neighborhood-serving local businesses--not bars and bong shops-- establish themselves, there may be a need for more parking that the city can address any number of ways.

Historically, parking lots have been created when the city needed to demonstrate some progress on redevelopment. Creating lots that are empty most of the time is not progress, and so far the lot on East 12th has not induced any private development.

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)



[ethan smith](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Do you mean the lot at 12th and Salina?

I don't see why bars get lumped in with bong shops, a neighborhood bar is a resource -- a place for people to meet and socialize. I think the parking proposal for the area immediate to 12th and Chicon as presented was a bit unreasonable, and the lot at 12th and Salina should be looked at as a reasonable solution for the near future. For one, to rip up the alley behind 12th street between Salina and Chicon as suggested would be tantamount to declaring war on the people who frequent the area. I don't think its a good policy for the city to on one hand know that culture is back there and allow it to exist and be monitored, but then one day start ripping the whole area up. I think that counts as fanning flames, and a better idea would be to slowly bring the area along.

Furthermore, I can't see all the local businesses agreeing to putting parking there. The backyard at Club 1808 is basically its most valuable property....it represents the ability to throw big shows on a temporary basis (I say this as a former promoter at the space). Many clubs make half of their money all year off of events that come down for sxsw week, so I don't think any amount of incentivizing ripping up the backyard and putting parking spaces there would be enough to encourage the owner to go that route.

I do not know the situation with the owner of the unpaved parking lot at 12th and Salines, but maybe if the city is selling a parcel somewhere along the strip, it could use the money to buy that lot and turn it into paved public parking. I think this would be a good investment, because there do not seem to be other reasonable alternatives for parking in the immediate vicinity.

Alternatively, I'm not sure what constitutes a good use of city funds in this instance, but it could simply incentivize the owner to pave the lot and throw up some good lighting, just to get in in circulation.

Also, you redo 12th to stick those bike lanes in there, I think it would be a good investment to put some quality bike racks up on both sides of Chicon on 12th, maybe in front of the bars, a la Beerland. That counts as parking, too.

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I think the city should look at some of the innovative parking solutions that are now available. Perhaps underground solutions that are in Budapest, and Madrid, and Dubai are something that could be incentivized to create access. Isn't it odd that people will park and walk to UT for Football, or in our neighborhood to go to the Drum, but they must park right outside the restaurant? Parking on South Congress might require a couple of blocks to your destination.

[reply](#) [I agree 0](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Yes, we need more parking. In particular, I think the area near Sam's BBQ and Galloway Sandwich shop could benefit from safe, well lit, high quality parking. As new development and greater attractions come to our area, managing the parking so that it does not become a problem for our neighborhoods will be huge. There are existing parking problems that need to be addressed as well.

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 0



[ethan smith](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

might be worth looking at additional bike parking as a cost-effective way to help address the situation (albeit slightly)

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 0

Reply to this question:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Issue: City's continued ownership of parcels within the corrdior is slowing the development process

There are numerous publicly-owned parcels in the Study Area parcels, typically acquired and improved with use of federal funding. Most of these parcels have yet to be developed, and represent development opportunities for the future, but also signify unrealized potential in the present. Near-term development of these sites would signify new investment, fill vacant parcels with active uses, and add to the demand for (and potentially supply of) desired commercial uses. Federal regulations affect the process for disposition and development of these parcels, including priorities for affordable housing projects. In cases where federal funding has been invested, factors such as repayment of federal funds must be considered if the sites are developed for uses not originally intended. These issues and other regulatory factors must be addressed in some cases in future development strategies.

What solutions do you have in mind?

10 answers



[Tracy Witte](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

It would be very helpful for and transparent of the City of Austin to explain to the public by January 9, 2012, parcel by parcel, exactly how much federal funding has been expended, the exact source of funding and time of expenditure, what obligations are entailed and what is required to liberate any developer from those obligations.

The community deserves to understand exactly what has been done in the name of our benefit and what precise limitations there are to development.

How many times do any of us have to ask for the details before they are provided?

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 9



[genechiles@gmail.com](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

It would be interesting to find out what the City has spent and what they really intend for those parcels. Do they even know? Has funding come with conditions and requirements?

[reply](#) [I agree](#) 6



[Andrea T. Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) 0 replies

I believe it is imperative that the city timely, truthfully and in detail explain exactly what is intended for each parcel of land - and like Tracy also mentioned above, how much federal funding has been expended, the origination of such funding, and any conditions to such funding.

This community deserves to know exactly what the city intends to do in this very community. The city has, in effect, held this corridor to downtown and the capitol hostage from development with the city's continued ownership of several parcels. It is hard to understand why the community has repeatedly had to ask and is still asking for details as to the city's past actions and intentions for this community. Is this how the city works with its residents? Have any other streets/ corridors undergoing "development" in such close proximity to downtown and the capitol been put on hold this long?

We would appreciate timely transparency from the city. Again, East 12th Street IS a gateway to downtown and to the Capitol of the State of Texas, and should be treated as such with the right and desired infrastructure, security, and development. Thank you.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 4



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

E. 12th street is a commercial "gateway" to Downtown. I am hopeful at the January 9th Urban Renewal Board meeting that the details described above will be offered and openly discussed with the community in front of the URB members, the same members charged with "disposing" of the properties on E. 12th street.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 1



[Kris Bowen](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

E. 12th street is a commercial "gateway" to Downtown. I am hopeful at the January 9th Urban Renewal Board meeting that the details described above will be offered and openly discussed with the community in front of the URB members, the same members charged with "disposing" of the properties on E. 12th street.

[reply](#) [agree](#) 1



[Jim Morris](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\]](#) [0 replies](#)

For purposes of perspective: Austin not long ago was an idiosyncratic, sleepy little town in the middle of Texas with one big building at its center. It was largely ignored by its three big brothers Houston, Dallas and San Antonio. Over the years -maybe because nobody else was bidding- the city acquired many close-in lots and small land parcels at bargain-basement prices using available federal funds, most of which were earmarked for low income housing. The City now owns over 2500 parcels of real property within its city limits. As the city grew, most high-end development occurred centrally and just west of downtown and most new industrial development occurred north and south, but always west of downtown. Areas east of downtown, for many reasons, did not flourish on the same timeline or at the same clip. A couple of years ago, in grownup city style, City of Austin officials rightly and nobly decided to tackle the problem of housing our homeless population. It's the right thing to do; I know of nobody who disagrees. And with some 2000 homeless people and a large number of city owned vacant lots and abandoned properties in inventory, the easy solution -the obvious solution- is to simply build affordable housing on that cheaply bought city-owned property. Problem solved! Right? Well, if nothing had changed, maybe. But during those same years -while Austin was sprouting- individuals, couples, families, builders, and small businesses planted roots in "challenged" close-in neighborhoods, believing that an investment now of effort and time and resources and love would help make the city a better place for all and would help grow healthy urban neighborhoods. And believing that those close-in neighborhoods would evolve naturally with new buildings lining its corridor streets, with retail businesses offering products and services that neighborhoods need That those neighborhoods would evolve to include dress shops and dry-cleaners, beauty shops and movie theaters and coffee shops and restaurants, gas stations and ice cream shops, and banks and bakeries. And, that the city would allow the free market system to prosper.

Instead, on 12th Street, we have a streetscape that has been described as a Jack o' Lantern, with vacant weedy lots and shoddy stand alone buildings giving the appearance of bad teeth. It is a sardonic smile perpetrated by city policies and inaction.

The suggestion is this:

- 1. Free up the city-owned land to commercial development.**
- 2. Designate and zone 12th Street as the Capitol Gateway Corridor that it is naturally with retail anchored mixed use development.**
- 3. Sell the city's land holdings and free up the land use to needed development.**
- 4. Pay back the HUD funding. Then, instead of building all-new Low Income Housing:**
- 5. Use profits from the land sales to rehab dilapidated properties throughout the city to house our homeless and PSH clients. This policy will put people to work, rehab rundown buildings, provide shelter and improve all neighborhoods.**

[reply](#) [agree](#) 6



[Bruce Sheehan](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

The city needs to get this land back into the market - have a lottery and sell it all off - as city property it generates no taxes - affordable housing generates no taxes - this should be a no brainer too - development is market driven with the city accomodating development - not the city being in the development business.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Perhaps the first right of refusal should go to the Neighborhoods helped hostage for the past years. Some of those neighborhoods have developers who have built market rate housing in the neighborhoods. Lack of infrastructure in the first six blocks east of IH35 have made conventional financing all but impossible hto achieve.

Yes, that was my FIRST question to the task force: make it transparent to all what the entailments are with the Clty owned lots. If it is as simple as repaying the HUD funds, then add that to the mix and let the developers know what is on that 'ticket'. The City still should be the one to upgrade the infrastructure, and pay for the underground utilities.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Joy Poth-Aleman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

Oh, and have the standards/requirements for the URB changed in the ensuing 'reappointments'? Don't board members have to be local property owners? Thanks.

[reply](#) [I agree 1](#)



[Lee Sherman](#) about 1 month ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

I think the City owns some prime property and has sat on it for way too long. Developing this land into subsidized rental housing would not the highest or best use and would further concentrate poverty adding fuel to the crime problems we already experience. This City should be transparent about what federal regs apply to each parcel. If these parcels are unable to be developed by the City in a way that achieves community goals (due to applicable federal regs or other reasons) they should be sold to an entity that is able to do so.

[reply](#) [I agree 2](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Recommendation: Clarify the development regulations and process by reconciling the NCCDs and Urban Renewal Plan.

The NCCDs are the controlling zoning regulation for the Study Area. However, the NCCDs indicate that developments must conform with the "Project Controls" for various parcels as outlined in the Urban Renewal Plan (URP), which was originally adopted in 1999 and has been modified five times thus far. On parcels where the URP still has these Project Controls (many have been eliminated over the years), proposals that do not strictly conform to the parcel-specific descriptions of uses, amounts of development, etc., can trigger the need for multi-level project approvals even if those projects otherwise conform to the NCCD entitlements. The community should re-confirm the importance of the remaining specific Project Controls, or else modify them in favor of more flexible requirements as already have been enacted on many development sites in the Study Area. If such flexibility were created for those parcels, NCCD-conforming projects could be processed administratively, rather than requiring lengthy, costly, and uncertain review by the Urban Renewal Board, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. In addition, the URP should be updated as a single consolidated document; presently, it is available as the original document plus five amendments, making it very difficult to navigate.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

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Recommendation: Establish \$10 million in public funding to underground utilities, improve streetscape, and subsidize wastewater infrastructure upgrades on East 12th Street.

In recent years, the City has upgraded infrastructure capacity and placed utilities underground in certain locations on 11thStreet, and also on East 7thStreet. The removal of many poles and wires and improvement of the un-landscaped, utilitarian streetscape on East 12thStreet would signal the City's support of the area, and improve its "look and feel" to attract new businesses and other development and community activity. The EPS Team has estimated that these streetscape and undergrounding projects would have a combined cost of roughly \$9 million. In addition, wastewater infrastructure in certain areas of East 12thStreet may need replacement and upgrades to accommodate future development. The EPS Team has estimated that these wastewater improvements would cost roughly \$1 million. This \$10 million total funding also will help to improve the feasibility of new development and attract private investment by removing significant costs from projects' financing needs.

1 answer[Jim Rath](#) 24 days ago [\[-\] 0 replies](#)

There are four transmission lines that cross the 12th Street corridor. They run from the former Holly Power Plant to three different substations: from Holly to 12th, 12th to UT, Holly to UT, and Holly to 38th. A map is attached.

If Austin Energy intends on keeping a major substation at Holly, it seems to me that the most sensible route for these transmission lines is along I-35. It's the most direct route, it wouldn't run over residential areas, it wouldn't require burying the lines or acquiring new rights of way, and it fits the already industrial aesthetic of I-35.

Is this relocation something Austin Energy would consider? As a potential funding source, how about tacking this on to the Holly demolition?

[reply](#) [I agree](#) [0](#)

Reply to this question:

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Recommendation: Dedicate resources to attract a grocery store to anchor the area's businesses.

The Study Area has no grocery store, is described as a “food desert,” and most community members indicate they travel well outside the neighborhood to get their groceries. In addition to serving the community, a grocery store could anchor more extensive community retail and services. As the area's population has grown and increased in income levels, and as the residential and employee population of Downtown Austin continues to grow, a mid-sized grocery store should be increasingly feasible in the Study Area. Staff resources should be devoted to pursuing such a tenant – potentially incorporated into a mixed-use development that takes advantage of the NCCD's higher-density allowances – and financial incentives such as New Markets Tax Credits should be explored as necessary.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

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Recommendation: Encourage the inclusion of locally owned businesses and “below market rate” commercial space in new development.

Most of the businesses in the Study Area are small and locally owned, and may be susceptible to displacement as new development occurs, particularly if they are renting rather than owning their space. Through the development solicitation process, all mixed-use or commercial projects on publicly-controlled sites should be strongly encouraged to provide at least 50 percent of commercial space for locally-owned businesses, and may be granted further preference if they also include some commercial space at lease rates below market-rates.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Recommendation: Encourage mixed-income housing development, plus new housing for families and seniors.

Market analysis indicates that the area has a comparatively high concentration of subsidized housing, relative to the rest of the City, but that seniors and modest-income families have been moving out of the neighborhood, in part due to rising housing costs or taxes. New development should be encouraged to provide some units large enough for families, including a goal that 10 percent of new units on currently public land should have three or more bedrooms. Also, the City may wish to support senior housing development on one of the publicly-controlled sites, or may offer incentives to achieve such a development on a privately held site such as the block between 11th and 12th Street just east of IH 35 or at 12th and Chicon. Other projects that include housing on publicly-controlled sites should be encouraged to provide 10 percent of units affordable at up to 60 percent of Median Family Income (if rentals), but otherwise focus on market-rate and/or ownership housing. Achievement of these strategies would increase the supply of market-rate housing in the community and dilute the current concentration of “affordable” rental units, but also address some continuing needs for impacted market segments.

1 answer



[Susie](#) 16 days ago [[1](#)] [0 replies](#)

I would like to see an independent senior-only housing development along with market-rate and/or ownership housing near 12th and Chicon.

No more affordable housing on the East side!

[reply](#) [I agree](#) [0](#)

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Recommendation: Enhance public parking on East 11th and 12th Street to support local businesses and reduce costs for new private development.

For any development that occurs on publicly owned parcels on both East 11th and 12th Streets, proposing developers should be encouraged through the selection process to provide surplus “community parking” spaces that can serve the greater area. Many of the developable sites on East 12th Street are constrained by size, and may have difficulty achieving the higher density, higher value uses enabled by current regulations if they must provide even the minimum code-required parking on-site. Moreover, the bike lanes both east- and west-bound on East 12th Street have reduced the supply of on-street parking by about half. A new public parking lot on Tract 13 between Waller and Navasota could provide roughly 20 spaces, and reduce the need for costly and space-intensive on-site parking on nearby sites. Also, “duck-in” parking should be encouraged along the south side of East 12th Street and the north-south streets approaching East 12th Street, to provide a less costly alternative to structured parking. Finally, the existing community parking lots on both East 11th and 12th Streets should be maintained until and unless other future projects on public or private land can provide similar public parking capacity.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

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Recommendation: Offer other publicly-held land for development as soon as possible.

The City of Austin or other quasi-public entities control several parcels in different locations throughout the [Study Area](#) (scroll to Figure 2 on page 10). Some of this land has been in public control for over a decade, and has been cleared of previous “slum and blight” conditions but not yet developed. Some of these sites were acquired or improved using Federal funding, and are subject to requirements regarding development for specific purposes or repayment of those funds. Infill development on these sites will enhance the physical environment, add services desired by the community and/or create additional support for existing businesses – all signaling to the development industry that the Study Area is receiving attention from the City. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) should be prepared and distributed for several sites, with minimum standards and desirable “value-added” elements specified. Specific recommendations for various sites include the following:

- a. Block 16** – An RFP was issued for this URA-controlled block in 2008, but received little developer interest, primarily because the real estate market and financing industry were in turmoil at that time. Most of the requirements of the RFP were reasonable – seeking mixed-use development and requiring modest affordable housing goals (if building rental housing), green building standards, etc. – and need not be substantially altered in a re-issued RFP. In an updated RFP, synergies with the adjacent African American Cultural and Heritage Facility should be strongly encouraged, as should the inclusion of space for local businesses. To the extent allowed by law, it would be helpful to provide some flexibility in the financing of the land acquisition, including potential for ground leasing, modestly deferred payments, etc., that may help to enhance opportunities for desirable community benefits.
- b. Block 17**– This land, sitting immediately north of the Street-Jones and Snell Buildings and facing Juniper Street, is planned to be developed for townhomes or live/work lofts. The City should expedite development of this land, either through direct construction carried out by the Austin Housing Finance Corporation or near-term transfer of the property to a motivated developer. See [Vacant Public Parcels](#) (scroll to Figure 1 on page 6).
- c. Block 18** – This URA land just east of the Snell Building on East 11th Street is home to the Victory Grill and East Room. The community should consider modifying the Urban Renewal Plan to provide site plan flexibility similar to that already provided for Block 16, or confirm that the specific Project Controls for Block 18 should be maintained. Following that discussion, an RFP should be issued. Developers should be encouraged to propose various ways to support the historic properties and the African American Cultural Heritage District on this block, in addition to the provision of community parking and space for local businesses.
- d. Tract 12** – This City owned land on East 12th Street has already been planned and platted for single-family attached housing (e.g., townhomes). To contribute more substantially to the commercial activity on East 12th Street, the community should consider modification of the URP to allow uses such as live/work units offering ground floor commercial space *within* side-by-side townhomes. The land should be sold as quickly as possible to a motivated developer.
- e. Tract 13** – This City owned land is more problematic to develop for housing than most sites, because it is oriented north-south and has limited width between Curve and Waller Street. The community should consider modifying the URP to encourage retail development on the East 12th Street frontage, plus community parking spaces. If such modification is approved, the City can issue an RFP for this site that allows for ground leasing, and seek to dedicate the revenues achievable through the leasing opportunity to the modest improvement of the site for community parking and potentially open space. If consensus cannot be reached to modify the URP for such use, the land should be sold as quickly as possible to a motivated developer.
- f. 1120 East 12th Street** – This small site should be sold to the highest bidder as quickly as possible, as it offers little opportunity for desired development as a stand-alone site.
- g. Tract 5** – This URA site on the north side of East 12th Street between San Bernard and Angelina, is designated in the URP for mixed-use and/or commercial development. The 0.6-acre site may also be large enough to accommodate senior housing as part of a mixed-use project, and could also be a potential site for a neighborhood grocery. The resolution of desirable uses for this site may require some community discussion, so the issuance of an RFP may be delayed beyond the next year or two.
- h. Community Parking** – The existing community parking lots on East 11th and East 12th Street should only be considered for more intensive development if and when adequate replacement spaces can be provided elsewhere in their vicinity.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Recommendation: The City must continue law enforcement efforts around East 12th Street and Chicon, and should also seek to support development and businesses in the area.

The Austin Police Department has conducted numerous efforts to improve security and law enforcement in this area, including closure of problem houses, enforcement of trespassing/loitering prohibitions, community clean-ups, etc. These efforts should continue, as should the community discussion regarding the merits of security cameras. The City does not own any properties near this intersection, but can provide technical assistance and financial incentives to support new development and existing businesses. The infrastructure funding recommended above may be particularly beneficial for this area, which is a minor commercial node that can be significantly enhanced through streetscape and utility undergrounding, and has the most pressing need for wastewater improvements to expand capacity for envisioned development.

0 answers

Reply to this question:

Image: Please make sure files are not bigger than 500KB

Recommendation: Numerous City departments must coordinate their efforts to implement desired improvements in the Study Area.

NHCD and the Urban Renewal Board can initiate certain actions, including preparation of submissions for infrastructure funding, discussions of modifications to existing development regulations, and disposition or development of public land. Other City departments should also be engaged as a Technical Advisory Group to prioritize and implement desired strategic actions. Examples of such departments and their potential roles include, without limitation, the following:

Law and Planning & Development Review – minor modifications and more user-friendly organization to development regulations
Public Works, Austin Energy, Watershed Protection, and Austin Water Utility – prioritization, design and construction of infrastructure upgrades
Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services, Real Estate, and Contract and Land Management – solicitation and selection of development proposals, disposition of land
prioritization of funds needed for future bond program(s)
Austin Police Department – continued law enforcement and community engagement

The EPS Team believes that implementation of the strategies and actions summarized above, and discussed in greater detail on subsequent pages, will make major and positive differences in the East 11th and 12th Street Study Area. The combination of physical improvements, regulatory clarifications, market and business enhancement, and organizational energy will signal the City's renewed commitment to the area. Private investment will be attracted, while the community's longstanding vision and goals will be respected. And the Study Area will more fully capitalize on its great potential as a vibrant urban neighborhood in Austin.

0 answers

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1

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