



Obstacles identified as part of creating Commercial Business Districts

Monday, February 9, 2015

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Districts must have the ability to **offer and support a mix of businesses** inclusive of different types of business and business sizes which offer an array of goods and services to the community

Compatibility - Austin's commercial areas and corridors currently host a mix of uses typically on small and/or oddly shaped lots, (very common in east Austin).

Example: Restaurant (current east 7th street issue)

- Alley runs behind the site
- Odd shape to the site and configuration of the building
- Residential lots on other side of alley

Current Code: Required to go to Commission for approval for a waiver of the required 25' compatibility setback due to the proximity of residential lots to the site.

Compact and Connected Austin - Support and encourage a walkable, bikable and transit friendly environment

Vertical Mixed Use Considerations and Streetscape License Agreement

Ability for VMU which supports a mix of residential and retail to exist and be executed in more commercial areas and corridors in the community

Subchapter E Design Standards and Mix Use

Considerations of business impacts in the cases where available right-of-way is limited, the streetscape must be placed within the private property portion of the site

Sidewalk Cafes

Considerations for process to obtain, length of Agreement, and requirements

Districts must have the ability to preserve the unique qualities, culture and soul of a place through **design elements and district branding**

Signage

- Considerations for sign permits, signage, ambiguity of placement of signage and requirements
- District banners (light poles)

Design overlays

- Considerations for Commercial District overlays
- West Campus Design Guidelines (example)

Districts must support business retention and growth accommodating demands for **parking solutions and infill development**

Shared Parking

Considerations for shared parking must be addressed. Parking for businesses currently impacts residential and neighboring businesses. Legal ways to share parking for day and evening use businesses or during peak and non-peak hours should be considered

Parking Minimums

Current parking minimum requirements are restrictive to the expansion of businesses depending on their lot size

Infill Development

Consideration should be given to modifying any restrictions in the current code that may not allow for reduced residential lot sizes, reduced setback requirements and reduced street and parking standards.

ABOUT SOUL-Y AUSTIN

Soul-y Austin is a pilot program of the City of Austin Economic Development Department that will:

- Promote and support businesses of *all sizes and types* within the city's commercial areas and corridors;
- Include a flexible set of tools to assist businesses in the formation of *merchants associations*;
- Create ideal conditions for *organized commercial districts*

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ABOUT SOUL-Y AUSTIN

What is a merchants association?

- A group of businesses of all types that exists to anchor and stabilize businesses around:
 - beautification efforts;
 - marketing and promotions; and
 - business retention and development activities within a commercial district.

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BENEFITS

- *Greater capacity* for small businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Increased *job opportunities*;
- Readily-accessible *community goods and services*;
- Preservation of *unique cultures and environments*;

BENEFITS (CONT'D)

- *Business retention and support services for existing and legacy businesses;*
- Increased sales tax and revenue; and
- *More pedestrian, biker, and transit-friendly communities*

TOOLS

Soul-y Austin will offer an array of *support services* that include:

- District outreach, visioning, and planning;
- Legal coaching;
- Marketing and promotions;
- Professional development opportunities; and
- Monetary district activation awards

NOTES

Soul-y Austin is:

- in the early development stages and includes plans for additional outreach to the business community;
- based on business needs, challenges, desired services, and “best practices”;
- centered on commercial district education and development