

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 5, 2010

Subcommittee Members: Council Member Sheryl Cole
Council Member Laura Morrison
Council Member Chris Riley

1. Citizen Communication (3 minutes to speak).

No citizens signed up to speak.

2. Approval of Minutes from the September 20, 2010, regular subcommittee meeting.

Minutes approved by a vote of 3-0.

3. Staff Update on the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Briefing and possible action on relationship and integration of neighborhood plans into the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan

Items 3 and 4 were discussed concurrently.

Garner Stoll, Planning and Development Review Department, and John Fernflur of Wallace, Roberts and Todd, briefed the committee on current status and next steps of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Stoll spoke about integration of the neighborhood plans into the Comprehensive Plan process and the relationship of the existing plans into the four scenarios. He also spoke about the fiscal impact associated with each growth scenario.

Scooter Cheatham, Comprehensive Plan Task Force, stated that task force members are still trying to determine their role in the process, and many members feel that any decisions made will supercede previous work on neighborhood plans. Many neighborhood groups perceive that their approval or acceptance of a neighborhood plan has resulted in upzoning that will result in absorption of many of the population predictions that have been made. He added that it is important to have complete and accurate data by which to make decisions because two years is not much time to consider and address the growth problems that may occur. He also stressed the importance of looking at how neighborhoods fit together when they share boundaries.

Council Member Cole noted that the University hills and Windsor Park neighborhoods have changed considerably in the last 25 years and they would be a good model to use for potential growth that may occur.

Council Member Morrison spoke of the importance of reviewing data with respect to development capacity. She also said it is important that the Comprehensive Plan have the force of law and that an implementation plan be adopted. It is important to ensure the public that approved neighborhood plans will not be disregarded in the process.

Mr. Fernflur noted that while neighborhood plans are very site specific, the consultant's role would be to look at them very broadly in terms of their potential for transit and infrastructure. He said the plans may be adjusted to accommodate future opportunities, but they will be respectful of the work that has been done thus far.

Council Member Riley questioned Mr. Cheatham if the task force needed any assistance from the Council. Mr. Cheatham responded that communication between the City and State agencies, such as the Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Nature Conservancy is needed. He said these agencies have useful data that can be shared with the City.

Council Member Riley said Council is grateful to the task force members for their time and energy and will do whatever possible to provide the necessary resources.

Mr. Cheatham said it is also important to communicate with citizens or groups that are normally not supportive or critical about the planning process, and to demonstrate that their viewpoints are being considered. He noted that many citizens are very suspicious about this effort, and the Council needs to ensure that the decisions which are made will be formalized.

Council Member Cole stated that the best way to ensure that this plan does not sit on a shelf is to know the fiscal impact, and to make the citizens aware of its fiscal impact. She said she appreciated the effort made in determining the fiscal impact for each scenario and encourages more work in that direction.

No Action Taken.