

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	15398	Agenda Number	135.
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Meeting Date:	5/24/2012	Department:	Planning and Development Review
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Subject

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance adopting the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Article X of the City Charter and Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code.

Amount and Source of Funding

Fiscal Note

Purchasing Language:	
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Prior Council Action:	August 26, 2010: Council endorsed the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement. February 17, 2011: Council set a public hearing for March 10, 2011. March 10, 2011: Council conducted a public hearing, endorsed the Plan Framework, and forwarded the Preferred Growth Scenario.
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For More Information:	Mark Walters, 974-7695
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Boards and Commission Action:	Recommended by the Planning Commission.
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MBE / WBE:	
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Related Items:	
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Additional Backup Information

In October 2009, the Planning and Development Review Department and the consultant team lead by Wallace, Roberts, and Todd (WRT) began the process of collecting public input for the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. Through a series of interviews which included three community forums, public meetings, and a variety of surveys, the Austin community was asked what issues were important to them and what type of place Austin should become in the future. This public input was reviewed and synthesized by staff, WRT, and the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force (CPCATF).

The process to develop the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan was divided into four phases—Plan Kickoff, Vision and Plan Framework, Creating the Comprehensive Plan, and Draft Plan Review.

Phase One—Plan Kickoff

This phase of the process involved both designing and beginning the process to create the comprehensive plan. The significant elements of this phase included the consultants getting to know Austin and meeting with the community. It also included both staff and consultants reviewing existing plans and finalizing the Community Inventory (a document with different types of information and data about Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction [ETJ]).

It was during this phase that the process to create the comprehensive plan was designed. This included assigning roles and responsibilities for City of Austin staff, the consultant team, and the public. The phase culminated with a Kick-Off Party held at the Austin Convention Center on October 12, 2010 which was attended by more than 230 members of the public, plus an additional 40 children from Austin recreation centers.

Phase Two—Vision and Plan Framework

This phase of the process revolved around a series of public meetings (Community Forum Series [CFS] # 1, # 2, and # 3.) During each meeting series, the public was asked to consider different aspects of Austin and its future.

During CFS # 1, the community was asked what they valued most about Austin, what needs to change to make it a better place, and what type of city could it be if the issues facing the community were addressed. This input was synthesized into elements of the Vision Statement.

During CFS # 2, participants were asked to comment on the elements of the Vision Statement and engaged in a chip exercise to assign future population and job growth, identify areas to be preserved from development, and indicated the types and locations of future transportation improvements. The results from this exercise were synthesized into four different future growth scenarios:

- **Scenario A**—a widely dispersed development pattern spreading future growth all over Austin and its ETJ.
- **Scenario B**—a crescent shaped pattern which indicated growth along US 183 in the north arching to the south and directed most development east of Mopac with a significant amount development located between IH-35 and SH 130.
- **Scenario C**—a more compact growth pattern directing a significant amount of redevelopment to the central city with dense concentrations of people and jobs located in centers situated mostly to the north, east, and south.
- **Scenario D**—the most compact development pattern which directed most of the jobs and people into the central city.

In addition, Comprehensive Planning staff developed a fifth scenario that reflected current development patterns and growth trends. These scenarios were analyzed using a number of sustainability indicators such as land consumed, amount of CO₂ emitted, development over the Edwards Aquifer, and the relative infrastructure costs associated with each scenario.

During CFS # 3, the community was asked to indicate their preferred scenario and was provided the indicator results to assist in the task. The public's preferences resulted in a map capturing significant elements of Scenarios C and D. This Preferred Growth Scenario map later evolved in the Growth Concept Map.

The significant work products of Phase Two were the Plan Framework and Preferred Growth Scenario which served as the basis for the next phase of the process.

Phase Three—Creating the Comprehensive Plan

During this phase of the process, staff reached out to people and groups with interest and expertise in the plan's elements to join topic-specific working groups. Their assignment was to create actions to implement the policy directions created in Phase Two. Over the course of 20 meetings the working groups generated and honed the actions from a beginning number of over 3,000 to a little more than 200. During this phase, with public input, the Preferred Growth Scenario evolved into the Growth Concept Map.

Phase Four—Draft Plan Review

This phase began with a Plan Release Party held at the Carver Museum and Cultural Center on October 1, 2011. More than 600 people attended the event to review the draft plan, rank plan elements, eat from food trailers, and listen to live music.

This phase asked the community to read the plan and comment on what they like and what they did not. During this comment period, staff received almost 2,000 comments. Each of these were reviewed and commented upon by staff and the Council-appointed task force. Many of these comments resulted in changes to the draft plan and are reflected in the adoption draft.

As part of establishing the scope for the contract with the lead consultant, Wallace, Roberts, and Todd (WRT), the City Council established three priorities for the plan—public engagement, sustainability, and implementation—which are central to how the plan was developed as well as its content. The comprehensive plan is organized into five chapters:

Chapter One: The Roadmap and the Road Ahead describes the need for a comprehensive plan providing a roadmap for Austin to navigate the challenges of the 21st century; core principles for action to achieve a sustainable future; and how we will use those principles to turn the plan into reality. It is useful for those who may not wish to read the plan “cover to cover.”

Chapter Two: Experiencing Austin: Who Are We Today? contains information on the current state of Austin and what it means for the city's future, such as how affordable it is to live here, how people are getting around, and how our parks and city services are performing.

Chapter Three: Imagining Austin: Our Vision of a Complete Community presents the Imagine Austin vision statement, developed with the input of thousands of residents. It describes the Austin we aspire to be in 2039, the two hundredth anniversary of the city's founding. Our city will be a city of complete communities that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, liveable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and that values and respects all Austinites. The vision statement defines the destination that the plan policies, actions, and programs are designed to reach.

Chapter Four: Shaping Austin: Building the Complete Community sets a two-part framework for action to realize our vision of a city of complete communities. The growth concept map shows in general terms where new development over the next 30 years should be located. The building blocks define specific policies to guide decisions on topics ranging from land use and transportation to economy to creativity. The core concepts of Imagine Austin – complete communities and compact, connected centers – are two sides of the same coin. These policies are the foundation of the action ideas and programs contained in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Implementation and Measuring Success addresses how Imagine Austin's vision and framework will be implemented. It identifies eight priority action programs based on hundreds of ideas developed by citizen working groups, provides guidance for decision-making, and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor implementation progress.

Texas Local Government Code Chapter 213 authorizes a municipality to adopt and amend a comprehensive plan to provide for the long-range development of the municipality. A municipality may define in its Charter or by ordinance the relationship between its comprehensive plan and development regulations. Article X (Planning) of Austin's City Charter discusses the purpose and intent of a comprehensive plan for Austin, its legal status, adoption and amendment process, the Planning Commission's role with reference to the plan, the required elements, and impact on future planning decisions and processes.