

C2+C3
1

To: Austin City Council and City Manager

From: The City of Austin Planning Commission

Date: June 25, 2013

Re: Planning Commission Recommendation on the 2013-14 Five Year CIP Plan

Mayor, City Council, and City Manager,

Once a year the Planning Commission (PC) is tasked with reviewing, making recommendations and providing feedback in regards to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Plan. In response to this task, the Planning Commission would first like to express its support of the City Manager's Proposed Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Five-Year CIP Plan. Additionally, we would offer the following specific comments and recommendations to consider while implementing the CIP, taking into account Austin's ever-changing needs.

The CIP Committee (Committee) met with the different branches of the city staff including the Capital Planning Office, the Budget Office and the Planning and Development Review Department to review the CIP Plan. As you well know, an incredible amount of organization goes into the CIP every year; however, we learned this year from presentations made to the Committee that particular attention has gone into building the framework for the different city departments to collaborate on different departmental needs, share information and work together to devise strategies to maximize resources. Unlike in previous years, the Committee did not labor over an extensive list of projects and attempt to prioritize them; they are all important. We chose instead to rely on each department's ongoing prioritization and provide broader feedback. Having said that, we still feel that the projects we specifically identified during last year's process are as important as we then believed them to be, so some are reiterated herein. Also, despite neighborhood representation at our Committee meetings being down slightly, we as a committee feel the result is a superior CIP Plan to that of previous years.

In an effort to make the plan more accessible to and readable by the general public, the FY 2013-2014 CIP Plan has been divided into two volumes: CIP Planning and CIP Financial Information. Also, consistent with one of last year's Committee recommendations, each department has identified specific goals and directions in addition to continuing to work on metrics to monitor those goals.

The Committee would like to recommend that particular attention be paid to projects and priorities that address the following goals and needs:

1. The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP) should continue to guide city planning as it outlines desirable directions and broad goals for growth. One of the major tenets of the IACP is a compact and connected city. This goal can only be realized through strategic planning that addresses transportation, sidewalk and bicycle lane improvements, and household affordability among other things. It is important to remember that the goal of becoming compact and connected must be balanced by the realization that a city as diverse as Austin also includes

C2+3
2

those that desire suburban development as a component of household affordability. Integrating different transportation methods is key to this growth.

2. In response to one of last year's recommendations, city staff continues to work on utilizing geographic information systems (GIS) mapping to identify requests for CIP funding and requests for capital improvements in adopted neighborhood plans.
3. Specifically in regards to transportation, the Committee recommends alternative ways to control traffic while simultaneously making roads and thoroughfares safer.
4. Consistent with last year's comments, the following continue to be top priorities going forward:
 - a. Household Affordability: More has to be done to provide additional rental and ownership opportunities in the 30-80% median family income (MFI) range, emphasizing the 30% MFI range.
 - b. Water: City staff continues to study issues related to drainage and water quality in areas identified as having particular issues. In addition to drainage and quality, water conservation is increasingly important as we continue to experience periods of regional drought.
 - c. Sidewalks: We consistently hear from neighborhoods about the need for more sidewalks to increase safety. We recommend looking for ways to increase funding for sidewalks in future years.

We applaud the work City staff and the different departments have undergone to create the CIP Plan and the work that will surely follow in its implementation. We appreciate your attention to these matters and as always, welcome your questions and comments.

Regards,

Alfonso Hernandez
Chair CIP Committee

Dave Anderson
Chair Planning Commission