

April 30, 2014

Mayor Lee Leffingwell
Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Mike Martinez

Councilmember Kathie Tovo
Councilmember Laura Morrison
Councilmember Bill Spelman

The following recommendations are the result of the work of the Boards and Commissions Transition Task Force established by Resolution No. 20131121-056. Our membership consisted of 15 Boards and Commissions members who were selected by the City Clerk's office. Our combined 130 years and average of 8 years of experience informed the discussions and decisions made at each of the 21 meetings conducted. To gain a better understanding of each Board and/or Commission, community input was requested through a survey of Chairs and Vice-Chairs. In addition, Task Force Members talked with select Chairs to obtain additional insight and information and received valuable input from citizens during our meetings. This input helped guide the discussions which lead to development of the recommendations submitted for Council consideration.

The task force prepared a transition plan that will enable the current boards and commissions to continue their critical work as the new city council is oriented with governing our city and makes their appointments. For boards that serve a very unique purpose, we are simply recommending increasing membership from 7 to 11, with the Mayor and each councilmember making a nomination. We completely reorganized the boards and commissions that have to do with planning and development, greatly increasing their efficiency and breaking down existing silos. We have proposed for certain commissions to sunset, while through the merger of existing Commissions or Boards, or by having membership drawn from other Commissions, others would be created.

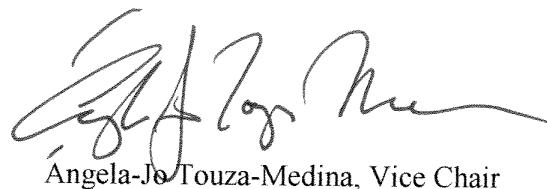
The more controversial recommendations will no doubt be the board mergers we are proposing. Our goal was never to save money on staff time. To quote Councilmember Martinez, we were trying to "innovate the way our citizens participate in the city government." Yet, evolving the prevalent understanding of how the commission structure is intended to function to the greater benefit of the community as a whole has been challenging. Navigating the philosophical and structural transition from the "individual we" to a collective one is always difficult. Despite this, moving away from our respective comfort zones has enabled us to identify synergies that remedy existing deficiencies/inefficiencies and make recommendations that we believe will remove silos, improve communication, and simplify and promote community participation in our city government. We believe that the proposed merged commissions will be more effective at giving the community a stronger voice in their city government. In this case, the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts.

We hope you will carefully review our recommendations, gather community input and have a healthy, open discussion prior to voting on our recommendations. We are available to comment on our decision making process and rationale for our recommendations.

Respectfully,



Victor Martinez, Chair



Angela-Jo Touza-Medina, Vice Chair



CITY OF AUSTIN
BOARD AND COMMISSION TRANSITION TASKFORCE
TASKFORCE REPORT
RESOLUTION NO. 20131121-056
May 1, 2014

TASKFORCE MEMBERS

Victor Martinez (Chair) - Austin Area Comprehensive HIV Planning Council

Angela-Jo Touza-Medina (Vice-Chair) - Commission On Immigrant Affairs

Dave Anderson - Planning Commission

Bernie Bernfeld - Electric Utility Commission

Lori Cervenak-Renteria - Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Commission

Scott Daigle - Arts Commission

Babette Ellis - Animal Advisory Commission

Dale Gray - Water and Wastewater Commission

Jeff Jack - Board of Adjustment/Sign Review Board

Norman Kieke - Austin Mayor's Committee For People With Disabilities

Peggy Maceo - Urban Forestry Board

Mary Gay Maxwell - Environmental Board

Gabriel Rojas - Zoning and Platting Commission

Dave Sullivan - Bond Oversight Committee, Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Olga Wise - Library Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The report is divided into the following sections each consisting of individual reports adopted by the Taskforce.

Section 1: Transition Work Group

The Transition Plan provides recommendations for a transitional period to allow the new Council to nominate members and allows the new members an opportunity to complete training and be brought up to speed on issues facing their commission. It also provides recommendations on potential updates to Chapter 2-1 that apply to all boards and commissions.

Section 2: Boards and Commissions Work Group: Non-Planning and Zoning Related

The report provided by the Board and Commission Work Group provides recommendations for changes to membership and purpose to boards and commissions that are not typically involved with planning and zoning issues. In addition, the Task Force has included recommendations for a few potentially new or joint commissions.

Section 3: Planning and Development Review Department Working Group Report

The report provided by the Planning and Development Review Department Working Group provides recommendations for streamlining and business process improvements for the boards and commissions that are involved with planning and zoning issues.

Section 4: Diversity and Recruitment Work Group

The report provides recommendations on ways to increase diversity throughout the boards and commissions by expanding recruiting efforts through the use of technology and other tools.

Section 1: Transition Work Group

Boards and Commissions Transition Taskforce

Transition Plan Workgroup Report

SUMMARY

The Transition Plan workgroup was assigned the task of developing a transition plan for Boards and Commissions following the election of the new City Council in November of 2014. Currently, Boards and Commissions are made up of appointees by the City Council, and since the current Council has seven members, most of the Boards and Commissions also have seven members. With the new system, the number of members will change to align with the new Council membership of eleven members.

That being the case, a transition period will assist the new Council in having a working system of Boards and Commissions until the members are appointed or re-appointed by the new Council comprising eleven members. The following recommendations provide a mechanism for consistent operation of Boards and Commissions until the new system is implemented.

ORGANIZATION

The Transition Plan workgroup included the following members of the Boards and Commissions Taskforce:

Dale Gray, Water and Wastewater Commission
Mary Gay Maxwell, Environmental Board

MEETINGS

The workgroup met or conferred by phone several times between March 6, 2014 and April 16, 2014. Updates were provided to the Taskforce a number of times during scheduled meetings of the Taskforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE TRANSITION PLAN WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Board Transition Period defined as: January 6 - June 30, 2015.
2. All Boards, Commissions, Joint Committees and Taskforces continue to operate in current form, including membership, for Transition Period.
3. Mayor shall nominate members to be approved by Council to fill any vacancies that might occur during Transition Period.
4. Majority of appointed Board members constitutes a Quorum.

5. Board action must be adopted by affirmative vote of majority of appointed members.
6. As of January 5, 2015, all Board members serving shall continue to serve through June 30, 2015.
7. As of June 30, 2015, all Board members' terms shall expire.
8. City Clerk can grant an administrative waiver for training requirements, except for requirements by law, for any new Board member appointed during Transition Period.
9. Board chair and any additional officers serving as of January 5, 2015, shall continue to serve through June 30, 2015.
10. Committees and taskforces in existence as of January 5, 2015, shall continue operation through designated date of expiration.

In order for Boards and Commissions to continue to conduct business and to serve City Council during a transition period, the following procedures are recommended:

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:

1. APPLICATION PROCESS - For new terms to begin July 1, 2015, application period will begin January 6, 2015.
2. DURING TRANSITION PERIOD, new Council will begin to appoint new members to begin serving July 1, 2015.
3. DURING TRANSITION PERIOD, training of new members will begin.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to maintain the ability of Boards and Commissions to conduct business, it is recommended that the City Council and the City Clerk:

1. NOTIFY current Board and Commission members of the Transition Plan.
2. OBTAIN commitment of current members to serve through June 30, 2015.
3. FILL VACANCIES by City Council that might occur during the Transition Period.
4. ENSURE that each Board or Commission will have a quorum to operate and to conduct business.

Section 2: Boards and Commissions Work Group: Non-Planning and Zoning Related

Board and Commission Work Group Report and Recommendations

1. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The Boards and Commissions Workgroup, (BCW), was formed initially to assess responses from various Boards and Commissions, (B&C), to a questionnaire developed by the B&C Transition Taskforce, (BCTT), regarding the transition from a 7-member to an 11-member City Council. Once responses were received, the BCW charge expanded to include making recommendations on the future, (continue, discontinue, merge, etc.), of any B&C not under consideration by the Planning & Development Review Workgroup. Comments and input were received during BCTT meetings, (including Citizens Communication), as well as from B&C representatives and staff liaisons.

2. ORGANIZATION

The BCW included the following members of the BCTT:

Angela-Jo Touza-Medina, Commission on Immigrant Affairs

Olga Wise, Library Commission

Norman Kieke, Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

3. MEETINGS

The BCW met or conferred via email on these dates:

March 3, 6, 10, 13, 24, 27

April 1, 3, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 25

Updates have been regularly provided to the BCTT at scheduled meetings.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS and LISTING of IMPACTED APPOINTEES

Note:

- *This document does not cover Boards or Commissions being considered by the Planning and Development Review group.*
- *Boards and Commissions not addressed by Transition Taskforce Work Groups will transition to 11-members with membership appointed by the City Council.*
- *City staff will determine departmental oversight, and responsibilities in the case of mergers or new Commissions or Committees.*
- *Commissions which are newly formed or merged should use Work Groups or permanent Committees to accomplish activities or address issues.*

- *The merger of some existing Commissions and the creation of new Commissions or Committees represents efforts to (1) reduce the overall number of Commissions, Boards, Committees, etc.), (2) facilitate communication between groups and eliminate issue silos which currently exist in the Boards and Commissions structure, and (3) create Commissions or Committees to address issues not represented in the recommended re-structuring of all groups*
- *For Commissions which are new, represent a merger of two existing Commissions or Boards, or have membership drawn from other Commissions, it is recommended that a "lead" staffing City Department be identified, with representation provided by additional appropriate City Departments.*
- *It is recommended that a consistent naming convention be used in referring to all possible groups as "Commissions".*
- *Boards or Commissions represented in joint Commissions or Committees will select their own representative from their membership. Members who are not representatives of a Board or Commission shall be (1) nominated by the Mayor and approved by a majority of the Council or (2) appointed by Council-approved stake holder groups.*
- *It is recommended that the City Council hold a public hearing on (1) the transition of Boards and Commissions to the 11-member City Council and (2) the Boards and Commissions Transition Task Force reports and recommendations.*

A. GROUPS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR REMOVAL

- Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force – Work is complete. The group is still on the Boards & Commissions web site to allow citizens to view documents.
- Lake Austin Task Force – Final Report was in 2013.

B. GROUPS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CONSOLIDATION

B1. *Emergency Response Services Commission*

- Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee – Advises the Downtown Austin Community Court on policy and operational issues.
- Public Safety Commission – Advisory body on all budgetary and policy matters concerning public safety including matters related to the Austin Police Department, the Austin fire Department and the Austin/Travis county EMS Department. Currently under the APD, AFD and EMS Departments.

JUSTIFICATION: The combined groups address issues pertaining to emergency services and public safety.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members appointed by the City Council.

B2. *Environmental Commission*

- Environmental Board – Advisory capacity on all projects and programs which affect the quality of life for the citizens of Austin. Connected to the Watershed Protection Department.
- Urban Forestry Board – The care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs and other landscaping in public areas. Currently under the Parks and Recreation Department.

JUSTIFICATION: -- The Urban Forestry Board should be formally connected to the Environmental Board and to the Watershed Protection Department. The WPD is focused on the green infrastructure of the city and uses a science-based approach to protecting that infrastructure. The WPD also works with other departments routinely and can facilitate activities that can result in protection of the canopy of the City of Austin.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members appointed by the City Council.

B3. *Municipal Contracts and Construction Commission*

- MBE/WBE Small Business Enterprise Procurement Program Advisory Committee – Review and recommend changes to City Code provisions 2-9A-18, 2-9B-18, 2-9C-18 and 2-9D-18. - Small and Minority Business Resources
- Construction Advisory Committee – Monitor enforcement of prevailing wage scales and job classifications on municipal construction contracts. Review construction contracts. - In Public Works

JUSTIFICATION: Both address common issues related to municipal construction and contracts.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members appointed by the City Council.

B4. *African American Quality of Life Commission*

Option 1: Expand the responsibilities of the African American Quality of Life Commission to include the African American Cultural & Heritage Facility.

- African American Resource Commission – Quality of life for the African American community.
- African American Cultural & Heritage Facility – The advisory group working on this facility.

JUSTIFICATION: Both address issues common to African Americans. By having a joint forum, all aspects of Quality of Life for the African American community can have higher visibility and a unified voice before City Council. This proposal increases the number of volunteers representing the African American community and it gives stake holder groups the ability to select representatives without seeking nomination from the Council.

MEMBERSHIP: 15 members; eleven appointed by the City Council, 4 community representatives from stake holder groups.

SUGGESTION: In order to not lose focus on quality of life initiatives unrelated to the AACHF, a subcommittee should be created to address AACHF issues. This subcommittee would provide the visibility and access the advisory group currently enjoys. Additional consideration could be given to groups in this community which may have, at some point, received City of Austin funds such as the Carver Museum.

Option 2: Leave the mission and purpose of the African American Quality of Life Commission as currently defined but create a separate African American Cultural & Heritage Facility Commission.

JUSTIFICATION: To provide additional support for the African American Cultural & Heritage Facility.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members for each commission appointed by the City Council and the two commissions should be required to hold a joint meeting quarterly to discuss common issues.

B5. Asian American Quality of Life Commission

Option 1: Leave as currently exists under Chapter 2-1.

- Asian American Quality of Life Commission – Asian American quality of life issues. Currently under ATC Health & Human Services Dept.
- Asian American Resource Center – Currently under PARD.

JUSTIFICATION: Both address issues common to Asian Americans. By having a joint forum, all aspects of Quality of Life for the Asian American community can have a higher visibility and a unified voice before City Council. The proposal increases the number of volunteers representing the Asian American community and it gives stake holder groups the ability to select representatives without seeking nomination from the Council.

MEMBERSHIP: 15 members; eleven appointed by the City Council, 4 community representatives from stake holder groups.

SUGGESTION: In order to not lose focus on quality of life initiatives unrelated to the AACC, a subcommittee should be created to address those issues. This subcommittee would provide the visibility and access the advisory group currently enjoys. With expanded membership, the Commission could address additional issues.

Option 2: Separate the two commissions into individual commissions of “Asian American Quality of Life Commission” and “Asian American Resource Center Commission” but encourage continued communication through the use of joint meetings to discuss common issues.

JUSTIFICATION: To allow the Asian American Resource Center Commission greater opportunity to recruit members who have experience with cultural activities and programs.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members for each commission appointed by the City Council and the two commissions should be required to hold a joint meeting quarterly to discuss common issues.

B6. Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission

Option 1: Merge Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission and the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center into one commission “Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission”.

- Hispanic / Latino Quality of Life Commission – Quality of life issues for Hispanic/Latino community. Currently under the City Manager’s Office.
- Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center – Advises the City Council on the establishment and operation of the MACC. Currently under PARD.

JUSTIFICATION: Both address issues common to Mexican Americans, Latinos and Hispanics. By having a joint forum, all aspects of Quality of Life for the Mexican American, Latino and Hispanic community can have higher visibility and a unified voice before City Council. The proposal increased the number of volunteers representing the Mexican American, Latino and Hispanic community and it give stake holder groups the ability to select representatives without seeking nomination from Council.

MEMBERSHIP: 15 members; eleven appointed by the City Council, 4 community representatives from stake holder groups.

SUGGESTION: In order to not lose focus on quality of life initiatives unrelated to the MACC, a subcommittee should be created to address those issues. The subcommittee focus on the MACC would continue to provide the visibility and access the MACC board currently enjoys. Additional consideration could be given to groups in this community which may have, at some point, received City of Austin funds.

Option 2: Leave the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission and the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center as two separate commissions but encourage better communication through the use of joint meetings to discuss common issues.

JUSTIFICATION: While many common interests may exist, the community expressed concern that the workload may be too great for one commission.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members for each commission appointed by the City Council and the two commissions should be required to hold a joint meeting quarterly to discuss common issues.

B7. People with Disabilities and Seniors Quality of Life Commission

Option 1: Merge the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and the Commission on Seniors into the "People with Disabilities and Seniors Quality of Life Commission".

- Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities – Helps to encourage, assist and enable people with disabilities to participate in the social and economic life of the city. Currently under the Human Resources Department.
- Commission on Seniors – Quality of life for seniors. Identified issues: Housing, Transportation, Fixed-Income. Currently under the ATC Health & Human Services Department.

JUSTIFICATION: Common issues of healthcare, fixed income, transportation, housing, etc.

MEMBERSHIP: 15 members; eleven appointed by the City Council, 4 community representatives from stake holder groups.

SUGGESTION: In order to not lose focus on issues specific to each population, subcommittees should be created to address issues. Examples might include specific senior issues or the annual Employment Awards for People with Disabilities. These subcommittees would provide the visibility and access each group currently enjoys.

Option 2: Leave the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and the Commission on Seniors as two separate commissions.

JUSTIFICATION: While many common issues such as healthcare, fixed income, transportation, housing, etc. exist, the customers served by the two commissions are demographically different.

MEMBERSHIP: 11 members for each commission appointed by the City Council and the two commissions should be required to hold a joint meeting quarterly to discuss common issues.

C. GROUPS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CREATION OR RE-ASSIGNMENT

C1. Joint Sustainability Committee

This new Committee would take over responsibilities of the Resource Management Commission with membership derived from other Commissions and supported by relevant City Departments.

JUSTIFICATION: This is the surviving entity of the Resource Management Commission through which different components of sustainability are blended and expanded.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 7 recruited from other Commissions: Planning Commission, Economic Prosperity Commission, Water & Wastewater Commission, Community Development Commission, Zero Waste Commission, Environmental Commission and Electric Utility Commission.

C2. Joint Cultural Committee

This new Committee would combine membership of nine Commissions which have involvement with cultural activities throughout the city. The Committee would provide opportunities for collaboration, information-sharing, etc.

JUSTIFICATION: It provides a cohesive direction and perspective on cultural issues in Austin.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 9 recruited from other Commissions: Arts Commission, the Music Commission, the Asian American Cultural Center, the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, the African-American Cultural & Heritage Facility, the Library Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, Historic Landmark Commission and the Economic Prosperity Commission.

C3. Joint Inclusion Committee

This Commission would address issues pertaining to diversity and inclusion. It would consist of one representative each from the African American Quality of Life Commission, the Asian American Quality of Life Commission, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission, the Commission on Immigrant Affairs, People with Disabilities and Seniors Quality of Life Commission, in addition to someone to represent the needs/interests of the former Commission for Women, and a representative from the LGBT Community.

JUSTIFICATION: Breaks ethnic and minority silos and provides an opportunity to find common ground.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 7 recruited from other Commissions and groups: African-American Quality of Life Commission, Asian American Quality of Life Commission, Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission, Commission on Immigrant Affairs, People with Disabilities and Seniors Quality of Life Commission, (the former) Commission on Women and a representative from the LGBT community.

C4. Commission for Women

This group will be blended with the Joint Inclusion Committee. In addition to working on the Joint Inclusion Commission, there may be work group or Committee activities with a singular focus on issues or activities impacting women.

C5. Resource Management Commission

Responsibilities for the Resource Management Commission will go to the new Sustainability Commission.

C6. Intergovernmental Commission

This group would provide citizen oversight and monitor activities of various entities and jurisdictions in the Austin Metropolitan Area and offer pro-active recommendations to the City Council on how the City of Austin can work cooperatively and successfully with these groups to ensure the best outcomes for the citizens of Austin and the region. Groups and entities which could be monitored, but may not be limited to the following, include:

- Independent School Districts in Austin's City Limit
- Capital Area Council of Government, (CAPCOG's 10 Counties)
- Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, (CAMPO's 6 Counties)
- Region K of the Texas Water Development Board
- Higher Education Institutions such as the University of Texas, Austin Community College, etc.
- Capital Metro, Lone Star Rail District, and Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority
- State Legislature and State Agencies such as TxDOT
- Federal Agencies such as Parks and Wildlife, Housing and Urban Development, etc.

JUSTIFICATION: With the population growth in central Texas, this group would provide oversight to the City Council regarding decisions made in the surrounding geographic area which may affect what happens in the City of Austin and provide a venue for cooperation with other entities.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 11 members appointed by the City Council.

C7. Economic Prosperity Commission

This group would oversee activities of the Economic Development Department which are related to construction and job creation, (not issues which might be considered by the Cultural Commission). Suggested membership might include representatives from the following entities:

- Community Development Commission
- Urban Transportation Commission
- (Infrastructure group)
- Hotel/Motel Association
- Automobile Dealers Association
- Austin Restaurant Association
- Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Black Chamber

- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Women's Chamber of Commerce
- Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

JUSTIFICATION: This group would provide oversight and input regarding opportunities for construction and growth for the City of Austin.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 11 members appointed by the City Council.

D. CHAPTER 2-1 BOARDS AND NON-2-1 BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

D1. 2-1-102 Animal Advisory Commission

- (A) The Animal Advisory Commission is established as prescribed by Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 823, (Animal Shelters). The Commission shall consist of five members as described in section B.
- (B) The Council's Public Health and Human Services Committee shall nominate the following members for Council approval:
 - (1) one licensed veterinarian;
 - (2) one person whose duties include the daily operation of an animal shelter;
 - (3) one animal welfare organization representative;
 - (4) one person recommend by the Travis County Commissioners Court; and
 - (5) one person nominated at-large.

D2. 2-1-123 Early Childhood Commission

The Commission would continue with its current membership of 13.

D3. 2-1-127 Community Development Commission

The CDC would continue with its current 15 members; 7 nominated by residents from each geographical area designated in 2-1. The additional 8 members could be nominated by a committee of the Council.

D4. 2-1-170 Sustainable Food Policy Commission

The Commission would continue with its current 13 members with 6 nominated by Travis County and 7 by the City Council. The 7 Council representatives could be nominated by a committee of the Council.

D5. Airport Boulevard Advisory Group

The ABAG would continue with 21 members appointed by the Council. This group can select replacement members without Council consent, but cannot exceed the original number of members.

D6. Applicant Review Panel

The Panel would continue with its current 3 members.

D7. Austin Area Comprehensive HIV Planning Council

The Council will continue to operate as directed by its bylaws, (with 13 members).

D8. Austin Energy Low Income Customer Advocates

The group had 16 members. Its final report is to be submitted no later than 6 months after 11/7/2013, the date the resolution was adopted.

D9. Austin Energy Resource Planning Task Force

The Task Force has 8 members. It is set to dissolve upon the Council's adoption of an updated generation plan or on December 21, 2014, whichever occurs first.

D10. Austin Travis Integral Care Board of Trustees

The Board will continue with its current 9 members, (it may have 5 – 13 members), three appointments each for the Council, (nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council), Travis County and the Healthcare District.

D11. Central Health Board of Managers

The Board will continue with its current membership of 9; 5 appointed by the Mayor, (nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council), 4 appointed by Travis County.

D12. City of Austin Firefighters, Police Officers and Emergency Medical Services Personnel Civil Service Commission

The Commission will continue with its current membership of 3 appointed by the City Manager, confirmed by the Council.

D13. Housing Authority of the City of Austin

The group will continue with its current membership of 5 appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council.

D14. Independent Citizen Redistricting Commission

The Commission has completed its work but remains listed in the City Charter.

D15. Municipal Service Commission

This group will continue with its current membership of 5 nominated by a committee of the Council and confirmed by the Council.

D16. Travis Central Appraisal District Board of Directors

This group would continue with its current membership of 3 nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council.

D17. Urban Renewal Commission

The group would continue with its current membership of 7 nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council.

D18. Austin-Travis County EMS Advisory Board

This group would continue with its current membership of 9, 6 nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council.

Boards and Commissions Transition Taskforce

Basic Conversion Groups

The following Commissions and other groups will transition from the current 7-member Council to the new 11-member Council growing from seven to eleven members appointed by each Council member.

Some groups are re-named for consistency with the recommendation to name groups as “Commissions”

Art Commission

Austin Airport Advisory Commission

Austin Community Technology and Telecommunication Commission

Austin Music Commission

Immigrant Affairs Commission

Veterans Affairs Commission

Electric Utility Commission

Ethics Review Commission

Historic Landmark Commission

Human Rights Commission

Impact Fee Advisory Committee

Library Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission

Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission

Urban Transportation Commission

Water and Wastewater Commission

Zero Waste Advisory Commission

IMPACT ON NUMBER OF APPOINTEES FOR BOARDS/COMMISSIONS REVIEWED BY THE B/C WORK GROUP

Board/Commission	# of Current Appointees	# of Appointees if just increased to 11	# Appointees using Taskforce Recommendations	# of Appointees if Taskforce Recommendations if Option 2 is selected
African American Resource Advisory Commission	7	11	15	11
African American Cultural & Heritage Facility Advisory Group				11
Airport Boulevard Advisory Group	21	21	21	21
Animal Advisory Commission	7	11	5	5
Applicant Review Panel	3	3	3	3
Arts Commission	7	11	11	11
Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission	7	11	15	11
Asian American Cultural Center				11
Austin Airport Advisory Commission	7	11	11	11
Austin Area Comprehensive HIV Planning Council	13	13	13	13
Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission	7	11	11	11
Austin Energy Low Income Customer Advocates	16	16	16	16
Austin Energy Resource Planning Task Force	8	8	8	8
Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities	7	11	15	11
Austin Music Commission	7	11	11	11
Austin Travis County Integral Care Board of Trustees	9	9	9	9
Austin-Travis County EMS Advisory Board	9	9	9	9
Central Health Board of Managers	9	9	9	9
City of Austin Firefighters,' Police Officers' and Emergency Medical Services Personnel Civil Service Commission	3	3	3	3
Commission for Women	7	11	0	0
Commission on Immigrant Affairs	7	11	11	11
Commission on Seniors	11	11	0	11
Commission on Veterans Affairs	7	11	11	11
Community Development Commission	15	15	15	15
Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Committee	7	11		0
Early Childhood Council	13	13	13	13
Electric Utility Commission	7	11	11	11

IMPACT ON NUMBER OF APPOINTEES FOR BOARDS/COMMISSIONS REVIEWED BY THE B/C WORK GROUP

Environmental Board	7	11	11	11
Ethics Review Commission	7	11	11	11
Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission	7	11	15	11
Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board	7	11		11
Housing Authority of the City of Austin	5	5	5	5
Human Rights Commission	7	11	11	11
Impact Fee Advisory Committee	7	11	11	11
Lake Austin Task Force	17	17		
Library Commission	7	11	11	11
MBE/WBE and Small Business Enterprise Procurement Program Advisory Committee	7	11	11	11
Municipal Civil Service Commission	5	5	5	5
Parks and Recreation Board	7	11	11	11
Public Safety Commission	7	11	11	11
Resource Management Commission	7	11		
Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission	7	11	11	11
Sustainable Food Policy Board	13	13	13	13
Travis Central Appraisal District Board of Directors	3	3	3	3
Urban Forestry Board	7	11		
Urban Renewal Board	7	11	7	7
Urban Transportation Commission	7	11	11	11
Water and Wastewater Commission	7	11	11	11
Zero Waste Advisory Commission	7	11	11	11
Joint Sustainability Committee				
Joint Cultural Committee				
Joint Inclusion Committee				
Intergovernmental Commission			11	11
Economic Prosperity Commission			11	11
TOTALS	383	503	437	476

Section 3: Planning and Development Review

Department Working Group Report

Planning & Development Review Department Working Group Subcommittee Report

April 30, 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Planning and Development Review (PDR) Working Group was formed as a Working Group under the full Boards and Commissions (B&C) Task Force to understand and evaluate B&C roles and membership requirements for those Boards and Commissions associated primarily or tangentially with the Planning and Development Review Department, and provide our recommendations to the full B&C Task Force.

The PDR Working Group evaluated the following Boards and Commissions:

- Board of Adjustment
- Bond Oversight Committee (Capital Planning Office)
- Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals
- Building and Standards Commission
- Land Development Code Advisory Committee
- Construction Advisory Commission
- Design Commission
- Downtown Commission (Economic Development Department)
- Electric Board
- Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Advisory Board
- Historic Landmark Commission
- Planning Commission
- Residential Design and Compatibility Commission
- Sign Review Board
- Waterfront Planning Advisory Board
- Zoning and Platting Commission

The PDR Working Group consisted of Dave Sullivan (scientist), Jeff Jack (architect), Gabe Rojas (planner), and Dave Anderson (engineering), and met as a group nine (9) times in March and April 2014, in addition to the regular meetings of the full Boards and Commissions Task Force.

The PDR Working Group also presented at the City Council Work Session on April 8, 2014, where they responded to questions and received comments that were integrated into the recommendations

The PDR Working Group's recommendations are summarized in the Table ES-1.

Table ES-1. Summary of Recommendations

Board/ Commission	Recommended Action	Recommended # Members
Board of Adjustment	Maintain duties of the Board of Adjustment, without the two additional Sign Review Board members as currently organized	11
Bond Oversight Committee	Reassign duties to a newly-created Economic and Capital Budget Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission	
Building & Fire Code Board of Appeals	Join the duties of the Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals with the duties of the Electric Board and the Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board into a new Life Safety Board of Appeals	11
Building & Standards Commission	Maintain duties of Buildings and Standards Commission as currently envisioned.	22
Land Development Code Advisory Committee	Maintain duties of Land Development Code Advisory Committee as currently envisioned	11
Construction Advisory Commission	Reassign duties to a new Municipal Contracts and Construction Commission.	
Design Commission	Maintain duties of Design Commission; reassign the duties of the Residential Design and Compatibility Commission to the Design Commission.	11
Downtown Commission	Reassign duties to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission.	
Electric Board	Reassign duties to a new Life Safety Board of Appeals	
Mechanical, Plumbing, & Solar Advisory Board	Reassign duties to a new Life Safety Board of Appeals	
Historic Landmark Commission	Maintain duties of the Historic Landmark Commission	11
Planning Commission	Reassign duties to focus on planning oriented activities City-wide, including the Comprehensive Plan, Area Plans (i.e., TOD plans, corridor plans, etc.), evaluating the CIP and other economic and budget initiatives, reviewing and initiating code amendments & ordinances. Utilize newly-created Joint Subcommittees with Zoning and Platting Commission.	13
Residential Design and Compatibility Commission	Reassign duties to the Design Commission	
Sign Review Board	Reassign duties to the Board of Adjustment, without the two additional Sign Review Board members as currently organized	
Waterfront Planning Advisory Board	Reassign duties to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission	
Zoning and Platting Commission	Reassign duties to focus on transactional activities City-wide, including re-zoning, platting and plat amendments, site plans, conditional overlays. Utilize newly-created Joint Subcommittees with Zoning and Platting Commission.	11

1. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The Planning and Development Review (PDR) Working Group was formed as a Working Group under the full Boards and Commissions (B&C) Task Force to understand and evaluate B&C roles and membership requirements for those Boards and Commissions associated primarily or tangentially with the Planning and Development Review Department, and provide our recommendations to the full B&C Task Force. Most of the boards and commissions reviewed operated primarily in cooperation with PDR. For boards and commissions whose primary association is with another city department, that department is referenced.

The PDR Working Group evaluated the following Boards and Commissions:

- Board of Adjustment
- Bond Oversight Committee (Capital Planning Office)
- Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals
- Building and Standards Commission
- Land Development Code Advisory Committee
- Construction Advisory Commission
- Design Commission
- Downtown Commission (Economic Development Department)
- Electric Board
- Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Advisory Board
- Historic Landmark Commission
- Planning Commission
- Residential Design and Compatibility Commission
- Sign Review Board
- Waterfront Planning Advisory Board
- Zoning and Platting Commission

The PDR Working Group analyzed how the number of appointees to each B&C impacts the ability of that entity to operate effectively and evaluated the positive/negative impacts that may be realized by integrating, separating, or re-defining the roles and responsibilities of each B&C.

2. ORGANIZATION

The PDR Working Group consisted of the following four members:

1. Dave Sullivan (Scientist) – Former Chairperson of the Planning Commission, current Chairperson of the CodeNEXT Land Development Code Advisory Group, current Chairperson of the Bond Oversight Committee, and current Zero Waste Advisory Commission member
2. Jeff Jack (Architect) – Current Chairman of the Board of Adjustment and Ex-Officio member of the Planning Commission
3. Gabriel Rojas (Planner) – Current member of the Zoning and Platting Commission

4. Dave Anderson (Engineer) – Current Chairman of the Planning Commission and former Chairman of the Environmental Board

3. MEETINGS

The PDR Working Group has met continually since early March:

1. March 10
2. March 17
3. March 22
4. March 24
5. March 28
6. March 31
7. April 7 (Working Group representative at a meeting with City Clerk)
8. April 8 (Working Group representative at presentation at Council Work Session)
9. April 16

The Working Group has also provided ongoing updates to the full Boards and Commissions Task Force at regular meetings as appropriate.

4. CITY COUNCIL INQUIRIES

At the April 8 City Council Work Session, Council Members asked specific questions about the PDR Working Group's progress. This section presents their questions, and our responses.

4.1 Could ZAP be rolled into Planning?

We don't believe that there is enough capacity in one board to do both traditional zoning & platting and look long-term at planning. One of us (Sullivan) served on a 9 member Planning Commission from 1994 – 1999 that met weekly, but other members feel weekly meetings are a deterrent to attracting members.

The City Clerk's Office shared the City Council resolution that split the Building Standards Commission into two "panels" within one commission, as shown in the excerpt from Council Resolution 20131003-100 below. Council member Riley encourages the Task Force to consider such a split for a unified PC-ZAP.

The City Council initiates a Code amendment to increase the size of the BSC to 14 commission members for the purpose of creating two panels that will allow the BSC to meet, as panels, more than once a month, and directs the City Manager to process the Code amendment. The amendment should allow the Mayor to appoint two members and each council member to appoint two members.

The PDR Working Group evaluated this option and while it has merit in the fact that it provides one body performing both zoning & platting and planning roles

(which ensures the two concepts remain connected within one Commission), it may not provide enough emphasis on the planning aspects of the role of the Planning Commission – something all within the PDR Working Group agreed must be improved. Furthermore, the make-up of the Planning Commission is dictated by Article X of the City Charter and is constrained to the number of members of the City Council plus two, which is currently nine and will become 13. Thus, there is no even way to divide the PC, unless, say, the chairperson served on both panels.

4.2 Provide a list of the number appointees that would be impacted by the proposed mergers?

The following table summarizes the impacts to the number of appointees due to the changes proposed by the PDR Working Group.

Existing		Proposed	
Board/Commission	# Appointees	Board/Commission	# Appointees
Board of Adjustment	7	Board of Adjustment	11
Bond Oversight Commission	7		
Building & Fire Code Board of Appeals	7	Life Safety Board of Appeals	11
Building & Standards Commission	14	Building & Standards Commission	22
Land Development Code Advisory Cmte	11	Land Development Code Advisory Cmte	11
Construction Advisory Commission	7		
Design Commission	7	Design Commission	11
Downtown Commission	7		
Electric Board	7		
Mechanical, Plumbing, & Solar Advisory Board	7		
Historic Landmark Commission	7	Historic Landmark Commission	11
Planning Commission	9	Planning Commission	13
Residential Design & Compatibility Commission	7		
Sign Review Board	2		
Waterfront Planning Advisory Board	7		
Zoning & Platting Commission	7	Zoning & Platting Commission	11
TOTALS	120		101

* Please see Section 5 for specific recommendations related to this table.

The PDR Working Group is also evaluating the addition of additional outside citizens with specific expertise to joint permanent subcommittees.

4.3 The use of the word “innovative” rather than “eliminate”.

Final recommendation will be sensitive in word choice.

4.4 Are we just shifting the bulk of the work from Planning to ZAP?

No. Currently the Planning Commission (PC) has more work than the Zoning and Platting (ZAP) Commission. This is based on the relative length of regular meetings. According to the Channel 6 Website, between October 2010 and August 2011, ZAP meetings lasted 1:22 on average, while PC meetings averaged 2:46.

Additionally, PC holds monthly subcommittee meetings for four standing subcommittees, and has individual appointees to several other Boards and Commissions.

Further, Working Group representatives estimate that about 1/3 of PC work is zoning related where for ZAP is the percentage exceeds 50% (see Section 4.5 below).

The intent of the Working Group's recommendations is to move toward a more even allocation of work.

4.5 What portion of Planning is currently devoted to zoning cases?

PDR Working Group representatives estimate that about 1/3 of PC work is zoning-related, while for ZAP the percentage exceeds 50%.

4.6 Is there a better way to balance the workload?

The Working Group recommends a combination of the use of joint subcommittees and improved information technology may make work easier.

4.7 Provide a method for joint subcommittee members to have on-going interaction with zoning cases as a way to keep them informed and provide a broad understanding of zoning issues.

The PDR Working Group believes that the Small Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan joint subcommittees will allow both Commissions to keep abreast of zoning and comprehensive planning issues.

4.8 Is there anything in the Charter about the Planning Commission's role in zoning cases?

The Charter is explicit in Section X that the "Planning Commission" is responsible for making zoning recommendations to the City Council. The City Legal Department has interpreted this to mean that a Land Use Commission, either called the "Zoning and Platting Commission" or the "Planning Commission" may make such recommendations.

4.9 Are there PUD requirements for the Planning Commission?

Yes, the Small Area Plan joint subcommittee would pass on recommendations to the Planning Commission, as may be required by the current PUD Ordinances. There has been some suggestion, however, that the use of PUD zoning may be affected by the CodeNEXT project.

4.10 How to best keep the joint committees active since past efforts have not been successful?

By maintaining a regular schedule as the Planning Commission subcommittees have for several years will help sustain effective joint subcommittee work.

4.11 Review the model used with the Building and Standards Commission – 2 panels rather than splitting duties. Would this work with Planning and ZAP?

Please see Response in Section 4.1.

4.12 Gauge commitment to board meetings and committee meetings to ensure we have enough commissioners for the proposed joint committees.

This is what one of the advantages of the splitting the roles of the PC and ZAP are – each Commission can spread out subcommittee involvement to those willing and able to serve. Further, each Commission can also develop rules to provide alternates in either an ad hoc or rotation schedule to further ensure that commitments are met.

However, new Single Member Districts and the higher likelihood that Board and Commission members may come from more suburban areas may create travel issues for folks in those outlying areas. These may be mitigated in the future by Project Connect mass transit improvements.

Alternatively, it may be possible for the Legislature to liberalize Open Meetings rules to allow online participation in subcommittee meetings.

4.13 Life Safety Board – reach out to the B/C being considered for this body and review the expertise required and if that expertise can be covered in one Board?

The PDR Working Group has sent an email to the Chairperson of each Commission and is awaiting response.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following subsections are organized by the Boards and Commissions that the PDR Working Group evaluated as part of our charge. Each subsection concludes with the Working Group's recommendations.

5.1 Board of Adjustment

The purpose of the Board of Adjustment is defined in City of Austin Land Development code Section 25-2 and Section 241.034 of the Local Government Code to 1) hear and decide a request for a variance from the requirements of Chapter 25-2 (Zoning), except as otherwise provided by the Code; 2) hear and decide an appeal of an administrative action under Chapter 25-2 (Zoning); 3) hear and decide on a request for a variance from the requirements of airport zoning regulations under Section 241.034, Local Government Code; and 4) perform other duties prescribed by ordinance or state law.

The Board of Adjustment met in conjunction with the Sign Review Board eleven (11) times in 2013, and the Board of Adjustment By-Laws provide the rules under which the Sign Review Board operates.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Integrate the duties of the Sign Review Board into the duties of the Board of Adjustment, without the two additional Sign Review Board members as currently organized; and
2. Increase the Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members.

5.2 Bond Oversight Commission

The Bond Oversight Commission ensures efficiency, equity, timeliness, and accountability in the implementation of the 2006 and 2010 bond programs, as well as all future bond programs. The committee reviews the annual appropriation and spending plan of bond funds. See [Resolution No. 20110127-034](#), [Resolution No. 20070215-028](#) and [Resolution No. 20061214-041](#) for additional information.

While the Bond Oversight Committee usually meets monthly immediately following a bond issuance, it currently meets quarterly.

The Planning Commission is charged by City Charter to review annually the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. This is accomplished through the use of a standing CIP Subcommittee.

Since it's inception, this subcommittee has not met every month. The recent addition of Capital Planning Office's Long Range CIP Strategic Plan has provided the CIP Subcommittee with additional workload, but it still has capacity to take on additional work.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Bond Oversight Committee into a newly-created Economic and Capital Budget Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission; and
2. Specify a membership of the Joint Subcommittee of at least seven (7) members from the PC & ZAP.
3. Allow up to four additional members appointed by the City Manager (or Capital Planning Office) and approved by the City Council with specific experience related to the GO bonds. For example, these could be veterans of the most recent bond election advisory committee, citizens with specific public finance experience, or representatives of key stakeholder groups.
4. Although the PC would receive and make a final decision on the CIP each year (as required by Charter), a separate report on the GO Bond program would go directly to the City Manager and City Council.

5.3 Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals

The Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals reviews any appeal filed in accordance with Title 25 (Land Development). It hears and decides appeals of orders, decisions, or determinations made by the building official relating to the application and interpretations of the Building Code and Fire Code. Section [2-1-121](#) of the City Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Join the duties of the Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals with the duties of the Electric Board and the Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board into a new Life Safety Board of Appeals;
2. Increase the new Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members; and
3. Require the necessary expertise currently distributed amongst the three (3) Boards.

5.4 Building and Standards Commission

The Building and Standards Commission was established to hear cases concerning alleged violations of the City's housing and dangerous buildings regulations. It shall have the powers and duties and comply with the procedures established by [Texas Local Government, Chapter 54, Subchapter C](#) (Quasi-Judicial Enforcement of Health and Safety Ordinances), [Texas Local Government Code Chapter 214](#) (Municipal Regulation of Housing and Other Structures), Subchapter A (Dangerous Structures), and [City Code Chapter 25-12, Article 9](#) (International Property Maintenance Code). See [Section 2-1-122](#) of the Austin City Code.

In 2014, the City Council initiated a Code amendment (and Code was accordingly processed) to increase the size of the BSC to 14 Commission members for the purpose of creating two panels that will allow the BSC to meet, as panels, more than once a month, with the Mayor appointing two members and each Council Member appointing two (2) members.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Maintain duties of Buildings and Standards Commission as currently envisioned; and
2. Increase the Board's membership to 22 members, with the Mayor appointing two (2) members and each Council Member appoint two (2) members, for the purpose of creating two panels that will allow the BSC to meet, as panels, more than once a month.

5.5 Land Development Code Advisory Committee

The Land Development Code Advisory Committee Act as an advisory group to assist in public outreach and provide feedback on the development and implementation of a revised land development code for the City of Austin. See [Resolution No. 20121206-074](#) for additional information.

The Land Development Code Advisory Committee shall be terminated automatically by the end of September 2015 or upon adoption of the new Land Development Code, whichever is earlier.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Maintain duties and membership of Land Development Code Advisory Committee as currently envisioned.

5.6 Construction Advisory Commission

The Construction Advisory Commission monitors enforcement of prevailing wage scales and job classifications on municipal construction contracts. They advise Council and City Manager regarding categories and specific projects of maintenance and construction work that should be accomplished by contract through competitive bidding processes instead of by use of City personnel and equipment. They review implementation of state laws, Charter, ordinances and council policies relating to the award of construction contracts and purchase or rental of construction equipment materials and services, including advertising policies, specifications and lease purchase agreements. They advise Council and City Manager on other construction matters affecting the quality, cost and improvement of City construction programs. See Section [2-1-128](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

The MBE/WBE/Small Business Enterprise Procurement Program Advisory Committee is responsible for reviewing the City Manager's report, as described in Sections [2-9A-18](#), [2-9B-18](#), [2-9C-18](#) and [2-9D-18](#) (Program Review); and recommending changes to the City Code provisions, adopting rules and regulations, and programming operations. Section [2-1-163](#) of the City Code.

As there are several overlapping roles in the two Commissions, the PDR Working Group evaluated whether or not to combine the two.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Construction Advisory Commission to a new Municipal Contracts and Construction Commission.

5.7 Design Commission

The Design Commission provides advisory recommendations to the city council (as requested by the Council) to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment. See Section [2-1-129](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

The Residential Design and Compatibility Commission (RDCC) makes determinations on requested modifications of certain residential design standards for specific developments, as prescribed in [Chapter 25-2](#),

Subchapter F (Residential Design and Compatibility Standards). See Section [2-1-167](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

While one Commission addresses urban design issues, the other addresses residential design issues; but, they are similar issues and could be considered part of the work of one Commission.

Additionally, the workload of the RDCC has been decreasing in the recent past, which may make it easier for another Commission to absorb their work.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Residential Design and Compatibility Commission to the Design Commission;
2. Increase the Design Commission membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members; and
3. Ensure that both urban, commercial and residential design expertise is included in a new 11-member Commission.

5.8 Downtown Commission

The Downtown Commission advises the City Council and City staff regarding policies and projects impacting downtown Austin; the Commission serves as stewards for the Downtown Austin Plan; maintain liaison relationships with city staff and other Boards and Commissions; and perform other activities as directed by the City Council. See Section [2-1-141](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

The PDR Working Group is recommending a Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee to address issues surrounding planning and zoning in areas such as Downtown, along Corridors and Centers, in and around Neighborhoods, on the Waterfront, in Planned Unit Developments, in Transit Oriented Developments, etc.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Downtown Commission to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission; and
2. Specify a membership of the Joint Subcommittee of at least seven (7) members.

5.9 Electric Board

The Electric Board hears and decides appeals of orders, decisions, or determinations made by the building official relating to the application and interpretation of the Electrical Code. The board may not waive the requirements of the Electrical Code. See Section [2-1-142](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Electric Board of Appeals with the duties of the Building & Fire Code of Appeals and the Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board into a new Life Safety Board of Appeals;
2. Increase the new Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members; and
3. Require the necessary expertise currently distributed amongst the three (3) Boards.

5.10 Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board

The Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board hears and decides appeals of orders, decisions, or determinations made by the Building Official relating to the application and interpretation of the Mechanical Code, Plumbing Code and Solar Code. Section [2-1-161](#) of the City Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Mechanical, Plumbing, and Solar Board with the duties of the Building & Fire Code of Appeals and the Electric Board into a new Life Safety Board of Appeals;
2. Increase the new Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members; and
3. Require the necessary expertise currently distributed amongst the three (3) Boards.

5.11 Historic Landmark Commission

The Historic Landmark Commission prepares and periodically revises an inventory of the structures and areas that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks. The Commission prepares, reviews and proposes amendments to the Historic Landmark Preservation Plan. It reviews requests to establish or remove a historic designation, makes recommendations on the requests to the Land Use Commission, as determined in accordance with Section [25-1-46](#) (Land Use Commission). Section [2-1-147](#) of the City Code.

The duties of the Historic Landmark Commission are to:

- Promote historic preservation activities in Austin;
- Review applications for heritage grant monies;
- Review applications for historic zoning cases;
- Review certificates of appropriateness and tax exemption applications for city landmarks; and
- Review sign and building permits in historic districts.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Maintain the duties of the Historic Landmark Commission; and
2. Increase the Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members.

5.12 Planning Commission

The Planning Commission makes and amends master plans, recommends approval or disapproval of proposed zoning changes and controls land subdivision within neighborhood planning areas and submits, annually, a list of recommended capital improvements. See [Article X](#) of the City Charter and [Section 2-1-166 of the City Code](#) for additional duties.

The PDR Working group evaluated how the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission could work together to ensure that the decisions made in implementing zoning and platting are in line with the overall City planning initiatives.

City Staff (Jerry Rusthoven) provided a history of how and why the two commissions were formed originally – and that the initial intent was to have two commissions organized as the PDR Working Group has proposed. Historically, all Boards and Commissions had the two additional members required of the Planning Commission via City Charter – and those were intended to represent an environmental/neighborhood interest and a development interest. At some point in the past, these additional members were removed from all Commissions but the Planning Commission.

The PDR Working Group felt that it is important for there to be citizen oversight of the Planning and Development Review Department, as there is currently not an existing citizen advisory board that has these duties (i.e., the Environmental Board reviews the metrics and budget for the Watershed Protection Department annually).

The PDR Working Group felt that economic impacts (both positive and negative) have not been addressed adequately in making planning decisions in the past, and that there should be a place for this kind of analysis in the future. This becomes increasingly more possible through the roles and responsibilities of a planning-oriented Planning Commission.

The Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) has both planning and transactional responsibilities. The PDR Working Group evaluated whether this remain a stand-alone board or if it was possible to reassign some of the roles into different Boards or Commissions.

The Downtown Commission reports to the Economic Development Department, but certainly has issues that inform, and are informed by, planning and transactional decisions made at the Planning Commission and/or Zoning and Platting Commission. The PDR Working Group evaluated whether reassigning some of the Downtown Commissions duties to other Boards and Commissions made sense.

The Planning Commission, by City Charter, must annually review the City of Austin Capital Improvement Program (CIP) program – which includes in its entirety the expenditure of GO Bonds approved by voters. The PDR Working Group evaluated whether it makes sense that this entity rolls up under the Planning Commission duties.

Members of the PDR Working Group presented their work at the 2014 Planning Commission Retreat on March 17, 2014. Several Planning Commissioners noted the importance for their to be an official coordinating process or structure in place to ensure that decisions made by the Zoning and Platting Commission were in line with the activities of the Planning Commission.

There was concern that the Zoning and Platting Commission – who may end up having a hefty workload – would not have the benefit of the 2 additional members required by City Charter, while the Planning Commission – with potentially a smaller workload – would still have that benefit. The PDR Working Group evaluated a recommendation to address this inconsistency via a City Charter amendment.

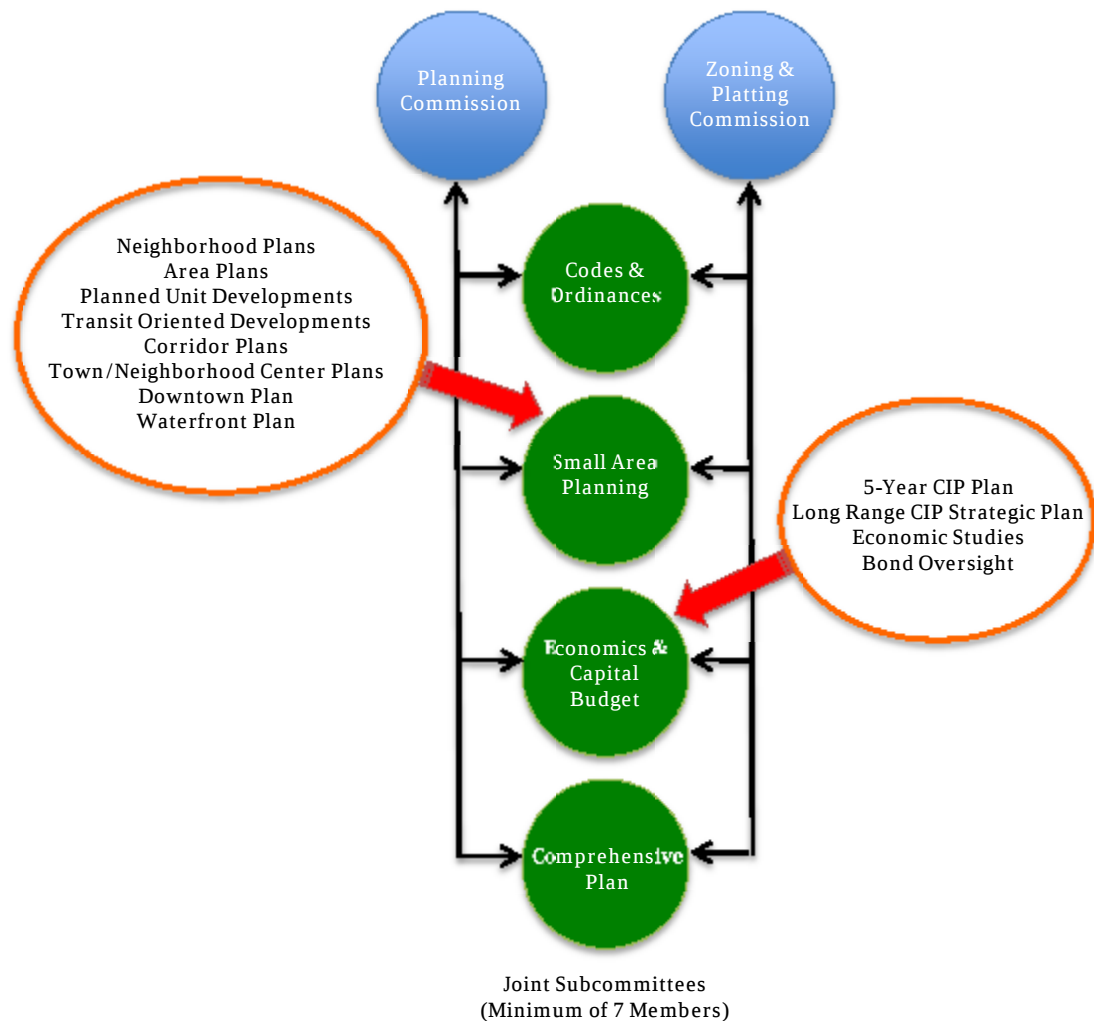
City Staff (Greg Guernsey) recommended we investigate a periodic meeting of the Executive Committees of the two commissions with some frequency to ensure that decisions were being made that were complementary. He also advised that we should be including the Historic Landmark Commission in our discussions – as it is associated with the Planning and Development Review Department.

At the Planning Commission retreat, the idea of standing joint subcommittees was offered as another mechanism to tie the two commissions together.

An idea was also put forward to reduce the number of appointees for both commissions, either by grouping districts together, or by instituting a process similar to the selection of re-districting members to the Independent Re-districting Committee, for appointments.

It was offered that this process should address a review of the inclusion of Ex-Officio members to boards and commissions.

Figure 5-1. Recommended Planning Commission, Zoning and Platting Commission and Joint Subcommittee Structure



RECOMMENDATION:

1. Figure 5-1 presents a pictorial representation of the PDR Working Group recommendation of realigning the Planning Commission duties;
2. Reassign the duties of the Planning Commission to focus on planning oriented activities City-wide, including the Comprehensive Plan, Area Plans (i.e., TOD plans, corridor plans, etc.), evaluating the CIP and other economic and budget initiatives, reviewing and initiating code amendments & ordinances, etc.
3. Reassign the duties of the Downtown Commission to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission;
4. Reassign the duties of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission;
5. Reassign the duties of the Bond Oversight Commission to a newly-created Economics and Capital Budget Joint Subcommittee of the Planning

- Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission, plus up to four additional members appointed by the City Manager (see Section 5.2);
6. Specify a membership of the Joint Subcommittees of at least seven (7) members; and
 7. Increase the Commission's membership to 13, with three people appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members – satisfying the requirements of the City Charter.

5.13 Residential Design and Compatibility Commission

The Residential Design and Compatibility Commission (RDCC) makes determinations on requested modifications of certain residential design standards for specific developments, as prescribed in [Chapter 25-2](#), Subchapter F (Residential Design and Compatibility Standards). See Section [2-1-167](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

The Design Commission provides advisory recommendations to the city council (as requested by the Council) to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment. See Section [2-1-129](#) of the City Code for additional duties.

While one Commission addresses urban design issues, the other addresses residential design issues (and specifically McMansion issues); but, they are similar and could be considered part of the work of one Commission.

The workload of the RDCC has been decreasing in the recent past, which may make it easier for another Commission to absorb their work. There has also been input from the community that there is a need for a Commission to protect the fabric of Austin's neighborhoods and to advise City Council on neighborhood issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Residential Design and Compatibility Commission to the Design Commission;
2. Increase the Board's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members; and
3. Ensure that urban, commercial and residential design expertise is included in a new 11-member Commission; and
4. Ensure that neighborhood planning duties are explicitly stated in the role of the newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission.

5.14 Sign Review Board

The purpose of the Board of Adjustment is defined in City of Austin Land Development Code Section 25-10 to 1) hear and decide a request for a variance from requirements of Chapter 25-10 (Sign Regulations); 2) exercise the power to revoke or suspend a sign registration under Section 25-10-236 (Revocation

and Suspension); and 3) advise the Council regarding Chapter 25-10 (Sign Regulations).

The Board of Adjustment met in conjunction with the Sign Review Board eleven (11) times in 2013, and the Board of Adjustment By-Laws provide the rules under which the Sign Review Board operates.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Sign Review Board to the duties of the 11-member Board of Adjustment, without the two additional Sign Review Board members as currently organized.

5.15 Waterfront Planning Advisory Board

The Waterfront Planning Advisory Board provides recommendations to the council and city boards that assist in promoting excellence in design, development and protection of the City's waterfront; and helps provide harmonious interaction and transition between urban development and the parkland and shoreline of Lady Bird Lake and the Colorado River. It provides recommendations on: project-level recommendations regarding proposed development within the Waterfront Overlay (WO) combining district, as required under [Section 25-2-715](#) (Review and Recommendation of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board). It also provides planning-level recommendations regarding proposed amendments impacting the WO combining district, as required under Section 25-2-715 (Review and Recommendation of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board.) Section [2-1-187](#) of the City Code.

The Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) has both planning and transactional responsibilities. The PDR Working Group evaluated whether this remain a stand-alone board or if it was possible to reassign some of the roles into different Boards or Commissions.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reassign the duties of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission; and
2. Specify a membership of the Joint Subcommittee of at least seven (7) members.

5.16 Zoning and Platting Commission

The Zoning and Platting (ZAP Commission performs duties relating to land use and development, as prescribed by [Title 25](#) (Land Development) of the City Code and other duties as assigned by the council. Section [2-1-188](#) of the City Code.

ZAP reviews and makes recommendations to the City Council on all proposals to adopt or amend land development regulations for the purpose of establishing the relationship of such proposal to, and its consistency with, the adopted Comprehensive Plan, or element or portion thereof. "Land development regulations" includes zoning, subdivision, building and construction, environmental, and other police power regulations controlling, regulating, or affecting the use or development of land.

Pursuant to ordinances adopted by the City Council, ZAP exercises control over platting and subdividing land within the corporate limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the city to ensure the consistency of any such plats or subdivision with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, or element or portion thereof.

The PDR Working Group evaluated the role of the Zoning and Platting Commission in conjunction with the Planning Commission. A detailed description of the evaluation is included in Section 5.12 above.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Figure 5-1 presents a pictorial representation of the PDR Working Group recommendation of realigning the Zoning and Platting Commission duties;
2. Reassign the duties of the Zoning and Platting Commission to focus on transactional activities City-wide, including re-zoning, platting and plat amendments, site plans, conditional overlays, etc.
3. Reassign the duties of the Downtown Commission to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission;
4. Reassign the duties of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board to a newly-created Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission;
5. Reassign the duties of the Bond Oversight Commission to a newly-created Economics and Capital Budget Joint Subcommittee of the Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission;
6. Specify a membership of the Joint Subcommittees of at least seven (7) members; and
7. Increase the Commission's membership to 11, with one person appointed by the Mayor and the remaining ten appointed by Council Members.

Section 4: Diversity and Recruitment Work Group

Boards & Commissions Transition Taskforce

Diversity & Recruitment Working Group

Members:

Bernie Bernfeld

Peggy Maceo

Scott M. Daigle

The Working Group met on March 4th to discuss and make recommendations for improving the diversity and recruitment of the City's boards and commissions. The group emphasized the belief that a well-functioning city requires citizen engagement, and that the boards and commissions should reflect the city's diversity.

There was agreement among the group that the setup of the new single member districts would help to encourage Council Members to choose a more diverse membership for B&Cs, particularly with regard to regional diversity. The group agreed that it will be the citizen's responsibility to step forward with interest, and it will be the City Council's responsibility to pick the most qualified nominees among the applicants. But the group asserted that stepping up outreach for the B&Cs would be vital to ensuring that the pool of applicants is as diverse as possible. The group suggested enhancements in the following areas:

Press Releases/PSAs

Taking advantage of partnerships with local media outlets to better spread the word about B&C openings.

Produce and distribute short PSAs for broadcast on Channel Six, Time Warner Cable News (formerly YNN), and other television channels. Post them on the city website.

Encourage print media to regularly mention B&C opportunities: Austin American-Statesman, Austin Chronicle, and other local newspapers (including Spanish-language media).

Social Media

Increase the use of social media to spread the word about B&C openings. Regular postings on City Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media accounts. Easily shareable, preferably with some type of image or video attached, as well as a link.

Work With Community Organizations/Resources

City staff should reach out to groups such as the League of Women Voters, Austin Interfaith, Texas Impact, Leadership Austin, Austin Young Chamber of Commerce, Executive Women in Texas Government, Austin Neighborhoods Council, YMCA, and others, alerting them to the importance of the B&Cs and encouraging them to distribute information to their members.

City staff should reach out to Neighborhood Associations — particularly in areas of the city with lower rates of B&C membership — asking them to post information in their newsletters and offering to do a short presentation on the B&Cs at association meetings.

Postings at libraries and on library websites, and at City-run facilities like the Dougherty Arts Center.

Greater Presence at City-Sponsored Community Functions

At certain well-attended events where the City is providing information, such as Austin's New Year, have on hand details regarding B&Cs and how to become a member.

The City could host an occasional workshop/vendor fair on B&Cs, to answer any questions and encourage membership; this may be particularly vital following the November elections.

Utilization of Current Board Members for Outreach

City staff could email current B&C members regarding upcoming events (such as the City-Sponsored functions or Neighborhood Association meetings mentioned above), and ask for volunteers to be on hand for questions and information.

Electoral Forums

Leading up to the November elections, ask hosts of candidate forums to mention the B&Cs, noting that they are a way for citizens to get involved beyond just supporting a certain candidate for Mayor or Council District.

Current B&C members could also encourage any candidates that they know to mention this at events that they are attending. While certainly not promising nomination to any interested parties, they can at least spread the word and note how vital the B&Cs will be to their jobs as Council Members.

City website

B&C details on the city website should be as accessible and informative as possible.

Prominent placement of a "Get Involved" button on the austintexas.gov homepage.

Online application for B&Cs should be retooled to better encourage people to fill it out. Prior to the signup for an account, provide details on personal information and questions to be asked.

Also without an account, provide a quick description of each B&C — possibly including a short sampling of topics that each B&C has grappled with in recent years — rather than having to click on each B&C separately. Perhaps a PDF document that can be easily printed or shared.

Information should be structured in such a way as to provide interested parties with what is being considered, the anticipated time commitment from membership, and what B&C best suits their interests, ALL before signing up for an account and filling in application.

New Council Member Orientation

If this is not already taking place, new Council Members should receive a crash course in the B&Cs, with a short intro from supporting departments on how they interact with B&C members, and what traits are most helpful for each individual B&C.

