Choosing
The Approach

Major Elements of a Code

	Brisk Sweep (1)	Deep Clean (2) *Recommended Approach*	Complete Makeover (3)
Code Format and Organization — How the LDC is formatted and organized			
Format - *The way information is presented on a page*	Revise	Replace	Replace
Reorganization of Content - *The way information is arranged*	Limited	Extensive	Extensive
Content Rewriting - *The extent of content revisions*	Low/Medium	Medium	High
Clean up for Consistency	———— Same Across All Approaches ————		
Development Review — How the LDC is used to evaluate and permit development projects. See glossary for definitions.			
By-Right Review - *Development applications that comply with zoning can move to the building department/permit quickly*	Low	Medium	High
Customized Zoning - *New and independent regulations are necessary to regulate major projects*	High	Medium	Low
Discretionary Review - *A permit is issued at the "discretion" of the review authority*	Medium	Low	Low
Development Standards — The type of standards that comprise the LDC. See page 3 for further definitions.			
Euclidean Based - *Focus on use separation and simple height/bulk standards*	High	Medium	Low
Performance-Based - *Focus on impacts of use and are more complex development standards*	——— Same Across All Approaches ———	Medium	Low
Form-Based - *Focus on building form and public space*	Very Limited*	Medium	High
Is it a Hybrid? - *Uses the above development standards in combination*	No	Yes	Yes

KEY

Revise
Use the existing Code framework/organization, with a cleaned up and targeted recalibration of standards. May create new districts and compress some existing districts, but few changes to the overall Code structure.

Replace
Replace the entire Code framework/organization with a new, alternative framework and recalibrate the standards in detail.

Low/Medium/High
Extent of application

Very Limited/Limited/Extensive
Extent of application

* Applied only in New Small Area Plans

Each of the major elements of the Code have been evaluated on a set of performance criteria detailed in the Code Approach Alternatives & Annotated Outlines Report - available online at www.austintexas.gov/codenext.

C1

Recommendation
Approach 2: Deep Clean

This approach would substantially improve the appearance, usability and consistency of the Code through a significant reworking of its content and structure. Approach 2 provides a balanced mix of by-right review, customized zoning, and discretionary review where appropriate. Through careful refining and vetting of development standards, this approach will establish Form-based standards for walkable urban contexts, Euclidean-based standards for drivable suburban areas and maintain many of the Performance-based standards that exist today.

Code Format and Organization
Under this approach the format of the Code document is entirely replaced and content is reorganized to optimize usability. Content is substantially cleaned up with targeted rewriting. The graphic format will be updated with new font styles and sizes, improvements to the basic page layout, and the addition of significant supporting graphics.

Development Review
Because Form-based standards and revised Euclidean standards will be carefully created and refined, the development review process can rely more heavily on by-right review in addition to some customized zoning in areas where the more detailed standards do not apply. Discretionary review remains in use in more limited portions of Austin, where it is still needed or desired.

Development Standards
In this approach a hybrid Code is created that establishes Euclidean, Performance, and Form-based standards in different parts of Austin based on the defined context (walkable urban, transitional, or drivable suburban), and which tool best implements existing plans such as Imagine Austin, Neighborhood Plans and other small area plans.

While each of the three Approaches has its own merits and will provide a basic level of improvement to the Code, the CodeNEXT Team recommends Approach 2 based on a combination of factors. These include alignment with Imagine Austin Priority Programs, public and staff input, technical analysis of the LDC in the Code Diagnosis, the best combination of Approach Elements, and our understanding of the desired level of change within the community. We believe that Approach 2 offers the best combination of technical solutions and best fit with Austin's civic character as it includes a balance between significant change and maintaining community values.

Other Approaches Not Recommended

Approach 1: Brisk Sweep
Approach 1 provides clean up of the existing LDC with targeted refinements, but does not make any major structural or organizational changes. Under this approach the organization of the Code document is minimally revised and reorganized only to address the most urgent usability issues in the existing Code. Form-based standards would have limited application, primarily to future small area plans. Combining districts are compressed where feasible, though most will remain in place. Some zoning districts are added.

Approach 3: Complete Makeover
Approach 3 provides the most extensive modifications to the LDC. This approach improves the appearance, usability, and consistency of the existing LDC by significantly reworking its content and structure. Development standards would be refined to the point that would allow for a development review process that relies primarily on by-right review. Performance-based and some Euclidean-based standards will remain. Combining districts are compressed where feasible. Form-based standards will be created and applied widely across the city.

Types of Zoning

Euclidean-Based Zoning standards, also sometimes called use-based zoning standards, focus on use separation and simple height/bulk standards. Euclidean zoning was designed to limit uses in undesirable locations rather than encourage uses in desired locations.

Performance-Based Zoning standards focus on impacts of use and are more complex development standards. Performance zoning is still based on limiting an undesired effect. However it allows for a more precise application of limits than conventional zoning.

Form-Based Zoning standards focus on building form and definition and activation of public space. Form-based zoning standards go beyond simply limiting an undesired effect by encouraging appropriate building scale and format in places where development is desired.

Hybrid Zoning standards apply a mix of Euclidean-based, Performance-based, and Form-based standards based on the context of the area and desired uses.

From Here to There:
Setting a Path for Austin's Code

CODE APPROACH ALTERNATIVES & ANNOTATED OUTLINES | SEPTEMBER 4, 2014 | EVENT HANDOUT

Choosing an Approach for Austin's Future

The Code Approach Alternatives & Annotated Outlines document describes three approaches to the reorganization and rewriting of Austin's Land Development Code (LDC). The approaches range from reorganizing the current content of the existing Code to rewriting large sections of the LDC. The preferred approach and annotated outline identified by the city council will establish the general direction for revising the LDC and will allow the consultant team to begin work on more detailed outlines. In early 2015 the preferred approach will be presented to the new City Council to allow policymakers to provide any additional guidance. A brief overview of the three Alternative Approaches and the CodeNEXT team's Recommended Approach is found on Pages 2 and 3.

▶ *Download a copy of the report online at www.austintexas.gov/codenext.*
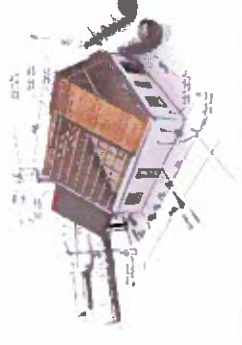
What does choosing a Code Approach do and not do?

- The selection of a preferred Code Approach by the City Council will set a general framework for the format and organization of the LDC, the ways in which development applications are reviewed and standards administered, and the types of development standards that will be crafted.

- The selection of a preferred Code Approach does not change development standards, revise zoning districts or neighborhood plans or create new zoning districts in the LDC. Instead it chooses a direction for the CodeNEXT team to explore with Austinites. Decisions on what standards remain the same, what standards change, where standards apply across the city and how they are administered will be explored during the next phase of CodeNEXT.

- Selecting an approach also does not decide where revised or new zoning districts will be "mapped" (where specific zoning districts and regulations apply). Decisions on where the revised or new zoning districts are mapped will occur after new draft zoning districts are crafted and will be thoroughly and publicly discussed.

How and when will the new Code be created?

- The preferred Approach will set a framework for the new Code. The development of the content of the new Code will be based on policy direction from Imagine Austin, adopted Neighborhood Plans and master plans, Council policies such as Complete Streets, etc., the Code Diagnosis, and public and staff input. The Code team will begin work on the Code in late 2014. The public and stakeholders will have multiple opportunities to review and comment on the draft content of the Code.

What opportunities will the community have to review the content?

- As content is completed, the Code will go through a review process that includes the community, stakeholder groups, the Code Advisory Group (CAG), boards and commissions, and City Council.

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Selecting an Approach

DOES

➤ **Set a framework**
Creates parameters to guide the revision of the LDC.

➤ **Allow for future flexibility**
Future City Council will have opportunity to reaffirm selected Approach.

➤ **Establish a road map for updating the Code**
Chooses a direction for the CodeNEXT team to explore with Austinites.

DOES NOT

✗ **Change existing regulations or policies such as Neighborhood Plans**
Does not say which regulations will be kept, replaced, or removed.

✗ **Revise zoning districts, neighborhood plans, or create new districts**
No recommendations of districts.

✗ **Decide where new or revised zoning districts will apply within the City**
Code Approach does not provide direction for mapping.

▶ *Read or download a list of Frequently Asked Questions at www.austintexas.gov/codenext.*

Next Steps

Beginning in 2015

Discuss Issues and Themes: CodeTALKs

During the drafting of the Code, a series of CodeTALKs will be held to discuss issues and themes raised by the public and staff. The input received in the Listening to the Community Report, the Code Diagnosis and the Community Character Manual will be used as starting points for community discussions on topics and issues.

Revising and Crafting New Standards

The development of the new Code will be based on policy direction from Imagine Austin, adopted Neighborhood Plans and master plans, Council policies such as Complete Streets, and input received from the public.

Discuss and Revise Proposed Standards

As specific content is drafted, the Code will go through an iterative review process that includes the public, stakeholder groups, the CAG, and boards and commissions.

Adoption

After revising the proposed standards, the completed Code will go through a community review process to include stakeholder groups, the CAG, boards and commissions, and City Council.

Mapping of Revised and New Zoning Districts

Once the new Code is adopted new zoning districts will need to be applied or "mapped" across the city. The mapping process will be defined as the Code is being revised.

How To Stay Involved

Stay plugged in at the Imagine Austin Facebook page and at the project website at www.austintexas.gov/codenext

SpeakUpAustin

Join the conversation online and share your thoughts on this or other reports. https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/projects/codenext-shaping-the-austin-we-imagine

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➤ @ImagineAustin
Use #CodeNEXT

f facebook.com/ImagineAustin

Glossary of Key Terms

Approaches
Unique combinations of elements of a Code that determine what kind of regulations are included, reviewed, and how the information is presented.

Annotated Outline
A summary of the Code structure and organization for an approach alternative (refined during drafting of the Code).

Elements of a Code
Different aspects of a land development Code that provide the standards and means of enforcement that make the Code document useful and actionable. These include the format and organization of the Code document, development review models, and development standards models.

By-right Review
A development review model where development applications are approved or denied based on compliance with an established, well-articulated set of measurable standards. Applications meeting established standards are approved without further review.

Customized Zoning
A development review model that requires new and independent regulations for major new projects. Often not coordinated with the overall LDC and are applicable only to the specific project for which they are written (Planned Unit Developments -PUDs and regulating plans).

Discretionary Review
A development review model that relies on established standards that are generally less specific than other models and that require interpretation by the reviewer, thus necessitating an extensive and sometimes subjective review process to ensure the intent of the standards are met. Projects often undergo multiple review cycles to obtain approval using this review model.

Mapping
The process of determining where zones are applied within the City; The act of outlining zoning districts on a map.