

# Austin's Development Process

Exploring the past and present.  
*Making changes that matter.*

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CITY OF AUSTIN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
APRIL 2, 2015



# Today's Discussion

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- Code and regulations – A historical perspective of the complexity
- Foundational challenges – The critical importance of a solid footing
- Steady progress – Tackling the highest priorities
- Going forward – Mapping out the next steps and tools we will use

## The Past and Present

### Pre-1984 Code

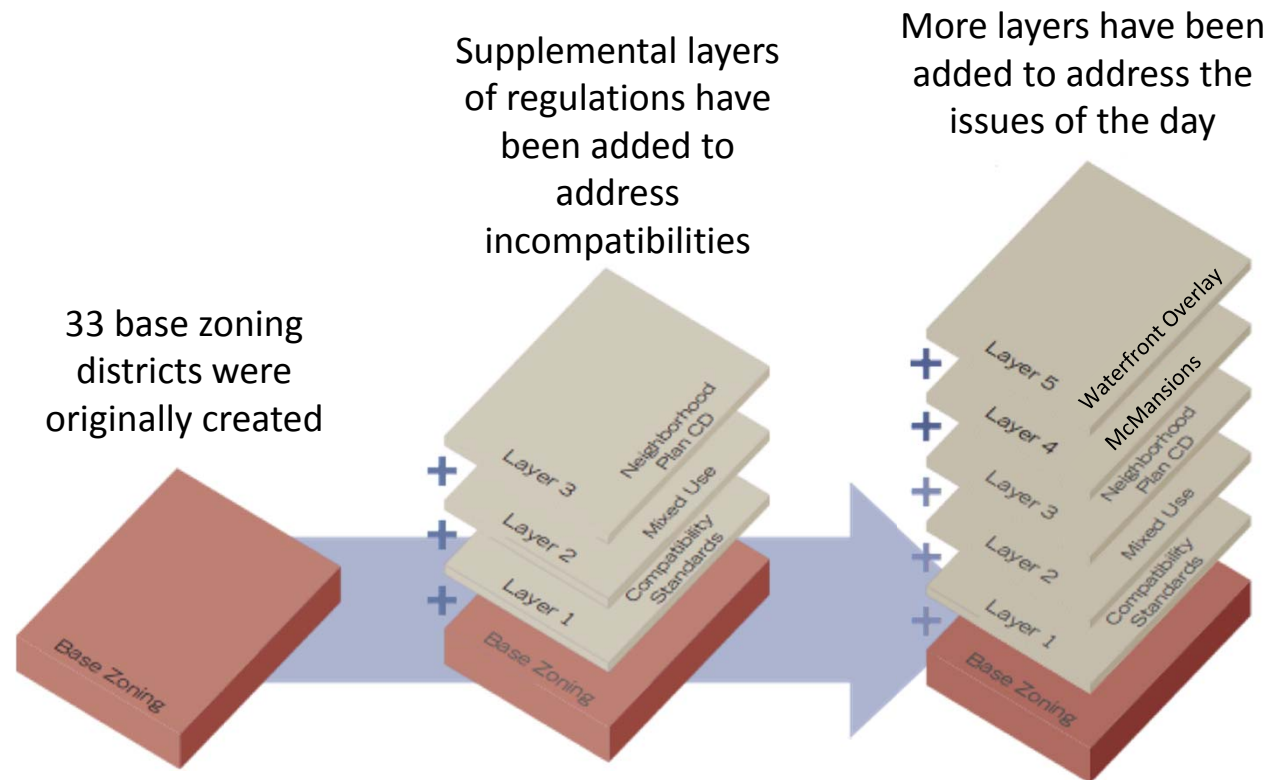
- Contained minimal requirements and standards
- Required limited interdepartmental review

### Current Code

- Originated in 1984
- 180 amendments since 2004
- Some amendments are used to mend tensions among groups
- The increased scope leads to more complexity which impacts the length and predictability of the review process

# The Land Development Code

## A History of Conflict and the Resulting Complexity



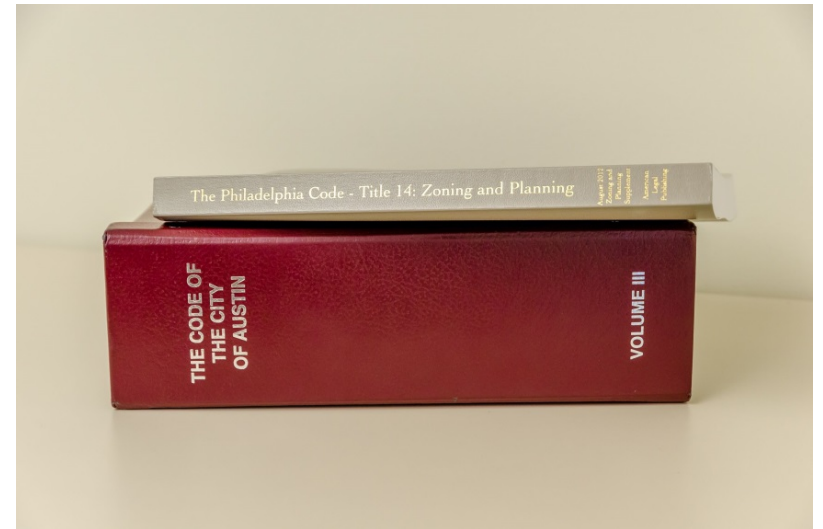
# Today's Code is a Foundational Challenge

*“The current complexity of the Land Development Code has an adverse effect on the organizational structure of the Planning and Development Review Department.”*

- May 5, 2014 statement by Opticos Design, Inc.

## Opticos Design: Three Primary Issues with the Code

- Inconsistent hierarchy, structure, and location of information
- Non-user-friendly and out-of-date layout, including a lack of graphics
- Inconsistent use of terminology and conflicting information



## Changes that Matter

### Imagine Austin

- Initiated in 2009
- Adopted by City Council in 2012
- Identified CodeNEXT as one of eight priority programs

### CodeNEXT

- Will revise the City's Land Development Code
- Will result in a clear, concise code that can be applied consistently

# The Highest Priorities

The Bedrock Needs to be Secure



# 2013 Stakeholder Forum

March 4<sup>th</sup>

- Staff listening session of various perspectives and issues from stakeholders

April 1st

- Staff and stakeholder idea generation and solution development

## Results

- 61 initiatives for improvement
- Focused on process, technology, organization, customer service, and policy
- Included an initiative to hire an external consultant to review department processes

# The Highest Priorities

Providing better customer experiences



# The Highest Priorities

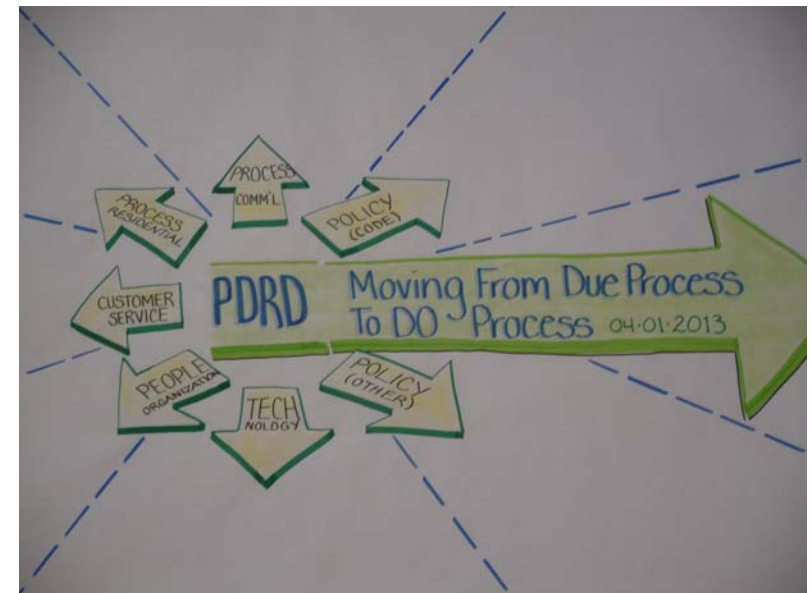
## The Steady Progress of Improvements Since 2013

### Completed

- Software to assist customers with wait times
- Digital fax receiving and response
- Facility changes to accommodate customers
- Centralized phone number (512-978-4000) and call routing system
- Quick Turn Around “QT” Process for small commercial plans less than 5,000 square feet

### Underway

- Piloting online payments
- Implementing an electronic plan review system
- Creating management dashboards with MicroStrategy
- Updating AMANDA to support a migration toward a web-based platform





## Continuing Progress

### CodeNEXT

- Streamline the code to make it less complex
- Align the City's code to implement Imagine Austin

### Process and Organization

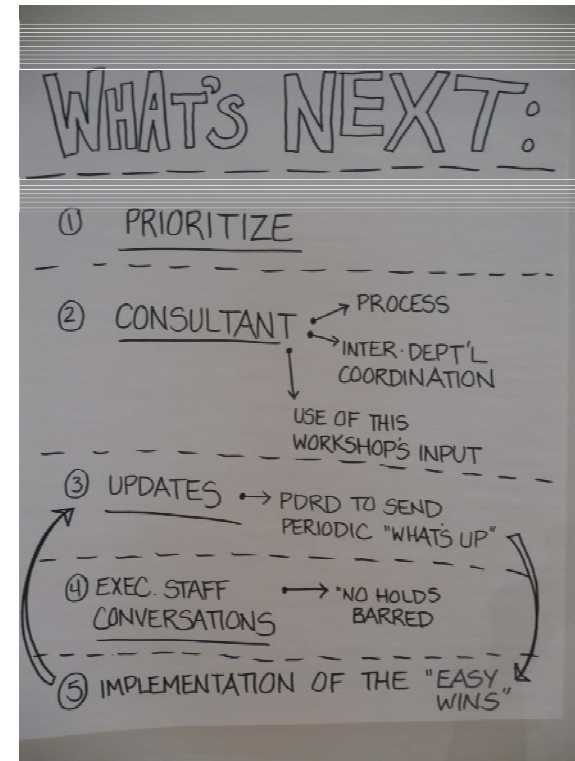
- Expand electronic plan review to all development applications
- Implement advanced mobile solutions
- Expand online payments
- Coordinate multi-department approvals
- Reviewing best practices

### Independent, Objective Assessment

- Anticipated to be completed by the end of April
- Department response to follow

## Going Forward

Resolving the code complexity, implementing initiatives previously identified, and building in more solutions







Thank you  
Rodney Gonzales, Acting Director  
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