



MEMORANDUM

To: Small Area Planning Joint Committee Members

From: Stevie Greathouse
Planning and Zoning Department

Date: October 30, 2015

Subject: Back Up For November 4, 2015 Agenda Item 6.a. Briefing on Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams

Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams are specialized community groups charged with implementing neighborhood plans by the City of Austin Land Development Code. On October 1, 2015 City Council approved a resolution directing staff to conduct stakeholder involvement and initiate code amendments to modify the Land Development Code to add oversight and compliance requirements for Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams. Staff has been asked to return to the City Council with a summary of stakeholder involvement and possible code amendment recommendation by January 28, 2016.

The intent is to develop requirements that would encourage a more open and inclusive process for Contact Teams throughout the City. As discussed at the [October 1 City Council meeting](#), many Contact Teams are functioning well and can serve as role models for revisions to the Code. The attached presentation provides more detail about the history and function of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams.

Stakeholder Involvement

Planning staff reached out to stakeholders for input via an on line survey and stakeholder meetings held on Saturday October 17 and Monday October 26, 2015. Notification of the survey and meetings were distributed broadly to stakeholder groups via the City of Austin Community Registry, existing Neighborhood Plan Contact Team membership lists, and other methods. To date, 280 individuals have responded to the survey and approximately 110 individuals participated in one or both of the stakeholder meetings. Survey results and detailed meeting notes from the stakeholder meetings related to Contact Teams are attached.

What We Heard

The feedback that staff has received varies considerably across the City. Broadly speaking, stakeholders fall into one of three major groupings:

- Stakeholders who feel that existing NPCTs are functioning well and would benefit from additional training, support, and/or greater standing in City development review processes;

- Stakeholders who feel that the existing NPCT structure is failing and needs to be significantly overhauled or replaced with a different mechanism for involvement; and
- Stakeholders who feel that additional measures need to be put into place to ensure that Contact Teams are inclusive and transparent.

While the perspective across these groups varies widely, some common themes have emerged:

- **Transparency.** NPCTs should be provided with additional tools that can support transparency, such as a city-maintained website where meeting announcements and membership lists would be maintained;
- **Training.** NPCTs should be provided with additional training, in particular some form of new member orientation;
- **Open Meetings.** All NPCT meetings should be required to be held in public settings, publicized to the general public via the web, and should be open to the public;
- **Minimum Standards.** The bylaws template provided by the City should set minimum standards related to inclusivity and transparency;
- **Grievance Process.** A formal complaint-based grievance process should be developed, with progressive steps for addressing grievances that may arise about NPCTs.

Recommendations

In response to these themes, planning staff recommends the following general approach:

- Identify staffing resources and a platform to develop and maintain a website that can be used as a clearinghouse for Contact Team information, meeting announcements, and membership lists;
- Develop a new member orientation training module and make training available via the City website and future Contact Team training sessions;
- Modify the existing Contact Team bylaws template to specify minimum standards for membership inclusivity, meeting location, and posting;
- Modify LDC 25-1, Article 16 to formalize a complaint-based grievance procedure for Contact Teams;
- Long Term: Continue to evaluate public involvement best practices through the CodeNEXT process, and consider future substantive changes to the Land Development Code that would provide for more equitable public involvement in plan implementation citywide.

Next Steps

Based on continued review of the stakeholder input, and discussion at the November 4 meeting of the Small Area Planning Joint Committee, planning staff will prepare a detailed package of recommendations, including potential amendments to the Land Development Code. Staff will publicize the draft recommendation package to stakeholders and will return to the December meeting of the Small Area Planning Joint Committee for review and discussion. In order to meet the resolution deadline of January 28, 2016, staff intends to present a refined set of recommendations to the full Planning Commission, Planning and Neighborhoods Committee of City Council, and City Council in January.

smg

Attachment(s)

cc: George Zapalac, Matt Lewis, Greg Guernsey, Marc Ott, Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams

Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams



October 26, 2015

Planning and Zoning Department
(PAZ)

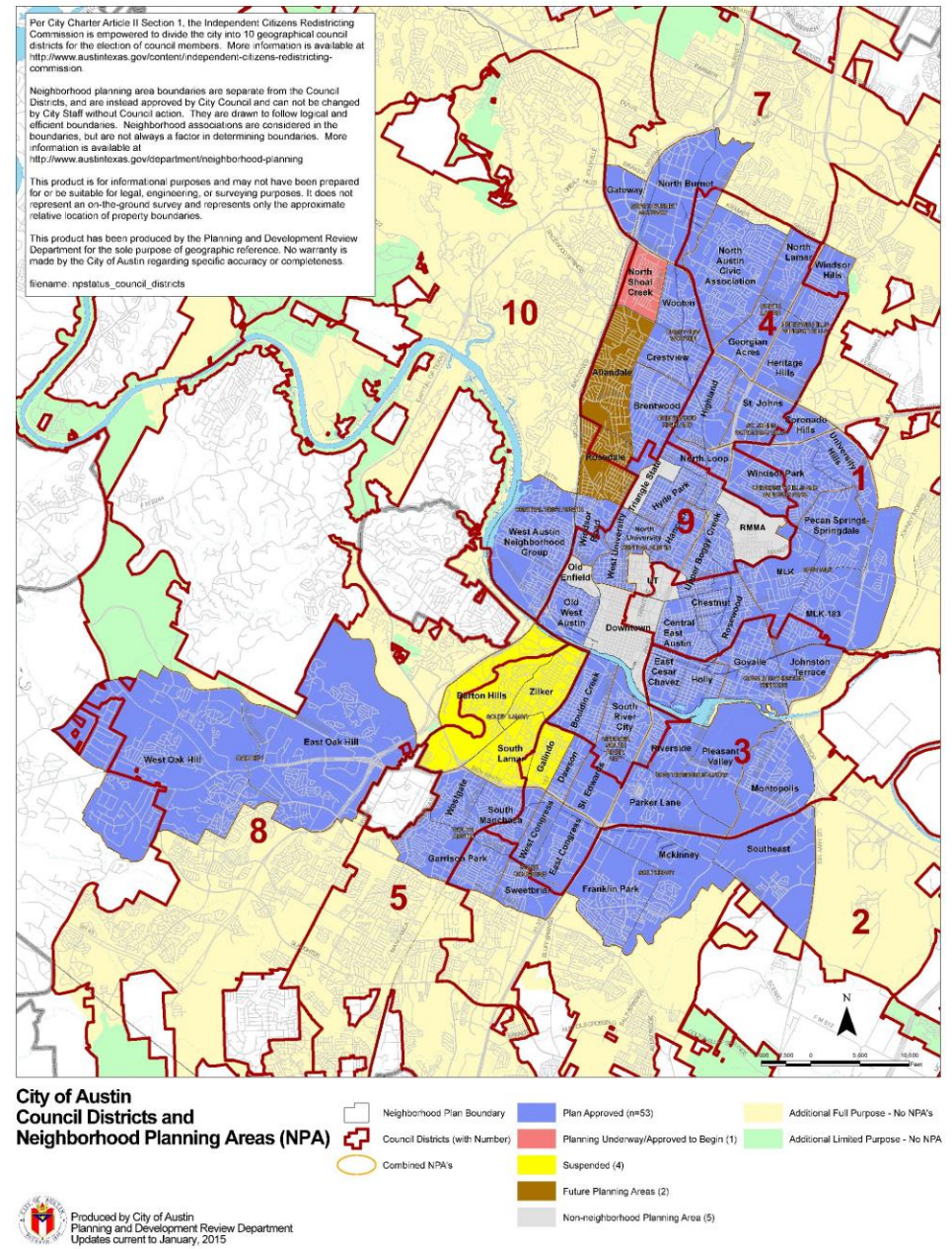
History of Contact Teams



- **1997:** Neighborhood Planning Program begins, neighborhood planning teams begin to form
- **2002:** Shift to “combined” neighborhood plans
- **2003:** Amendment process and role of contact teams established by ordinance
- **2008:** Amendment process and role of contact teams refined and codified
- **2009:** Contact team provisions modified (switch from planning team initiation of contact teams to Director initiation)
- **2009-Present:** Staff worked with planning areas with adopted plans to form contact teams, develop by-laws, establish membership
- **2012:** Imagine Austin adopted
- **2015:** City Council adopts resolution directing outreach and code amendments related to contact team enforcement

Existing Contact Teams

- 31 contact teams
- Contact teams forming for South Austin
- 2 additional plans do not have an existing contact team
- Contact teams cover 42% of the City's population (25% of geography)
- Boundaries overlap with Neighborhood Associations and other organizations



Role of Contact Teams



- Provide input on setting plan implementation priorities
- Initiate neighborhood plan amendments
- Make a recommendation to staff on amendments
- Allow out-of-cycle amendments
- Receive notice of:
 - the filing of neighborhood plan amendments
 - required community meetings on amendments
 - public hearings on amendments
- Prohibited from initiating zoning amendment cases
- Prohibited from charging dues



Contact Teams vs. Neigh. Associations



	Contact Teams	Neighborhood Associations
Regulated by the City	x	
Can initiate Neighborhood Plan Amendments	x	
Can allow out of cycle NPAs	x	
Provide input on Plan Implementation	x	
Provide a letter of recommendation to Director on NPAs	x	x*
Can attend community meeting on NPA s	x	x
Sign up as interested party to receive notice	x	x
Testify at public hearings	x	x
Charge dues		x
Set their own boundaries and scope of work		x
Can limit membership to only homeowners		x

Contact Team Requirements



- Include representation from:
 - Property owners
 - Residential renters
 - Business owners
 - Neighborhood organization members who rent or own property within the Planning Area
- Submit a list of officers and members on an annual basis
- Submit bylaws and changes to bylaws
- Bylaws must be based on a standard template



What We've Heard



- Many contact teams are working well and making a positive impact on their community
- Communication and transparency can be a struggle
- Participation too low and difficult to involve business and renter communities
- Some contact teams use a decision making process which can exclude participation
- Not all contact teams meet regularly and not all meetings productive
- Overlap with neighborhood associations can be confusing
- City doesn't listen to contact teams enough, contact teams should play a stronger role in deciding Neighborhood Plan Amendments
- City doesn't provide enough support and training (clear information on procedures, conflict management, web support, etc.)
- Contact teams have limited influence over corridor plans

Direction from City Council



- **Council adopted Resolution on October 1, 2015 which directs:**
 - Outreach to stakeholders
 - Develop draft code language to add oversight and compliance requirements for contact teams, which could include:
 - More direction on bylaws, meeting requirements
 - Fair process for City to rescind recognition of contact teams
 - Fair process to handle community initiated grievances
 - Return to City Council in 120 days (By January 28, 2016)

Proposed Timeline and Next Steps



- October 2015:
 - Meeting invitation, webpages, and survey
 - October 17 Stakeholder Meeting
 - October 26 Stakeholder Meeting
- November and December 2015:
 - Small Area Plan Joint Committee of PC and ZAP
- January 2016:
 - Planning Commission Hearing
 - Planning and Neighborhoods Committee of Council
 - City Council Hearing

Stakeholder Outreach

Draft Code Proposal

Input and Information



Event Webpage:

www.austintexas.gov/event/neighborhood-stakeholder-meeting

Survey:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/contactteams

Feedback



- Station 1: Membership of contact teams
- Station 2: Meetings of contact teams
- Station 3: Contact team communication
- Station 4: Enforcement and grievance procedures
 - What's working?
 - What's not?
 - Improvements?
 - City Role?



Contacts:

Stevie Greathouse, Principal Planner, Neighborhood Involvement and Implementation Division
George Zapalac, Division Manager, Neighborhood Involvement and Implementation Division

Stakeholder Input Related to Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams
Raw Meeting Notes: Meeting #1, October 17, 2015

Meeting Overview

Approximately 70 attendees representing Contact Teams and others citywide participated in the meeting. After a brief presentation, attendees broke into 6 groups and addressed the following questions by topic. (Due to the size of the meeting, groups were free to discuss all items and provided individual comments to staff via post-it notes in lieu of a facilitated discussion.)

- What's working?
- What's not?
- Improvements?
- City staff role?

1. Membership

Recruitment of contact team members, appointment of officers, membership requirements

Flexibility of Requirements

- Keep flexibility in the way contact teams allow voting. Some allow everyone to vote. Others have an elected board that votes. Allow both types as decided by each team.
- Membership requirements are currently adequate.
- Not enough emphasis on maintaining existing teams.
- Membership requirements should have a minimal standard from the city, but contact teams should be able to exceed those requirements as long as they are inclusive.
- If we make the process too formal then we will not have participation.
- Require standard voting rules without burdensome membership requirements.

Threshold for Membership

- Membership should include any and all stakeholders
- How we do it: Wooten NPCT bylaws define anybody in the 4 food groups in our boundaries as "members". There are four officers elected as voting representatives (4 votes). A 5th vote is a majority of those present at the meeting. No time limit. First appearance can vote.
- Eliminate all barriers to participation: attendance, delays, restrictions

- New members self-nominate and are required to attend at least two meetings prior to appointment by the team.
- How do we keep special interest groups from packing “new” voters into a contentious meeting and sway the vote to achieve their own agenda?
- Membership rolls and voting records must show which stakeholder group the individual represents
- Members shall include: Property owners, residential renters, business owners, neighborhood org. members and balanced cross-representation and elected leaders also cross-representative.
- Our Contact Team includes everyone in the four “food groups” period. Everyone is welcome. Everyone is equal.-Crestview
- Membership should be limited to residents and businesses with addresses within the area. Not associations of builders, realtors, PACs, etc. Permanent street address.
- Officers are elected by vote. A member who misses two consecutive meetings may be dropped from the CT.

Neighborhood Organizations

- Do not just include neighborhood association officers. Very marginalizing.
- Why was “neighborhood association” changed to “neighborhood organization”?
- The term “neighborhood organization” needs to be deleted or defined in template
- Delete “neighborhood organization” as a membership category.
- 4 Food Groups: please explain the requirement that neighborhood organizations be represented. How is that not redundant with property owners, renters, and business owners?

Renters

- Very difficult to convince renters to join NPCTs because renters generally do not have long term interest in the neighborhood.
- STRs have reduced number of potential renter members of NPCTs.
- Problem with outreach due to multifamily complex managers not allowing NPCT members to distribute notices to their complexes. Only allowed to leave notices with apartment manager’s office, which usually end up in trash.

- How to involve renters in contact teams? Since they are good part of neighborhood, they should have a voice.
- Making renter/homeowner distinction alienates renters; Membership language should require both + not weight one over the other; Long standing members dissuade new member engagement (often accidentally); term limits would help; Clarifying voting process (who is voting member, etc) would help.
- Representatives of renter citizens is hard to accomplish. I suggest posting at apartment facilities and known rental residences.
- Important to have tenants as well as homeowners be on contact team.

Businesses

- Removing corridor plans from existing neighborhood plans reduces likelihood of having businesses join NPCT.
- Address non-profit organizations, make them a business type
- We have had difficulty getting/recruiting business participation

2. Meetings

Contact team meeting schedule, location, procedures, minutes

On-Line Participation vs. In Person Attendance

- It should not be necessary to attend meetings to have a voice on a CT. Electronic voting should be allowed.
- In order to vote, meeting attendance should be required.
- Allow and encourage on line voting
- It should not be necessary to attend meetings in order for a stakeholder to have a voice in CT recommendation
- Require voting by email/website to allow people who can't show up to participate.
- Require voting by attendance only. So People are involved in discussion and know the issues.

Meeting Rules

- Require use of Roberts' Rules. Require that there be some attendance requirement to vote.

- Follow Roberts' Rules of Order
- Roberts' Rules should be used to run meetings.
- Follow Roberts' Rules of Order
- Meetings shall be open to all; shall not be required to comply with open meetings act.
- Require anonymous voting to prevent harassment.

Location/Meeting Frequency

- Meetings must have regular, public location that is easily accessed. Meetings and agenda (w/ exhibits, if applicable) must be posted in advance in public sphere (incl. website)
- Specific #of meetings required; publicly shared meeting info; notice given to allow 2 weeks prior to meeting
- City should only mandate one NPCT meeting per year; Contact teams can exceed this if they provide regular meeting schedule; Standardize advance time for meeting notification cancellation;
- Meetings Primarily focus on zoning issues and maintaining the goals set out in the neighborhood plan or considering changes that need to be made—sometimes have not occurred under the current President when there is not an issue pending.

City Support

- Provide hosting for contact team meeting posting (agenda and minutes.)
- Require that city budget and support meetings of NPCTs; by providing staff attendance for technical assistance, i.e. LDC questions.
- Make quarterly trainings about meeting skills development (facilitation skills).

Meeting Announcements/Minutes:

- How we do it: (Wooten NPCT): meetings announced on Yahoo and Facebook, at Wooten NA meeting. Meeting usually 1 week after. We have not had a plan amendment proposed to date, so action at meetings has been minimal except maintaining vigilance. Attendance is very light. Not surprising without amendments.
- Meetings should be announced far enough in advance for busy people to squeeze into their schedules. Two weeks in advance would be great.
- Maintain meeting minutes.

3. Communication

Contact team notification, websites, e-mail

On-Line Communication and E-Mail

- What is working: The OHNCT e-mails all changes and amendments being proposed to the OHAN members. This enables improved communication.
- Use technology to encourage involvement and participation: on-line surveys, list serve, open to all; Helios or other vetted voting.
- Encourage On-Line Discussion boards open to all stakeholders, e.g. Discourse
- We in Wooten use Facebook, Yahoo and announcement at NA meeting 1 week before Contact Team meetings. Difficult to get participation.
- Have Central Website where you can enter address and find out your Contact Team
- All NPCTs should have standardized website format linked from City page with at a min: 1) meeting minutes, 2) agenda, 3) contact info, 4) plan language, and 5) geography. Could also use social media platforms? NPCTs should be conduit to the City from NAs- NAs are not subject to oversight and wield too much power compared to NPCTs
- Need to be able to post notices of meetings on City Website.
- Provide standardized web template.

City Support

- It would be nice to reimburse NPCT for expenses, within reason, for distribution of info and meetings, etc. E.G. Neighborhood Association newsletters
- Provide facilitators and fair process tools upon request.
- Need to know more about City Plans that need implementation.
- Provide funds for printing and other expenses.
- Require City to budget and support communication: mailing of annual notice to households of NPCT; assistance with translators and interpreters when requested.
- The City needs to help Contact Teams cover operating costs.

Level of Notification

- Contact Teams have duty to inform all stakeholders of upcoming decisions.

October 26, 2015 Meeting Notes

- Notification issues: with no money it is difficult to notify everyone. City can't mandate anything beyond e-mail notification. Difficult reaching renters and people not in a neighborhood association (City should help with notification of meetings.)
- Contact Teams have a duty to actively solicit input from ALL stakeholders before making decisions.
- Communication is accomplished by posting notification of meetings so non-members can know about the meeting and attend. Also, when an issue has come before the team, we leaflet the most affected homes and that has been very effective in producing a large turn-out. Our communication among team members is done primarily by e-mail, but can be a problem sometimes. Telephoning seems to work better.

4. Enforcement

Enforcement of contact team requirements, adherence to bylaws, process for hearing grievances, etc.

Process/Decision-Making Body

- All enforcement and grievance review should be the responsibility of City Council. Absolutely no filtering by City Staff. Process must be open to the public.
- City Council should decide enforcement for Contact Teams (grievances).
- City Planning staff needs to be empowered to stand up to abuses by Contact Teams (e.g. Not following the ordinance)
- All enforcement should happen at City Council level by elected officials.
- Grievance procedure should not be burdensome on Contact Teams. Prevent someone from filing frivolous grievances. Give Contact Team ample notice and time to comply with specific rules. Grievance should not be just for disagreement, only violation of the Code.
- Any grievance process must have multiple steps including: independent meeting facilitator service; informal meeting with City Staff; Require exhaustion of informal dispute resolution process before formal grievance allowed.
- Any grievance process should require Department Director to have a local (i.e. Planning area based hearing, to allow all parties to publically voice complaint and evidence) Director should not take any action or make a determination without an opportunity for planning area affected to have notice and an opportunity to be heard. Director must be required to present findings to Planning Commission before any action.

- Need a Grievance and Arbitration Committee
- Do not allow personal family feuds to drive rescission of team status. Need a hearing/mediation for all parties to solve differences

Requirements

- Grievance process should focus on specifics-notification time, not allowing an eligible member to vote, etc...do not use vague words like “fair” or “open” as they can be interpreted in many ways.
- Any grievance procedures must specify the types of grievances allowed and what must be shown before any action by City. Allow a range of response by City from more training to city-run meetings if grievance is sustained.
- Bylaws for Contact Teams should be standardized Citywide
- Require representation. If can’t come close to representing community, stop taking votes.
- Contact teams whose by-laws are dissonant to the CT ordinance should not have a voice in City decisions.

Other Enforcement/Grievance Comment

- If the City is to adopt a grievance process, City needs to provide legal representation to Contact Team Members to respond to complaints.
- A grievance mechanism is necessary. Here’s a grand bargain: NPCTs should embrace more oversight and standardization and receive in turn tools to help them do their jobs better (web hosting, templates, etc.)
- More limits and restrictions on Plan Teams; but no additional power or influence—why would we want this?

5. Other Comments

- Contact team members unable to listen to each other and to compromise on issues.
- Contact teams should be shielded from lawsuits
- Elected officials lacking; is the contact team on a skeleton crew w/interim officers still viable?
- The City must do a better job of communicating the Imagine Austin goals. A lot of people are saying that the goals are to eliminate single family zoning, to fill

neighborhoods with high rise apartments, and to ignore concerns about flooding, electricity, deed restrictions, etc.

- The plan and zoning are ultimately related. Contact teams need to be empowered to address zoning issues that relate to planning issues.
- Too much City Control. It appears as if the City wants to limit any influence the contact teams have by threatening to rescind recognition. There is no force behind contact team decisions; recommend Council should require a $\frac{3}{4}$ super majority to overrule.
- Contact Teams that violate the ordinance should not be protected from litigation or complaints.
- The City needs to be more open with info on how communities can organize new contact teams. We in South Austin have been told we cannot form one when Code says that we can. Too large of a planning area includes too diverse needs form stakeholders. Not adequate representation. Not fair to members of the community.
- Don't allow overlapping boundaries in neighborhood associations.
- City provide training for CT Leaders in running meetings and conflict management.
- Most contact teams are not on Community Registry. Since these groups are sanctioned by the City, shouldn't it be a requirement that they register?
- The City needs to provide revenue to cover cost of operating Contact Teams, i.e. Space Rental
- CTs should not be allowed to make up their own rules for stakeholder input on decision making.
- Working: Relationship with Neighborhood Association.
- Need separate City Neighborhood Planning Department to support neighborhood planning and facilitate contact teams. City Staff should not be allowed to initiate amendments to neighborhood plans.
- All CTs should have a COA sponsored web presence for discussion, feedback, and decisions.
- Plans for future areas to be included outside zones and ETJ; Impact to external areas of Plans on Edge of Existing Contact Team and Neighborhoods.
- CTs should be transparent: who votes and how; who advocates what; who participates; who decides; accountability!

- Working: Once/Year Plan Amendments
- The Planning process for the neighborhood plan will influence how well the Contact Team or teams will work. If there is acrimony because of lack of communication or ability to listen, it will be hard for the Contact Teams to work.
- Funding for Contact Team Activities
- Call Contact Teams “Planning Teams”. “Contact” is dismissive.
- NAs have too much policy power—they are social organizations with no oversight who bring neighbors together. If an issue becomes contentious, it should go to NPCT; City can act as an arbitrator if necessary. For UBC, at least, the NA tails wag the dog.
- Education: Members should receive factual, regular information on City of Austin Development Codes and Ordinances
- Our contact team has followed all processes re: membership, meetings, communications, differentiation with neighborhood association. We are only limited in our desired amendments because COA limits it to zoning.
- Lost Creek: Please record our Lost Creek Neighborhood Plan (existing) and add our contact team as part of Dec 15 Annexation
- Please help us record our neighborhood plan and give us a team as part of December 15 annexation. I would like to be on the Lost Creek Contact Team as soon as we have one. I am on the Lost Creek Neighborhood Association Liaison to the LC Mud; Marshall Tract Committee; Parliamentarian and Lost Creek Civic Organization founding member. Liaison to the Planning and Neighborhoods Committee; Liaison to Planning Commission and Project Team
- City to Contact Team communication needs to be more efficient. Currently the Chair is buried by notifications that are vague and often by post. Better: all communication by e-mail; classified broadly; better descriptions or links to more info; information is in “planning speak” can you give pictures to illustrate change or examples.
- Need to send [City] notices to more than just one member of contact team. We asked for a secondary contact and City refused.
- Can a Contact Team have a treasurer? Can a Contact Team apply for 501 (c)3 status so that “in kind donors” receive a tax discount?
- Give contact team recommendations more teeth than individual homeowners (valid petition)

- Give more weight to “contact teams” than to neighborhood associations
- In Wooten we have no grievances. We would like teeth in our recommendations—for example ¾ vote by Council to override. We have more grievances with City than against our team.
- We met with the permittee to get all of the info organized before meeting with the NA to inform the group. Many permits are not filled out properly and do not have document to really explain what is taking place on the land.
- Grievance process for City Staff or an Ombudsman to address Citizen Complaints. Also: require City Staff to physically inspect sites under plan review.
- What about grievances about staff misconduct?
- Represent directly-interested parties; democratic way of encouraging membership and viewpoints; officers and members list regularly given to City; City share info on requirements in a clear and open way (not happening now)
- Important for city and the neighbors to have a clear understanding of how many teams are to be formed for a neighborhood plan.
- Contact teams should hear any policy discussion coming from NAs within Plan Area
- How can section 7H of the Template Bylaws be enforced? If not, can it be deleted?
- Who hears grievances about City staff conduct in N’hood Plan process?
- NPCT are only able to voice their opinion of the NP, with dialogue from the NP.
- Who hears grievances re: how City staff responds or fails to respond to the Community’s request to form Contact Teams?
- The details of how contact teams manage their business should not be dictated since these are volunteer teams so it’s not easy.

Stakeholder Input Related to Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams
Raw Meeting Notes: Meeting #2, October 26, 2015

Meeting Overview

Approximately 45 attendees representing Contact Teams and others citywide participated in the meeting. After a brief presentation, attendees broke into 5 small groups and addressed the following questions by topic with support from a small-group facilitator:

- What's working?
- What's not?
- Improvements?
- City staff role?

1. Membership

Recruitment of contact team members, appointment of officers, membership requirements

Flexibility of Requirements

- City template is not prescriptive enough
- City should require certain membership language
- Membership is fine and needs to stay flexible and be diverse (representation by % of ethnicity)
- Different Contact Teams have different variations on what constitutes membership
- Leave established Contact Teams alone and let them be grandfathered in
- Standardize CT Membership requirements
- Should be universal requirements for all contact teams
- There should be more consistency in membership requirements across the city
- Membership requirements should be flexible across the city to account for differences (e.g. Oak Hill is a large geographic area containing 26 neighborhood associations, while other planning areas are much smaller)

Threshold for Membership

- Not currently invited to be a member of Contact Team
- Contact Team is deliberately excluding members
- Contact Team bylaws require 7 year residency

- Benefit to having folks knowledgeable about the Plan and Zoning process on the Team
- Having a core group of active participants benefits communication
- Contact Team doesn't equitably reflect geographic distribution of population within planning area
- Term limits for officers
- Attendance is upheld
- Representation from 4 food groups is working
- SF homeowners being members of CT is working
- SEC: Ours is working. Keep membership requirements as is. We do not have a strong presence of neighborhood associations. Require 3 meetings within 12 months to vote.
- More attendance at contact team meeting before a crisis occurs. Not enough community attends.
- What is working? Members take role seriously.
- Everybody that lives or owns a business in the area should be part of the contact team.
- Don't allow person to be officer of more than one contact team
- Each subdistrict has to have "4 food groups," not just the entire area contact team
- Should not allow contact team to have to approve new members. If you are eligible you should be able to participate.
- Voting age requirements for contact team members (not 14 year olds).
- Require geographic representation from entire area.
- Board should not all be from one "food group."
- 1 voting member per address
- Have to have attended one meeting to be member (not all agree)
- Have term limits?
- Maximum # of members (one group has 30 in bylaws but has never reached this #)
- Minimum # of meetings required before eligible to vote

- Members must be residents or own business in planning area
- Membership should be representative of the planning area

Neighborhood Organizations

- Contact Teams and NA's members overlap and serve as an echo chamber
- Contact Team combines six smaller neighborhood association/benefits from members with longevity
- Membership same as neighborhood association – all are welcome
- (Central Austin) Membership is limited to nominated reps (2 each) from 7 named neighborhood associations and only those NA's (they charge dues also). Lots of restrictions on boundaries and overlap of NA's so that new NA's aren't allowed representation. Many of the representative NA's don't allow businesses as members. No member/representative term limits means the people who wrote bylaws are the ones also voting not to change them.
- Neighborhood associations should have requirements.
- Representatives from each neighborhood association in planning area, plus businesses

Recruitment

- Can city help provide tools to support recruitment/Can City help teams get new members by providing list of new people, new occupants, new AE customers?
- Generating new membership is hard
- Seek participation from schools and community centers
- How to refresh the membership roles? Especially businesses, large housing developments; Is there a way to provide list of contacts yearly to the Contact Teams?
- Very hard to get business owners and renters to join Contact Team/No enforcement
- Soliciting Membership – Flyers, signs, and postage are expenses which cannot be addressed without funding of some sort. Dues are not allowed.
- The attrition level is very high. Members tire and it is not easy to find replacements. Difficult to find renters and business people
- Business owners are typically not included or notified and don't participate.

- (Windsor Park) Hard to get renters as they keep getting pushed out by gentrification. We do have business, homeowners, and property owners on the contact team. You do not have to be a member of the neighborhood association to be on the contact team but everyone is. We do require that contact team members attend 3 meetings before they can be on the team. You are open to vote packing if you do not do this. All the people on one team are very dedicated and take this very seriously.
- Difficulty getting renters involved

2. **Meetings**

Contact team meeting schedule, location, procedures, minutes

On-Line Participation vs. In Person Attendance

- Need to provide non-online methods to let people without computer access know about meetings
- Working (Univ Hills): People participate with great intention.
- 90% of our contact team come to our meetings so they do know what is going on. Any controversy is always discussed at the regular WPNA meetings. Plus, we try to have a regular WPNA officer at any meeting where there is a request for a variance or to deviate from the neighborhood plan.

Meeting Rules

- Bylaws require 2/3 vote but contact team is not sticking to that
- Meetings shouldn't be closed-door/should be open to the public
- Let everyone speak, not just some people.
- Need more transparency
- Go by Robert's Rules as default. If group has good function, can do "light" Robert's Rules.
- Abide by Texas Open Meeting Law.
- No yelling.
- Comply with Texas Open Meetings Act.
- All teams shall comply with Texas state law on ethics and conflict of interest.
- Inconsistency on quorum requirements

- Some groups require a quorum of total membership and a quorum of neighborhoods
 - Some groups require 50% of members, plus one
- Elect Steering Committee which can meet separately from general membership
- Require annual election of officers
- Designate voting members but allow visitors
- Decision-making:
 - 2/3 vote from members
 - Consensus
 - Take no position if vote is split

Location/Meeting Frequency

- Contact Team grew out of Planning effort and reflects the 4 food groups; doesn't need to meet often
- Lack of set meeting schedule can be a problem from transparency perspective
- Set meeting schedule would be helpful
- Our team 1st met once a month, but that conflicted with NA meetings. We moved to quarterly and it didn't work for developers for plan amendments. Now we meet only as needed for officer elections, reviewing applications for projects, and other required issues.
- Only meet as needed/always on a Thursday
- Contact Team shouldn't need to meet if there isn't something that needs to be discussed
- Meetings on a set schedule would help transparency for developers, too
- Contact team should only meet when required
- Regular meeting time and place working
- Having to rely on community for space not working
- Need a permanent space and time

- (University Hills) Meeting space in the 'hood is limited and in demand by many other worthy groups.
- Working (CH/CR): limited number of contact team meetings – usually as needed.
- Working (UH): We meet the third Monday of every month 6P – 8P. Notice is posted a week before the meeting. Open to anyone in the community.
- Working (SCCNP): Meeting held in a public place
- Working (SEC): Get a lot done during meeting. Set agenda. Meet in public place
- Working (WP): Notification of cases by COA. Meetings as needed. Attendance is good.
- (CH/CR): Too many meetings for neighbors to attend – contact team usually not need to meet as frequently. Could use suggestion as to free meeting places in area.
- Meetings should be in a public place (not a home).
- Frequency of meetings? No meeting if there are no issues on neighborhood plan.
- Meet on regular schedule – can cancel if no business to discuss
- Meet as needed

City Support

- Advisory Groups like Bicycle Advisory Committee have access to a City Website that publishes consistent meeting information. Can Contact Teams be treated similarly?
- Can City support meeting announcement signage?
- City staff should come out to the meetings annually and provide education to individual Contact Team and a chance for dialogue
- Meetings should be attended by City Staff
- City should provide routine consultation regarding education on Zoning
- City should help to provide flexible meeting space
- Provide resources such as a FLUM
- Interagency Communication with meetings and case
- Resources to promote the meeting (ex: flyers)
- Provide a list serve sign up for CT Communication

- (WP) Discourages membership. Lack of COA support. No financial support. No COA website to upload info. No legal protection. Overall financial burden.
- Improvements (SCCNT): More frequent training provided by City on how to run meetings properly, Roberts Rules of Order, etc.
- Improvements (CH/CR): Create useful questionnaire annually. Staff help with website – perhaps meeting notification. Not everybody has a computer. Meaningful repetitive training for contact team officers: orientation, rights of team members, how to conduct meeting.
- Improvements: Web page. Use mediators at Dispute Resolution Center. Train new contact team leaders (required). Past leaders train new ones. Liability coverage for contact teams or some protection. Translators. Staff support.
- City moderator by invitation only.
- City should have website with info on all contact teams: location, officers, minutes, agendas

Meeting Announcements/Minutes:

- Agendas should be posted on-line as they are modified
- Minutes should be detailed/describe full discussion and should be released within a few days
- Minutes and attendance should be posted on –line within 72 hours
- Meeting notification is provided by e-mail at least 2 weeks ahead of time
- List Serve and e-mail
- Phone calls and outreach working
- (Central Austin): No advertisement of meetings or agenda. Members have complete control of how meetings are run on an ad-hoc basis – no consistency, can impose speaker limits, expressly state that it can take 6 weeks to get a meeting and a requestor must have first met with affected neighborhood association and some NA's only meet once a quarter – that's up to 26 weeks of wait time. Meeting minutes haven't been published in 5 years.
- Not working (SCCNT): Less than 1 week notice. Meeting held at an inconvenient time for the majority of the members. Agenda not posted until last minute (day before or day of). Poor attendance unless a neighborhood plan change. Meetings run in chaotic manner. People shut off those who they disagree with. No meeting minutes or too brief.

- Minimum time before posting (1 week minimum suggestion)
- Minutes of meetings, including attendance, location, votes, and approve at next meeting
- Send notes to attendees 1 week after meeting for agreement and corrections.
- If no notification of a meeting from contact team by required posting date, email goes out saying meeting is cancelled.
- Should be process to get item on agenda.
- If meeting not posted on City site then meeting not recognized.
- Use listserve for meeting notices
- Use NextDoor to publicize meetings
- Post minutes on website
- Provide template for minutes. They should be concise, not detailed (Robert's Rules).
- Send draft copies of minutes to meeting attendees

Other

- (SEC): Limited space. Small space. No support: staff, translators, hungry tummies (food)
- It's hard to find free public space for meetings

3. Communication

Contact team notification, websites, e-mail

Communication with broader public

- Bilingual communication, emails, phone calls and door-to door are working
- Word of mouth is working
- Not working (WP): Difficult notification. Difficulty with required communication. Hard to maintain consistent communication.
- Official communication should be approved by all.
- Not everyone uses computers
 - Use posters at local kiosk, business locations, schools – establish a central location

- Use neighborhood association newsletters (contact teams can't afford their own newsletters)

On-Line Communication and E-Mail

- NextDOOR can be a tool, but may not be democratic
- Yahoo can be a good tool, but depends on moderator
- Neighborhood List Serve works
- E-mail is sent to everyone in Yahoo Group as well as other Neigh. Organization leaders who are asked to distribute to their members
- List serves and web based outreach is working
- Not working (Univ Hills): Hard to keep the people of the neighborhood notified regularly (lots of people don't have or use email – can't be assumed it is a stable communication method).
- Not working (SCCNT): Yahoo group works but not many members have joined. Poor written records, like meeting minutes, etc. Some people (a few) send aggressive emails – no moderation of Yahoo group.
- NextDoor – optional, not mandatory
- Use neighborhood association website, Yahoo group, Facebook
- Need IT training on digital media
-

City Support

- Can City host neutral mailing lists for teams (e.g. via Constant Contact or MailChimp?)
- City should host single website and provide training on how to upload documents, etc
- City should post all policies, procedures, and bylaws on web
- City staff not supporting Contact Team Outreach/need funding for outreach
- Contact teams need a budget
- Provide more resources: e.g. websites and templates and processes and procedures
- Lack of budget and support is a problem

- Can City provide electronic notice of reviews instead of paper, so that we can forward out to CT Members via e-mail?
- Need support in addition to dollars – such as repetitive website, etc.
- (University Hills) Not working (challenges): Contact teams are neither fish nor fowl – no protection because not an “official” City entity, but have considerable expectations of outreach (without financial support). Risk and costs are borne by people who often have limited personal resources.
- Improvements (Univ Hills): City might consider a central website for contact teams to use that is straightforward to use. No legal protection currently in place, so clarify risk to contact team members and available protections.
- Improvements (Central Austin): Dedicated City resources like a public website to posting meeting calendar, agendas prior to meetings, minutes after meetings. Moderation of meetings by City officials to be sure they are conducted fairly and consistently.
- Improvements (WP): COA website support for all required communication. COA liability coverage. COA support for general expenses.
- Make City website easy to get info – not have to drill down repeatedly to get info.
- (Univ Hills): Contact team communicates well internally. Outreach: There is no support or straightforward means to reach stakeholders. Again, no financial support for fliers, signs, tennis shoes for delivering fliers. City role: Unclear what City role is overall.
- (SEC): What works: email, Next Door. What’s not working: Translators for non-English speakers. Improvement: City staff support, Citywide web page with webmaster by City.
- Provide City of Austin website for posting contact team meeting time, location, agenda, minutes, bylaws. Non-posted meetings are not valid.
- City send email to contact team members or interested parties on meetings. Contact team secretary sends info to City.
- Need City help with outreach
- Need City help with website
- Provide user-friendly template for website
- Need City help with publicizing events and process
- Need City help in selecting priority recommendations – more structured format (e.g. Oak Hill selected only 5 projects for entire area)
-

Level of Notification

- How should communication be handled on a tight timeline?
- NAs and Contact Teams getting 2 notices
- Reaching out to full area can be challenging depending on size of area
- In Austin Energy bills, advertise how to sign up for email or phone notification.
-

4. Enforcement

Enforcement of contact team requirements, adherence to bylaws, process for hearing grievances, etc.

Process/Decision-Making Body

- City staff should review Contact Team performance and provide a recommendation for improvements
- Establish a clear grievance process with progressive steps
- Make City Contacts for who to file grievances with easy to find/public
- City should step in and convene a standard process for creating new team in an area that does not have a functional team
- Grievance system should be complaint-based
- Contact Team's special rights should be taken away if they aren't meeting requirements
- CTs are involved in the process and try to enforce our decisions
- Not working (SCCNT): City needs to get involved in some very aggressive cases. Establish/make clear that all members are to treat each other with respect. For example, City moderation of one meeting?
- We don't need the City to arbitrate internal contact team disputes – they will always support the developer position and their allies. Contact teams must be independent. Support us but don't dictate.
- (Univ Hills): No problem to date with enforcing following of bylaws. People are careful to do so. Grievance (none to date) would be heard and discussed. All points of view/sides are heard and considered.
- Clear info on who enforces – Planning Commission?

- If minimum standards not met (repeatedly and willfully) then group is “de-chartered” (not recognized) by Planning Commission. Director initiates formation of new contact team for area.
- Officers of unrecognized group cannot serve on next team.
- Meet general requirements for “certification.” Grievance for other issues as they might arise.
- Use PC/ZAP Small Area Plan Joint Committee to hear disputes
-

Requirements

- City should require Contact Team to wait until after Public Plan Amendment meeting to develop a recommendation.
- All meetings should be public, posted with City Clerk
- Posting meetings 2 weeks ahead with City Clerk would not be workable
- Some parts of bylaws template should be set in stone/non-negotiable
- Bylaws and procedures should be standardized
- Make bylaws flexible
- New regulations should be for new teams
- (CH/CR): Little enforcement needed by City – don’t make teams subservient to staff ideas and protocols.
- Improvements (SCCNT): City should verify residency of officers if brought up by members.
- Should be grievance for non-compliance
- Establish grievance procedure.
-

Other Enforcement/Grievance Comment

- Currently no enforcement/not aware of enforcement process
- What type of rescinding? What is process? Is there appeal process?

- Staff should create a draft enforcement and grievance procedures and processes with support and review from NPCTs
- Unclear how to deal with members who violate bylaws
- (CANPACT): No procedures posted on the current CANPAC website, so that anyone wanting to complain would have to find that procedure on a City website (do they exist at a city level?). No way to change bylaws without being a member and membership is very restrictive.
- Problem (W. Park): Members who violate bylaws and misrepresent the contact team's actions are a problem. They do nothing but drive good people away.
- Recognize uniqueness of contact teams
- Training on conflict resolution
- Mediator hired by City
- Training on function of contact team
- City should focus on being helpful, not punitive

5. Other Comments

- Contact Team doesn't listen to results of neighborhood surveys
- Currently no opportunity for learning/NPCTs aren't open-minded enough
- Peer pressure makes it hard for opposition viewpoints to speak up
- Un-welcoming atmosphere at CT meeting can suppress participation
- In-kind donations for advertising?
- How often do Contact Teams initiate Plan Amendments?
- City needs to educate developers on reaching out to Contact Teams early in the process
- City should push back when NPCT opts out of electronic survey for priorities
- Contact Teams should have legal representation/protections
- All Neighborhood Plans should have a recognized FLUM
- Need City help to get developers on a set schedule

- Staff opposes Contact Team recommendations
- City needs to provide: support, oversight, templates and budget, more guidance
- City staff needs to communicate with Contact Teams and have another meeting
- City should expand notice from 500 feet to 1000 feet
- City should provide mailing labels for who has received notification
- Staff is not communicating their NPA and Re-Zoning decisions
- Too little time for Contact Team to develop a recommendation (2 weeks is too short)
- Want more training and binders with info on Zoning
- City needs to clarify goals of the Contact Team
- City Staff ask for letter
- Staff should not oppose Contact Team recommendations
- Continue to allow CTs to accept out-of-cycle NPAs. Didn't have power like power over this.
- What is the community's power to make staff enforce decisions? We need them
- Two way accountability city staff vs. community
- Do not expand Contact Team boundaries
- Leave current Contact Teams as is
- Staff needs to work to approve contact team recommendations and communicate with Contact Teams
- How do you rescind staff decisions counter to contact teams? Which department will handle rescinding?
- Staff make recommendation, cannot/may not dictate outcomes to contact teams.
- (CH/CR): City staff puts spin on neighborhood plans not consistent with neighborhood's intent.
- City should not be notified of decisions before meeting is held to decide.
- Coordinate better with City's meeting on neighborhood plan amendments.

- Publicize content of plan
- City not updating information on bylaws, officers, etc.
- City asks us to do busy work that takes time and then is ignored; e.g., re-order CIPs
- Quarterly check-in by City with 25% of teams to find out what their needs are

Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Stakeholder Online Survey

October 2015

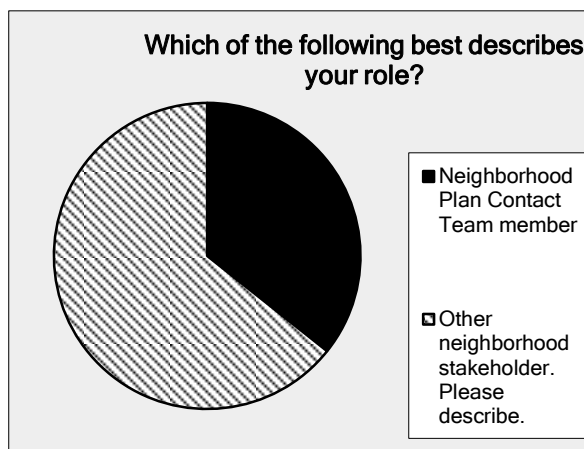
Survey Overview

The Planning and Zoning Department launched an on-line survey via Survey Monkey on 10/14/2015. The survey is designed to solicit input regarding the current functioning of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams and improvements that could be made to Neighborhood Plan Contact Team requirements. A link to the survey was widely distributed to Contact Team members, organizations listed in the City's Community Registry, and others. The survey will remain open through January, and staff will continue to monitor and report on updated survey results as the process moves forward. As of October 29, 2015, **280** individuals had responded to the survey.

Question 1.

A majority of survey responses do not consider themselves to be members of a contact team. However, many respondents are residents and are involved in another type of neighborhood organization.

1. Which of the following best describes your role?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Neighborhood Plan Contact Team member	35.7%	100
Other neighborhood stakeholder. Please describe.	64.3%	180



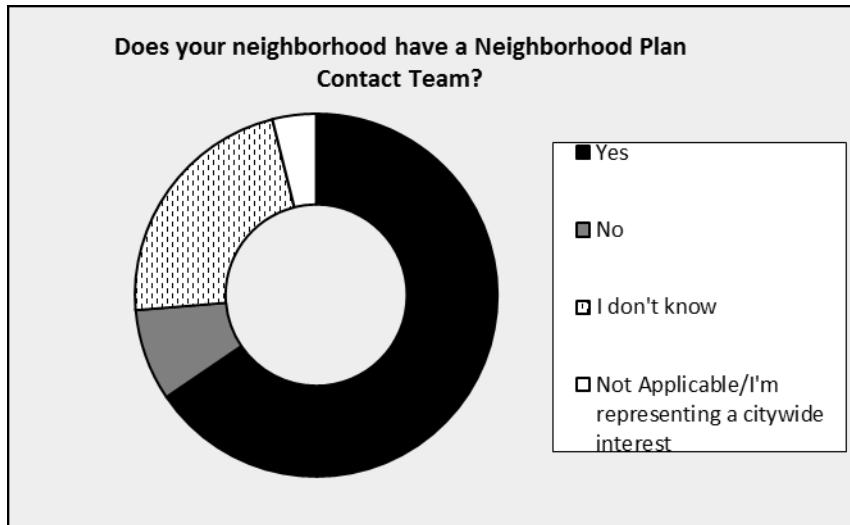
Among those who selected “other,” the majority indicated that they are residents – either renters or homeowners. Many are also involved with their neighborhood associations. Commercial and non-resident property owners and developers also participated in the survey but at a lower rate.

Other Role	#	Other Role	#
Resident	106	Currently involved with contact team	8
Neighborhood association or homeowners’ association member	31	No detail	7
Property owner (other)	10	Formerly involved with contact team	6
Developer, architect, builder, agent, or consultant	8	Non-profit executive	1

Question 2

Even though most respondents are not members of the contact team, nearly two-thirds say that their neighborhood does have a neighborhood plan contact team. More than one-fifth of respondents do not know whether or not their neighborhood has a contact team.

2. Does your neighborhood have a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66 %	184
No	8 %	23
I don't know	22 %	63
Not Applicable/I'm representing a citywide interest	4 %	11



Question 3

3. What is the name of your Neighborhood Plan Contact Team?

All contact teams, including the teams now forming in the South Austin Combined Planning Area, were represented in the survey responses except the following five teams: Central East Austin (OCEAN), St. Johns, Coronado Hills, University Hills, and Windsor Park.

Contact Teams represented include Bouldin Creek, Brentwood, Central Austin Combined (CANPAC), Central West Austin, Chestnut, Crestview, Dawson, East Cesar Chavez, East MLK Combined, East Riverside/Oltorf Combined, Garrison Park, Govalle/Johnston Terrace, Heritage Hills/Windsor Hills, Highland, Hyde Park, Montopolis, North Austin Civic Association, North Lamar Combined, North Loop, Oak Hill, Old West Austin, Rosewood, Southeast Combined, South Congress Combined, Upper Boggy Creek, Westgate, Windsor Park and Wooten.

Question 4

On average, the contact teams got a Fair rating for each of the four qualities. Many respondents have strongly negatively or strongly positive opinions of their contact teams' performance.

4. For each of the following, please rate the performance of your Contact Team on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent).								
Answer Options	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Fair (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
<i>Inclusiveness</i> – Extent to which the NPCT allows a wide variety of individuals with diverse viewpoints to participate	52	12	11	24	63	5	3.21	167
<i>Activity Level</i> – Extent to which the NPCT meets regularly and works toward plan implementation	22	16	35	46	40	7	3.42	166
<i>Transparency</i> – Extent to which the NPCT communicates well with its members and the public, provides notice of meetings, and records written meeting notes	51	18	18	33	42	6	2.98	168
<i>Scope</i> – Extent to which the NPCT focuses on activities that relate to implementation of the adopted neighborhood plan.	28	12	35	33	49	9	3.40	166

Question 5

Most survey respondents seem to support additional regulation of contact teams. The comments provided by respondents who answered “Other” indicate that while increased standards would be beneficial, *some* contact teams would need additional support and oversight from the City in order to comply. Fewer than 20% support eliminating all regulations or keeping the existing regulations. There are still many people who don’t understand the role of contact teams. A small group of respondents would like all contact teams to be eliminated.

5. The Austin Land Development Code requires that Contact Teams develop bylaws based on a standard template provided by the City, and include members that to the greatest extent possible represent property owners, residential renters, business owners, and neighborhood organization members owning or renting property within the neighborhood planning area. Which of the following statements best describe your opinion about City regulation of Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
The City should have more authority to <i>enforce</i> Contact Team requirements and should consider putting in place additional requirements so that Contact Teams function better across the City.	37 %	92
Other (please specify)	33 %	82
The existing requirements are <i>working well</i> and should not be modified.	13 %	33
I don't know/I don't have an opinion.	12 %	29
The City should <i>not</i> regulate Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams, and the Code should be modified to let Contact Teams adopt their own procedures.	6 %	14
answered question		250
skipped question		33

Other Responses (Summarized)

Generally in support of more contact team regulation --

- City must monitor the teams if it created them. Regulations should ensure that all residents have the opportunity to participate and should be enforced consistently across the City. (10)
- The contact team does not represent neighborhood interests or is exclusive. (9)
- Contact teams should operate in a uniform manner, and the City should provide more support to hard-working, over-burdened volunteers to comply with guidelines, conduct outreach, and manage conflict. (8)
- The existing requirements are working fairly well, but there is room for recommended procedures and leader training to help guide contact teams. (5)

- Either the City should have more authority to enforce the Contact Team requirements, or Contact Teams should be treated like any other civic organization (i.e. neighborhood association) and not be given preference in planning processes. (3)
- Some standardization is appropriate for contact teams, but please do not add burdensome regulations that will actually reduce participation. Also, please be very careful about any grievance process as it could be easily abused. Having to defend themselves from multiple grievances could cause many members to quit. (1)
- New regulations should be minimal and should only apply to those groups which have prevented reasonable participation. (1)

Generally opposed to regulation –

- My team is working well. No changes are needed. (3)
- The City already regulates contact teams too much. (1)

General suggestions or criticism for City role pertaining to contact teams –

- City should abide by the neighborhood plans and provide funds for implementation. (3)
- The City should provide outreach support such as hosting contact team websites. (3)
- City isn't currently exercising oversight of contact teams. (1)
- I am not confident the City can regulate these teams in any substantial way. (1)

General suggestions or criticism of contact teams --

- Eliminate contact teams. (8)
- Contact teams are comprised of only the most vocal people who want to stop all development including affordable housing, progressive urban development, and transit. (5)
- Residents should receive information about all contact team activities in the mail. (1)
- Business owners and developers should not be allowed to participate in contact teams. (1)
- City code definition of Neighborhood Contact teams should be revised, as it cannot "implement" an adopted neighborhood plan without support from city staff and ultimately city council. (1)
- City should recognize teams exhibiting best practices. (1)
- Integrate contact teams with neighborhood associations. (1)

Don't have enough information or not sure --











- I don't understand the role of contact teams and need more information. (7)
- Not sure. (2)
- My team functions well, but I can't assess the need for changes to other teams. (1)

Other Ideas --

- Land Owners - Neighborhood Associations should be the ones implementing neighborhood plans in their area, not a Government. (1)
- Neighborhoods outside of the adopted plans should have more representation. (1)
- The planning area should be restricted to smaller more cohesive area. (1)

Question 6

Most respondents support additional membership-related requirements, but there is no broad agreement on which requirements are appropriate. The most widely-supported requirements are to allow members to vote regardless of how long they have lived in the area and to establish term limits for officers. Setting a minimum age requirement and a minimum meeting attendance requirement are less popular. Among the “Other” responses, the most common suggestion is for the contact team to have an online presence where people who cannot attend meetings can get information about contact team business and vote.

6. Based on your experience, which of the following additional membership-related requirements for Contact Teams should be considered:			
Level of Support	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Allow members to vote regardless of how long they have lived in the planning area	50%	112
	Term limits for officers	40%	91
	Other (please specify)	37%	84
	Require contact team officers to attend free leadership training provided by the City or an approved non-profit organization or educational institution	37%	83
	Limit votes to the lesser of one per property/household or one per person	31%	70
	Require attendance at a minimum number of meetings before a member can vote	27%	61
	Set a minimum age for voting members	23%	51
	Differentiate between voting and non-voting members	21%	48
	Allow members from outside of the planning area to participate	16%	37
	None of the above. Contact Teams do not need any additional membership-related requirements.	11%	24

***answered question* 226**

***skipped question* 57**

Other Ideas

- There need to be ways for people who cannot attend meetings to be involved (e.g., online voting, website, newsletter, etc.). (11)
- A poll of the Neighborhood should be required by email or electronically. If some minimum % of the neighborhood (2-5%) doesn't participate, then the handful of people (Generally the Contact Team) shouldn't be given the right to represent the Neighborhood.
- Require the contact team to update a webpage at least bi-monthly.
- Require the team to keep changes in the bylaws, meeting minutes, and contact information of the executive committee up to date and on file with the City.
- Require outreach to business owners and renters.
- Provide free training on Robert's Rules of Order.
- Provide training on technical aspects of the City Code. [Staff comment: look for training at the Neighborhood Assistance Center]
- Limit the number of non-residents property owners on the contact team.
- Teams mostly represent single-family homeowners. They should be required to have as many renters as homeowners.
- Renters and homeowners are both residents; there no need to provide a distinction.
- Require a minimum number of renters, home owners, and business owners. [Staff comment: Current minimum is one each.]
- Proof of residency should be required.
- Limit developer participation.
- Require audio recordings of meetings.
- The contact team should hold meetings in different locations throughout the neighborhood.
- Eliminate the code requirement that the contact team include people who wrote the neighborhood plan to the greatest extent possible; it is unfair to new arrivals.
- Require a minimum turnout for votes to be considered valid [a quorum].
- Follow the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Consider requiring geographic distribution of members.
- Members should be required to have an intimate knowledge of what their plan says and why.
- Close the meeting once it has begun so that the contact team cannot recruit extra people to outvote the opposition.
- Bylaws need to provide for some level of democratic process. Our by-laws require the members to "support" the plan, ergo any vote to revise the plan would be reason to remove a member from the team for "not supporting the plan" verbatim.
- Delete the "neighborhood organization" category of stakeholder because it is redundant.







- Require team to notify every address in the neighborhood if a new business is denied because of their vote and the reasons why. These decisions affect sub-economies and landlords/residents would like more services.
- Guide contact teams in a process of self-assessment. (Specific questions are provided by survey respondent.)

Concerns about some of the listed suggestions

- Additional requirements create disincentives to participation. (2)
- Term limits would make it hard to recruit volunteers to fill positions.
- Attendance requirements reward super volunteers.
- Contact teams should be solely advisory to City staff.
- Contact teams should encourage more people to participate, not fewer.
- Requiring attendance at one meeting is reasonable; any more is too restrictive.
- Allow anyone who is within the required notification area for a matter before contact team (i.e., who has received a city notice about it) to vote on that particular matter, regardless of whether they have attended enough contact team meetings to be able to vote.
- I do not mind training but do have limited time.

Question 7

Survey respondents strongly support better notification of contact team meetings and hosting meetings in a public location. Many respondents who chose “Other” support posting agendas and minutes in a timely fashion on a Web site. Several respondents favor online voting. Some residents do not use the Web, so multiple channels of communication are needed. City support may be needed for identifying public meeting locations, providing funds for notification, and hosting Websites or group email.

7. Based on your experience, which of the following additional meeting-related requirements for Contact Teams should be considered:			
Answer Options		Response Percent	Response Count
	Require meeting notification to be posted on the web or publicized to the general public in some other way	72 %	163
	Require a minimum number of days between posting meeting and holding meeting	66 %	149
	Require meetings to occur in a public place (e.g. library, recreation center, school)	59 %	133
	Require a regular meeting schedule	48 %	108
	Other (please specify)	36 %	81
	None of the above. Contact teams do not need any additional meeting-related requirements.	11 %	24
answered question			227
skipped question			56







Other Suggestions

- Contact team should post agendas and minutes online. Minutes should be posted shortly after meetings. Agendas should be posted 1-2 weeks in advance. This could be on a website hosted by the City of Austin. (16)
- Require methods for absenting voting or online participation. (7)
- Meetings should be open to the public, and the locations should be ADA-accessible (4).
- Establish guidelines for meetings to respect alternative viewpoints; minimize hostility and bullying; and follow the bylaws. (3)
- Provide City support for any new requirements that increase cost, such as notification and public meeting spaces. (3)
- Contact team should follow up with neighborhood association after meeting.
- Contact team should be open to discussion of all issues or explain why not.
- No online voting.

- Allow anyone in the neighborhood to attend the meetings.
- Follow Robert's Rules of Order.
- Robert's Rules of Order is too complicated for regular folks.
- Hold online town-hall style meetings. Hold votes in the days after the "meeting" so that information can travel out and so that people who could not attend can still participate.
- If meetings are necessary they should be held at a variety of times and highly advertised.
- Allow video recording of meetings.
- Require meetings to be recorded.
- Require members (or at least officers) to use city provided emails for public information requests.
- Set a limit on how long applicants must wait before contact teams meet to consider their cases.
- Notifications need to be posted in a way other than on the web & list serves. Many residents are elderly and do not participate in these methods of communication.
- PAZ should NOT be presenting the web, or any other single channel which systematically biases participation, as the default or minimum communication channel.
- Require them to form as a non-profit corporation with the State of Texas. This costs \$25. File their certificate of formation with an addendum that requires compliance with Open Meetings provisions in state law.
- Establish a quorum for meetings.
- There should be a threshold number of responses from a neighborhood contact team before it is considered viable feedback. It should be polling, not a vote. It should move forward all the various opinions that can be generated around a subject.
- Contact teams should be formed in whatever manner best suits their neighborhoods. A one size fits all approach does not take into account the wide array of problems individual neighborhoods face.
- A paid city official should be present at all meetings to make sure the rules are followed.
- Require meeting minutes to be posted with the city clerk.

Question 8

A majority of survey respondents supports establishing a grievance process as well as a process for recognizing contact teams. There is less agreement on how contact team requirements should be codified.

8. Based on your experience, which of the following methods should the City use to enforce Contact Team requirements?			
Level of Support	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Establish a formal City process for resolving grievances when individuals feel that a particular Contact Team is operating in a way that is inconsistent with its bylaws or City Code or Rules.	60 %	133
	Establish a formal City process for recognizing Contact Teams. (Contact Teams which fail to comply with requirements would lose their special status under City Code until compliance is regained per formal City process.)	53 %	117
	Include all Contact Team requirements in City Code or Rules and provide training on requirements.	46 %	102
	Require Contact Teams to submit bylaws on an annual basis which describe how the team meets requirements.	41 %	91
	Other (please specify)	27 %	59
	None of the above. The City should not enforce Contact Team requirements.	12 %	26
answered question			222
skipped question			61

Other Suggestions

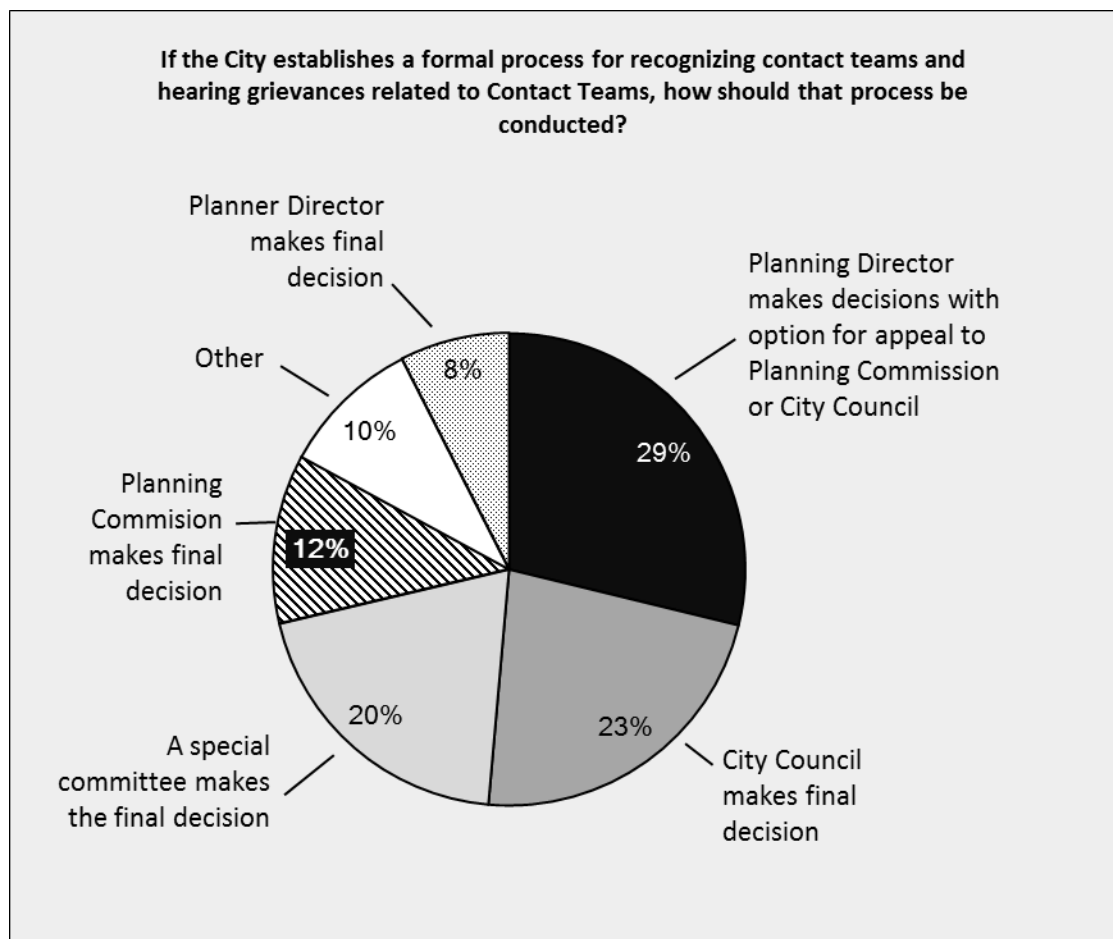
- Contact teams should be disbanded. They are not needed in the 10-1 governance structure and are not a best practice. (10)
- Bylaws should be handled by the city and consistent between teams. Please do not make us dedicate time to writing bylaws. (3)
- The process is working now. Contact Teams work with the City of Austin. Creating additional bureaucracy for these all-volunteer organizations will be counter-productive. (2)
- Require that the Contact Team submit current bylaws as they are changed. Then, require the City staff to actually post those on the City's website within 30 days. (2)
- Post the annual meeting schedule on the website as well, with the time and locations.

- Do the minimum necessary to resolve the problems with the few Contact Teams that are creating dissension by being out of compliance with basic requirements.
- Contact Teams should NOT be allowed to adopt bylaws to determine their own membership - this should be determined by the City. Otherwise, the City is sanctioning exclusive clubs to trim input based on their preferences.
- Neighborhood orgs should have close to equal footing with Contact Teams- the CT's frequently do not represent the interests of those who actually live in the neighborhood- they seem to be slanted towards the business reps in many cases.
- Fund whatever you require.
- Some Contact Teams are working well. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.
- Limited oversight is needed but some oversight is needed. Our particular contact team (and the 2 NAs that comprise it) is small so we have extremely limited bandwidth for regular, time intensive, bureaucratic process. That said, because of the power bestowed upon the contact team, the city needs to better manage the process AND COMMUNICATION (the CITY needs to communicate better) what the role of contact teams is and how to become a member. Perhaps the city could host a site that includes contact information for all city contact teams so new residents can access the teams quickly and reach out to become involved.
- The city needs to provide liability protection for Contact Team officers.
- If the city feels that some Contact Teams are not functioning well my recommendation would be for a city representative to meet with the contact team in their neighborhood to provide feedback and suggestions for structure.
- Require a non-resident city staff member from planning and zoning at all NPCT meetings.
- Our team needs help with Roberts's rule of orders as some try to take advantage to get their way.
- The power of contact teams should be reduced. Ideally, they are not needed at all, and the planning commission should more directly engage with the public so that everyone can have their voices heard, rather than a well-connected few being able to filter out those who disagree.
- Who does the contact team report to? What is there accountability? Who oversees the teams?
- The neighborhoods should have the final say as to whether the Contact Team has appropriately addressed the needs of a particular neighborhood. All neighborhoods in the City of Austin need to have interaction with each other to access overall City of Austin growth patterns and government policies that may be detrimental to any one particular neighborhood.
- Contact teams often function as political clubs. Making them non-profit corporations not only would run them afoul of federal and state law for political endorsements, but also give them an opportunity to develop into full 501c3's to extend the scope of benefits they provide the community.
- Give us some money and more time with city staff.

- Ideally, every CT meeting should have City staff present. Realizing the logistics & cost of that are prohibitive, allow meetings only when dealing with development/plan issues and elections.
- I would recommend that any grievance policy allow neighborhood representatives to mediate them rather than city staff.
- The resolution in question grants city staff authority that they are already, wrongfully claiming. It's a bad deal for the neighborhoods and should be discontinued immediately.
- All minutes and meeting agendas should be published on the city website in addition to NextDoor and other applicable channels without editorializing.
- Begin by hiring or contracting staff experienced in operation of NON-governmental organizations. Any formal process for recognizing or revoking contact team status MUST follow due process.
- Allow online voting.

Question 9

The final authority for making decisions regarding contact team recognition and grievances should rest with Planning Commission or City Council, according to most respondents. Slightly less than one-third of respondents support allowing the Planning Director to make the initial determination if there is an opportunity to appeal the decision to Planning Commission or City Council. One-fifth of respondents would like a special committee appointed to hear grievances and recognize contact teams. About half of survey participants did not respond to this question.



Other Suggestions

- Contact teams should solve their own problems.
- Plan Team members need to resolve their own problems, with the assistance of neighborhood specialist or trained dispute resolution person if requested.

- Any grievances must be considered in light of the aggrieved person's attempts to participate in the formal process, or refusal to do so, always deferring to the formal process.
- This is just more big government and wasted money. Also sort of the fox guarding the henhouse!
- While I feel terrible for dumping this viper's nest of drama in Mr. Guernsey's lap, I do think it should be city staff, not a committee of citizens, who would make that decision. If it's decided to form a committee or board, please make sure it's televised live, TIA.
- The Planning Director should be able to suspend a contact team until City Council can hear the grievance.
- Realistically almost any of these would be better than what we have now. As long as it works, and there is rational oversight instead of what we have now - none, nada, nyet.
- Since all three departments are involved, grievances should be made to the Planning Director who should make a recommendation to the Planning Commission, who then makes a recommendation to city council, who has last word on the grievances.

Question 10

What other comments or suggestions do you have about Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams?

The following comments are copied directly from the survey responses; spelling has been corrected, but no other changes have been made.

- Require the City to notify the Contact Team when the approved neighborhood plan has been amended by the City Council, City Staff, Planning Commission or other entity.
- Help teams determine what issues their charter includes. Every team could have a different approach to setting agenda and delving into other topics such as schools or code issues. There should be consistency and a limit on the scope of Contact Team activities.
- The entire planning team process is flawed. Among the flaws is the requirement that plans can only be changed once per year. This is ridiculous and is counter to the City's goal of advancement, economic growth, and density. Planning teams should be advisory but should be overseen by a professional planner in the planning department. The planner should do more to guide the planning team's decisions and set their boundaries regarding decisions.
- I hear through the grapevine after meetings have been held. There is never a posted agenda or time/date of meetings either in the neighborhood newsletter (published monthly) nor is there ever an agenda published; I have no contact information on whom to contact should I have an issue so I email the neighborhood president for info. I have been told the names of some of the people on the contact team, but I do not know if this is current information or not. A couple of years ago when there was an issue in my part of the neighborhood, I emailed the person who was then designated and he never got back with me. Our contact team apparently wants to only work on its own issues and not the ones for the good of the community as a whole.
- For the last 5 years the XXXXX Neighborhood Planning Contact Team was a very good representation of the neighborhood. However, this past month (October) XXXXX was elected as the co-facilitator. At that meeting he took the liberty to inform several regular voting members that their votes and opinions will not be recognized because they aren't voting in the spirit of the neighborhood as a whole. Suppression of votes is wrong! The city needs to ensure all votes are counted regardless if they aren't the popular vote.
- Please, the city needs to get involved.
- They should be more inclusive of students, should be required to keep and post all minutes, and should represent everyone in the neighborhood.
- Open meetings for any person who lives, owns property, or works within the boundaries. - 100 percent participation
- Protect the neighborhoods from increased development, traffic, etc. by adhering to the neighborhood plans.

- I'm really uncomfortable with the idea that certain groups are anointed with special authority from the City. If this remains to be the case, those groups need to be held to high standards for inclusivity and participation. Currently, this is far from the case.
- As I mentioned, the city needs to outline how residents can be involved in their communities and how contact teams differ from NAs. I believe an easy to navigate, informational website -- including descriptions of NAs and NPCTs, what neighborhood plans are and links to existing neighborhood plans and proposed plans, would be very helpful. Also -- is there a mechanism for new home owners to receive information about their neighborhood leadership? It would be great if new owners received city NA and NPCT information at closing or shortly following purchase.
- Our neighborhood team has had some challenging times but appears to be working well right now.
- Contact Team Facilitators should know that they have legal representation provided by the city if required since they are in a role based on votes by Austin residence, facilitating a city sanctioned organization.
- Crestview's Neighborhood Planning Contact Team should be used as a model; every resident who attends should vote and that's how decisions should be made (not by committees). Expressed needs/ideas to the facilitator should be addressed publicly so residents have input. The website is awesome: open and informative."
- Contact teams need to be local and independent of all other organizations and protected from attack by special interest groups.
- They should be made to understand their limits.
- The neighborhoods have for far too long put their interests above the needs of the city and forced bad "compromise" growth as a result. We can do better, but only when the city acts uniformly, something that isn't likely to happen under the new district representation.
- Please strongly evaluate this whole process and the original intent of these groups. Is it really accomplishing what it was set out to? All of this needs to be re-evaluated as part of the Code Next process. Start fresh!
- Please do not place burdensome requirements on contact teams. We are volunteers with no money to do things like send out notifications or maintain a website. If you make it too difficult to contact teams to function, you will see many people quit and some teams cease to function.
- The City absolutely needs to do a better job of recognizing the importance of the neighborhood plans and the votes, suggestions, and input provided by contact teams in response to issues affecting their quality of life as part of the near-maniacal growth impacting Austin. We need to grow in a SMART way.
- They are more trouble than they are worth and make already confusing code and expensive development more confusing and expensive! Disband them!!!!

- Require disclosure of any financial conflicts of interest. Real estate developers and their proxies should not be running the show, nor should absentee landlords.
- Follow Crestview's lead. City can address specific teams as needed but blanket changes not needed.
- I wish that there was some regulation of the information that has been provided at some of our meetings. Some distribute false information and stack the votes by communicating only with members that are on "their side" and informing them of meetings when a vote will be held.
- These groups are an important part of ensuring that neighborhood plans help guide area development. The city should provide materials and feedback to help these groups operate successfully.
- Abolish them
- NPCTs, should not be determining our city planning. Members of a neighborhood, while good resources to professional planners, cannot provide unbiased decision making and therefore should not have control over any development code, overlays or otherwise. NPCTs, or neighborhoods in general, should have input, but should not be allowed to affect city planning or city zoning via conditional overlays for neighborhood plans.
- I really think that the minutes of meetings should be posted on the neighborhood website or even on a page of the City of Austin website, to increase transparency and make it so that neighbors who cannot attend meetings can still be involved.
- The neighborhood association should regulate the NCPT. MEMBERS SHOULD ABIDE BY MAJORITY VOTES EVEN IF THEY DO NOT LIKE THEM.
- Require that before you can run for a position on the Contact team that you attend at least 6 months of meetings to know what the neighborhood concerns are. How can you rule effectively if you don't even know the neighborhood.
- If they must exist, there should be significant effort to ensure that they include the entire community. Ideally, they should be disbanded so that the community can deal with the planning commission directly. The current process is rife with abuse and contributes to NIMBYism (why should one neighborhood allow changes when NPCT from all the surrounding ones will not). They are significantly contributing to Austin's traffic and affordability crisis.
- Again, rid official COA contact teams.
- Our neighborhood's contact team makes votes on our behalf that we aren't even aware of. I'm the president of our NA and wasn't even aware of the contact team's votes. I do not think this was intentional but better education for contact teams *and* neighborhoods is needed so people outside the contact team understand the rules.
- There seems to be a large, grass roots effort to circumvent the established role of the NPCT to advance a pro developer agenda. They claim that the established groups are not being inclusive, but turn snarky and confrontational when the neighborhood does not vote to support.

- NPCTs should have strict quorum requirements, based on a not-insignificant percentage of the residents of the neighborhood they represent.
- If additional requirements are recommended, please consider the effect on contact team participation, and creating an opportunity for abuse of the process.
- Our NPCT has an open membership, minimal barriers to entry, and by laws and meetings open to all. It has survived the ebb and flow of occasional conflict over specific issues.
- I don't think groups of 15-30 households who take issue with Contact Team attendees or vote results should be allowed to make side-deals with developers and have those deals presented at Planning and Council meetings as if on equal footing to Contact Team processes (which have been required to be transparent, subject to public meeting and discussion, vote, etc.).
- The NPCT may not be perfect; it may include personalities one doesn't like; it may include people who are older or ethnically different or of a different class. Let's embrace the mess, rather than seek or support outright subversion by groups who already enjoy much privilege due to economic status and digital activism.
- From what I can tell in Crestview, the Contact Team is extremely hostile to alternative viewpoints. The Contact Team seems determined to oppose any development that is not a park or single-family housing.
- The previous method of communicating with neighborhood associations was preferable to the contact teams.
- My complaints about PCTs relate to my personal experiences, whereas a member of our neighborhood would make fliers stating his stance on an agenda subject, exaggerate or lie about the facts, and would get neighbors riled up, ready to down-vote whatever this one particular member wanted them to down-vote - all through scare tactics. Worked like a charm. Not democratic at all and very discouraging to someone who believes we should work with a changing Austin, not against it.
- Better communication to the public about these teams existence and what their roles/responsibilities are. Also how stakeholders can provide input or be informed of issues and decisions.
- These are not useful, just have a neighborhood plan and let anyone in the city invoke it as evidence during planning debates
- We've tried to complain to city staff about ours in Crestview, but city staff just forwards the emails on to our local CT leader. This does not help. We need a way to bring concerns to staff and work through the process. Not just have our concerns forwarded on in an email.
- This makes our local leadership too quick to say "woe to me, I'm just a volunteer". When in fact they are performing a function to gather official public feedback about zoning changes. This cannot be left in the hands of a "woe to me volunteer". How does that stand when compared to fair housing practices and laws of about reasonable accommodation?

- Thank you for considering our input. I think with better management, neighborhood plan contact teams could be a very useful tool for communities to engage with the city and vice versa. But as the system currently exists, it is too informal to have meaning. I think my team manages well and abides by our bylaws, but I know that does not happen citywide and for the betterment of the program, I would welcome oversight that would increase the expectations of all teams. With improved expectations and oversight, I feel the program would have increased value and legitimacy, which many contact team members feel is currently lacking.
- Also, on a related note, I think there is a lot of confusion about what a contact team can and cannot do and how they are different than a neighborhood association. I think there needs to be more outreach by the city to help people understand the role of the teams in their communities.
- Also, thinking back to when I was new to my contact team, I would have welcomed an orientation by the city because it took me a while to understand what we were supposed to be doing. This could be a simple online training.
- The idea is flawed to begin with. Neighborhood plans inevitably affect all other neighborhoods in the city. Their input should be taken into account but at a very low priority.
- The city should eliminate contact teams.
- My personal experience with Contact Teams (Hyde Park) has been pretty bad. It seems like an echo chamber of NIMBYs that actively work to keep their insularity and hold on to the power given to them by the city. Some people have worked tirelessly to make the group more inclusive and less insular, but it's been a hard climb. I believe Contact Teams are bad ideas to begin with, and shouldn't exist, but if we are going to have them the City needs to make sure they are truly representative. A CT that can't meet that requirement should not be allowed to operate.
- 1. The petition process is one-sided - set up to only allow for CTs to dispute zoning changes. The city should consider a formal method for allowing residents & CTs to SUPPORT zoning changes. Many of us do support CODENext type urban planning, yet all CT energy is focused on disputing zoning changes. 2. There should really be a city-run online voting mechanism to increase participation in zoning decisions. I'd guess that 95% of residents with young kids have no time to make CT meetings -- and the CT leaders like it that way as it becomes a generational vote that the older folks 'win'. It's 2015 - Austin is a tech hub - let's expand channels for participation.
- I think that devolving planning power directly to the neighborhood residents' contact teams is generally a bad idea. They often try to limit infill and make infill more expensive, while on a citywide basis we should be doing our utmost to encourage more infill.
- Longtime Northfield homeowner never heard of Contact Teams
- Neighborhood contact teams and neighborhood plans are a poor way of doing business. They are essentially yet one more way that we are making it hard to build new homes and apartments, and as a result, we see prices shooting skywards. We have a Planning Commission appointed by an elected city council with geographic representation, and authority over planning and development should rest with those bodies rather than unelected,

unrepresentative bodies made up of people who, by virtue of their status in life - whether age, class, language, and/or family status - have more time and ability to attend such meetings.

- NPCTs hold an outsized influence on zoning in our city. Our neighborhood plan (Bouldin) was adopted in 2002 by only 10% of the neighborhood.
- People who were originally involved may have since moved. And people who have since become part of the neighborhood are almost completely disenfranchised from the ability to have a say in zoning in their neighborhood.
- Furthermore, in order to vote, you have to have attended one meeting in the past (they happen irregularly), and you have to do so in person. This disenfranchises people who aren't long term residents (renters) or able to come to meetings (jobs, children, other responsibilities). I brought this up to the chair of our NPCT and he agreed that more could be done to be more inclusive of a plurality of voices in our neighborhood.
- Finally, I view our neighborhood plan as outdated. It was adopted a long time ago and as far as I can tell its effect now is that it's pushing growth to other parts of the city (mostly far out suburban areas). I strongly disagree with policy that increases sprawl.
- While I'm lucky enough to be part of a very open and inclusive CT, protecting a fairly forward thinking FLUM / NP, I do see a lot of problems with most Austin CT.
- When the goals of a CT are counter to the City of Austin's goals (increase housing, transit, etc.), then they should no longer be allowed to exist in their current form.
- My contact team has pretty good bylaws, but a people problem. When I emailed the city to express concern about the meetings not being announced in advance the facilitator mocked me at the next meeting. (For example.) The people involved have become nasty and insular, sometimes lying in communication with the city. I was pretty shocked when I had a conversation on the phone about these issues and the city's response was "oh well."
- Suspend all contact teams currently in place until new policies for inclusion and transparency are in place.
- For several meetings this summer, in contravention of the team's bylaws, the Crestview contact team did not post its meetings to the neighborhood Listserve, or any other neighborhood forum other than its web site. There is also apparently a private email list that certain neighborhood activists use to get the word out to anti-development neighbors. There have been multiple violations of the team's bylaws, but the bylaws tend to only be invoked when the most vocal activists are mad about something. There has been a lot of misleading and confusing information offered at contact team meetings. The city doesn't provide enough support so we don't have an objective source of information to answer our questions. A lot of people in the neighborhood work at night or have children and aren't able to make the meetings. So the people who show up tend to be those who are worried or scared or passionate about opposing new development. For all of these reasons, the team doesn't provide a full picture of opinions in the neighborhood. All of this causes a lot of discord and bad feelings among the community. It's a mess, and the city needs to fix it.

Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Survey Results (as of 10/29/2015)

- 1. Neighborhood Plans are undemocratic - They are adopted by a tiny minority of a neighborhood. For example, the East Cesar Chavez plan was adopted by 24 votes. Voting age population of the neighborhood in the 2010 census was 2,692. Even if all those 24 respondents still live in the neighborhood, we're talking about 0.8% voter turnout, lower even than even a primary run-off. - They disenfranchise all people who moved into an area after the NP was adopted, who now have little say in how the neighborhood evolves. - They permit NPCT's to adopt further undemocratic bylaws - e.g. the Govalle/Johnston Terrace requirement for 5-years of residency, to prevent new residents from having a voice. 2. Most Neighborhood Plans are outdated - All plans include a requirement to be re-approved and re-adopted every 3-5 years; this has never happened for any Austin neighborhood plan, even though some are now decades old. 3. Neighborhood plans are no plans at all. - They are not a tool to manage growth, but rather a tool to push it elsewhere. Compare current land use to the FLUM - almost zero changes other than the downzoning of many parcels.
- They need to follow a specific set of rules and be more representative of the neighborhoods they represent.
- Many of the Teams are enforcing outdated or unworkable plans. The whole Neighborhood Plan idea needs to be examined.
- Honestly, the contact teams seem like a pre-10-1 thing. It used to be that Council Members needed to know who represented each area. Now, we know who does: The Council Member from that district.
- The city's intent should be to prevent the ossification of planning contact teams, which has happened in Dawson to the neighborhood's detriment. Teams need to be mandated to have more turnover and involvement with residents. As a secondary goal, the city should look carefully at bylaws to avoid situations like that in Dawson, where confusing attendance requirements and mix-ups with the neighborhood association discourage participation. Indeed, some contact team members appear to actively exploit the confusing rules to sidestep opinions they don't like or don't want to hear.
- Many of the suggested changes will make it more burdensome for residents to volunteer on contact teams, which will encourage developers (who have the time and incentive) to dominate the teams.
- Our contact team has been extremely beneficial to our NA. We have had two major redevelopments and coordinated with our contact team during the process. CANPAC is active and consistent with issues coming forward to NA
- More information should be given to residents to have a say as to the decisions that get made for their neighborhood. I was not even aware that these teams existed before I received this survey from my Neighborhood Association.
- I'm not totally against them, but I think this is a dangerous undertaking.
- Again, I think most neighbors are unaware of the Neighborhood Plan and the Contact Teams. In lieu of email, regular mail to each resident informing of progress and changes.

Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Survey Results (as of 10/29/2015)

- Their existence, meetings and activities are poorly publicized. Gatekeepers do a poor job of connecting residents with team. I feel that there is no way as an average homeowner to get my input to the team.
- They should also allow voting other than in-person. I travel for work a lot and cannot attend all meetings yet I care about my neighborhood. I can vote early in regular elections, so I don't understand why I can't in this case.
- I didn't know I was in a NPCT, much less what it does. I had a flooding problem and issue with the City about a flood retention pond that was causing flooding in my yard. I was at my wits end because no one with the City of Austin would address my concerns. Finally a friend told me about the NPCT and helped me navigate the City's website to make contact with the team. Someone in the team responded to my e-mail and provided the engineering documents approved by the City. Otherwise I don't who is the team, what it does or whether it ever meets.
- What are the vested interests of the Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams? What is the goal short term & long term for the needs of the neighborhoods? Will the Neighborhood Plan Contact teams be using a resource-based economic approach or a politically-driven special interest development approach?
- I think a lot of people feel that the neighborhood plans & contact teams are meaningless at this point. And they aren't doing what they were set up to do for our city. I think the city should consider whether the idea & the reality of these plans are actually doing anything productive. Right now it seems that developers are calling the shots & finding ways to bypass the plans & the City largely supports them. On the other hand, the plans can be used to stop or slow down homeowners from doing simple remodels because they require tremendous knowledge, time and/or money to navigate the system.
- The City of Austin should express thanks and support to the all-volunteer Contact Teams, and make them feel welcome and appreciated. That will encourage teams to have a good relationship with the City of Austin. City of Austin employees are not perfect, and Contact Teams won't be either. Contact Teams should be helped and encouraged by the City not co-opted.
- I did not even know that Contact Teams exist. It could be dangerous to give people power who may have recently moved to the neighborhood or who may leave the neighborhood in 5 years. The people who should have the most say of a neighborhood are those that have been here the longest. We should be finding ways of bringing these people to the table.
- Neighborhood Contact Teams should continue to only give recommendations to city planners & should never (!!) be given authority to write/determine code.
- Online voting
- I think the city should step in with mediators when conflict occurs rather than refusing to engage. So VOLUNTEERS have to take the crap from bullies and trolls on their own with no back up from the city when these plans are technically a city project.

- The city must stick with contact team boundaries established in the adopted neighborhood plans. Allowing small neighborhoods to have their own contact teams, not cooperating with others in the planning area, will result in confusion, dissention, and will overburden the city staff.
- Standardize bylaws as much as possible. Provide a City website for posting meeting time, location & AGENDA similar to Board & Commissions. Offer (require?) online training for basic development info and OPEN MEETINGS LAW.
- Right now, contact teams are not very inclusive. Most people in Austin don't even know they exist, and some contact teams are very exclusive and non-representative. If we expect the City to respect the decisions made by the contact teams, then the contact teams must demonstrate good faith effort to be more representative and inclusive.
- Let the contact team geographic size be smaller or larger than what was in the adopted plans or combined plans, if that is what the contact teams vote to do.
- When a member of the original contact team moves out of the NPCT area, they are replaced by someone with their length of tenure in the neighborhood who supports the currently adopted NP.
- Contact teams need more support from the city....web pages, e-mails and legal protections for suits...as with regular city commissions.
- Make them real bodies of the city, or figure out which group representing the planning area is truly open, transparent, involving, and engaging. What we have now isn't working.
- 10:1 Council districts give more power to Neighborhoods. This power can be abused by "NIMBY" attitudes. Individuals in neighborhoods are often resistant to change ("Save our Houses" in Travis Heights; Say No to PUD in NW Hills; Acrimony against Marriott by Las Manitas). "Progress" in Austin is defined in many different ways, but desirable. Neighborhood Assns. and COA regulations need to be based on Public input, published in advance, and not overruled at the last minute when a small group of activists pressure their council-person. The uncertainty thus created increases costs and results in fewer initiatives.
- There are too many. They don't cover the entire city. There isn't enough focus on implementation and tools are not provided. Consider providing tools like grants, consolidate the number of teams, and standardize bylaws as other cities have done. Candidates running for city council positions should not be present at any meeting to exert influence as has occurred in the past in Old West Austin.
- Actually implement contact team recommendations rather than just give them lip service.
- Do away with them. Concentrate on reforming the Neighborhood Associations. The problem is Contact Teams were created to legitimize a NA's voice. But NA's are a subset of a neighborhood and as such do not represent all the views of a neighborhood. Oversight is impossible and costly. So why do something that is ineffective and really useless for communicating a neighborhood's voice? What we do in our neighborhood association is receive notice from the city and send it

out to all members of the NA and let them decide how they wish to act on that information. Simple unrestricted and empowering. Decision makers need regular office hours IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. That is what I call contact.

- If a contact team is operating in a manner that is fair and inclusive, let them continue to do so. Contact teams should be allowed to craft bylaws that meet the needs of their community as long as they are fair and inclusive and should not be forced to adopt a standardized city-crafted one.
- How can a neighborhood Association survive in an ever changing city climate driven by commerce, limited by boundaries and funds ever begin to think that they have a voice and consideration by a group that only looks at the bottom line and density. Good Luck.
- The system is broken. Contact teams have become the tail that wags the dog. My suggestion is to end them, go through Code Next, get new LDC without baggage of previous codes and hangovers of NPCTs and reassess after sufficient period of time has gone by as to whether NPCTs are needed or not.
- Neighborhood Plans should be recognized and followed.
- There are too many contact teams - areas should be consolidated.
- They should have a way to get direction of what to do, a place where someone with the city can help them with situations that arise, to answer questions of procedure. Contact teams should be transparent, inclusive, and approachable.
- In general I feel that the requirements should be shaped so as to encourage compliance from bad actors but should not engage in efforts to force contact teams into too rigid a mold for the entire city.
- If needed, CoA should provide staff to take minutes, post meetings on website, etc. The NPCTs should be considered Associated Entities, much like the Bicycle Advisory Council. These entities have their own web pages on the City's website and have staff associated with them.
- Maybe a standardized voting method.
- Hopefully other areas of the city are represented by planning teams that are more open and inclusive than ours currently is.
- I feel that allowing neighborhood associations to form their own contact teams, if they wish to do so, would be beneficial to the community as there will be better representation. The current boundaries set, which only allow one contact team, engulfs a very diverse area that is not able to obtain adequate representation of the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders who have worked on neighborhood plans have spent years working on what they think is right for their neighborhoods. They should certainly have the right to implement their plans in any manner they see fit.
- City staff should be trained in basic skills such as organizing and running meetings. They should also learn to work with, not against stakeholders to improve the initial process of creating contact teams.

- The people on NPCTs are hardworking volunteers with no budgets who are doing their best to represent their area's needs.
- Annual or biennial reports by contact teams re progress or problems re implementing adopted neighborhood plan
- Participation in our Contact Team meetings has fallen to 2 people. Unless there is a controversial issue, no one but these 2 show up. There are also no current officers for our Contact Team. No one will volunteer to take office.
- CodeNEXT is required to reflect neighborhood plans, in their final code design. Many neighborhood plans are woefully out of date. Participants never anticipated the current day and anticipated community stressors and needs. Neighborhood Plan may limit quality code development if linked to no longer effective neighborhood plans.
- If the city is going to require Contact Teams, the city should be required to make sure they run properly. Contact teams are made up of volunteers, and zoning is complicated and difficult.
- City staff should pay more attention to NPCT recommendations. Way too often they just ignore them!
- their time has passed
- Having one site for all NPCT. It'll be easier access to see meetings, propositions, news, etc. Our NPCT has been hijacked and nothing has been done to correct the issue despite filing numerous complaints to city staff. Maybe also limiting who can serve on the board in regards to family members due to conflict of interest (for example: the mother is the president, daughter is the VP, cousin is Secretary, etc.).
- It would be useful if the City offered the services of a mediator in extraordinary circumstances-- some of the issues we address are very divisive and discussion can become heated. A disinterested moderator who could be fair to both sides would be appreciated.
- The HPNPCT is in the process of revising our bylaws and we believe some of our changes could benefit other neighborhood planning areas.
- We have essentially no participation in the contact team. The group of ~10 has dwindled to 2. Therefore, I am concerned that developers will use that to their advantage as our area of Austin (NE) is seeing a boom in development. And that the planning commission and city council may not be aware of the extremely low input when taking Contact Team input into account.
- Survey is a good start. Look to the contact teams to learn from them what is working and how you could be more helpful.
- Overhaul the system. Please!!! We are literally suffocating over here and have been for a while and are subject to the whims of a very select few
- Please contact me at XXXXXX if you'd like to see a copy of our revised bylaws for the Hyde Park Contact Team. I think you might find this helpful
- LISTEN to the contact teams and then implement what they want. Stop acting like no one but city planners knows what they are talking about or has a valid opinion.

- Our contact team is an exclusive club for friends of the executive committee only.
- The city should never ask "if " growth and density is acceptable, they should only ask where and how much. Every neighborhood should be tasked with accommodating some growth to spread the impact across the city. Every neighborhood has a birth rate which means that neighborhood has impacted the city. If they don't absorb some growth, they are requiring another neighborhood to absorb it and roads to bring population growth into the city from other areas that is also being contested by these same central city neighborhoods. All of us use the entire city and impact the entire city.
- That they be abolished
- Teams should be careful scope of scope creep - making decisions about items beyond the Contact Team jurisdiction.
- Our DNPCT has two overlapping groups of Board Members who have 2-year terms. The idea is that only half of the seats will be up for election each year. DNPCT has lost track of when terms began and are to end in just 4 short years! Establish a formal format to follow when PCT announce how many seats are open, when they are to begin and end, and in describing the status of remaining seats still held through the next year. I know it sounds self-explanatory, but you should see how it's described our newsletters. They use inconsistent vocabulary.
- Some neighborhoods that have a NP have very active participation and truly represent the neighborhood. Other neighborhoods that have a NP are represented by a very small group that is looking out for their own best interest. This is not the best way for the City to plan for growth. In some cases, the current decisions by the "few" will come back to haunt the "many" in the future. Things change. A neighborhood cannot come up with a Plan, and then put it on the shelf.
- The Neighborhood Plan system is broken. I have participated to educate myself and help and I have learned that my contact team is made of good people who want the best for their neighborhood, but who are overwhelmed by the level of work needed to properly plan, announce, hold and record meetings and agenda.
- The City needs to have a more comprehensive system that aligns the plans in format and scope, weighs the needs of all neighborhoods such that one neighborhood cannot push its problems into another, and provides a coherent system for people to easily access information about their plan and contact team.
- My district is majority renter while my contact team by-laws (which differ from the City template) privilege homeowners. This distinction does not belong in neighborhood planning. We're all residents.
- The level of power NPCTs have displayed in Council hearings is not commensurate with their level of accountability or involvement. They are a small list of people (dealing with often very dull but important issues) and are not in their present form anything resembling an accurate understanding of neighborhood voices, nor do they have any incentive to look at their neighborhood plan within the broader context of the needs of a growing city.

- I support a more critical look at the contact teams that looks at 10-1 alignment, balances representation between the existing 31 NP areas and areas of Austin without such representation, and provides consistent tools between contact teams that helps them do their work and helps others have access to decisions, issues and meetings."
- An appeal process to the decision by Planning Commission or whoever makes "final" decision.
- Again, why all the interest in changing a type organization that the City of Austin first established in 1999-2000? Many neighborhood associations were very upset at having these new groups required on top of them. What has changed to make the City no longer want these groups involved in planning?
- Removing trees or other structures from a neighborhood for safety reasons should not be subject to the approval of a neighborhood association or contact team as this is hazardous and creates unnecessary liability. If a city official deems a structure unsafe, the landlord should have full discretion on removal of said structure.
- Require online voting which tends to be far more representative than the 'rule with those with the most time on their hands' approach currently being used.
- If the structures and processes are developed appropriately, it should be workable to have a "small area contact team" for any designated planning area, even if the planning process has not been completed. Any group could apply for this designation, meet the requirements, and receive the privileged access now only available in certain parts of the city.
- Ensure they actually represent the neighborhood democratically.
- The contact team in my neighborhood is self-appointed, answers to no one, and makes no attempt to determine the views of the stakeholders, let alone act on those. There should be NO voting at the contact team level. Their only responsibility should be to get inputs from the majority of stakeholders, and simply pass that along to decision-makers.
"While I understand the value of local input, we need to start thinking as a city to solve our problems. Contact teams create balkanization and contribute to city-wide issues like unaffordable housing and housing.
- In addition contact teams take away the power of 1 person 1 vote in city elections and hand power to unelected persons. This feels like a relic of Jim Crow, and it feels like a means to keep certain classes of people out of neighborhoods and raise the cost of living in neighborhoods."
- Contact teams work best when its meetings are City staff mediated and announced and publicized by the City. City support is currently limited to training. The City should schedule planning updates of older plans and mediate these events.
- Thank you for collecting this survey.
- Find ways to include more people in the neighborhood. Especially by using online voting and posting information on a website.
- Contact Teams are unrepresentative and are dominated by a few people that have both the time and willingness to attend numerous meetings. Most people are completely unaware of the

existence of these groups and don't realize decisions are being made on their behalf by self-appointed groups without any oversight.

- The city needs to eliminate contact teams and return planning decisions to our elected officials.