

Working Group Comments and Findings of CodeNEXT Prescription Paper #2

Points of common interest:

1. The affordability prescription paper does a good job of explaining market affordable housing, and how it makes up the vast majority of our affordable housing stock. However it does not propose any prescriptions for monitoring or preserving affordable units that occur naturally in the market, outside of affordability programs.
 - a. Demolished housing units must be tracked in order to evaluate the success of affordability programs.
 - b. Increased entitlements must be calibrated to ensure they do not incentivize the demolition of market affordable units.
 - c. Our older stock of market affordable units must be preserved or replaced when facing demolition
2. The site-plan requirement is disincentivizing missing middle developments. Its application and its processes must be evaluated in order to remove this barrier for smaller unit count projects, 2-5 units. *(my concern is that the site plan process looks at so many factors like stormwater, traffic impact, etc that I would hate to see these get ignored of larger unit projects, 5-25)*
3. In instances where entitlement increases are applied in order to achieve greater affordability, some measure of affordability outcome must be clearly defined and required on site.
4. Planning efforts must prioritize areas where Austin is experiencing the most growth, and where we are likely to have the greatest impact. Currently the greatest growth, and the greatest potential for creating complete connected communities lies in the development of greenfield sites.
5. In light of the research results on Austin's economic segregation, and to ensure we are pursuing fair housing policies, the growth concept map must be evaluated to consider activity corridors and centers west of Mopac.
6. A prescription to bring housing to job centers and even job sites should be considered.
7. Several prescriptions have a basis on our current land development code. We believe strongly that there must be an evaluation of how the programs are moving the needle on affordability before we incorporate them in our new land development code: i.e. infill tools, fee in lieu, density bonus and live/work units.

8. There is support for incentivizing a mix of housing types, of especial interest are entitlements that would increase density without increasing the current FAR or impervious cover. We believe they would better fit the character of already developed areas, and would produce a smaller product, more likely to increase affordability.
9. Different areas of town have different economic realities. An entitlement might promote affordability in one part of town while it might push out lower income residents in another. We believe the code should be sensitive to that reality in order to address economic segregation. (Stephen, I don't know if this is what you intended to say?,)
10. Although we understand that the affordability prescription paper intended to focus only on topics that fall squarely within the land development code, we believe it would be of great value to report on topics that are integral to the affordability conversation, even if, at least in part, they fall outside of the LDC re-write scope. I.e. Public private partnerships, the use of public lands, historic preservation districts, homestead preservations districts. As well as an outline on ways in which city government can support the land development code via next steps and assumptions that the code rewrite team may see as necessary for the future success of this rewrite.