

SPENDING

Imagine Austin will also help direct how the City spends money. This spending typically takes the form of capital improvements and the annual operating budget. The comprehensive plan will influence both types of expenditures. *Imagine Austin* builds on existing operations to better coordinate the City's many missions. However, it does not address all City operations and should not be taken as a guide to budgeting, particularly related to dedicated funding sources, funding for essential needs such as emergency medical, police, and fire services, and funding for existing infrastructure repairs and improvements.

Imagine Austin also provides context for seeking outside sources of funding, such as federal or state grants.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is an important tool to guide growth and development and is the only way to expand municipal boundaries. The City of Austin uses annexation to apply zoning and development regulations, to protect and expand the tax base, to more efficiently deliver municipal services such as public safety and utilities, and to provide these services to developing areas. To be consistent with *Imagine Austin*, provide efficient, equitable, and environmentally sensitive utility services, and coordinate the extension of municipal services, the City of Austin should continue to maintain its annexation program. This program should be based on the following policies:

- Annex areas that can be the most economically served with existing and proposed infrastructure and services.
- Annex areas that will be provided with municipal services and utilities through coordinated municipal utility and service extension plans and the capital improvements program.
- Continue to annex major industrial and commercial areas on the periphery of the city.
- Use limited purpose annexation in cooperation with landowners to expand environmental, land use, and development regulations on land currently in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Consider annexing areas served by aging or substandard septic systems where water quality degradation is probable or citizens have submitted petitions for annexation.
- Annex residential areas to broadly distribute the cost of services.
- Provide City consent to independent utility or improvement districts only where the City is the water and wastewater utility provider. The districts must promote sustainable development in accordance with the Growth Concept Map. Proposed districts must be financially viable, located entirely within Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction, and provide extraordinary public benefits.