



# **COUNCIL MEETING EFFICIENCY AND DELIBERATION**

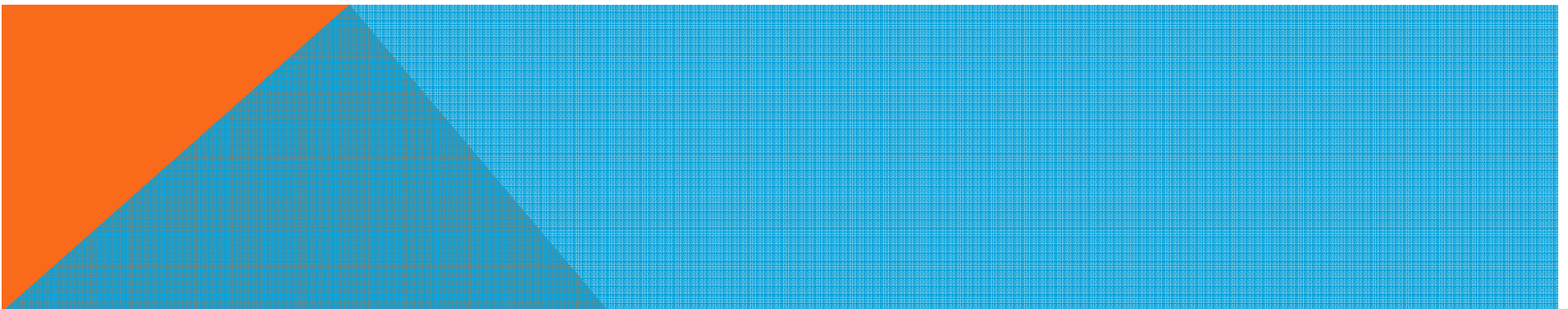
**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

MARCH 21, 2017

## **COUNCIL DIRECTION**

### **Provide Staff Recommendations on Improvements to Meeting Efficiency and Deliberation:**

- CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT
- TASK FORCES INCLUDING PROVIDING A HISTORY OF TASK FORCES
- IMPROVEMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES



## **PROJECT TEAM**

- **Jannette Goodall, City Clerk**
- **Myrna Rios, Assistant City Clerk**
- **Corrie Stokes, City Auditor**
- **Ray Baray, Chief of Staff**
- **Deborah Thomas, Deputy City Attorney**
- **Catie Powers, Agenda Process Manager**
- **Andrew Reyna, Council Meeting Coordinator**
- **Kerry O'Connor, Chief Innovation Officer**
- **Sabine Romero, Acting Chief Administrative Officer**

## **PROJECT GOALS**

- **Identify “pain points” and possible efficiencies in the agenda process, meeting structure and citizen engagement**
- **Increase Council’s time for meeting preparation**
- **Maintain active citizen engagement**
- **Identify ways to continue transparency**
- **Provide council with short/long-term recommendations**

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

- Reviewed Existing Council Rules
- Reviewed Proposed Changes to the Meeting Rules by Council Members
- Reviewed *2014 Auditor's Report on Council Committees & Meeting Practices*
- Reviewed Council Discussions During Meetings and Message Board
- Reviewed the Current Agenda Process
- Pulled Citizen Participation Statistics from 2016
- Reviewed Current Practices Relating to Task Forces in Chapter 2-1
- Researched History of Task Forces Appointed by the Mayor

## **PAIN POINTS**

- **Length of Meetings**
- **“Dead-Air” Times during Council Meeting Between Time-Certain Items**
- **Balancing Length of Meetings versus Citizen Engagement**
- **Insufficient Time to Prepare Between Agenda Posting and the Council Meeting**
- **Council’s Desire to Receive Backup Earlier**
- **Not Taking Full Advantage of Council Q&A and Message Board**
- **Not Enough Time During Work Sessions to Discuss Issues**
- **Purpose or Role of Council Committees**
- **Amount of Staff Time Dedicated to Meetings**

# **AGENDA PROCESS**

## **Current Process of Posting Final Agenda on Friday Before Council Meeting**

### **Staff Recommendation:**

- No preliminary agenda will be posted.
- Post final agenda 2 weeks in advance (on Friday).
- Post any addendum to the final agenda on Friday before the meeting. Addendums would be reserved for **emergency** items only.
  - ❑ *Items would not be able to be postponed 1 week, except for emergencies.*

### **Justification:**

- Provides more time for items to be reviewed prior to the meeting.
- Could allow Council more than 1 Work Session to discuss “hot” items.
- Would provide backup further in advance of the meeting.

**Would Require Change to Chapter 2-5.**

# **AGENDA PROCESS**

## **Current Process Allows IFCs to be Placed on Meeting Agenda with Posting Language and Resolution**

### **Staff Recommendation:**

- Move deadline for submittal to 11 business days before meeting.
- Enforce requirements that IFCs:
  - ❑ *Include fiscal & operational impact as required by Chapter 2-5-2.*
  - ❑ *Include supporting documentation as required by Chapter 2-5-26.*

### **Justification:**

- **Would reduce questions received after the item is posted on resources needed or costs associated with the item. Will allow for Council to view completed IFCs earlier.**
- **Would require a change to Chapter 2-5 to move deadline.**

### **Additional Recommendation**

- IFCs that “direct the City Manager” would be posted for the Work Session.



# **COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS**

## **Time Management and Efficiencies**

### **Staff Recommendations:**

#### **– Establish Standard Schedule for the Work Session:**

- ☐ *9 a.m. – 11 a.m.                      Discussion of Upcoming Council Agenda*
- ☐ *11 a.m. – Noon                      Staff Briefing*
- ☐ *12 p.m.                      Executive Session*

#### **– Work Sessions Briefings**

- ☐ *Establish maximum number of 1 briefing on a Work Session agenda.*
- ☐ *Establish 1 meeting a month devoted to staff briefings (maximum of 4 briefings with no action items on the agenda). This could be scheduled during a non-Council meeting week.*
- ☐ *Include presentations in Work Session backup.*
- ☐ *Move most briefings to Council committees.*

# **COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS**

## Time Management and Efficiencies

### **Staff Recommendations:**

- **Utilize Council Q&A and Message Board to discuss items further in advance of the meeting.**
  - *Use Work Session for discussion among Council members, use Q&A for staff questions.*
- **Encourage Use of Memos to Council rather than briefings when possible, allowing briefings to be used for complex policy issues.**

# COUNCIL MEETINGS

## Staff Recommendations:

- **Start Times:** Keep existing start times (9 a.m./Work Session & 10 a.m./Council), but commit to starting on time.

### Justification:

*Pre-meeting time is used by Council and staff to prepare for the meeting and allows citizens time to register to speak on consent items.*

- **Consent Agenda:** Pull items that Council wants to discuss or ask a question. The only discussion on consent should be the motion, the second to the motion and the vote.

### Justification:

*The Consent Agenda should be completed in 15-20 minutes from the start of the meeting. Completing it quickly would allow citizens and staff in Chambers to leave who are there for a consent item.*

- **Consent Agenda:** Continue the practice of confirming citizens are in Chambers prior to pulling an item from consent for speakers.

# COUNCIL MEETINGS

## Staff Recommendations:

- **Existing Specified Time Certain Items:** Remove the existing specified times for Board Meetings, Staff Briefings, Bond Sales and Zoning. Establish practice of taking up Zoning discussion items at 2 p.m.
  - *Would only leave a required time certain for public hearings at 4 p.m.*

### Justification:

*Would provide Council with more flexibility when these items are taken up during a meeting and could eliminate the “dead” air time that can occur waiting for a specific time before continuing with a meeting. Would require Changes to Chapter 2-5.*

- **Establish “set” break times:**
  - *12 noon for Citizen Communication*
  - *Lunch (12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.); Dinner (5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.)*
  - *Items not taken up before 10:00 p.m. would be postponed.*
  - *Requires no change to existing Council Rules.*

## **CEREMONIAL ITEMS**

### **Staff Recommendations:**

- **Reinstate Live Music on the Plaza** and replace Live Music at the Council Meetings with live music either on Friday at Noon or Wednesday at 5:30 pm.
  - *Would require a Code amendment to remove Live Music from the agenda.*
- **Keep Proclamations at the 5:30 p.m. Council Meeting time slot.**

### **Other possible options for proclamations:**

- *Reduce number of meetings at which proclamations are presented to twice a month, 5 per meeting.*
- *Limit amount of proclamations from each Council Office presented during council meetings (10 per council office, per year).*
- **Make use of special called or non-ceremonial meetings for items that are of high public interest or will have large amount of public testimony.** Examples include: The Grove or CodeNext.

# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

# 2016 MEETING STATISTICS

2016: approximately 557 hours were spent at Council Meetings and Work Sessions  
(includes executive sessions and breaks)

Work Sessions (includes executive sessions)

— 133.33 hours

Council Discussions and Budget Work Sessions

— 75 hours

Council Meetings (special called and budget adoption)

— 348.50 hours

# 2016 SPEAKER STATISTICS

## 33 Council Meetings

### Number of speakers

- 2,386 wishing to speak
- 1,571 not wishing to speak
- 775 donating time
- **Total of 3,161 wishing to speak or donating time**

### Number of Minutes

- 7,158 minutes for speakers wishing to speak or 119 hours
- 2,325 additional minutes from citizens donating time or 39 hours
- **Total minutes: 9,483 or 158 hours**
  - 45% of the 348.50 hours spent in Council Meetings

Number of items with 60 or more speakers: 4

Number of items with 20-59 speakers: 13



# 2016 DONATION OF TIME

In 2016 there were 2,386 speakers wishing to speak and an additional 775 people who donated time to these speakers.

- 775 people had time donated to them at 3 minutes = 2,325 minutes or 38.75 hours
- Of the 775 speakers:
  - 208 received donated time from 1 individual
  - 154 received donated time from 2 individuals
  - 105 received donated time from 3 individuals
  - 252 received donated time from 4 individuals
  - 25 received donated time from 5 individuals

# POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DONATED TIME

## Reduce the time donated to 2 minutes

- With 775 speakers that would equal 1,550 minutes or 25.8 hours compared to the 2,335 minutes (119 hours)

## Reduce the time donated to 1 minute

- With 775 speakers that would equal 775 minutes or 13 hours compared to the 2,335 minutes (119 hours)

## Reduce the number of speakers who could donate from 4 to 2

## Reduce the number of speakers who could donate to 2 and reduce the time donated to 1 minute

# MARCH 2, 2017 MEETING

## Length of meeting: 14 hours and 8 minutes

- Consent
  - 10 AM consent: 18 minutes (5 items with 2 speakers)
  - Zoning consent: 19 minutes (4 speakers who did not speak)
- Items pulled from consent: 156 minutes (18% of the meeting)
  - 15 speakers/6 donating: 63 minutes
- Items from Council pulled from consent: 139 minutes (16% of the meeting)
  - 21 speakers/2 donating: 69 minutes
- Zoning discussion items: 285.63 minutes (34% of the meeting)
  - 27 speakers/15 donating: 126 minutes
- Public Hearings: 60 minutes
  - 11 speakers/3 donating: 42 minutes
- Live music/Proclamations: 27 minutes
- General Citizen Communication: 17 minutes (3 speakers)
- Breaks:
  - Lunch: 72 minutes
  - Dinner: 52 minutes

# MARCH 2, 2017

## Speakers

- 107 Registered wishing to speak
- 37 Registered not wishing to speak
- 40 Registered donating time
  - They donated time to 18 individual speakers
  - 12 of the 18 had more than one person donating time
    - 8 of the 12 had three or four individuals donating time
- 40 speakers donating time at 3 minutes each = 120 minutes (2 hours)
  - Reducing the time allotted for donation
    - 2 minutes = 80 minutes or 40 minutes less
    - 1 minute = 40 minutes or 80 minutes less

# CLOSING SPEAKER SIGN-UP

The person may register at any time after 12:00 noon on the Monday preceding a council meeting, and before the last person who has registered to testify has been called.

- Staff Recommendations:
  - No change to the time the agenda is open for registrations to begin. This allows the Clerk's Office to incorporate any addendum items in speaker sign-up before registration begins.
  - Items with no speakers registered when Council discussion begins the item is closed for registration.
  - Items with speakers registered the item is closed once the last speaker registered has been called.
  - Consent items that are withdrawn or postponed per changes and corrections close registration prior to the meeting
  - Requires no change to existing Council Rules

# SPEAKER & DONATED TIME

Currently each speaker receives 3 minutes and can have donated time from 4 additional speakers for a maximum of 15 minutes.

- First 20 speakers are allowed 3 minutes each
- Each subsequent speaker is allowed 1 minute each
- Total time for public comment on an agenda item may not exceed 90 minutes unless extended by council.
- Staff Recommendations:
  - Establish a set amount of time for the primary speaker
  - Establish a maximum number of citizens who can donate time
  - Establish a set amount allotted for each donations.

# GENERAL CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

## Currently 10 slots are available at Noon

- No speaker may register more than once every three regularly scheduled meetings.
- 2016 Statistics
  - 29 meetings had General Citizen Communication of which 40% of the meetings had fewer than the 10 slots assigned.
  - 231 Citizens total registered of which 20% did not show
  - Of the 231, 17% registered to speak at multiple meetings including 4 that registered to speak at 6 or more meetings
- **Staff Recommendation:**
  - Consider increasing the number of meetings between registrations to once every 4-6 meetings and/or moving general citizen communication to 5 or 5:30 p.m. (if live music is moved). Would require a Code amendment to Chapter 2-5-28 (D).

# FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

New Agenda Management System has the potential to provide for E-comments submitted online prior to a meeting.

Speaker Sign-up could potentially be modified to allow citizens to register their opinion only (not register to speak) in advance of the meeting. Would require modification to the existing system and would have to be explored in greater detail.

Upgrades to the Council Message Board to make it more user friendly and robust.

Identify items that come before Council that could be dealt with outside a Council Meeting. Examples may include: appeals, fee waivers, etc.

Analyze impact of increasing City Manager's authority relating to contracts.



# FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

## Open Government Partnership Commitment #4: City Public Meetings

To help Austin community members better navigate issues of concern, and to make city decision-making processes more understandable and accessible, we commit to furthering transparency and accountability by gathering, sharing, and analyzing data on the activities during public meetings to recommend opportunities for efficiencies and effectiveness.

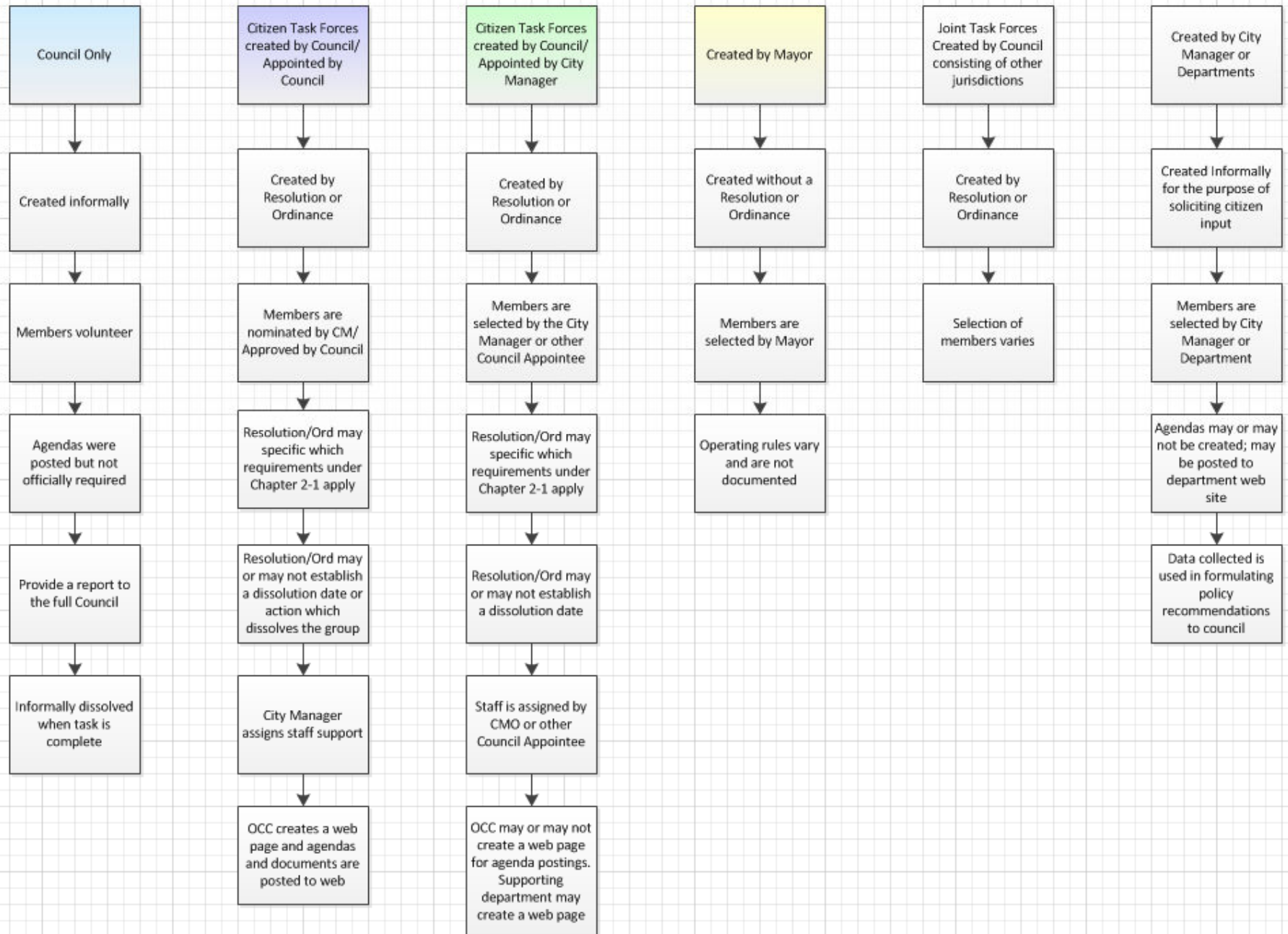
Desired outcomes for this project
1) Public understanding of the activities at public meetings is increased through access, both in person and electronically.
2) Council communication is improved with through new practices built on shared understanding of what works
3) The effectiveness of each meeting is increased, with a clear progression through debate.
4) Establish meaningful options for informational and decision flows that will have the effect of making public meetings more accessible to the public
5) Create a better understanding for citizens on how initiatives are funded and how departments use resources from the General Fund and other budgetary sources.

# TASK FORCES

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- Council Rules have not defined the use of Council task force or Council ad hoc committee at the Council level.
- Chapter 2-1 defines a task force: as a non-codified temporary advisory body established by resolution or ordinance for a specific purpose that expires upon the completion of its assigned task or according to a specific deadline.
- Chapter 2-1 defines a working group: as a body of board members established by vote of the board, consisting of less than a quorum of the board, to which the board delegates a defined matter, or matters, for consideration and recommendation to the board. It is automatically dissolved after it reports its recommendations to the board and may consist of non-members.
- The following slide provides a breakdown of how task forces have been created in the past, how members are appointed and who makes the nominations/appointments.

## City of Austin: Task Forces



# HISTORY OF MAYOR'S TASK FORCES

History and accomplishments was difficult to track.

- Rules and goals were unique and varied over time.
- Difficult to determine created date or when they dissolved.
- Difficult to determine who served.
- Difficult to determine the purpose or goal of the task force.
- Difficult to determine if a final report was required.
- Difficult to determine if any documentation of the task force activities were preserved.

# HISTORY OF MAYOR'S TASK FORCES

## **Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health**

- Created by Mayor Wynn in August 2004; Final report delivered to Council in January 2005

## **The Mayor's Task Force on the Economy**

- Created by Mayor Watson sometime before December 2002; A subcommittee of the task force provided a final report in April 2003.

## **Task Force on Libraries of the Future**

- Created by Mayor Watson in 2000; Final report was accepted by Council on December 14, 2000.

## **Task Force on Crime, Drugs and Gangs**

- Created by Mayor Cooke sometime around 1990 or earlier. Status report was given to Council on March 19, 1992.

## **Task Force for Smart Growth**

- Created by Mayor Watson in 1998.

## **Smart Streets Task Force**

Only mention was in an August 2007 Street Smarts Task Force Bicycle Facilities Toolbox Report.

# TASK FORCES

## Staff Recommendations:

- Council should formally establish rules or procedures on the creation of task forces or ad hoc committees.
  - City Clerk's Office has a checklist of considerations when creating a task force such as subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act; web page needs to be created, etc.
- Documentation of the work of the task force should be preserved.
  - City Clerk's Office can work with the task force to create a central web page that would be publicly available.

# COUNCIL COMMITTEES



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## 2016 Council Committee Meetings

- 95 meetings scheduled of which 30 were cancelled
- Total hours: 147.33

## 2016 Citizen Participation Statistics

- 43 Council Committees (March 28-December)
  - Number of speakers: 382
    - 325 wishing to speak
    - 38 not wishing to speak
    - 25 donating time
  - Number of Minutes
    - 975 minutes for citizens wishing to speak or 16.25 hours
    - 75 minutes for citizens donating time or 1.25 hours
    - Total minutes for citizen comments: 1,050 or 17.50 hours or 12% of your total time in Committee meetings

# COUNCIL COMMITTEES

## Staff Recommendations:

- Align each committee to a primary strategic goal.
- Limit meetings to once per month with the option to reduce or increase as needed.
- Create bylaws for each Council Committee

QUESTIONS?

