



City of Austin - Design Commission Project Review Application

The [Design Commission](#) provides advisory recommendations to the City Council to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment. The Design Commission reviews three types of projects:

1. **City projects** (see page ii for process)

The Commission reviews all municipal buildings and associated site plans to ensure they demonstrate compliance with city design and sustainability standards ([Council Resolution No. 20071129-046](#)), including those seeking [Subchapter E Design Standards Alternative Equivalent Compliance \(AEC\)](#) ([Council Resolution No. 20100923-086](#)).

2. **Destiny Bonus projects** (see page iv for process)

The Commission reviews density bonus projects for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin in accordance with the Gatekeeper requirements of [LDC 25-2-586](#) for the Downtown Density Bonus Program.

3. **Advisory Recommendations for Private projects** (see page ii for process)

The Commission will consider Project Review Applications from private projects during its regularly scheduled monthly public meetings and may issue an advisory recommendation in the form of a Project Review Letter to the Applicant.

This Project Review Application must be submitted before your project can be presented to the Design Commission for their review. Design Commission requests project be presented in their Conceptual/Schematic Design phase. This application primarily addresses inhabited buildings and structures and their effect on the public realm; please refer to Appendix A for infrastructure type projects.

The Commission's review of projects is based on the planning/design principles in the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin. Ensure that all applicable principles are addressed in the application questions and in your presentation.

https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Boards_and_Commissions/Design_Commission_urban_design_guidelines_for_austin.pdf

The Design Commission supports the vision and principles of [Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan](#), especially those that affect the urban environment and fabric. All projects should consider this vision and principles, many of which are similar to the Urban Design Guidelines. Refer to Appendix C for the most pertinent sections of Imagine Austin.

The Design Commission expects the applicant's design team to present their project with those most knowledgeable and encourages the inclusion of sub-consultants at the presentation, when deemed necessary.

EXHIBITS TO PRESENT

- 1) Completed Project Review Application (p.1-6)
- 2) Existing zoning classification, adjacent zoning & uses, future land use map classification, topography
- 3) Vicinity plan, including public transportation and connectivity on-site and within quarter mile
- 4) Site plan and landscape plan
- 5) Ground level, basement plan, and typical floor plan
- 6) Elevations and/or 3d views
- 7) Any letters of support or findings by other commissions
- 8) Staff reports, if any
- 9) Records of public participation

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS: CITY PROJECTS

The Design Commission reviews all municipal buildings and associated site development projects to ensure they demonstrate compliance with city design and sustainability standards ([Council Resolution No. 20071129-046](#)), including those seeking [Subchapter E Design Standards Alternative Equivalent Compliance \(AEC\)](#) ([Council Resolution No. 20100923-086](#)).

1. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Office of the City Architect prior to submitting a Project Review Application, especially if seeking Alternative Equivalent Compliance (AEC) under Subchapter E Design Standards. (See Staff Contacts on page iv.)
2. Applicant submits completed Project Review Application, including Exhibits, to Commission Liaisons a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the Design Commission meeting. (See and [Calendar of Regular Meetings](#) and "Exhibits to Present" on page i)
3. Commission Liaisons review Project Review Application for completeness. Once the Application is deemed complete, the project will be added to the agenda. (Agendas are posted online 72 hours prior to the meeting.)
4. Commission Liaisons post backup, including complete Project Review Application and letters/decisions from other Boards and Commissions, the Friday before the meeting. (See [Meeting Documents](#) website.)
5. Design Commission meets and hears a 15 minute presentation by the Owner/Applicant/Architect. The Commission asks questions and makes recommendations. At the end of the project review, the Design Commission may rely on the recommendations recorded in their meeting minutes or submit a Project Review Letter to City Staff in Development Services Department.
6. Design Commission may direct a Working Group to write the Project Review Letter. The Working Group will take comments from the full Design Commission meeting, add their comments, and coordinate with the Design Commission Chair to issue a Letter to applicable Development Services Department Staff. The Working Group shall meet prior to the next regularly-scheduled Design Commission to finalize comments on any project submittal. The goal is for this to happen in a one (1) month time frame.
7. Commission Liaisons will forward approved meeting minutes or Project Review Letters to applicable Development Services Staff.
8. Design Commission may request that an Owner/Applicant or City Staff submit an update report in the future so that the Commission can review progress as a project is further detailed.

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS: DENSITY BONUS PROJECTS

The Design Commission reviews density bonus projects for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin in accordance with the Gatekeeper requirements of LDC 25-2-586 for the Downtown Density Bonus Program.

1. **Six weeks prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** Applicant will contact Density Bonus Liaison with intent to schedule project on the next Design Commission agenda.
 - a. Density Bonus Liaison will provide application and submittal documentation to Applicant and notify Commission Liaisons.
2. **Five weeks prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** Density Bonus Liaison will contact Chair of Working Group to schedule a meeting, copying Commission Liaisons.
3. **By the end of the fourth week (24 calendar days) prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** The Applicant will submit all completed application requirements to Density Bonus Staff Liaison.
4. **By the end of the third week (17 calendar days) prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** Design Commission Working Group will meet to review Project Review Application and evaluate Applicant's presentation detailing substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin.
 - a. Working Group will provide Applicant comments and suggestions on improving presentation and issue a recommendation to the Design Commission on achieving substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin.
5. **By the end of the second week (10 calendar days) prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** Chair of the Working Group will send the Density Bonus and Commission Liaisons the Working Group's written recommendation to the Design Commission containing specific feedback given to the Applicant and, if lacking, detailing items to address to achieve substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin.
6. **One week (7 calendar days) prior to the target Design Commission meeting:** Once the Density Bonus Liaison receives the revised project submittal from the Applicant and the Commission Liaison receive the written recommendation from the Working Group Chair, the Commission Liaison will place project on Design Commission agenda for discussion and possible action.
7. **Design Commission meeting:** At the meeting, Design Commission will review the project for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin based on Working Group recommendations and issue a final recommendation detailing to Planning and Zoning Department Staff items needed to be addressed in order to achieve substantial compliance.
8. **Within one week after Design Commission meeting:** The Chair will issue a formal written recommendation based on the action taken by the by the Commission detailing to Planning and Zoning Department Staff items needed to be addressed in order to achieve substantial compliance.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Incomplete Applications

Should Commission Liaisons determine that the Project Review Application is incomplete, the Application shall be returned to the Applicant and the project will not be posted on the agenda for consideration by the Commission.

Submissions without the required Adobe PDF electronic file shall be deemed incomplete.

Public Notice

Posting of public notices on the proposed project site or giving notice to adjacent property owners is not required by the enabling ordinance of the Design Commission. The posted agenda for the Design Commission meetings serves to inform the public of subjects considered by the Commission. The Applicant shall note that the concomitant regulatory procedures by other boards and commissions have legal public notice requirements. Actions taken by the Austin Design Commission shall be in respect of and in compliance with such local ordinances and project review procedures.

Limits on Resubmissions

Applicants are limited to two (2) resubmissions per design phase (as described herein) and shall notify Commission Staff of the intent and desire to resubmit project(s) for review within seven (7) days of the action vote by the Commission. The Commission shall consider such resubmissions prior to issuing the Project Review Letter.

Rebuttal of Project Review Letter

Since the Commission issues advisory recommendations only, there is no instance for appeals to the Commission. Rebuttals of such advisory recommendations may be made by the Applicant to the applicable city department, planning commission, or City Council in accordance with applicable standard processes and procedures.

STAFF CONTACTS

By appointment, City Staff is available for consultation on submittal requirements. To schedule a pre-submission conference or for information on any of the above submittal requirements, please contact:

City of Austin, One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Rd., Austin, TX 78704

Commission Liaisons:

Executive Liaison: Benjamin.Campbell@austintexas.gov, (512) 974-7691

Staff Liaison: Nichole.Koerth@austintexas.gov, (512) 974-2752
Urban Design Division, Planning and Zoning Department, 5th floor

City Architect: Janice.White@austintexas.gov, (512) 974-7997
Office of the City Architect, Public Works Department, 9th floor

**Density Bonus
Program Coordinator:** Anne.Milne@austintexas.gov, (512) 974-2868
Urban Design Division, Planning and Zoning Department, 5th floor

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name

Project Type:

Infrastructure

City building & site

Density bonus

Private project

Other

Project Location/Address

Applicant

Property Owner

Applicant Mailing Address

Property Owner Mailing Address

Applicant Telephone Number

Property Owner Telephone Number

Project Start Date

Project Completion Date

Applicant's Architect

Applicant's Engineer

1] Indicate if proposed Project is required by City Ordinance to be reviewed by the Design Commission.

2] Describe the recommendation that you are requesting from the Design Commission.

3] Current Design Phase of Project (Design Commission prefers to see projects right after approved schematic design).

4] Is this Project subject to Site Plan and/or Zoning application approvals? Will it be presented to Planning Commission and/or City Council? If so, when?

5] Does this Project comply with Land Development Code Subchapter E? List specifically any Alternative Equivalent Compliance request if any. Please refer to website for Alternate Equivalent Compliance (AEC) requirements.
https://www.municode.com/library/tx/austin/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodetid=TIT25LADE_CH25-2ZO_SUBCHAPTER_EDESTMIUS

B. PROJECT BACKGROUND

6] Provide project background including goals, scope, building/planning type, and schedule. Broadly address each of the “Shared Values for Urban Areas” that are listed on Page 6 of the Urban Design Guidelines. Attach additional pages as needed.

7] Has this project conducted community/stakeholder outreach? If so, please provide documentation to demonstrate community/stakeholder support of this project.

8] Is this project submitting for the Downtown Density Bonus Program? If so, please provide a completed Downtown Density Bonus Application.

9] Has the project been reviewed by COA Department (i.e. DAC) Staff? If so, please describe and cite any relevant comments or feedback that the Commission should be aware of.

10] Are there any limitations to compliance or planning principles due to the specific requirements of this project that the Commission should be aware of?

Project Goals:

- Expand the IT facilities to support airport operations for the next 20 years
- Mitigate risk through facility hardening and redundancy of systems
- Create forward-thinking office spaces for staff that provide a positive environment to attract and retain talent

Building Type:

- Two-floor, ~40,000 SF building. Type V construction.
- Building diagram separates hardened mission critical spaces from open, day-lit office spaces
- Framing: Steel columns w/ exposed glu-lam beams and acoustic deck

Project Schedule:

- Design start: Nov 2018
- Target Construction Start: Oct 2019
- Target Construction Completion: Feb 2021

Urban Design Guidelines:

Humane Character - Office spaces are separated from the blast-resistant bunker to allow daylighting and views for higher quality office spaces. Project is greatly improving existing amenities for break areas, including access to outdoor spaces. Sensitive siting has enabled us to preserve most of the existing trees and therefore nestle the office building within the trees. The building structure includes the use of glue-lam beams which impart warmth and humanity within the core working spaces of the building.

Density - A single floor diagram was investigated, but 2-floor stacked office scheme was agreed upon for best land use. The site design makes provision for future expansion of the building within a constrained site.

Sustainability - Project will be LEED Silver, and is using the Austin Energy Integrated Modelling Incentive program to make smart decisions on energy savings. Project will use reclaimed water for irrigation, investigating rain water harvesting for storm mitigation. Vertical passive solar shading cuts down glare and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient on the longer east and west facades.

Diversity - Project fosters collaboration and community among staff through open office environments by leveraging a variety of shared collaborative spaces to promote inter-departmental interaction. The building layout is as “open” as permissible within security constraints. The most public-facing areas are grouped together around an open social stair in an effort to make the building welcoming to visitors and staff alike.

Economic Vitality - The airport is a significant economic generator for the City of Austin. The IT building project provides much needed expansion and risk mitigation to ensure our airport remains a reliable asset to our City.

Civic Art - Project will provide funding for Art In Public Places although it will more likely be placed in a more public location at ABIA. The building exterior leverages the solar shade fins to provide an artful, colorful facade element. These shade fins will appear to “float” above the landscaped perimeter fencing.

Sense of Time - The crisp geometries, clean lines and high performance metal and glass skin relate to the high-tech nature of the building functions within, and evoke Austin's leadership in the tech industry, without reliance on flashy or expensive gadgetry – which can become dated over a long life of the building.

Unique Character - The artful, colorful expression of the shading fins provides a unique and identifiable expression that is both timeless and recognizable. The outdoor spaces will be likewise unique.

Authenticity - The building diagram splits the program into two volumes: the mission critical communications rooms placed in a solid volume clad with pre-cast concrete panels to resist blast loads, while placing the people in a lighter more elegant structure with abundant windows for daylighting and views, for higher quality interior spaces. The architecture of the two volumes are each honest about the functions they contain.

Safety - The project has numerous aspects that improve safety and mitigate risk for the airport IT operations, including: access controlled perimeter fencing, ram resistant barriers, blast resistant construction, and enhanced fire protection systems like Sapphire clean agent suppression and VESDA early smoke detection systems. In addition to these very purposeful enhancements, the project also is smart about simple things like improved daylighting and a clear plan diagram for ease of wayfinding, help to make this a safe facility for the IT staff.

A Connection to the Outdoors - An abundance of windows at occupied office spaces provide daylighting and views into an enhanced landscape that buffers the building from the adjacent public parking areas. Collaboration spaces spill out into the landscape with outdoor break areas, and shaded informal meeting spaces incorporated into the landscape.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CONTEXT

11] Identify connectivity to public transportation including, bicycle and pedestrian routes and/or multi-modal transportation. Does the project comply with ADA requirements? Provide a site context map and attach additional pages as needed.

12] Identify and describe any existing features that are required to be preserved and/or protected such as heritage trees, creeks or streams, endangered species (flora and/or fauna)? Attach additional site diagrams as needed.

13] Is this project within any City of Austin planning district, master plan, neighborhood plan, regulatory district, overlay, etc.? If so, please illustrate how this project conforms to the respective plan. Attach additional pages as needed. (See below for requirements.)

14] List any project program and/or site constraints that should be considered.

D. RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC REALM

Public realm is defined as any publically owned streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities. The quality of our public realm is vital if we are to be successful in creating environments that people want to live and work in.

15] The shared values outlined in the Urban Design Guidelines include Human Character, Density, Sustainability, Diversity, Economic Vitality, Civic Art, A Sense of Time, Unique Character, Authenticity, Safety and Connection to the Outdoors. How is the project addressing these unique community characteristics? Is the project developing any public amenities for urban continuity and vital place making?

16] Does this project encourage street level activity to engage and respond to functional needs such as shade, rest areas, multi-modal transportation storage and paths?

17] How will the project be a good neighbor to adjacent properties? For example, describe the treatment of the transition area between properties, i.e. fence, landscape improvements, etc.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABLE ISSUES

The Austin Urban Design Guidelines set a goal that, "All development should take into consideration the need to conserve energy and resources. It should also strive for a small carbon footprint."

18] Please list any significant components of the project that contribute to meeting this goal. If the project has been designed to accommodate future inclusion of such components (for example, by being built "solar ready") please list them.

19] If the project is being designed to meet any sustainability/environmental standards or certifications (for example, LEED Silver), please list them here and attach relevant checklists or similar documents that demonstrate how the standard or certification will be achieved.

20] If the project contains other significant sustainability components not included above that the Commission should note, please list them here.