



Recommendation for Action

File #: 22-3733, Agenda Item #: 49.

2/23/2023

Posting Language

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance adopting the Palm District Plan as an element of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

Lead Department

Housing and Planning Department.

Fiscal Note

This item will have no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

On May 23, 2019, City Council issued City Council Resolution No. 20190523-029, which directed staff to develop a small area plan for the Palm District on the eastern edge of Downtown.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

The Planning Commission considered the Palm District Plan on November 8, 2022 (postponement), November 15, 2022 (public hearing, discussion, and postponement), December 20, 2022 (postponement), and January 10, 2023 (formation of working group and postponement to February 14, 2023)

Additional Backup Information:

In 2019, City Council Resolution No. 20190523-029 directed staff to develop a small area plan for the eastern edge of Downtown: Palm District. The planning process formally kicked off in May 2021, and staff has engaged community through a number of methods, including:

- SpeakUpAustin! website (<https://www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict>)
- On-line and paper surveys in English and Spanish
- A Palm District on-line interactive map
- Social media and e-mail newsletter
- Courtesy notification postcard to residents and businesses
- June 2021 Virtual Community Visioning Forums
- July 2021 American Institute of Architects Virtual Design Workshops
- Recordings of all the virtual events to the SpeakUpAustin! website
- Ongoing, targeted outreach to Austin's Mexican American community leaders and longtime residents through interviews and focus groups.

To summarize the collective results of all these engagement efforts, Housing and Planning Department staff created the *Listening Report: What We Heard During the Visioning Phase*. Staff next reviewed and analyzed the community input to develop the draft plan's major themes. Their findings were released in February 2022 in the *Draft Vision Framework*.

In August 2022, a series of four in-person workshops, hosted by the Downtown Austin Alliance, were held at the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center. A design team from Asakura Robinson led community stakeholders through several scenario planning exercises. Based on those results, through conversations with stakeholders, and a review of previous plan materials, the consultant team developed scenarios based on three different themes: Live, Work, and Play. Staff solicited input on those scenarios through a public survey. The Palm District Plan includes a preferred scenario that aligns with the Vision Framework and is guided by public input.

Housing and Planning Department staff briefed the following boards and commissions about the draft Palm District Plan prior to Council consideration:

- Small Area Planning Joint Committee
- Environmental Commission
- Downtown Commission
- Parks Board
- Design Commission
- Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission
- African American Resource Advisory Commission
- Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Board
- Historic Landmark Commission
- Planning Commission, awaiting a recommendation.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Government that Works for All.