

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

Request Council Initiate Amendments to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and elements or portion thereof including the Climate Equity Plan and Austin Strategic Mobility Plan in regards to Telework Policies

The Planning Commission recommends that the Austin City Council initiate the suggested changes to the comprehensive plan to ensure that the City of Austin is a leader for workplace, mobility, and environmental policies that implement the vision of Imagine Austin and advance the priorities it espouses. As the Planning Commission, we are tasked with the stewardship and oversight of the City's comprehensive plan. The development of Imagine Austin engaged thousands of Austin's residents, a wide array of stakeholders, consultants, and City employees through a robust process that included public meetings, online surveys, traveling teams, and more.

As elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Austin Strategic Mobility and the Climate Equity Plans represent vital aspects of this larger vision, bringing us closer to complete, sustainable, and resilient communities. These plans outline clear modeshift goals for the City, along with goals for traffic demand management, reduction and elimination of free parking in city facilities, and compact and sustainable development.

We have identified a few key areas where goals in these plans require clarifying language to make clear the role of the City of Austin in the implementation and modeling of these policies. Furthermore, we have identified gaps where it would strengthen the plan to add clarifying language around the specific strategies required to implement these plans.

We therefore recommend the initiation of amendments to the comprehensive plan that will bolster and clarify the intent of the stated goals within these plans and advance our shared community priorities. Nothing less than the successful implementation of Imagine Austin is at stake. As one of the largest employers in Central Texas, the City of Austin will not successfully achieve the goals in its comprehensive plan, nor prompt the private sector and other public entities to meet these goals, if the City itself fails to model these policies.

Furthermore, the Planning Commission requests that while these changes to the comprehensive plan are being considered by the Austin City Council, changes in policy that might impact achieving these goals are paused or reconsidered to ensure that Austin is committed to providing leadership on the implementation of community mobility and climate equity goals.