



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Planning Commission

Recommendation Number: 20260324-017: FY26-27 Planning Commission Budget Recommendation

Date of Approval: March 24, 2026

Recommendation:

Allocate city funds for FY26-27 to several initiatives designed improve the efficacy of Austin's Planning Commission.

Description of Recommendation to Council:

List of initiatives we are requesting funding for:

1. Optional Planning Commission 101 training for PC members, possibly through Texas Municipal League or APA Texas Chapter.
2. Allocate resources to the Planning Department in order to work with Planning Commissioners to enhance the digestibility and usefulness of the staff reports associated with rezoning or NPA cases.
3. Allocate resources to the Planning Department to create and support an ongoing focus group of experts in financing, construction, building developers, and other relevant land use backgrounds, to solicit feedback for proposed code amendments.
4. Create a staff position of "Community Liason", which would serve as a resource for impacted neighbors, neighborhood organizations, and businesses that contact the City through the zoning process. This individual would help explain the impacts of zoning changes, guide community members through the options to support or contest cases, and support communications with applicants. They would also proactively reach out to NPCTs as a part of the NPA process.
5. Create an Ordinance and Policy Support Office not under the City Manager to lead the process of crafting new ordinances or policies - or changes to existing ones - as directed by City Council.

Rationale:

Rationale for initiatives 1-5, respectively:

1. Allow for new and existing commissioners to gain valuable knowledge about planning processes, state law, and best practices to inform discussions and improve efficiency.
2. This allows for clarity and ease of understanding for community members (and Planning Commissioners) when reviewing the backup materials, which are often

the authoritative source for rezoning and NPA cases. One example is to add a chart showing key effective entitlements such as the maximum height, maximum impervious cover, and maximum setbacks, broken out by applicant request, staff recommendation (if different), and the current existing entitlements. Another example would be to add the contact information (pulled from the community registry) of neighborhood associations and NPCTs in the area.

3. This ongoing focus group would offset the cost of consultants that Planning staff employ to help develop recommendations for code amendments, and creates a clear channel for Austin's community of land use professionals to engage with City-led land use reforms. It would also help ensure that the Planning staff's code amendment recommendations result in developers actually initiating the types of projects intended by the amendments, i.e., projects financially "pencil out" with the code amendments.
4. Planning Commissioners often get feedback from neighbors and neighborhood organizations that it is difficult to get in touch with City staff regarding zoning cases, to understand how a zoning change will impact them, and to navigate their options to support or oppose a proposed zoning change.
5. To streamline ordinance creation and allow for a more transparent and direct input process with stakeholders, especially City departments. This would likely include compiling and organizing existing Council direction and maintaining a schedule of ongoing work.

Motioned By: Parliamentarian Ahmed Breton

Seconded By: Commissioner

Vote: 12-0

For: Chair Woods, Vice Chair Haney, Secretary Maxwell, Parliamentarian Ahmed, Commissioners Barrera-Ramirez, Bedrosian, Breton, Gannon, Hiller, Lan, Powell, and Skidmore.

Against: None

Abstain: None

Off the dais: None

Absent: None

1 vacancy on the dais.

Attest: _____ 