



CodeNEXT Mapping – PIR #35462

Lessons Learned

The Mapping Process

- City Staff divided the city into grids
- Grids were reviewed by individual staff members
- If staff identified a “major decision”, it was escalated to upper management
- Whether a particular site received additional scrutiny appears to have been dependent upon such decisions being flagged by individual staff members
- **Key**: As part of the review process, staff was responsible for putting a note into a database to identify (i) whether a lot was reviewed and (ii) why the staff member did/did not change the zoning for the lot (Subject of future PIR)

Was there a Mapping Methodology?

YES; and the methodology even included references to the neighborhood plans' text and FLUMs

But, why was the criteria such a mystery for so long? . . . “When we talked to CAG about mapping approach, we didn't ask for their opinion and nobody wanted to say/hear more about it.”

- *Source document: CodeNEXT Mapping Strategy Meeting, 02/01/2017*

How were neighborhood plans considered?

“Neighborhood plans contain many vision and development recommendations **that align with the Imagine Austin vision of a compact and connected Austin.** Those recommendations will be evaluated and considered part of the mapping strategy and will assist the CodeNEXT team to **understand how development patterns were considered** during the creation of the neighborhood plans.”

- *Source document: Draft Statement for CodeNEXT Mapping Strategy, dated 10/03/2016; see also “CodeNEXT Mapping Approach”*

What about the FLUMS?

“The CodeNEXT team will evaluate all existing FLUMS to closely examine development patterns as they were envisioned during their creation and how closely they align or deviate from Imagine Austin.”

“Modifications to FLUMs is beyond the scope of CodeNEXT however, updates and changes may be considered as part of an alternate process after an evaluation of existing conditions, development patterns, existing zoning and application of the new zoning tools is studied.”

-Source document: “CodeNEXT Mapping Approach”

Did city staff with knowledge of the neighborhood plans participate in the mapping?

“Participating staff are very familiar with existing neighborhood plans and zoning . . .”¹

But see this question asked in March... “[D]o you know if there was any thought or discussion of possibly connecting staff who worked on specific neighborhood plans to those areas?”²

-Source documents: 1) Written Response to Question from Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo, dated June 8, 2017; 2) Email from one staff member to another, dated 03/08/2017

How did mappers decide where to put “transect” zoning?

Q: “When to switch from T-zones to non-T-zones?”

A: “Keep going until there is a material physical change”

“Base the decision on character rather than distance from node”.

- *Source document: CodeNEXT Mapping Strategy Meeting, 02/01/2017*

“Areas with high connectivity within 1/4-1/2 mile of a corridor or center were good candidates for transect zones”

- *Source document: Email from consultant dated 02/09/2017*

How were the “nodes” identified?

“Start at center . . . Ideally these would be nodes that have been already established in a planning process, but in Austin, will need to look at how zoning has been applied and how build-out has happened to identify a node.”

- *Source document: CodeNEXT Mapping Strategy Meeting, 02/01/2017*

Mapping Methodology

- Imagine Austin
 - Corridor or center?
- Connectivity + building form (frontage to lot width)
 - Street grid, access to corridor + transit or loops & lollipops?
- Existing policy
 - FLUMs, NPs → what do they say? how old?
- Base zoning + overlays
- Existing land use (GIS not always accurate)
- Other conditions
 - Environmental constraints?

Existing Zoning

- T-zones? → Zone or bucket o' zones
- Euclidian? → Zone or bucket o' zones

CONNECTIVITY	IA CORRIDOR OR CENTER	
Y	Y	→ T-Zone
Y	N	?
N	Y	?
N	N	→ Euclid.

How did we lose our single-family zoning?

“We should remove all SF-2 from the maps, as a quick way to focus efforts.”¹

“We also have Tier 2 edits that ODI flagged as needing city sign-off. These are mostly related to SF-3 having been upzoned to T4 in the previous map, and ODI wanting to ensure the areas are revisited following public feedback.”²

“[I]t’s not a transcription error . . . I did map it as a T4. The reason was that our base maps labeled that such stretch of houses [as] including a 3-plex, which are not allowed in T3, and so seemed to bring it up to T4 . . . Another approach would be spot-zoning only those parcels but I carried that intensity to those parcels’ immediate neighbors.”³

- Source documents: 1) Document: CodeNEXT Mapping Strategy Meeting, 02/01/2017; Email from consultant, dated 5/11/2017; Email from staff, dated 05/09/2017.

What is happening with conditional overlays?

"I am hoping to do more analysis [on conditional overlays], especially in the transect zone areas where I think we could find a Title 23 zone that meets the conditions of the CO."

- *Source document: Email between staff, dated 05/31/2017*

What's missing from the emails?

- Serious dialogue about existing neighborhood plan direction
- Analysis of displacement of families and impacts on neighborhood schools
- Analysis of existing/future flooding and consideration of impervious cover increases, loss of trees and other environmental constraints
- Analysis of infrastructure capacity and needs for increased population
- Conversations with neighborhood planning contact teams and other key stakeholders

What do we do now?

- Council Q&A
- Organize your neighbors and gather thoughts / input
- Share information with groups like Community Not Commodity
- Meet with your council representatives and Land Use Commissions
- Recognize that even the best and brightest will disagree
- Get ready for the 2nd Draft



Contact Information

Bobby Levinski

Phone: 512-636-7649

Email: Levinski@utexas.edu