



Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) has been following closely the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan process since its inception. Many of our representative neighborhoods have participated in this process. On behalf of ANC's executive committee, I would like to express our collective concerns about the final draft plan; we are unable to support such a plan in this form. Even though many of the concepts such as preserving livability, our character and our history, having multiple transportation choices as indicators for complete communities, bridging the ethnic divides, protecting our natural resources, and ensuring prosperity for all have universal appeal, we have reservations about how these things will ultimately be achieved/implemented, funded, and executed.

The major talking points that the ANC executive committee has about the Comprehensive Plan are:

- Continue the Neighborhood Planning Process before adopting the Imagine Austin Plan. By tabling the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan at this time, the Neighborhood Planning Process would continue for those neighborhoods without NPs. We must insist that the Neighborhood Planning process continue for those areas that do not have Neighborhood Plans, particularly those within the urban core. These areas will provide more than enough density for the estimated 750,000 new people who will call Austin home in the coming years. (We have already satisfied the density requirement for 550,000 new people in the current NP process. Staff did not use the information from a report entitled "Density Backup Data" which was a briefing on 2 capacity analyses by the City before the Growth Concept Map was created. Such omissions create a distorted view regarding density and proposed density in a comprehensive plan.)
- The Growth Concept Map needs to be removed from Imagine Austin. This map contradicts the broad vision /big picture approach of the Comprehensive Plan. It is too specific to be conceptual. It is inaccurate, because it does not include all of the existing Neighborhood Plans comprehensively, nor does it fairly account for those areas without neighborhood plans. The Growth Concept Map's role in the short-term implementation list is of ultimate concern. For example, 3 out of 5 work items under Invest in a compact and connected Austin for short-term implementation (pp. 5-3, 5-4) are based on the Growth Concept Map. From this example, we are concerned that the Growth Concept Map might suggest entitlements to development that would be in contradiction to the Neighborhood Plans, particularly in areas where growth has been designated.
- Imagine Austin caters to the "creative classes" which makes this plan elitist. Where are the provisions and care for people who are in the service industry and other day to day jobs which are essential to our economy? What about the dishwashers, the mechanics, waitresses and hotel workers? In the Implementation Chapter, there are groups of workers who have been forgotten; Blue-collar jobs were referenced once in this chapter. Clearly, this is in opposition to the vision statement: As it approaches its 200th



anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity: where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

- Local Businesses are not acknowledged as priority players for Austin's future economy. Local businesses should be one of the key components for a robust City economy. This is obviously a glaring oversight in the Comprehensive Plan itself, as well as, specifically in the Implementation chapter. We do not perceive this as the will of the community.
- Comparing the revision of the Land Development Code as a priority program to the other seven priorities is misguided. The mention of this revision has created fear within the community. With community distrust in City processes, it is not clear whether fairness and/or reason will play a role in this proposed LDC revision. We do see how a revision of the LDC could be detrimental.

With all of these deficiencies, we cannot support this Plan. We urge the Planning Commission to reject adopting Imagine Austin as the Comprehensive Plan for the City.

ANC executive committee believes that The Imagine Austin Plan should protect and nourish the building blocks of the City, Austin's Neighborhoods; it should build upon the strength of the City's neighborhoods as one of the key amenities while also ensuring safe, affordable and livable places to call home. The Imagine Austin Plan should be based on the existing Neighborhood Plans and the others that have yet to be completed. Many promises and ideas have been made within the chapters of this plan. Implementation seems to be the key for finalizing these ideas; however, we feel that flawed premises and outdated data (mostly referenced from 2008, 2009) are fueling some conclusions within the Plan. We, the residents of Austin, deserve a better plan; we urge you to reject this version of the Comprehensive Plan. A majority of the ANC executive committee supports this letter.

Sincerely,

Steven Aleman,
ANC President, 2011-2012

3.27.12