



**Austin Neighborhoods Council Resolution
For a City of Austin Public Engagement Ordinance**

WHEREAS, the City of Austin will significantly benefit from an improved, participatory, public engagement process that prescribes methods for including public and stakeholder involvement in planning sessions for major projects or significant revisions to City laws and codes; and

WHEREAS, major City of Austin projects such as Imagine Austin, various Bond proposals, CodeNEXT, and Project Connect, etc. have ample opportunities to sufficiently improve their engagement of the public and develop more effective outreach activities that focus on receiving a diverse set of perspectives, solutions and feedback; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin will benefit from developing improved methods for collecting, evaluating and quantifying citizen feedback, viewpoints, suggestions and incorporating them into the plans being defined; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin consultants and City Staff who facilitate and oversee major plans and projects will improve their interactions and effectiveness by requiring documentation and quantification of perspectives, feedback and inputs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin will improve their effectiveness and efficiency by adhering to specific guidelines in a Public Engagement Ordinance; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Austin Neighborhoods Council passes a Resolution for the City Council to develop a set of guidelines for a Public Engagement Ordinance that encompasses the following components:

- a) Processes that are employed shall respect the model that citizens are caretakers of the process and citizens shall help define the process.
- b) Facilitators shall show how the public engagement information will be used and shall ensure final actions are not predetermined.
- c) Various stakeholders from the community and neighborhoods shall participate in give-and-take sessions that provide an iterative process where differing viewpoints are moderated on a fair and impartial basis.
- d) Facilitators at public meetings shall guide participants in a consensus-building effort with the process fostering a spirit of openness and cooperation.
- e) Moderators at public meetings shall attempt to resolve conflicts, in part by exploring and quantifying pros and cons of various scenarios.

- f) Reports of the results of community feedback shall document and quantify prevailing viewpoints of stakeholder groups, and illustrate steps taken to resolve differences and arrive at consensus.
- g) Reports of the results shall clearly indicate why predominant ideas, suggestions, and directions recommended by stakeholders and/or the public were or were not adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the framework for this reform shall be compared to best practices for consensus-building efforts that have been implemented in other areas. One example of reviewing benchmark practices is the National Coalition for Dialog and Deliberation (<http://ncdd.org/about>).

Presented to the ANC General Membership: August 27, 2014

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