

Code Advisory Group Stakeholder Engagement Event (May 23, 2016) Summary of Public Input (from Table Flip-Charts)

The focus of the Code Advisory Group's May 23, 2016 stakeholder engagement event was public input on the Code Prescription: Household Affordability. The following text summarizes the input that was received at the meeting. The summary consolidates the participants responses based on the four breakout rooms.

- The Gallery
- Conley Room
- The Classroom
- Dance Studio

Part 1

1. How did you choose where you live?
2. What were the most important factors?

Proximity to:

- Transit, the Boardwalk at Lady Bird Lake,
- Downtown and central neighborhoods
- Job
- Family and friends
- University, school
- Shopping, restaurants, conveniences and services
- I-35
- Parks including Barton Springs
- Arts
- Food
- Amenities and interests
- Cows

Affordability

- It is what they could afford, needed \$600-800 to rent
- Family housing
- What they could finance, made sense for a first-time homebuyer
- Shared walls as affordable
- Timing, needs
- Not a choice
- Unforeseen costs
- Minimize taxes due to retirement (but this has changed)
- Sacrificed access for affordability.
- Affordability equals lack of choice such as grocery, medical and transportation
- Have to move/lots of turnover every year
- Lack of sidewalks, ammenities etc. to keep rent low

Community Character

- Captures what is Austin, feels like home
- Liked Mueller Master Plan
- Village lifestyle
- Suburban v urban character

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- Suburban v urban character
- Historic neighborhood, older housing
- Neighborhood feel
- Rural character
- Family-oriented
- Family history
- Quality of life
- Housing type
- Density, Avoid Density
- Big yard
- Quiet
- Size of units (lack of smaller units)
- Single-family neighborhood
- Austin vibe, eclectic, Austin culture
- Diversity of people, mixed income and ethnicities
- People who accept/appreciate others
- Social aspects, community ties
- Walkable streets, bikeable
- Size/space vs proximity (where an option, scarce)
- Stability over time
- Safety
- Trees and green space
- Convenient

Other (Classroom)????

- Private vs public green space
- Question of access-car vs location
- Land uses around home
- Single-family home vs. density \$
- What to do with contradictions in the code?
- Over-taxed park system
- Quantity vs. quality of green space
- Mandatory inclusions in code vs. need (i.e. visitability)
- Parking requirements (unwanted)
- Rent control (voucher holders)

Part 2:

Who Cannot Live There?

- Low income residents
- Middle income households
 - Subsidized or expensive but not in between
 - In low income developments
- People who live there because of taxes (especially for fixed income)/people getting pushed out of neighborhood
- For some there is a limited ability to upsize or downsize within neighborhood
- The range of income levels has shrunk over time
- The children of those living there now.
- Families
- Renters
- Students/young people
- People that need more than a studio
- People of color
- People “just starting out”
- People “that aren’t planned for”

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- Fixed income
- People with limited transit options, no car
- The fabric of the neighborhood (long-term residents)
- People with mobility challenges such as disabilities both physical and visual.
- 90% of people in city

Discussion of the Prescriptions

Mobility

- Relationship between density and public transportation
- Incentives for employment near transit
- Connect density to public transit
- Change transit-oriented development to equitable transit-oriented development
- Accessibility to transit
- Concern for persons with disability in proximity to transit
- More transit hubs that are serviced
- Greenfield example: pre-plan for mass transit
- Reduce parking where appropriate, eliminate parking minimums and let market dictate, connect parking requirements to walk scores
- Tools available to planners too limited
- Put a price on users for parking spots (people pay for what they value)
- Affordable housing negatively impacted by parking requirements (unnecessary/expensive)
- Public parking garages centrally located in activity centers
- Redevelopment needs to be considered with transportation needs.
- Real analysis of precise benefit from reduced parking requirements for developers
- Impacts of reduced parking must be considered in context
- Disincentivize parking vs. incentivize bus use
- Green space over excess parking space
- Improve roads in conjunction with growth

Missing Middle Housing

- Variety of housing options such as row houses, micro-units (400 square feet)
- Developer wants predictability in code-do not have to gamble on permits and rezoning
- Apply code uniformly across central Austin, not just corridors and neighborhood centers but worries about total changing neighborhood from homeowner.
- Need voice from everyone.
- Worries about luxury condos in affordable neighborhood
- Make it easier for diverse housing-single/multi/townhome, duplex, etc.
- On-street parking impacts
- Will missing middle be “affordable?”
- Affordable housing vs household affordability
- Pre-approved missing middle/accessory dwelling unit design
- Transition zone should be measured not by distance but by effects
- Co-ops, co-housing, and other alternative ownership structures
- Have community development corporations manage accessory dwelling units-similar to alley flats
- Family-friendly affordable units
- Attract families to live in the city
- Variety of family-centered mix of housing
- Use form-based code to fit zoning to neighborhood feel and context
- Preservation of existing housing stock, including those that are affordable
- Accessory dwelling units for affordability
- Live/work-integrate into neighborhoods
- No area should be exempt from diversifying housing stock.
- Hyde Park: 8 units/12 parking spaces, 5,000 sf lot. Stormwater control?
- Access over proximity

- No area should be exempt from diversifying housing stock.
- Hyde Park: 8 units/12 parking spaces, 5,000 sf lot. Stormwater control?
- Access over proximity
- Age of housing units
- Does diverse housing lead to gentrification?
- Are we segregating our city by income
- More affordable Central Austin living
- Does density lead to or prohibit affordability?
- More infill may lead to more flooding especially in central Austin given infrastructure
- If we want more places like Mueller, we need to put a code in place that encourages that type of development.
- Value community services over highest bidder.
- Are we planning to move people? Need to avoid more displacement.
- Don't insist of density/development where people already live.
- Are we choosing not to make Austin affordable?
- We have antiquated "big lot" tendencies that limit affordability
- NIMBYism around greenfield sites?
- Development in West Austin needs to keep pace with East Austin.
- Homogenous (single-family) neighborhoods excludes low income, service industry
- Filtering-luxury condos provide more choices on upper end and also make affordability in center.
- Worry about neighborhoods becoming less diverse, pushing people to suburbs.
- Worry about 6+ unrelated people ordinance for cooperatives, students, etc.
- Tradeoff community benefit for density
- Increase supply and diversity of housing throughout Austin

Affordable Housing

- Conversion of underutilized properties to affordable housing
- Eliminate fee in lieu or pool into funds for affordable housing. Increase fee!
- Why not 99 years affordability instead of 20?
- Rebekah Baines Johnson Center is an example of density working
- Change definition of "affordable" for subsidies/bonuses-serve who is being priced out.
- Define affordable as 30% take home income.
- Regulate some of affordable units for density bonus (3, 4 + bedrooms)
- Better monitoring of affordability programs

Density bonus:

- Density bonuses where appropriate (i.e. Homestead Preservation Areas)
- Missing middle density bonus for affordability
- At what point do bonuses actually make a difference in cost? (land, finance, construction costs)
- The City complicates the process!
- Longer required affordability or in perpetuity.
- Density Bonus Program for greenfield

Centers and Corridors

- Important to ensure uses (industrial, etc.) do not harm single-family residences (East Austin historic "dumping ground")
- Develop town centers on periphery with more than service jobs (not just coffee shops and bars)

What's Missing from the Code?

Fiscal

- Examine tax policy, tax exemptions
- Linkage fees
- "Branding" affordability for reasonableness and modesty including working with the State

- Examine tax policy, tax exemptions
- Linkage fees
- “Branding” affordability for reasonableness and modesty including working with the State to relate tax rate to rent paid
- Economic development policy regarding promoting local business.
- Land trusts and banking as tools in the code
- Look at utilities to ensure compact development that lowers costs
- Rent control? Change state law!
- City investment in public housing

Development Standards

- Further restrict housing sizes
- Green buildings to save money in the long run
- Zero lot line in Single-Family zoning or different setback standards
- Accessibility requirements
- Inclusionary zoning where available
- Subchapter E: redevelopment v rehabilitation
- How much flexibility in code? Use vs. form-based
- Worry about uniform code vs. neighborhood plan

Mobility

- Need better transit planning
- Sidewalks and streetscape
- Better sidewalk requirements-maybe use density bonus for offsite improvements

Community

- Safety such as eyes on the street, communication between neighbors, and design for safety
- Need more about what happens in core of neighborhoods outside of centers and corridors
- Use code to address food desert in suburbs, grocery stores in complex (i.e. Fresh Plus in West Campus).