

2014 AIA Austin
Commercial Advocacy Round Table
June 23, 2014 | Center for Architecture

Discussion Topic: Issues Related to Infill Development

1. Introduction by Jeff Needles
2. New business topics proposed by attendees
 - a. Perceived underfunding of City Planning and Development Review Dept.
 - b. Permitting process too long. Complex LDC compounds the problem
 - c. AIA to advocate for improved staffing of PDR
 - d. PDR Reviewers have different interpretations of LDC.
 - e. Philip Southwick announced that Michele Van Hyfte is working with Austin Energy on their Rebate Policy. Members can contact her with any issues.
3. George Adams Presentation (Asst. Dir. Planning & Development Review Dept.)
 - a. The CodeNext talks held on June 12 & 14 are now available to view online. <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/codetalks>
 - b. Brief overview of the Imagine Austin Plan and its 8 priority programs.
 - c. Discussed Imagine Austin Growth Concept Map
ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/maps/Fig_4.5_Growth_Concept_Map_24x36-2_Map.jpg
 - d. George discussed the CodeNext phases & timeline
 - i. Listening & Understanding – Summer 2013
 - ii. Diagnosis & Outline- Fall 2014 (go to council in Sept. for approval of proposed code choices. Go back to council in spring after election)
 - iii. Preliminary Draft Code- Fall 2015
 - iv. Code Adoption – Summer 2016
 - e. Diagnosis Findings
 - i. Issues with base districts (SF-3 & CS zoning)
 - ii. Lack of affordable housing and choice
 - f. An RFP has been issued for an organizational assessment of the Planning & Development Review Department.
 - i. This will be a 9 month process - so will be completed before code rewrite. There will be a challenge incorporating any changes in the department with the new code once adopted.
 - ii. Will include stakeholders in process (AIA should be actively involved in process)
4. Infill Development Discussion
 - a. Infrastructure cost is a burden on infill developments.
 - i. Should city pay for infrastructure with bonds or taxes, versus keeping it private
 - b. External partners of PDR (Austin Energy, Austin Water Utility, & Fire Department) do not provide clear guidelines on development & their

- review is not coordinated well with permitting process
 - c. Issues with policy versus implementation. Intent is not clear.
 - d. There are contradictions in permitting requirements depending on reviewer or department
 - e. It is difficult to develop small lots with current code restrictions. This leaves many lots empty and undevelopable.
 - f. How Neighborhood Plans affect this process? How to map zones in new LDC using old plans. How to use new LDC tools.
 - g. How will council redistricting affect the code rewrite process and the role of neighborhood plans?
 - h. Suggested to create more site development permitting options for smaller projects.
 - i. Proposed that a PDR review team be assigned for projects and follow the project through completion of permitting process.
 - j. Suggested to condense the development tools into one easy-to-use interface. Like the Drive Decisions platform <http://drivedecisions.com/>
5. Eleanor McKinney Presentation
- a. Announced a CodeNext session at AIA Summer Conference on August 22.
 - i. Will workshop 3 sites (1 urban residential, 1 urban commercial, & 1 suburban)
 - ii. Asked members to suggest sites for workshop. Ele will provide submittal requirements for suggested sites.
 - b. Briefly discussed Seattle Green Factor, an incentive based landscape code and how Austin should adopt this model.
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cityplanning/completenesslist/greenfactor/whatwhy/>