

NATURAL RESOURCES, RESILIENCY, LANDSCAPE AND SITE DESIGN

PROBLEM/ISSUE:

Code not organized by intent to create a sustainable city, i.e. Water Conservation, Urban Heat Island, etc.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

The code needs to be easy to understand by intent and flexible in design options to solve for that intent.

CASE STUDIES:

Reference Seattle's Green Factor - Point Based System to meet green infrastructure standards using a POINT BASED SYSTEM



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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

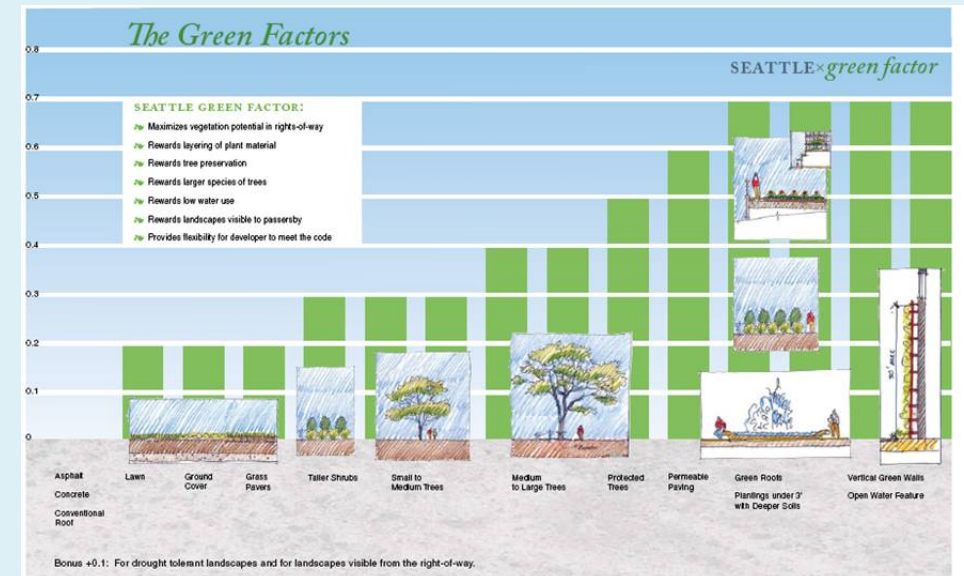
- Existing Code not User-Friendly
- Code is circuitous and overlapping creating problems for reviewers and design professionals. It needs to be clear enough for a new developer or consultant coming into town to be able to submit a viable site plan.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- The code needs to be easy to understand by intent and flexible in design options to solve for that intent.
- **Make code more visual, educate reviewers and design professionals, make code flexible using a matrix and/or point based system.**

CASE STUDIES:

- Reference Seattle's Green Factor - Point Based System to meet green infrastructure standards using a POINT BASED SYSTEM
- **Reference point system approach of SITES or LEED for example formatting (without hard-lined prerequisites)**



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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

Although not the code itself, one of the main issues is different interpretations of the code by different reviewers and lack of trust by the reviewers of licensed professionals. Also, there seems to be more and more desire by the reviewers to apply tighter and tighter regulations rather than engage with the professionals in creative solutions that meet the intent of the ordinances.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

The code needs to be easy to understand by intent and flexible in design options to solve for that intent.

Make code more visual, educate reviewers and design professionals, make code flexible using a matrix and/or point based system.

Make regulatory review cross discipline. The review process would be more stream-lined, round table format...versus having various parties review at different times with conflicting perspectives. (End result = quicker solution = less money & time spent)

CASE STUDIES:

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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- The LDC needs to better address and incentivize development in older infill areas versus new greenfield development. Often heard from developers “It is too hard and complicated to deal with the City of Austin...so we chose to work in the out-skirts” etc, etc.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Setup a network/incubator for public/private partnerships with the City of Austin to make underutilized developable land, parkland, etc to be recreated into their more desired, higher and best uses.
- Establish public investment areas
- **Identify village and functioning urban nodes within the city limits.**
- Limit supply of land available in areas that are considered (not preferred)
- **Potential for more liberal review process (waivers and variances)**

CASE STUDIES:

- Seattle: “Infill Development: Strategies for Shaping Livable Cities”

<http://www.mrsc.org/publications/infill1.pdf>

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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- Make Code specific to areas (collection of similar neighborhoods). This would allow the code to be responsive to area concerns/needs. These areas would not correspond to City Council Districts.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Establish COA Review Teams for “areas” to allow systems area approach (areas meaning: villages, neighborhoods, or zones within the city of Austin)
- Performance based metrics and commissioning has helped achieve certain building goals, could we use this approach on a Site Plan basis?
- *Create incentives to development to provide creative context sensitive solutions and opportunities in appropriate areas? i.e. on-site water quantity and quality treatment, solar harvest (take load off city grid), provide public/private open space to meet 1/8 mile goal from each dwelling unit in “area”. Multi-faceted values are important. Owner can opt to provide “X” to receive variance, or alternative incentives while providing for the greater community.*

CASE STUDIES:

- Reference Seattle’s Green Factor - Point Based System to meet green infrastructure standards using a POINT BASED SYSTEM

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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- Lacks educated and qualified review professionals

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Improve credential requirements and training of staff reviewers. Incentivize a greater supply of quality reviewers with greater pay and benefits (City heavily invests in this department understanding its significance).

CASE STUDIES:

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NATURAL RESOURCES, RESILIENCY, LANDSCAPE AND SITE DESIGN

PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- Problems with LDC blanket language and interpretation by legal staff. Legal staff requires something that is not needed on the specific site plan.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- PDR staff should have the final determination as to what is needed.

CASE STUDIES:

- **Project at MuEller – Seton Office Building**
- **LDC Section 25-7-152 relates to dedication of a drainage easement for a drainage facility. PDR review did not find the section application but due to the need for a Unified Development Agreement, legal staff had a review role. They interpret the section as “blanket” and required for all projects which led to the unnecessary additional services of dedicated an easement where not required by PDR.**

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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- Definition of impervious cover does not encourage the use of innovation such as pervious services. This is caused by a disconnect between the engineering/actual performance of pervious materials to allow water infiltration and the current use of impervious cover to control development.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Remove the impervious cover limitation and replace with performance criteria.

CASE STUDIES:

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NATURAL RESOURCES, RESILIENCY, LANDSCAPE AND SITE DESIGN

PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- The difficulty in accomplishing decentralized water quality treatment in urban infill project or urban redevelopments project.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Water quality compliance could be accomplished within the urban core by development of a point system for the use of green treatment methodologies instead of central ponds. Although the current code does allow for green treatments it is many times difficult if not impossible to meet the design capture volumes. If one is to take a holistic view acknowledge that removing an older energy inefficient building for example and replacing it with a green building should count toward better stewardship of the environment.

CASE STUDIES:

- In looking at the redevelopment of an older (1980) building on Far West where the desire is to put a parking garage/office building on a existing surface parking lot, it is challenging to address water quality for the redeveloped area on an already developed site. The point here is that the roof runoff of a proposed new building is better for water quality than a surface parking lot and yet there is no way to take this inconsideration.

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PROBLEM/ISSUE:

- Urban farms, community gardens, food hub....LDC needs to further define compatibility issues. How do we create incentives to provide opportunities in appropriate areas? Multi-faceted values are important.

PROPOSED APPROACH:

- Create metrics that will address and define different scales of food along the transect; from rural to peri-urban and intra-urban.
- Identify “urban agriculture incentive zones.” These areas can be public/private ventures. Identify these areas by looking at food deserts found in Austin as well as scales of food production.
- Create a metric that states that addresses access to healthy food (groceries, farmer-to-consumer sales, etc.)

CASE STUDIES:

STAR Community Index: Austin is one of the 10 pilot cities now refining a new national sustainability benchmarking tool, the STAR Community Index. Star Index, Goals for Food Access and Nutrition- Access to Food (Number 5a): Over 80% of residents live within a walkable half-mile of grocery store and also a direct farmer-to-consumer sales location, or within a walkable half-mile of a public transit station that provides service to a grocery store and direct farmer-to-consumer sales location in under 15 minutes one-way travel time. Of the remaining population, no more than 25% are allowed to be low-income or minority.

Definition of Direct farmer-to consumer sales location are sites where consumers can buy directly from farmers, including farmers markets, farm stands, CSA programs, food buying clubs and pick your own.

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URBAN FARMS CONTINUED

CASE STUDIES:

- Case study in Austin – where 4 big farms are located in East Austin. Map showing their location in relationship with the neighborhood. Identified existing open space in that neighborhood.
- Austin: Add mile radius and add map of all the urban farms and market gardens found in Austin
- Case Study in California – add images and map about this case study. The created “urban agricultural incentive zones”

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/02/local/la-me-urban-agriculture-law-20131003>

- **Agricultural Urbanism case study: Look at Duany’s book on “Theory & Practice of Agrarian Urbanism” Example: Prairie Crossing, Illionois. Different scales of production.**