

CAG Report on the Mobility Prescription Paper

Mobility Working Group of the
Code Advisory Group

December 19, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II. CAG OVERALL MOBILITY VISION.....	3
III. CAG COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	4
On Line Survey Results.....	9
IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	13
V. CAG EVENT COMMENTS	14
APPENDIX A – CAG MEMBER COMMENTS.....	17

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report serves as the Land Development Code Advisory Group’s (CAG) response to the Mobility Code Prescription, the third of four “prescription papers” authored by City staff as a part of CodeNEXT.

Some of the important points are that although there is broad support for most of the prescriptions, care will have to be taken in the mapping process for where and how parking reductions and compatibly standard changes are incorporated.

II. CAG OVERALL MOBILITY VISION

Our Imagine Austin and shared-CAG Vision is of a Compact and Connected City with green and varied array of transportation choices open to the community.

III. CAG COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

CAG members discussed the Mobility Prescription paper over the course of three meetings.

On July 25, Francis Reilly presented the Mobility Code Prescription. The following was discussed:

- The need for examples of other cities that have reduced the percentage of single-occupancy vehicles;
- transit-supportive density and uses along corridors and near transit stops;
- correlation between housing costs and transit ridership;
- where transit-supportive density and uses will be applied;
- how subdivision regulation changes could affect affordability and connectivity;
- need for data to support the effectiveness of Transportation Demand Management;
- need to ensure that cost-reductions in development gets passed along to consumers;
- need to prevent displacement of people in areas with lots of transit, and
- need to ensure that public amenities are provided when development incentives are issued.

On August 22, the Mobility Subcommittee facilitated a discussion on the prescription paper.

- 9 out of 17 people responded to the survey created by the Mobility Working Group. 6 prescriptions have good support (multimodal with sidewalk connectivity, sharing parking among businesses, review new development apps for safety, updating AMATP as a strategic mobility plan, context sensitive rules in regard to utilities, simplifying parking requirements, requiring safety review throughout process).
- Nuria Zaragoza does not see how loosening compatibility standards equates to more affordable housing. She believes that until we have something specific to replace compatibility it remains too hypothetical. She wants to see language that must require affordable units if it would not be compatible with nearby uses.
- Terry Mitchell was very supportive for affordable housing and increased densities along corridors. Jarred Walker recently spoke to the Cap Metro board and suggested increasing frequency over coverage as it results in increased ridership.

- In regards to reducing parking minimums, some CAG members voiced their skepticism that the saved cost could still be passed down from developer to the user and that an enforceable mechanism must be used.
- Guy Dudley is interested in finding or conducting a study that shows the cost of commuting. Liz Mueller actually did a sample survey that showed there would be a cost savings of moving to central zip codes and commuting by transit compared to living the suburbs and commuting by single passenger vehicle.
- Susan Moffat agrees that remodels should be required to provide connectivity improvements like sidewalks. Roger Borgelt does not think that accessory dwelling units (ADU's) or balconies should trigger improvements. A model to look at would be the Cherrywood Neighborhood sidewalk plan. A proportional dollar amount to the remodel would go into an overall fund for neighborhood sidewalks. However, Nuria does not believe this method is very efficient.
- Roger Borgelt also supported most prescriptions at some level, but wants to make the code easier to work with so variances are not as needed.
- Colby Wallis believes that incorporating safety into the site plan review should already be a part of the process. He also supports parking reductions and believes that density isn't solely about achieving affordability but walkability.

A table of individual CAG member comments is attached as **Appendix A**. In addition, an online poll was conducted to survey members on the various elements in the prescription paper. Screen captures from the survey appear in the next few pages, followed by the survey results.

CAG Mobility Survey

Please fill out this quick survey for the Mobility Committee to prioritize topics for discussion during Monday night's CAG meeting (your answers will be anonymous).

Your responses do NOT constitute a final vote and are NOT a replacement for feedback on the CAG Google Doc for the Mobility Prescription Paper.

* Required

Multimodal *

	Support	Support with minor changes	Support with major changes	Do not support
Plan for density along transit corridors using transect zones in lieu of compatibility along Imagine Austin corridors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complete Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and update Roadway Table	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement corridor plans, bike/sidewalk/urban trail master plans at the time of development to avoid future CIP projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve sidewalk connectivity by removing/restricting waivers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require connectivity improvements for remodels, not just redevelopments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Context-sensitive solutions to address utility standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments for multimodal prescriptions

Your answer

Mitigating congestion *

	Support	Support with minor changes	Support with major changes	Do not support
Transportation Demand Management: Menu of community benefits in exchange for parking reductions and/or impact fee reductions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More stringent requirements for variances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments for mitigating congestion prescriptions

Your answer

Parking *

	Support	Support with minor changes	Support with major changes	Do not support
Simplify parking requirements in non-transect zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eliminate minimum parking requirements in intensive transect zones and establish maximums instead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make shared parking easier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Through TDM, unbundle parking from cost of housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid parking in higher intensity zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments for parking prescriptions

Your answer

Household Affordability *

	Support	Support with minor changes	Support with major changes	Do not support
Density bonus along transit corridors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modifying single family compatibility requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments for affordability prescriptions

Your answer

Safety *

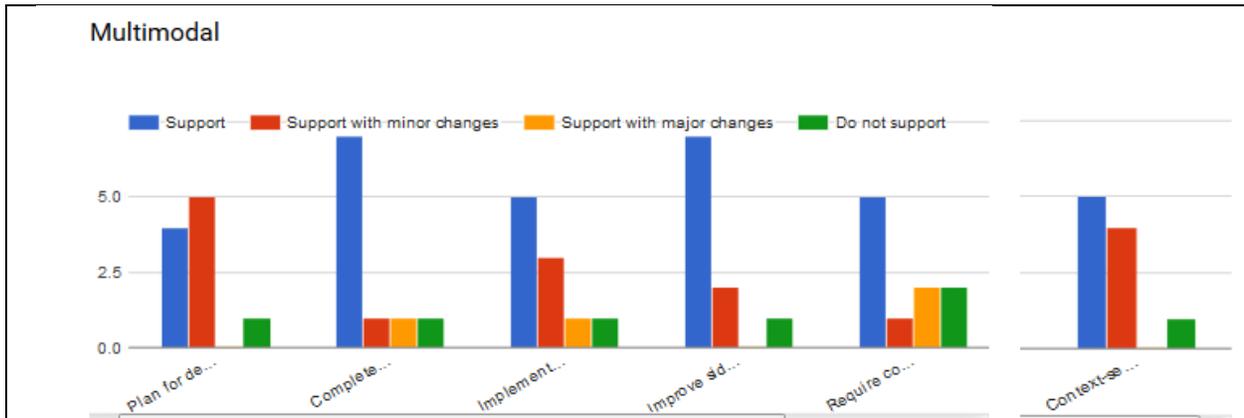
	Support	Support with minor changes	Support with major changes	Do not support
Require safety and mobility improvements to be addressed throughout development review process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Code for multimodal design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review for safety during development review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments for safety prescriptions

Your answer

SUBMIT

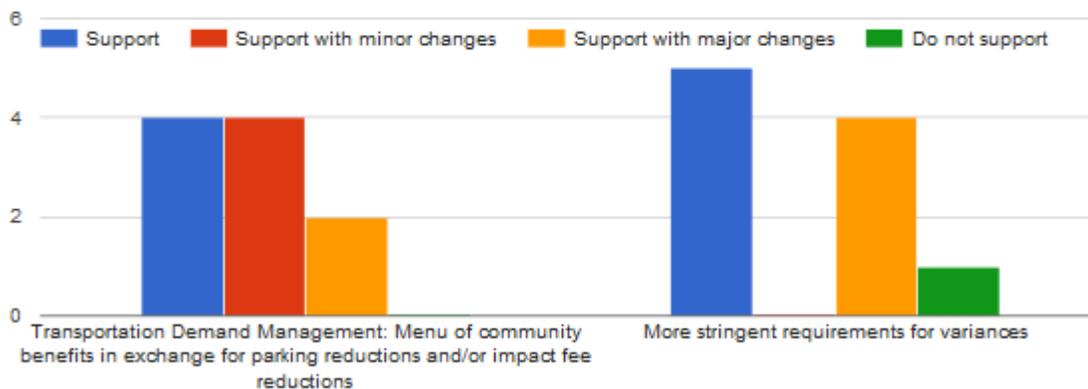
On Line Survey Results



Comments:

- Nowhere in the prescription paper does it talk about transect zones in lieu of compatibility. Any changes to compatibility need to be vetted in a stakeholder group process.
- Implementation of corridor/bike/sidewalk/etc. plans during development to avoid future CIP projects in most cases should be negotiated with the development team through MDAs and city incentives. This can be beneficial but can also prolong development.
- Blank answers are too vague for a vote.
- Although I do support density along transit corridors, and several of the watershed prescriptions address increased density, this prescription should acknowledge the capacity of the watershed and need of improved drainage infrastructure to accept more density at the same time.

Mitigating congestion

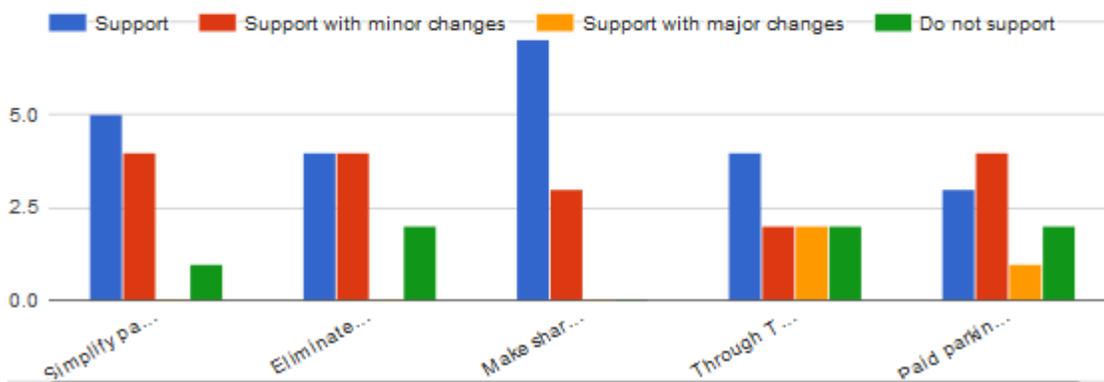


Comments:

- Need to tie increased green space to parking reductions.

- I support more stringent requirements for variances if this provides a variety of avenues with a direct solution to each of the requirements.
- Blank answers are too vague for a vote.
- Some of the TDM strategies provide a weak or attenuated benefit to the public - for example, a "transportation coordinator" could be a redundant and meaningless title conferred on an existing position. None of these weak incentives should alone satisfy a parking reduction. Furthermore, consequences for non-compliance should be steep. Regarding variances, obviously they should be more difficult to obtain, but this will be difficult to determine until we see the details: what will be carried over? Will there be firmer standards for when consideration of a variance is appropriate?

Parking



Comments

- Mapping of paid parking zones needs to be vetted.
- Reduce parking requirements required along Imagine Austin corridors. Reduce parking requirements for affordable housing. Reduce impervious cover requirements (similar but different) with both. Create density bonus programs for creating green spaces in lieu of impervious cover and parking.
- I support eliminating parking requirements in T5-T6 and possibly T4 as well, but I want the code to ensure that the community receives sizable and tangible benefits, and compliance should be monitored regularly and enforced with strict penalties.

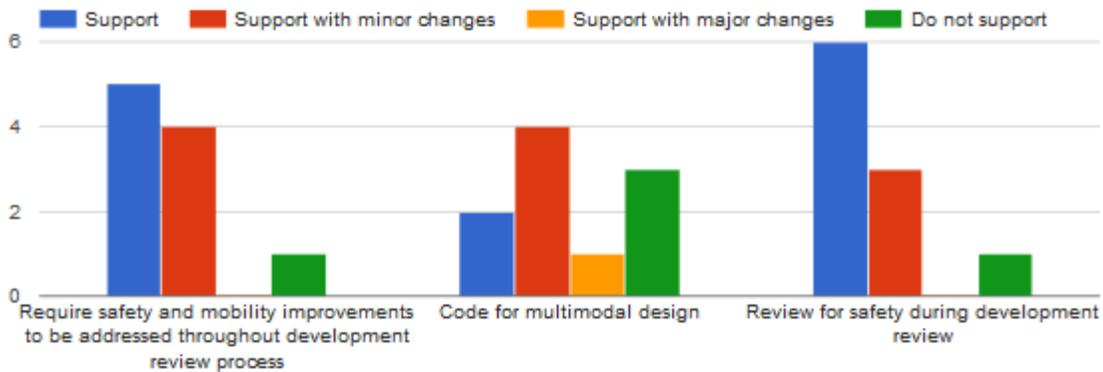
Household Affordability



Comments

- Compatibility requirements are not necessarily tied to decreased affordability. As stated previously, this needs greater discussion in a stakeholder group.
- Blank answers are too vague for a vote.
- I absolutely believe that the only way to equitably increase density on transit corridors and equitably increase transit ridership is to guarantee truly affordable units along the transit corridors. Obviously, the current density bonus program does not work, and I do not support anything that looks remotely like it. In fact, I'm hesitant to support any density bonus program at all, and would rather see a linkage/development/impact fee (whatever it is called) guarantee truly affordable housing in units for all sizes (singles, families, etc) on transit corridors.
I generally don't like the way we are using the word "affordability" to mean "cheaper." Although the technical definition of "affordability" versus "Affordable Housing" is explained in a paragraph here and there, I think it is confusing and disingenuous to say things like, "offering cash equivalents for unused parking spaces can contribute to increasing affordability." Plus, it doesn't address the very real need ensure cost savings are passed along to the consumer and the community in order for this basic presumption to even come true.
Maybe it's because I was in a hurry, but I didn't see the "Modifying single family compatibility requirements" prescription in the Household Affordability section, so I clicked Do Not Support because I don't know what this prescription proposes to modify exactly.

Safety



Comments

- If I understand this correctly, having a code for a multimodal design would be separate and apart from the code that is currently being written? Can we not incorporate these desires into the current code as opposed to creating another step in the process to lengthen the review times for development? A review for safety should be incorporated, but what will the tangible actions for adhering to safety requirements. How does this process become efficient and once again slow the review process through the city?
- Blank answers are too vague for a vote.
- Of course, safety is good. Need more detail to understand what I'm endorsing, other than just generally including safety in the review process.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

August 22, 2016

- Hannah Frankel represented cooperative housing. She believes that **parking minimums are prohibitive to rental residential developments** and would rather spend costs on amenities that further community benefits instead of cars. La Reunion Co-op has 70% car ownership, only filling up 60% of the parking lot. Also the fact that housemates share duties, cars are less needed.
- Ryan Nill spoke about why car ownership is lower in co-ops, mainly because it's shared housing with shared responsibilities. 35 residents live there but one person shops once a week, thus replacing around 20 trips for one trip. Co-ops specifically take measures to reduce the need for cars. 21st St Co-op has a partnership with the Yellow Bike Project, in which they assist residents with bike maintenance and commuting courses. Entertainment exists naturally due to the large amount of people that live there and does not need to be sought after in a vehicle. **Overall there is a large need to reduce parking minimums for uses that have "shared" systems.**
- Sharon Blythe **did not like that Spicewood Springs road was restriped for bike lanes without contacting the neighborhoods, in addition to pedestrian facilities not being included.** She wants these and other meetings/ actions to be more inclusive of the northwest Austin neighborhoods.
- Frank Herron wanted follow-up on ensuring that a variety of all types of housing can exist in all neighborhoods. He provided a list of 15 reasons why all neighborhoods need a diversity of housing. He gave an example of 21 units per acre being developed in Terry Town 70 years ago. Also new developments like The Grove have that variety of housing. He does not understand why certain neighborhoods need to be limited to people of a particular income, and believes that current zoning exacerbates that problem.
- Daryl Stuart spoke about his tiny house meetup group and wants to know if citizens can live in tiny houses on wheels or period. He asks that we address this issue for ADU uses. He states people want to live in town in tiny houses.
- David King spoke about parking in the Zilker Neighborhood and **thinks the RPP works and is necessary.** The residents have requested it and the City has followed through. He believes that Zilker already has a variety of housing and does not need to change in order to meet the code. He believes that The Grove is not diverse as it restricts single family. He is interested in making single family homes affordable to middle income families. He's worried about densification policies, and that it does not lead to affordability and can decrease livability.
- Lauren Creswell spoke about being multimodal and a home owner. **She favors more intensified and diverse land development patterns. She wants a program for developers to be incentivized for safety street roadway improvements. She wants shared driveways and for the City to control alleyways. She is worried about waiting for an updated TCM. She also supports the elimination of parking minimums and unbundling from housing.**

V. CAG EVENT COMMENTS

This section contains a brief summary of each CAG event at which the Mobility Paper was discussed.

Changing from an auto-centric city to a multi-modal region

Denser Housing along Transit Corridors

- Existing street design doesn't support ped/ bike/ transit
- ¼ mile zone is too small
- Is up-zoning a neighbor's idea of neighborhood? What about compatibility?
- Chicken or egg conundrum – induce density or follow it?
- Need to intentionally design land uses for people
- Land use and density that is adaptable and accommodates change overtime
- How can the design of the built environment encourage mode shift?
- Fee in lieu for different transect zones
- By-right vs conditional methods
- Wants expanded use of density bonuses, especially on transit corridors
-

Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

- Inadequate transit frequency
- Transit is currently slower than riding a bike do to current routes and the need to transfer
- “Multimodal” paradigm does not always take into account the needs of low-income neighborhoods outside of the core
- Inconsistency of bus times (no bus on Sunday)
- Difficult to trip-chain by modes other than SOV since errands/ shopping locations not close each other
- Park & Ride system currently inadequate due to lack of parking
- Buses are not a viable option for the service industry since they do not run late at night
- Buses and bus stops do not feel like a safe option for women at night
- Electric bicycles as a viable commute option which needs to be encouraged more
- Many buses routed around downtown but not all the north to south or east to west
- Need to expand the walkability that exists at the center of the city out to other neighborhoods
- Need for better transit hubs, amenities, and shade
- Need for transit-supportive density
- Unreliable bus service – too many transfers and a need for circulators
- Better bike detection at signals
- Weekend bus and train service drops off
- Assisted living is far away from transit
- Need for Transit Center/ HUB with concierge, food, laundry, co-working space
- Could upgrade North Lamar transit center
- Need for more buses that arrive in 15 minute intervals
- Need for smart bus stops that track bus arrival times
- Need for end of trip facilities for cyclist – Showers, bike racks, etc
- Smaller bus/ van to ease access and time at bus stops
- Need for more options overall
- Focus on access vs mobility
- Environment encourages behavior -> gradual shift

- Higher transit frequency = better access
- Need for better traffic light signal timing

Street Design

- Lack of connected street grid
- Fragmented bicycle facilities
- Diagonal commutes are very difficult for all modes
- East-West connection lacking for alternative uses
- Suggests 14th St or 16th St as an alternative bike route than Martin Luther King Jr.
- Lack of connectivity, feeder systems, and safety infrastructure at and around TODs
- I-35 creates not only an enormous division between communities, but it is extremely difficult to cross on foot
- The lack of a PHB at 4th and I-35 makes it very difficult to cross for children

Sidewalks

- Lack of sidewalk connectivity can be addressed by walking paths between neighborhoods
- All highways and frontage roads are a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians
- Many PHBs are not ADA accessible
- No continuity on bike lanes
- Need for shade to induce a more pleasant pedestrian experience
- Need for better pedestrian and street light coordination
- Code that promotes shared streets and woonerfs (5-10 MPH for all uses, suggested on Rainey)
- Parallel parking + bike lane arrangement should be context sensitive

Mitigating the effects of Congestion

TDM

- Telecommuting is a great option but a half-hearted effort
- HOV lanes
- Proximity + connectivity = less mobility problems
- What can Austin learn from peer cities?
- Decoupling allows more accurate demand management
- To what degree should the city subsidize driving?
- One-size-fits-all vs context sensitive solutions
- Flex hours

Parking

Context Sensitive Requirements

- Concern that citizens aren't being involved in discussions around parking reforms
- Alternative uses for parking spaces (parklets)
- How do we accommodate for parking in older neighborhoods?
- How to accommodate parking in the interim?

Minimum Requirements

- Free parking is the main reason why My Commute Solutions is a failure
- Dynamic rate street parking with full day options
- A large supply of parking discourages mode shift
- Parking supply vs pricing

Affordability

- Concerned that focusing on dense, walkable, transit-accessible areas will lead to gentrification
- Public expressed support to expand missing middle housing options to ½ mile from transit corridors
- People are forced to make choices between transportation and housing costs

Density Bonuses & Cash-Outs

- City Council may have killed the density bonus program by requiring vouchers
- Wants more VMU development

Cost of Growth

Impact Fees/ Mitigation

- New code may be putting too large of a cost on remodels
- Density's effect on Austin character and historical businesses
- Should not be pursuing lot by lot planning, but looking at how a development affects its surroundings
- By-right vs voucher-based systems

Safety

Build Safety into Design

- Dangerous pedestrian intersections and long block lengths make mid-block crossings almost impossible without PHBs
- Lack of safety disincentivizes biking
- Safer crossings across highways
- Need to make crossings at railroads safer for sole individuals
- More separated bicycle facilities or having facilities one street over from parallel large corridors
- Roads are too wide and induce speeding
- Narrow bike lanes as problematic

Code for Multi-modality

- Current lack of infrastructure that promotes safety (sidewalks, lighting, etc)
- Prohibit cars from parking in bike lanes at any time, keep bike lanes in use 24/7
- Needs uniformity of bicycle infrastructure
- Sidewalk prioritization

Incorporate Safety into Review

- Need for consistent street lights as it relates to safety and reliability for all uses
- Sweep bike lanes and protected facilities for bike safety

Outreach

- Concerned that low-income people aren't represented at this meeting
- A member of the CAG requested that ATD staff attend the next CAG meeting (Aug. 22nd) to answer questions.

Code

- Concerned that current LDC has too much red tape – Francis explained that one of the main motivations for Code Next is to streamline that process

Other

- Polycentric city plan
- Comprehensive WFH Plan

APPENDIX A – CAG MEMBER COMMENTS

The following spreadsheet contains comments from CAG members through November 28, 2016.

Mobility Code Prescription Paper CAG Member Comments

CAG Member/Date	What Did You Like?	What Needs Improvement?	What's Missing?
Sullivan 8/16/2016	<p>Unbundling parking costs More paid parking Context sensitive parking requirements Improved street design Smart shared parking Use of TDMs</p>	<p><u>Need data on the effectiveness of TDMs</u> <u>Show data from smart parking lots that meter use</u></p>	<p>I have often thought that transit centers would do better if there were retail or mobile food trucks on site. With regard to parking in TODs. I think a distinction needs to be made between transit facilities in T4+ areas vs T2-areas. In less intense areas, transit is park & ride. Shared streets.</p>
Moffat 8/17/16	<p>Establishing a remodel threshold for providing public benefit improvements.</p> <p>Requiring connectivity in new subdivision design and infill projects (greenfield/brownfield).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminating loopholes leading to sidewalk gaps and minimizing curb cuts. <p>Providing clear enforcement/monitoring/consequences.</p> <p>Limiting variances and making these more difficult to obtain. Requiring a safety review for proposed projects.</p> <p>Requiring that any change in parking requirements must be context sensitive.</p>	<p>Clarify where T-4 to T-6 transects will be located. The miniscule IA map included in the paper is difficult to read and does not show where the referenced 1/8 to 1/4 mile radius will apply. It will be hard to support elimination of parking minimums in these areas without knowing where they are.</p> <p>Provide definition of "context sensitive" and an example of how code will establish this for proposed parking changes.</p> <p>With all proposed parking trade-offs, the devil is in</p>	<p>Despite my repeated requests, I find no mention of a safety buffer for public schools (i.e., not reducing onsite parking requirements within 300' of a campus). The former project manager indicated this would occur in the mapping phase, but if it's not called out in the prescription paper, how will the mappers s know to do it?</p> <p>In addition,</p>

	<p>Statement that mapping must “respect character of the community” and that IA directs us to “protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change that include designated redevelopment areas, corridors and infill sites” and to “recognize that different neighborhoods have different characteristics, an infill and new development should be sensitive to the predominant character of these communities.” Also: “[Small area] plans and their FLUMs will provide strong guidance for staff’s mapping recommendations.”</p>	<p>the details: how can we ensure savings to developer in reduced parking will be passed on to tenants in the form of more affordable rent? Required unbundling of parking, which allows tenants to pay separately for parking, is one approach mentioned, but how will this be monitored/enforced?</p> <p>Re counting available on-street parking, this may vary dramatically based on time of day or day of week, especially near auto-intensive uses serving vulnerable populations such as schools, day care centers and many places of worship. Any counts used to establish available street parking must consider these peak hours.</p> <p>Require stronger connection between easing parking requirements and obtaining more affordable units or other clear public benefits. A trade-off should involve an exchange of roughly equal value, not an unmonitored giveaway.</p> <p>Generally, any trade-offs for affordable housing should specify a percentage of deeply affordable units, as well as family-friendly units - not just tiny efficiencies at 80%MFI, which is virtually all the current Density Bonus program has produced to date.</p>	<p>regarding paid parking, school districts would like to be consulted before any paid street parking is implemented within 300’ of a public school campus, as this may make it more difficult for parents, especially low-income families, to be engaged in their children’s education. Again, this should be specified in any code provision dealing with paid parking.</p> <p>Generally, I believe it will be difficult for the public to support changes without knowing where they will be applied. Given that mapping is not scheduled to take place until after the new code is adopted, this seems like a major structural defect in the process. Anything staff or consultants can do to clarify areas of change will be appreciated.</p> <p>Please consider requiring low-cost, broad-based linkage fee to provide funding for deeply affordable housing, which the current density bonus program</p>
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			does not provide.
Ele McKinney 8/20/16	Support updated utility placement standards. Support Green Streets.	TOD Zoning Approach is proposed for all stations along the Metro Rapid high-capacity routes. Yet there is no example of what this zoning approach could look like along a corridor.	Under the critical factors for transit, incentivizing transit use is not listed. On S. Lamar the buses are empty, yet there are plenty of dense multi-family apartment complexes. Creating even more density here will not necessarily translate into more transit use.
		The CAG needs more information on the Strategic Mobility Plan. What is the status? When will we see a draft?	Definitions of transect zones. What do T3, T4, and T5 look like?
	Support Street Design Standards that incorporate Corridor Mobility Reports, the Bicycle Master Plan, the Sidewalk Master Plan, and the Urban Trail Master Plan.	The CAG needs more information on the TIA process, the mitigation ordinance and rough proportionality.	Concern of impact to existing neighborhoods of increased density within 1/8 mile to 1/4 radius of transit stops. Needs be context sensitive.
	Support a percentage of affordable units in return for parking reductions.	Support Transportation Demand Management, but incentives for use by large private sector employers need to be tied to any entitlements the city offers. Also, the public sector employers need to be the leaders in this arena.	Impact on Austin's character with increased requirements for remodels. Threshold for providing public benefit improvements needs to be incentivized rather than required. Small iconic businesses need to be supported on Burnet Road instead of stating that redevelopment is

			the main preferred goal.
	Support reduction of variances.	Similar to the mapping of CodeNEXT, the proposed mapping of paid on street parking needs a thorough vetting process.	Need a Green Streets Master Plan.
	Support shared parking.	N. Lamar Transect concept map is not readable and the Transect Key needs definitions and examples.	While reducing curb cuts along corridors is a good goal, providing commercial access off of minor streets brings more cars into neighborhoods.
	Support unbundling of parking from housing.		Parking reductions also need to be tied to increased green space for stormwater infiltration.
			Need a stakeholder process for evaluation of the Residential Parking Permit program. There have been many benefits of the program that need to be retained. Support a context sensitive approach.
			The discussion on transportation as a part of affordability is missing live/work units which require less daily transportation demand.
			Missing landscape setbacks along corridors for pedestrian safety and comfort.

