

## **Compatibility Q&A Part III (August 21, 2014)**

### **Who decides what is compatible?**

Ultimately City Council will decide how the code regulates compatibility, based on a consensus of community values.

### **To what extent should compatibility be allowed to evolve in context?**

How standards will evolve is still to be determined, and will rely on the level of flexibility written into the code.

### **Is compatibility a "sacred" cause that will be too difficult to change?**

Like any aspect of the Code that functions within a dynamic city, we acknowledge that there are strong opinions about compatibility regulations, but we feel there is always room for improvement as community values evolve over time. Any changes made to compatibility standards in the new code will have to be made by City Council.

### **There are some who want to keep things like they are - Others want to go project by project. Others want predictability. How do you intend to address those who are not in favor of predictability?**

Predictability is a value that we have heard from the community throughout the process; it was also identified in the Listening to the Community Report as a key theme category. The ability to achieve more consistency through predictability can benefit developers and the community alike.

### **How are you going to address the issue that they are changing code based on individual requests, rather than for the benefit of the community?**

The CodeNEXT Team goal is to reach a consensus across the community to present to City Council in their decision making. Council members will make the decision to adopt regulations based on community input and values.

### **How are we going to incorporate all plans given that they could be incompatible with each other?**

During the Imagine Austin process, a great effort was put forward to ensure that Neighborhood Plans were consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Growth Concept Map. City Council is the only body that can formally amend these plans, and the City Charter requires that plans be consistent with one another.

### **Can we build into code that Council cannot circumvent the code?**

Building this type of rule into the code would not provide an adequate or appropriate process for how to handle extenuating circumstances that will inevitably occur.

### **How can you deal with historical uses in creating compatibility; they were there first?**

In most cases existing uses are grandfathered or carried over under the new code; this remains intact unless the use changes or the building expands.

### **How do you find a balance between change and preservation? How do we effectively balance the rights of property owners while maintaining quality of life?**

Achieving this balance will be part of the code drafting process. It is necessary for our city to guide the growth that is occurring in order to maintain the desired quality of life while also protecting the rights of property owners. The intent of CodeNEXT is to create tools that will yield the desired results as expressed by community members throughout the current process as well as in Imagine Austin.

**How do we ensure citizen/neighborhood participation in the development of the code and context within the development process?**

Participation in our public events and keeping up to date with the reports and documents that we provide publicly is the best way to stay involved in the process. CodeNEXT has created a culture of continuous conversation and collaboration with all stakeholder groups. Providing feedback through our surveys and online forums is an additional opportunity to be part of this process.