

January 14, 2014

Dear George,

Thank you for your response (1/7/14) to my letter (12/10/13). More questions have surfaced from these correspondences. In the 2013 fall "listening sessions" with the "community," the Opticos team used a **macro-approach** for gathering data and input. The "general topics" indicated a focus on "broad sector of the "community." I am assuming that the **micro-approach** will be used in the **evaluation of specific neighborhood character**, even though "**neighborhood character**" is not referenced in the upcoming exercise, "Community Character in a Box?" I am assuming that this is a correct assumption about the consultant team's approach. Here is an example of lack of clarity and consistency of language- neighborhood/community. **As an organization, ANC would like to know how the Opticos team is differentiating "neighborhood" from the broader term, "community."** Defining, clarifying, and separating these terms are paramount for the Code Next process.

We are very happy that the Opticos team with city staff view ANC as an **important participant in this Code Next process**. You stated in your letter that you have met with ANC "more than any other group." Whether or not the interaction between the umbrella group, ANC, and the city staff, has been because we asked you or that the staff made the contact is not the issue.

The attempts by your team to reach out to all neighborhoods have not been fulfilled. **I am concerned about this disingenuous outreach for the upcoming Code Next exercises; invitations did not go out to every neighborhood for Community Character in a Box.** More extensive outreach must be with all neighborhoods. My sense is that "WE" need to keep working on that approach by improving the "connection" with neighborhoods by communicating with and soliciting more input from all of our diverse neighborhoods. Even though ANC is an umbrella organization, we do not have access or the resources to alert all neighborhood organizations about these meetings and exercises. Typically, ANC's total membership roles include 85-88 neighborhood association members, but there are 119 neighborhoods registered on the Community Registry at the City. The city staff needs to be more conscientious about inviting all neighborhoods to the "table." I firmly believe that the Neighborhood Advisor, as a city staff member, would be a valuable addition to the city's outreach/communication for events. **Comprehensive outreach to all individual neighborhoods is terribly important for this Code Next process to be perceived as fair and comprehensive, not to mention, for the purpose of collecting accurate data. Therefore, the outreach to all neighborhoods needs to be more extensive and inclusive.**

You mentioned in your response letter (1/7/14, paragraph 5) that the Opticos team has extensively reviewed of "*all of the existing neighborhood plans to identify community objectives, goals, and policies.*" I know that ANC will be very curious to know **when and where this compiled "data" will be available** for viewing. We will also be eager to **learn how this data was tabulated, how conclusions were drawn,** and

how the applied conclusions relate to the content, goals, and priorities of Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

We need to have a **timetable/timeline for the delivery of the tabulation of goals, policies, and conclusions that the Opticos team compiled from the neighborhood plans.** I would like to make a special request that a list of the entire neighborhood plans and the names of those specific neighborhoods are sent to me directly. This will be helpful not only for ANC's viewing but for detecting if anything has been omitted unintentionally. The unstated intention is how to help you and the team more comprehensively and with more extensive outreach.

I would like to request a **list of all the neighborhoods without plans** that were reviewed. I am sure that the ANC membership will be eager to know how the consultants have collected and will collect data like *"physical characteristics, geographic plans, development patterns and date of construction,"* (5th paragraph). Obviously, there will be other contributing factors for that evaluation. We will need to know if this data from the **unplanned areas/neighborhoods** will be in a **separate report or in the same report** as the other **"planned" areas**. I would assume that report will be available soon, but I would like to request notification of its existence for the ANC membership. On behalf of ANC, I would like to know if all this data was considered as supportive of the Comprehensive Plan's objectives. I would also like to know if the analysis included elements, which make our individual neighborhoods "unique" (something that will be documented in the "Community Character in a Box" exercise this month). **It is most important that we know how and what specifically has been done and evaluated before moving forward,** so that we avoid omissions or produce too many redundancies.

The people who live in the specific mapped area of a neighborhood must be the participants for the "Community Character in a Box" exercises. There must be some way to account for who weighs in about the character of a particular neighborhood; otherwise, this exercise could be abused by business organizations and people who have no connection to a neighborhood other than a wish for things to be different. That would not be a legitimate way to measure neighborhood character.

From the last paragraph of your letter (1/17/14), I am assuming that you are using the term **"special"** as **synonymous** with the word, **"unique."** which is being used specifically in the Community Character in a Box exercise. I am also assuming that when **the consultants reviewed the existing Neighborhood Plans,** that **the analysis did not include "unique" characteristics,** because our Neighborhood Plans were not organized that way- (NPs state goals, priorities and visions, not "unique" elements). **Evaluating uniqueness would require extensive knowledge and much extrapolation from each Neighborhood Plan.** I am going to challenge the assumption (from Imagine Austin) where you infer that future growth is inevitable *"while maintaining the neighborhoods and places that make Austin special,"* (1/7/14 letter, 9th paragraph). To my mind, these so-called changes will completely involve neighborhoods; **the protections and enhancement of our overarching, "community" neighborhoods are the concepts that all of us are concerned about in the Code Next process.**

In summary, there needs to be some **clarification of language** (in context) from the staff and the consultant team- “community” versus “neighborhood,” “special” versus “unique,” etc. The ongoing effort to **strengthen the comprehensive outreach** to all neighborhoods should be a **priority of the staff and consultants for the collecting accurate and complete data**. I have made a personal request for the **tabulation of data** from the **existing neighborhood plans and unplanned areas**, its availability in separate reports or in one document, and a **list of each neighborhood and each neighborhood plan** that was evaluated. Finally, I would like to request an **explanation of any “unique” elements that have been already documented by the Code Next team** in the Neighborhood Plans. Let’s keep the channels of communication open between the consultants, staff, and neighborhoods for developing the partnership that you referenced between ANC and the Code Next team. Thank you very much for your sincerity and time.

Respectfully,

Mary Ingle
ANC President