

Planning Commission Amendment Process

By Todd Shaw

Current status

The Planning Commission has not yet voted on amendments to the Land Development Code. The amendment process starts on October 29.

The Process Working Group established the Land Development Code review procedures for the working groups, and it was the responsibility of each working group chair to establish how their working group would develop and finalize their draft set of amendments.

The Planning Commission discussed land development code revision working groups on 7-23-2019 and voted to form the following sub-quorum working groups: Transition Areas, Process, Affordability, Residential, Non-residential, and Downtown. Members are as follows:

- Affordability (Commissioners Azhar, Howard, Llanes-Pulido and Anderson)
- Downtown (Commissioners Anderson, Flores and Hempel)
- Non-Residential (Vice-Chair Kenny and Commissioners: Flores and Thompson)
- Process (Commissioners Hempel, Shaw and Thompson)
- Residential (Commissioners Vice-Chair Kenny, Schneider, Seeger and Shieh)
- Transitions (Commissioners Anderson, Azhar, Seeger, Shaw and Shieh)

More about the Process Working Group

The purpose of the working groups can be generally understood by their titles except for the Process Working Group. The Process Working Group has several functions:

- Develop the procedures and schedule by which the PC working groups would operate,
- Review the draft code to determine if it addressed deficiencies of the current code based on earlier Code Diagnosis Papers
- Draft amendments on the development permitting process
- Provide amendments on sections of the code not covered by the other working groups.

More information:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=323682>

The Process Working Group developed the process and schedule for reviewing the revised code and proposing amendments and presented the draft process and schedule during the 8-27-2019 Planning Commission meeting. The Process Working Group

established the process below which directed the PC working groups to draft amendments within the framework of comprehensive planning documents and City Council's 5/2/2019 directives to the City Manager for revisions to the land development. The section below is copied from the PWG presentation.

Charge to the Working Groups

Before the draft is released:

- *Review policies, metrics and targets found in City Council's "Direction in Response to City Manager's March 15, 2019 Memo re: Land Development Code Revision Policy Guidance" and Austin's Comprehensive Plan and determine which ones are key to evaluating the LDC. Remember, Imagine Austin is only one part of the plan. The plan also includes Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, the Strategic Housing Blueprint, etc. Determine the process by which you'll evaluate the new code against these policies, metrics and targets.*
- *Detail any data that you will need for evaluation and work with staff to plan how you will collect that data.*

After the draft is released:

- *Evaluate how well the draft met policies, metrics and targets within Council's direction and Comprehensive Plan.*
- *Assess how draft prioritizes among competing objectives*
- *Develop a list of possible amendments*

Schedule of hearings so far

Note that the Planning Commission modified the original schedule at subsequent meetings to add and change dates to deliberate proposed amendments, 10-29-2019 and 11-5-2019, and to add a stakeholder workshop on 10-14-2019.

More information:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=325854>

On 9-26-2019, PC LDC revision working groups presented their plans for review of the revised code which included a presentation from the Transition working group (TWG).

More information:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=327851>

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=328402>

The PC amendment debate rules were discussed and passed on a vote at the PC meeting on 10-8-2019.

More information:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=328840>

With a few exceptions, the Transition Working Group met weekly since 8-12-2019 to prepare the scope of our working group, analyze policy documents, review Planning Commission working documents and amendments from previous Land Development Code drafts, discuss city staff's council work session presentations, review the draft Land Development Code and maps released 10-4-2019 and finally, prepare draft amendments.

After city staff presented modeling results on 10-8-2019 showing whether or not the draft code and maps met city council established targets for housing, the Transition Working Group developed a set of proposed amendments related to transition areas as discussed previously. Transition Working Group and other working groups are still waiting for code performance data, such as the city's goals for impervious cover within watersheds and various modes of travel.

More information:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=329103>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=329104>

On 10-14-2019, the Planning Commission held its *Land Development Code Revision Working Groups Workshop* where the public invited to participate in a discussion regarding the Land Development Code Revision. The Transition Working Group did not incorporate ideas for improving the revised land code discussed at this forum into the draft amendments given that their presentation was scheduled two days later.

Working groups will determine whether modifications to their proposed amendments are warranted based on their notes taken at the meeting. The working group workshops were not recorded by City staff.

Working groups presented drafts of their Land Development Code amendments on 10-16-2019 (Downtown, Affordability, and Transition Areas) and 10-22-2019 (Residential, Non-Residential, and Process). The purpose of these meetings was for working groups to receive input from the other commissioners.

More information:

http://austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/40_1.htm

After the Planning Commission Public Hearing on 10-26-2019, working groups will finalize proposed amendments based on public comments, code performance data, and commissioner input during the 10-16-2019 and 10-22-2019 meetings. The Planning Commission will take up the working group amendments starting on 10-29-2019 and vote on them based on the debate rules referenced earlier. Working groups were asked to reference specific comprehensive policy goals and council directives supporting their draft amendments.

After working group amendments are voted on, individual commissioners will present their amendments to be discussed and voted on by the full PC. Although the individual amendments do not have to be supported by policy documents like the working group amendments, they are more likely to receive a majority of the votes if they are backed-up by previously approved council policies.

Future meetings

For information about future meetings of the Planning Commission, see:

<https://AllandaleNeighbor.com/Info>