

Land Use in Austin

In 2012, the Austin City Council adopted Imagine Austin, the community's collective vision for our future as a city. Part of Imagine Austin called for rewriting Austin's outdated and complex land development code, which governs what you can build and where. This initiative, called CodeNEXT, has reached an important milestone: the first draft of the new land development code was released in January 2017. The CodeNEXT team worked to make sure the Imagine Austin vision and community priorities were incorporated into the draft, and is seeking community feedback and conversations to ensure they got it right.

Conversations will address these questions:

- How does the City's regulation of land use impact you personally? (e.g., homeowners trying to improve their home, property owners trying to develop their land, environmental organizations trying to improve water quality, nonprofits seeking land for affordable housing, etc.)
- What tradeoffs in the way we regulate land use would you be comfortable supporting? Examples:
 - Providing added density to developers in order to increase the stock of affordable housing.
 - A focus on the form of building in the zoning code, rather than the way the building is being used.
 - Requiring new development on major corridors to connect to trails, sidewalks, etc., and potentially reducing parking spaces to align with what's expected on the property or restricting certain development if the amount of parking would be heavy.
 - Citywide standards vs. the ability of neighborhoods to opt in or opt out of certain regulations
 - Creating more open space and parkland in the city, thereby restricting developable areas; also requiring all development projects to contribute to solutions that minimize flooding.
- In what ways should the City be regulating land use that it isn't now?
- In what ways should the City not be regulating land use that it currently regulates?

Why is this topic important and how will feedback be used?

Austin's Land Development Code governs what you can build and where. Everything from building a deck to constructing a high-rise downtown is determined by the Land Development Code. This code will affect the look and feel of Austin for many years to come.

Feedback on the Land Development Code is critical to the revision process, and will inform the updates made to the version of the code presented to the Planning Commission and Zoning & Platting Commission, and eventually to Council. All feedback on the code will be provided to the land use commissions and to the City Council for their consideration.

Who will be reviewing the feedback?

The CodeNEXT team will be reviewing the feedback received through Conversation Corps. Additionally, it will be sent to the Planning Commission, Zoning & Platting Commission, and to the City Council.

What else do I need to know?

CodeNEXT is the City of Austin's initiative to update its land development code, which determines how land can be used throughout Austin, including what can be built, where it can be built, and how much can be built.

To implement the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, the City's collective vision for the future of Austin, the Land Development Code must be updated to help achieve the Imagine Austin goals. The last Land Development Code revision was in 1984, when Austin's population was half the size it is now. The Code needs to be changed to help us create the kinds of places we want and to address critical issues such as diminishing natural resources, household affordability, and access to healthy lifestyles – to name a few. In addition, the current code has been amended over 800 times and is confusing, dense, and even contradictory in some places.

The Code will play an important role in guiding Austin's future growth. The initiative means more than making the Code simpler to use and understand; it means creating a framework to help improve our quality of life.

Are there other ways to participate?

In addition to providing input through Conversation Corps, you can take the CodeNEXT survey, found on our website (austintexas.gov/codenext). Additionally, you can read the code and comment directly on it at codenext.civiccomment.org.