

Results of the April 15, 2006 Workshop
on Neighborhood Planning
Next Steps

Graduate Program
in Community & Regional Planning

CRP 381 Participatory Methods
in Community Planning

Registration and Attendance

Working with a 15-member multi-stakeholder convening committee, the Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning at UT's School of Architecture designed and facilitated a workshop held on April 15, 2006 at City Hall entitled *The Future of Neighborhood Planning in Austin - Next Steps*. The intent of the workshop was to address the principle constraints to neighborhood identified by the students' field research, and to create a container of safety and creativity for the different stakeholders to come together to identify ways to deal with those constraints. The workshop culminated in the identification of action steps to steer neighborhood planning towards a stronger future.

The workshop was publicized in several different ways. Invitations were sent out by the convening committee to a broad range of stakeholders, including neighborhood people, city staff from various departments, and members of the local business community. Official notice of the workshop was issued under open meetings regulations, and word about the event spread informally through conduits such as neighborhood list-serves. Over 125 individuals participated in the workshop. Along with the groups already mentioned, City Planning Commissioners, City Council members, representatives from the development community and members of the news media were all present at the event.

As participants entered City Hall they were asked to put two different colored dots on a map of Austin indicating where they live and work. In general terms, the red dots (representing workplaces) were clustered closer to the central areas of the city, with significant numbers near downtown and the University of Texas. The green dots (representing residences) were scattered throughout the city, but most heavily concentrated on the south and west sides of the city.

opportunity to hear and understand different points of view. The logistics committee used a spreadsheet to assign participants to tables. The idea was to mix planning officials and civic leaders, city planning staff and other city staff, business representatives and developers, and neighborhood people from different parts of the city. However, due to the large number participants representing neighborhoods and the logistical difficulties associated in dealing with an open-invitation workshop with many no-shows, some tables ended up more balanced than others. There was no one room more balanced than the other two. Workshop participants remained at the same tables and with the same people throughout the day so that relationships could be established and so that they would begin to work together as a team.

Once at the tables participants were asked to introduce themselves and to “clear the air” by sharing something that they contribute to neighborhood planning that others might not know or appreciate. The full list of comments is included below. Introductions at some tables took a long time and many did not get to this exercise before it was time to move on to the next one. Only a few tables had time to go on to the second part of the “clearing the air” exercise, in which participants shared something that they appreciated from the role of another in neighborhood planning. The full list of responses is included below.

Others might not understand or appreciate that:

TABLE 1

- How transparent the planning commission is.
- Citizen planners must read and absorb large amounts of technical paperwork.
- How negative planning can impact people
- The difficulty is in enforcement.
- Renters are members also.

TABLE 2

- I created alternative language for the neighborhood plan that more accurately reflected the neighborhoods vision.
- I researched and wrote the history of our neighborhood that is now included as part of our plan.
- I have a long history of involvement with neighborhood planning since the Austin Tomorrow Plan and I sat on the Transportation Plan committee.
- I have a long-term relationship with neighborhood planning.
- I have been involved in neighborhood planning for a long time.
- I Became involved in 2001 as the community realized the need to be active in seeking sustainable development.

TABLE 3

- Advocacy for rail impacts neighborhood planning.
- I have been around since the first Austin Issues Conference.
- I have been a part of much neighborhood planning.
- School planning is a part of neighborhood planning.
- As a planning commissioner I balance neighborhood and larger city goals.

TABLE 4

- GIS is not just making maps – we do a lot of groundwork.
- I work as a facilitator/encourager to get people involved.
- Neighborhood Associations don't represent everyone.

TABLE 10

- I am stuck in the middle between understanding the city's need for increased density and neighborhood concerns.
- I want density targets or some sort of directive from the city.
- The city has to deal with He has dealt with a lot of zoning battles, on a lot-by-lot basis.
- I try to make the time to be involved, but many developers are short-staffed.
- As city staff I have no specific policy directives or numbers to work with and must look for possibilities.
- It is difficult to get ongoing participation from residents.
- It is difficult to make connections with developers and keep up with their projects.

TABLE 11

- It takes hours and effort to build a trail to connect all of Southeast Austin
- It is a challenge to maintaining communication between Travis Heights and East Austin, areas with different issues.
- It is difficult to maintain participants in long planning processes

I appreciate the role of other participants in neighborhood planning***because:*****TABLE 2**

- The City staff put up with a lot of guff from the community. They have been really good at helping us understand our role, extent of available resources and the parameters within which we have to work.
- Neighbors have been committed to the process over time. They have contributed beyond the basic requirements, coming to the regular meetings. Our designated staff person Matt has been tremendous.
- Jackie Schuter is dedicated to the idea of neighborhood planning. When they told us that we could not plan a hike and bike trail and we decided that we could, Jackie gave us all the necessary support. Also Yates and Temple have added a lot.

- Business owners and landowners have joined the community at the table. That is unusual, these groups working together.
- The support of the neighbors. The city staff has been accommodating and it feels like a partnership. Scott Whiteman, Maureen Meredith and Matt Holland (who seems to have taken a personal stake in the outcome) have given a tremendous time contribution.

TABLE 3

- I like the connection to schools.
- The transportation connection important.
- Downtown is important
- The planning commission is important to the city
- Neighborhood planning is an area for Cap Metro to focus on.

TABLE 5

- Adam Smith stayed late to work on my plan – he works long hours and is dedicated.

TABLE 8

- City staff members' hearts are in the right place; they lack resources.
- The city staff always calls back promptly.
- Neighborhood participants have devotion, passion, dedication, and vision.
- City staff and students have energy.

Purpose of Neighborhood Planning

During the second exercise, participants were asked to consider individually what they felt should be the purpose of neighborhood planning in Austin. When all had their ideas jotted down, the table facilitators helped the participants to compile their individual thoughts to draft a joint statement of purpose for neighborhood planning. The goal of this activity was to create discussion about the real or most important purpose for neighborhood planning among the various reasons that have been expressed. Some rooms had time to agree on a single consolidated statement for the room, while others presented multiple statements. The following six purpose statements (grouped here by room) were presented at the final plenary session (individual and consolidated table statements can be found in Appendix A).

Boards and Commissions Room

Recognize *diverse and competing interests* in the creation of a *sustainable society* which *preserves traditions while welcoming the new; enhances the quality of life.*

Creatively manage change and proactively map the continued implementation of a shared future vision.

Media Room

A *shared and evolving vision*, representing the *views of all*, with the aim of guiding change in such a way as to create *sustainable communities.*

A short and long term *results-driven, ongoing, collaborative* process that balances the goals and visions of stakeholders to *create, implement, enforce, and periodically revise* a plan that *balances neighborhood and city wide goals.*

Achieve and maintain the highest quality of life for the whole community through a *transparent, cooperative process* based on participation and self-determination that balances preservation and future growth, as the mechanism for government by the people.

Staff Bullpen

Develop a *shared vision* and framework through *collaboration and communication* to plan for the future development, infrastructure, and services in order to *preserve the integrity* of our neighborhoods and quality of life.

While these statements vary greatly, they all touch on two important themes – an ideal process goal and an ideal outcome goal. The statements reflect that neighborhood planning is both an end and a means to an end – the process may be as important as the outcome.

Overall, the purpose statements reflect the desire to incorporate, represent, and balance the different views and interests of the various stakeholders and to generate and implement a vision for a sustainable future that enhances the neighborhoods and the quality of life of their residents.

Relationship between Neighborhood and City

Though student research identified multiple relationship issues in the neighborhood planning process, the most often referred to as troubled was the relationship between the City of Austin and the neighborhoods.

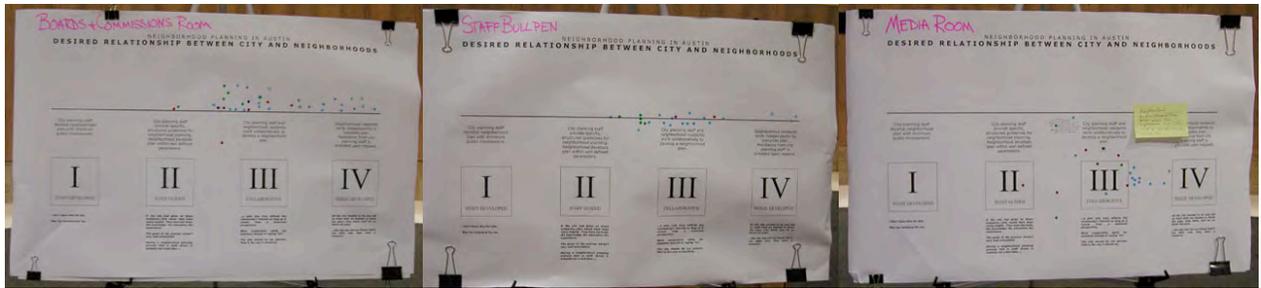
During our research, four options had been mentioned for the relationship between the neighborhoods and the city. They fall on a continuum of who has the most responsibility for the plans.

In the third exercise, participants in each room were asked to consider what they viewed as the ideal relationship between the City and the neighborhood in developing neighborhood plans. Each participant was given a dot color-coded to his or her role in neighborhood planning. Blue dots represented those most associated with neighborhoods, green dots represented those associated with the city, and red dots were for those that associated most closely with another group, such as business owners or the development community.

Each participant then placed a dot along a spectrum consisting of four categories describing the plan as: (I) Staff developed: *City planning staff develop neighborhood plan with minimal public involvement*, (II) Staff-guided: *City planning staff provide specific, structured guidelines for neighborhood planning. Neighborhood develops plan within well-defined parameters*, (III) Collaborative: *City planning staff and neighborhood residents work collaboratively to develop a neighborhood plan*, or (IV) Neighborhood developed: *Neighborhood residents work independently to complete plan. Assistance from city planning staff is provided upon request*. Participants were also invited to add other options.

Though the results of this exercise offer insight into the desired relationship between the City and neighborhoods, there was a fair amount of opposition to the structure of the exercise. Some participants felt that the city-neighborhood dichotomy was too strongly stated, and some did not see the logic of the continuum. Others disliked the division by stakeholder group and would have preferred using all one color.

Other desired relationships were put forward by participants, a couple of which were written onto the charts. One comment read: "neighborhood driven because they know about their neighborhood with city staff to address city-wide perspective." The second comment, placed between staff-guided (II) and collaborative (III) suggested that planning should be done with the goals of the city master plan in mind, including citywide goals for issues such as density, affordable housing, and water quality.



The photographs above show the results from the three rooms. Clearly, the bulk of the dots express a desire for a collaborative relationship between the City and neighborhoods, i.e. shared responsibility in producing the neighborhood plans. One wing shows a small number of dots, primarily green, favoring an approach in which the City defines the parameters in which the neighborhoods do the planning. The other wing shows a slightly larger number of dots in two of the three rooms, primarily blue, favoring a strongly neighborhood led planning process, with the City staff acting only as a resource.

Action Steps

In the main task of the day, workshop participants at each table identified the fundamental action items needed to improve the neighborhood planning process in Austin. They also prioritized action items by theme: scope and structure, outreach, implementation, governance, and other. Each table then agreed on the three most important steps, which were then presented to the room. Two of the rooms had time to discuss the results and consolidate them into top priorities for the entire room. The room results were then presented in a power point presentation at the final plenary session (see below). Complete action item lists by table can be found in Appendix B.

Boards and Commissions Room

1. Allow holistic vision to dominate process and implementation
 2. Neighborhood-driven outreach versus city-driven
 3. Education prior to start of process
-
1. Integrate industrial development, transportation, affordable housing through the neighborhood planning and scenario planning
 2. Neighborhood plan will have the enforcement of law with respect to the CIP
 3. Design an approach to increase participation of owners, residents, and neighborhood businesses, employers, and employees (voice, no vote)
-
1. Council: frame goals, define the scope of the work, and allocate resources
 2. Staff: provide tools, identify resources, and design election process for contact teams

3. Neighborhoods: select representative contact team as the first step in process
 1. City Council and City Manager establish NP as high priority for city departments and city budget
 2. Money in annual budget and bond packages
 3. Broaden and strengthen scope of neighborhood planning

1. City Council must state now in clear language what their desired outcomes are from the neighborhood planning process
 2. Make neighborhood planning a priority through adequate resources
 3. Build a database linked into all the departments to implement the neighborhood plans and for department heads to be held accountable for abiding by neighborhood plans

1. Establish density goals and specific methods to implement them
 2. No zoning until plan is developed
 3. Infrastructure for implementation

1. Clear definition of scope and purpose
 2. Neighborhood driven target marketing (outreach)
 3. District liaison/advocate within government that aids with implementation and enforcement

Media Room

1. Neutral facilitator per request of neighborhood provided to negotiate between neighborhoods and city staff
2. Possibility of a paid mediator if conflict arises
3. Liaison between neighborhood and city council when not getting action from staff
4. Create neighborhood contact teams early
5. Increase participation and outreach
6. Better coordination
7. Integrating neighborhood planning into all departments
8. Establish realistic time frame proportionate to size and complexity for each neighborhood planning process

Staff Bullpen

1. The City initiates and Austin Neighborhood Coalition and individual neighborhoods drive multi-lingual, multi-media learning opportunities about goals, process, tools, limits/guidelines, neighborhood profiles, etc. – before and during the neighborhood planning process.

2. City provides more resources for planning to produce a neutral process, including trained facilitators and other technical and informational resources.

3. City should codify neighborhood plans, their goals and objectives, and provide City resources for enforcement of the goals and the plan (i.e. code violations).

The fundamental concerns addressed by these proposed actions were: enforcement and implementation; civic education for the planning process; neutral facilitation and mediation of conflicts; and representative outreach, participation, and decision-making.

The workshop showed a clear convergence of support for the following actions:

- Civic education: together, the City and the neighborhoods should make available to the participants the necessary information, best practices, research, technical assistance training, and leadership training to assure quality outcomes in neighborhood planning.
- Contact team set-up: the City should form teams early in the neighborhood planning process and work with them to ensure that the planning process is representative and inclusive from beginning to end.
- Implementation/enforcement: the City should work towards greater integration of neighborhood plans with the various City departments. The political will must come from City Council, the City Manager's office, and the continued advocacy of neighborhood groups.
- Facilitation: the City and the neighborhoods should both recognize their non-neutral roles as stakeholders. Neutral facilitators should be brought in to assist in the process when necessary.
- Funding: City Council and the City Manager's office must recognize that to move forward successfully, neighborhood planning needs increased funding. City departments should prioritize funding for projects identified by neighborhood plans and/or money should be allocated by the City specifically for neighborhood plan implementation. Neighborhood groups should advocate for this goal.

Evaluation

The Next Steps Workshop was evaluated using both exit interviews and evaluation forms in an effort to gauge the amount of legitimacy surrounding the workshop-generated action steps and to allow critique of the form and function of the workshop. The critique will allow for better design of future workshops on neighborhood planning.

Five interviews were conducted by students of the University of Texas and provide a general sense that the workshop was a success. During an

interview with a city planner, the planner stated, “I was deeply concerned about the bashing of the city by the neighborhoods, but everyone seemed polite and the workshop was balanced.” According to interviews with neighborhood activists, “the workshop appeared very organized” and “the workshop was much more honest than the last one.”

Workshop participants completed the evaluation forms during the final plenary session at the City Council Chambers. More than 90% of participants that evaluated the workshop felt the workshop met or exceeded their expectations for: their comfort in sharing their ideas, facilitators listening and understanding what they had to say, respectful treatment by other participants, and their groups were productive and cordial. Responses were more mixed with regards to the usefulness of information received before the event and optimism about the future of neighborhood planning, but more than 60% of evaluators still felt that these goals were met or exceeded (see Appendix C for greater detail).

The second part of the evaluation form was more qualitative and allowed participants to provide expansive comments. The overall reaction to the event was favorable and showed excitement about the future of neighborhood planning in Austin. All of the comments, grouped into common themes, are available in Appendix C.

Conclusions

The Next Steps Workshop produced concrete results. A shared sense of purpose was clearly articulated: The purpose of neighborhood planning is to incorporate, represent, and balance the different views and interests of various stakeholders and to generate and implement a vision for a sustainable future that enhances the neighborhoods and the quality of life of their residents. A broad-based desire for a collaborative relationship between the City and the neighborhoods was expressed, with shared responsibility for the quality and implementation of plans. A clear mandate for specific changes emerged from the workshop: to create neighborhood planning teams early in the process to ensure representative outreach, participation, and decision-making throughout; to provide ongoing civic education and training for participants; to use neutral facilitators and mediators; and to give neighborhood plans more clout through implementation and enforcement.

Now it is up to the participants and their organizations to follow through--the neighborhood associations, the neighborhood contact teams, Austin Neighborhoods Council, the City's Neighborhood Planning and Zoning

Department, the Planning Commission, the Commission's neighborhood planning committee, and City Council. The responsibility for action is shared. The sooner that action is taken the more the participants will see that their efforts were worthwhile.

For our part at the Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Texas, we will be happy to play a continuing role in bringing together the diverse actors in neighborhood planning and Austin's development as a whole and providing research and technical assistance on emerging issues and trends.

Appendix A: Purpose Statements

TABLE 1

- An opportunity for a neighborhood to chart a course for its future that serves the best interests of the neighborhood and the city as a whole.
- Produce a community which balances interests to produce a good quality of life for all.
- At best neighborhood planning should assist neighborhoods to maintain or create genuine neighborliness.
- To be able to invest in an area for that area and not have it change the next week when a new developer roles into the hood.
- Good quality of life, neighborliness, wealth, society and service, participation, each and every neighbor participate and then third party negotiation with city.
- Helping the city to serve its customer, the neighborhood.

Consolidated: To allow everyone in a neighborhood to work together to promote quality of life, neighborliness, health, safety, and service now and in the future.

Disagreement: Add “protection of property values.”

TABLE 3

- Knowing bigger picture (city/region).
- Envisioning and realizing the future.
- Balance.
- Empowering stakeholders (my voice will be heard).
- Seeking unity while respecting diversity.
- Conservation and enhancement of built, natural, and human resources.

Consolidated: Envisioning and realizing our future by empowering neighbors to seek unity while respecting diversity and resources.

TABLE 4

- The purpose of neighborhood planning is for people from diverse backgrounds and interests to work together on developing a plan for that neighborhood's future. It should be visionary, inclusive of all interests, and balanced.
- Communities designing themselves for long-term health and expression of their identity.
- Encourage growth of a vital community.
- A neighborhood plan should provide more opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle... it should enhance the functionality of the city as well as the neighborhood.
- Protect yet invigorate the integrity of my little piece of Austin.
- Helping neighborhood work towards a shared vision.

Consolidated: Protect and invigorate the integrity of our little piece of Austin within the context of the integrity and vitality of the whole of Austin.

TABLE 5

- To forward the interests and wishes of neighbors, i.e. residents, with respect to their neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood planning will be the fundamental unit of city government. It will part of, rather than parallel to, government.
- Manage growth to curb sprawl.
- The purpose of neighborhood planning is to enable the community to envision, describe [and] create the kind of community they want to live in and to determine their destiny.
- My vision of neighborhood planning is that it facilitates change without hurting or penalizing long time residents.

Consolidated: To authorize neighborhoods to shape and control their quality of life, for themselves and the greater community, and to create an integral and effective means to assess needs and to create and implement policy.

TABLE 7

Consolidated: Neighborhood planning is a collaborative process that involves diverse interests and requires input from the neighborhood to create a plan that provides direction, accommodates density goals, clarifies purposes and roles and addresses changes in the city/region.

TABLE 8

- Community driven.
- Community driven development process.
- Density allocation.
- Prove framework to make future land use decisions easier.
- Maintain and improve quality of life.
- Density allocation.
- To develop compromise/consensus on neighbors future (vision of future).

Consolidated: The purpose of neighborhood planning is to provide a framework to direct, plan, and manage the future development, infrastructure, and services in the city based on the goals, desires, and vision of its citizens ideally to reflect the individual character of each neighborhood and to maintain and improve quality of life.

TABLE 9

- Optimization of Quality of Life.
- Collaboration among public citizens, elected officials and private interests to achieve a shared vision for that community.

- Through consensus, establish the desired future character of the neighborhood and the land use/zoning/urban design criteria to meet that desired state.
- The purpose of the neighborhood planning process is to facilitate a cohesive and coordinated plan for the City, including all City departments and services (a bottom up approach to city planning).
- Direction from neighborhood, not just City staff. Include improvements in City services – sidewalks, enforcement, traffic calming. Include design and development standards, have pattern books or “good examples.”
- Plans document an enforceable agreement (collaborative/mediated) for land use, design and development standards in context of a specific area.
- The purpose of neighborhood planning is to help maintain the integrity of the area while integrating new development.

Consolidated: To develop a shared vision through collaboration to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods by involving all stakeholders including City departments to optimize quality of life for the citizens of Austin.

TABLE 10

- Neighborhood Planning must be more neighborhoods leading instead of the City of Austin leading.
- A shared vision of what the neighborhood should be.
- The Neighborhood Plan (final product) should represent the needs/interests of the neighborhood, undiluted by what is “reasonable”, “do-able” – for perpetuity.
- To develop a plan which will ensure beautiful, healthy, and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in what is destined to be a higher density city.
- To plan a common vision for the neighborhoods – followed by goal planning to accomplish vision.
- Awareness of issues, constant cohesive communication between all parties (renters, residents, business owners, property owners, etc).
- To create a rational land use and localized transportation plan for areas of the City of Austin, and by doing so, create a sustainable future for the city.

Consolidated: The goal of neighborhood planning is to define inclusive neighborhoods, create a living document, foster communication among stakeholders, and create a shared vision (in a reasonable amount of time).

TABLE 11

Consolidated: To control and steer future growth and development in a desired direction while preserving existing neighborhoods, to provide a safe environment for life and living, and ensure that the desires and wishes of the stakeholders are considered in future decisions. Currently, the City has a different Agenda and purpose in mind than the neighborhoods.

TABLE 12

Consolidated: Achieve, evolve, and maintain the highest quality of life for the whole community, through a transparent, cooperative process based on participation and self-determination that balances preservation and future growth, and creates sustainable communities as the mechanism for government by the people.

TABLE 13

Consolidated: A shared and evolving vision, representing the views of all stakeholders, with the aim of guiding change in such a way as to create sustainable communities.

TABLE 14

- Balance goals of: neighborhood and City, current and future residents (phased plan).
- Sustainability, Multi-modal transportation. Economic. New Urbanist uses/form based restrictions.
- Neighborhood improvement/enhancement.
- Collaborative Process.
- Educate residents but recognize existing knowledge base.
- Implementation and enforcement component.

Consolidated: A short- & long-term results driven, ongoing, collaborative process that balances the goals & vision of stakeholders to create, implement, enforce and periodically revise a plan that balances neighborhood and city-wide goals.

Appendix B: Actions Steps

TABLE 1

What are the most important choices to make and what would be the action items we want to recommend?

- Stronger implementation.
- Neighborhood education prior to process.
- Balance neighborhood goals with city goals.
- Use holistic planning.

Neighborhood selection and outreach

- Stop zoning, office and developers from having more political pull in the neighborhood.
- Prior to neighborhood planning process, meetings with every existing neighborhood organization; education of neighborhood representatives; block meetings.
- Demonstrate intent to implement top 3 under \$100,000.
- More media publicity, though I think post card system works pretty well.
- Newsletter to residents.
- Energize, empower, and motivate neighborhood participants to do outreach.
- Bring PR professionals to the table.
- Examine past outreach efforts to see what has worked well and what hasn't.
- Educate neighborhood associations, PTAs, churches, and schools.

Planning process

- Less emphasis on FLUM and more emphasis on neighborhood vision.
- Educate.
- Action Items.
- Community meetings to describe neighborhood planning process benefits, etc. and to promote education.
- Designate individuals to hold block meetings after early community meetings.
- Intense education of zoning language and what can go into a plan or not.
- Allow more than zoning to be considered.
- FLUM for all plans.
- More holistic vision.
- Financial professional involved to know what is possible.
- Vision to FLUV (future land use vision) to implementation.
- Educate in beginning.

Implementation and enforcement

- Have neighborhood planning contact teams in place at the conclusion of the neighborhood plan.
- Have contact info for the neighborhood planning contact teams online.
- Have realistic action plans in place for each action item.
- Keep the groups vision and rezoning in place at least longer than it took to come up with the plan and preferably 5 years to see how the plan works.
- Allocation of city resources that follow neighborhood planning priorities. Ex: Not a separate process for decisions.
- Require city zoning decisions to be consistent with FLUM.

- Designate neighborhood planning decision to every city office and staffer that makes decision.
- Quit changing after you decide on a plan.
- Negotiate funding options/streams
- A neighborhood center for every 20,000 people.
- Flexibility.

Neighborhood contact teams and governance

- Elected neighborhood representatives and give them the power only to make changes.
- Elected by neighborhood to represent all of neighborhood.
- Make consensus decisions.
- Available to everyone by phone or email.
- Have neighborhood planning contact team info online: names, contact info, bylaws, meetings times, agendas, minutes.
- Members of the contact planning team should be folks who have actually participated in the plan and know why all elements are there. Bylaws need to address this education process for later numbers.
- The various neighborhoods do vote on items before the neighborhood contact teams and their representatives vote their decision.
- Staggered terms.
- Initial vote definition.
- Initial city/plan mutual goal process.

Prioritized Action Items:

- 1) Allow holistic vision to dominate process and implementation.
- 2) Neighborhood driven outreach.
- 3) Education prior to start of process.
- 4) Formally make UT part of the process as a resource.

TABLE 2

Prioritized Action Items:

- 1) Integrate industrial development, transportation, affordable housing through the neighborhood planning and scenario planning.
- 2) Neighborhood plan will have the enforcement of law in respect to the CIP.
- 3) Design an approach to increase participation of owners, residents and neighborhood businesses employers and employees (voice no vote) prevent co-option by special interest and provide citizen education.

TABLE 3

Most important change for neighborhood planning?

- Timeline from beginning to neighborhood plan adoption, owned by city staff/neighborhood collaboratively.
- Recruit/form representative contact team first, owned by neighborhood.
- Regional (ECT) future plan – understanding, owned by city.
- Dynamic ongoing integrated technology outreach, owned by city.
- City council articulates neighborhood planning goals, owned by city.

- Neighborhoods form balanced contact team, eliminate geographic boundaries.
- Tools – preservation and conservation must come first, owned by city/City Council.
- Recognize the past and understand, owned by today's participants.
- Focus on relationships, education within neighborhood contact team.
- Process should be transparent (contact teams, preparation important).
- Articulation of goals from city, framing scope of work for neighborhood planning.
- Neighbors involved too in changes.

Changes to neighborhood planning – Preparation stage of flowchart

- Vision for city, region needed.
- Neighborhood solicits, recruits resources for equality of process.
- Relations between the neighbors and community.
- Will for neighborhood planning must be present in city and neighborhood BEFORE planning process.
- Continuum of neighborhood/city involvement should be a choice, like desired relationship poster.
- Neighborhood autonomy in preparation, identify resources, inventory.

Prioritized Action Items:

- 4) City Council should: frame goals, scope of work. Provide, allocate resources, staff; enable with tools.
- 5) City staff should: support the process through the management of technology, tools. Design election process for contact teams and identify resources.
- 6) Neighborhoods should: select representative neighborhood contact team – first in process. Identify scope of work, resources needed.
- 7) Transparent collaboration should apply to all groups, steps, processes

TABLE 4

Big picture changes

- CIP – money with neighborhood planning matching grants.
- Focus on implementation.
- Establish citywide goals and as they relate to neighborhoods.
- Departments working together on information and work relevant to neighborhoods and neighborhood planning up front at start of planning process.
- Increase flexibility of scope to address specific neighborhood concerns.

Changes to the process

- Education for neighborhoods.
- Implementation and enforcement.
- Expectations of neighborhoods and city up front.
- Representation and availability.
- Currently very dependent upon informal relationships within city.
- City Departments – neighborhood communication and presentations to create exchange and education on interests and issues for both.

- Flexibility for what's in plan; zoning bogs down plan and delays outcomes; other areas of plan decided by neighborhood.
- Performance standards of neighborhood support for development and other ways document could communicate neighborhood priorities to developers besides rezoning.

Participation issues

- Concentrated workshops rather than bimonthly meetings.
- Communication and outreach.
- Commit city resources to neighborhoods to increase outreach support.
- City resources for implementation would galvanize participation.
- Organization with the neighborhood.
- Balancing interests within the community.

Implementation and enforcement issues

- Neighborhood planning priority within city department budgeting; City Manager's Office.
- Communicate expectations regarding timeline for implementation and pressure departments delaying implementation process.

Prioritized Action Items:

- 1) City Council/City Manager establishes neighborhood planning as high priority for city departments. i.e., budget/CIP/regulations and programs – especially the Top 10 Action Items lists from neighborhood plans.
- 2) Money from annual budgets and bond projects for neighborhood plans.
- 3) Change the scope of neighborhood planning – vision, goals, and FLUM may be the only 'standard' elements and the neighborhood can choose additional topical areas of interest/importance for them. i.e., transportation, environmental, etc. Rezoning can come after plan adoption, if at all.

TABLE 5

Big picture fundamental changes

- Culture within City government.
- Clarify the purpose of neighborhood planning and the roles of the neighbors and the City.
- Clear articulation of the goals.
- Assessment of the existing state (for example, density) and policy options as related to desired outcomes.
- City's expectations should be delineated at the beginning. It should be neighborhood driven. Staff should act as technical advisors.
- City Council must state now in clear language what their desired outcome is from the neighborhood planning process.
- To provide a comprehensive asset inventory and the infrastructure capacity for each neighborhood.
- Clarify and record all commitments made to neighborhoods.
- To make neighborhood planning a priority through adequate resources.

Selection and Outreach

- To include neighborhoods that were developed (platted) after the drainage regulations of 1974.

- To shape the process to allow input and feedback from a larger group of participants (such as those who cannot regularly attend all of the meetings).
- To provide up-to-date, current information about the neighborhood planning process, e.g. a City web site and a reliable non-electronic localized posting place.
- To better notify every possible stakeholder group of the planning process (e.g. residential and business renters without utility accounts, inter-jurisdictional agencies).

Process (Scope and Structure)/Implementation/Enforcement/Governance/Other

- To build a database linked into all the departments to implement the neighborhood plans, and for department heads to be held accountable for abiding by neighborhood plans.
- All neighborhoods must be notified of all development processes/plans affecting their neighborhood at the earliest possible point in the process.
- All planning processes should be integrated into the neighborhood planning process, e.g. transportation, AISD, infrastructure planning.
- To establish a stakeholder group to guide, before and during, the neighborhood planning process.

Prioritized Action Items:

- 1) City Council must state now in clear language what their desired outcome is from the neighborhood planning process.
- 2) To make neighborhood planning a priority through adequate resources.
- 3) To build a database linked into all the departments to implement the neighborhood plans, and for department heads to be held accountable for abiding by neighborhood plans.

TABLE 6

Prioritized Action Items:

- 1) Establish density goals and specific methods to implement them - Align with city's updated policy document.
- 2) No zoning until plan is developed.
- 3) Infrastructure for implementation.

TABLE 7

Scope & Structure

- Provide a clear definition of the scope and purpose of neighborhood planning.
- Define the time period.
- City of Austin should define the scope in the code.
- Broaden or narrow the scope of neighborhood planning.
- Scope should include entire city.
- Better collaboration between neighborhoods.
- Better collaboration between city, business, and residents.
- Clarified purpose should be built into meetings.
- Open dialogue between neighborhoods and city to mesh goals with Envision Central Texas.

Outreach

- Get more stakeholders involved.
- Provoke controversy early in the process so that it is not used to sabotage the final product.
- Last minute disruptions should be cut-off; not rewarded.
- Recognize who the audience is.
- Utilize neighborhoods to drive targeted marketing campaign for outreach.
- City should initiate process by seeking neighborhood organizers.
- Use demographic data to balance neighborhood representation.
- Develop neighborhood leadership group composed of stakeholders representing the variety of interests (city, resident, developer, business) before neighborhood planning begins.

Implementation

- Everyone must understand planning is an ongoing process; work does not end when the document is completed.
- Create position within city government for district liaison/advocate that aids with implementation and enforcement of the plan.

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) Provide a clear definition of the scope and purpose of neighborhood planning
- 2) Utilize neighborhoods to drive targeted marketing campaign for outreach
- 3) Create position within city government for district liaison/advocate that aids with implementation and enforcement of the plan.

TABLE 8

Most critical changes

- Know what city agenda is.
- Need more availability of neighborhood statistics.
- City web site needs to be improved.
- More money for staff.

Process

- City explain goals of neighborhood planning and why.
- Urban Planning 101.
- Provision of more area information/statistical analysis.
- Disclosure of density allocation and guidelines/affordable housing (livable units) allocation.
- Better City Council directive to staff.
- Inclusionary zoning.
- Create a more open relationship between neighborhoods and City Council, attendance by City Council to neighborhood meetings.

Implementation

- Create of Planned Development Districts to make implementation easier.
- Dedicate more resources for staff, education, statistical analysis, and infrastructure.
- Increase amount of cross-district planning/collaboration.
- Regular revisiting of plan/plan update guidelines.
- City hire consultants to assist with annual updates.

Governance

- Clarification of who/what role of planning/contact team.

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) Codify neighborhood planning goals and objectives and provide resources for annual updates.
- 2) Clarify city goals which include density and affordability allocation and a commitment to an open process where the neighborhood is involved in all steps.
- 3) Provide basic planning principle education, Planning 101, including statistical analysis of planning (current density, income, housing affordability).

TABLE 9

Scope and Structure

- Process too complex (language terms, need for education like neighborhood academies). Who: City could facilitate, neighborhood share responsibility of getting educated about tools.
- Better communication between city entities and neighborhoods needed. Who: City and neighborhoods
- Remove the many layers of approval. The final approval is based upon the number of people attending the council meeting. Who: City
- Need trained mediators to come to collaborative view. Biases by City staff because the City planners are playing too many roles. The process needs direction from the neighborhood. Not just City staff. Who: City
- Include improvements in all City services in the plan. Who: Requests/identification to come from the neighborhood
- Need good examples of design and development standards (could be part of education). Who: City
- Need a comprehensive view. The City needs to be upfront about goals. Who: City
- Need trained/neutral facilitators. Who: City
- Need better identification of stakeholders. Who: City and Neighborhoods
- Need to stop developers from coming in with zoning requests during the neighborhood planning process (before plan approval). Could place a moratorium on permits issued for the area before the plan is approved. Who: City
- Before team gets started, neighborhood needs to be educated. Who: City and Neighborhood

Selection and Outreach

- For selection, look at neighborhoods receiving the most pressure/developments in terms of the number of building permits per acre or zoning variances. Who: City
- Get developers involved early on with incentives. Who: City and neighborhoods
- Should set up something like list-serves for selected neighborhoods for better communication/outreach or other ways to best involve the community (might not be through a computer). Who: City

- Explain and invite the involvement of developers in initial letter. Also request that if the developer has plans to develop the property, to please tell the neighborhood planning team. Who: City
- Include a needs assessment survey in the initial letter. Who: City
- Ensure all residents (including tenants), business owners and property owners are notified. Tax appraisal records and utility accounts do not always account for everyone. Who: City
- Tailor the outreach to the neighborhood resources (not all have same experience, education, economic means). Who: City

Implementation and Enforcement

- Have mediators available when amendments/changes are requested. Who: City
- Code enforcement staff must uphold the plan. Need penalties when people don't abide by the plan including removing new non-compliant structures. If those who have been cited and have not paid penalty come forward with other property requests, they would not receive a permit or would be penalized with higher fees. Who: City
- Evaluate changes to achieve conforming zoning (i.e. allow what was built there to remain even though it may not conform). Ask what is best for the neighborhood. Who: City and Neighborhood
- When the neighborhood plan is approved and another request is made outside of the plan (not in compliance), it should not be sent forward (i.e. height of buildings). The plan needs integrity. Who: City

Governance

- Ensure a good mix of representatives on the neighborhood planning contact team. Who: City
- Perform periodic review of requirements on neighborhood planning contact team. Who: City

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) More education about processes and tools is needed. This includes better communication (in different languages) within the City, between City departments, within neighborhoods, and between adjacent neighborhoods.
- 2) Add trained neutral facilitators to conduct planning process (acknowledge the City's role as stakeholder represented by planner).
- 3) Code enforcement needs to stop those who violate the plan or other City codes (use City technology and communication systems to flag code violators until penalty is paid).

TABLE 10

Scope

- City should provide up-to-date land use data
- City should provide information about infrastructure capacity and current demand
- Stronger education process needed (upfront and ongoing), including online resources

- City should announce its expectations and what is involved in the process at the outset
- City should provide information about demographics, socioeconomic reality and tax base of the neighborhood
- Prior to the process, neighborhoods should come together and define themselves, have an advisory group in place, and define neighborhood planning boundaries (w/staff assistance).
- More flexibility and specificity needed in land use categories

Process/Structure/Governance

- The overlap of neighborhood associations should be sorted out, perhaps with a hierarchy system.
- Neighborhoods and the City should work together to have an inclusive contact team.
- There should be space on contact teams for important civic, religious, and other important players.
- Contact teams should look similar across all neighborhoods (structure, number of representatives, etc.).

Implementation

- Other city departments must become responsive to plans (the mandate must come from the City Manager's office).
- Get representatives from other city departments to talk to neighborhood planning teams (this is already happening in some current plan areas).
- Neighborhood planning teams need to be lobbyists.
- The city needs an implementation mechanism from the City to get other departments to do action items (but what about neighborhoods w/out plans?).

Outreach

- Needs to be multilingual, deal with other communication barriers.
- Get churches involved.
- Targeted mailings by City at milestones in process.
- Neighborhoods should use newsletters and other means to maximize outreach.
- Use media - television, The Austin Chronicle - to get word out.
- There should be committees within each neighborhood planning area focusing on different things - businesses, recruitment, etc.

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) Education. Should be upfront and ongoing, online, and should include information about neighborhood infrastructure capacity and demand, demographics and tax base, and what the city can and cannot do.
- 2) Implementation. Pressure must come from above to get other city departments involved
- 3) Planning teams should be structured similarly across the city. They should include all organizations and institutions in the neighborhood planning area.

TABLE 11

Most Important Places for Change

Community and Regional Planning Graduate Program
University of Texas

- Zoning alone does not make a plan. Zoning now takes up too much of the planning process.
- Neighborhoods are required to identify their goals in the plans. The City Council should be asked to do the same, from the start.
- 'Collective amnesia' needs to be addressed – as it is now, things said at meetings are too quickly forgotten.
- Trained, professional facilitators with expertise in interpersonal relationships as well as neutrality and impartiality should lead meetings. Planning staff would be free to observe, take notes, etc.
- More resources – time, staff, money – need to be devoted to Neighborhood Planning.

Selection & Outreach

- Initial meetings are too large and try to do too much. Staff could start by distributing a large amount of background information to educate stakeholders before planning ever begins.
- Pay attention to meeting venues, to create an environment that invites conversation.
- More effort should be put into corridor planning; all neighborhoods along a transportation corridor plan together.

Scope & Structure

- Could the City build a regional perspective into the process?
- Thorough input is needed from ALL residents. This problem is tied back to insufficient information distribution.
- The City should pay attention to demographics when forming neighborhood planning areas.
- Communication should be targeted to the neighborhoods' demographics. All communication should be multilingual, and use non-electronic methods.
- Devote more resources – time, people, money – to Neighborhood Planning.

Process

- City/staff must be open about any overall agendas – honesty is crucial.
- Staff must be clear from the start about any constraints on what neighborhood plans can do, due to city policies. Allow for discussion. Present these in an early workshop (e.g. infill, mixed-use, zoning, Envision Central Texas).

Implementation/Enforcement

- Anyone applying for permits/rezoning must demonstrate how their development proposal meets the neighborhood plan's goals.
- When evaluating development proposals, the entire neighborhood plan document, and especially its vision & goals, must be referenced before the FLUM is considered.
- City should explicitly define what different categories of land use would entail. E.g. What exactly will mixed-use zoning allow?

Governance

- Contact Teams too often consist of the last people standing, after everyone else drops out. These teams should be formed earlier in the process.
- Notification of zoning changes should be sent to a wider affected area

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) Education/Outreach. Before the NP process ever begins, be clear about any City Agendas/policies that must be met, and distribute information widely (in schools, Spanish, non-electronic communication) so every resident can be educated about planning.
- 2) City process. Devote more resources (people, money, time) to Neighborhood Planning and hire independent, trained professional facilitators to guide meetings, so staff are free to help, observe, take notes, etc.
- 3) Implementation. The most important things in the plan are the Goals and Vision, not the FLUM. All development/rezoning applications should be required to meet the intent of the Goals, and ordinances that encompass the Goals should be enforced.

TABLE 12

Outreach

- Provide city subsidies to encourage participation, such as utility bill discounts to individuals who participate (this was seen especially as a way to encourage renters to participate).
- Provide a more thorough explanation to business owners of the importance of their involvement in neighborhood planning (It was noted that a primary deterrent to business involvement is the perceived inefficiency and overly long duration of the process...i.e., too many meetings).
- A media/PR campaign (television, print media, and billboards) designed to explain the importance of and encourage participation in the neighborhood planning process.
- AISD should teach about local planning in schools (perhaps in civics or government classes).

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) If the neighborhood feels it is needed, a neutral, third party facilitator should be provided to negotiate between planning teams and city staff. A paid, third party facilitator would allow the City to openly participate in the process as the stakeholder it is, relieve staff of having to serve two contradictory roles, and remove one of the issues currently creating mistrust among parties.
- 2) There should be an independent liaison between neighborhoods and city council (perhaps within the city auditor's division), to serve as someone the neighborhood can contact regarding implementation issues (such as code enforcement).
- 3) The neighborhood plan action items should be incorporated as priority items for bond/ CIP funding.
- 4) There must be more outreach to the different components/groups within the community (such as renters, business owners, and bilingual residents).
- 5) There should be a comprehensive template for the neighborhood planning process.
- 6) As a means of ensuring political accountability, there should be district, rather than at-large city council representation.

TABLE 13

Neighborhood Selection and Outreach

- Involvement of more people – more different stakeholders – less polarization.
- Use other means of outreach aside from mailing – perhaps certified mail – something to call attention so that business owners don't just throw away mailings.
- NPZD needs better data set of addresses.
- Neighborhood planning should not just be about furthering the goals of the neighborhood association.
- Provide Spanish translation always.
- Make neighborhoods show that there is real interest.
- Use smaller geographic areas.
- More attention to rapid growth areas such as SH-130 corridor.

Planning Process

- The role of NPZD staff needs to be clarified – they shouldn't just be facilitators, they should be *planners* -- and if they are facilitators they need better training in facilitation.
- Reduce the duration of the process – increase efficiency.
- Change focus from *zoning* to broader-scope *planning* -- there should be less of a focus on individual zoning cases.
- Better integration of City departments – formal streams of communication between departments.
- Offer formal mediation where it is needed – at the City's expense.
- Involve expert planning – perhaps through contracting the process out to private consulting firm, but could also be through allowing NPZD staff to apply their planning expertise.
- Modified, more interactive version of the services forum is needed – something where neighborhood stakeholders can participate and express their needs directly to the relevant department.
- NPZD needs more staff.
- There should be more continuity of staff/neighborhood relationships – this might mean creating a better working environment for planners so that they don't have such a high level of turnover.
- The City's agenda should be laid out at the beginning of the process.
- At the beginning of the process there should be an expo or something like that to bring in more stakeholders to reflect the relationship of cooperation.

Implementation and Enforcement

- Consistent oversight and coordination is needed – code enforcement is currently too much of a struggle.
- More communication between departments is necessary.
- Regulations need to be clear.

Neighborhood Contact Teams and Governance

- Involvement of diverse stakeholders should be a priority: renters should be involved in a welcoming manner, commercial property owners should be involved.
- There should be a formalized channel for communication with policymakers (City Council).

- Contact teams need to be tracked over time by staff (so maybe more staff is needed).

TABLE 14

Changes to neighborhood planning

- Additional responsibility for contact team.
- Adopt by-laws for contact team and process for involvement and representation in neighborhood plan.
- CIP & budget consults existing neighborhood plans as outset.
- Framework for collaboration between city departments - NPZD point person.
- Smaller planning areas.
- Bottom up process.
- Less/No zoning and more emphasis on land use.
- More diverse and representative contact team.
- Consistent planning process between neighborhoods.
- Contact team to be responsible for outreach.
- Include responding to and incorporating neighborhood plans in performance review for city departments.

Other issues discussed

- Existence of coalitions of neighborhoods unified about certain issues i.e., development, Mopac corridor, etc
- Plans that benefit both current and future users. Recognizing population growth and accommodating with respect to existing neighborhood character, assets, etc.
- Constant feedback loop vs. Periodic Evaluation – “planning never stops”.

Prioritized Action Items

- 1) Move creation of contact team to the front of the process and expand their responsibility.
- 2) Integrate neighborhood plans in to all city planning efforts.
- 3) Balance expectations about completion timeline of plans with regards to the size and complexity of the neighborhood.

Appendix C: Evaluation Results

Workshop participants completed the evaluation forms during the final plenary session at the City Council Chambers. The responses on how well the workshop met eight goals are provided in the following table:

Table C.1: Total responses on workshop goals

Workshop Goal	Exceeded my expectations for this goal (%)	Met this goal (%)	Mostly met this goal (%)	Did not meet this goal (%)
I felt comfortable sharing and explaining my ideas.	34.9%	60.3%	3.2%	1.6%
Facilitators listened and understood what I had to say.	39.7%	52.4%	6.3%	1.6%
The small group process worked well.	33.9%	48.4%	16.1%	1.6%
Other participants treated me with respect.	42.9%	50.8%	6.3%	0.0%
My groups were productive and cordial.	50.8%	39.7%	9.5%	0.0%
I now have a better understanding of others' perspectives.	40.0%	48.3%	11.7%	0.0%
The information I received before the event was useful.	33.3%	29.8%	31.6%	5.3%
I feel more optimistic about the future of Neighborhood Planning.	29.0%	35.5%	28.2%	7.3%

The second part of the evaluation form was more qualitative and allowed participants to provide expansive comments. These comments were grouped into common themes, which are presented below along with the questions presented on the evaluation forms. The full text of the comments is provided below.

Do you feel that today's event was worthwhile? Why or why not?

- Yes (44 responses)
- No (2 responses)
- Workshop was collaborative and allowed an exchange of viewpoints (17 responses)
- Many challenges for the planning process lay ahead (10 responses)
- Workshop was informative (7 responses)
- No business and development interests represented (2 responses)
- Other (12 responses)
- 46 total responses

Of the 46 total responses to the question "Do you feel that today's event was worthwhile?" a resounding 44 stated that the event was worthwhile.

What would you like to see done differently in any future events?

- More diversity of stakeholders needed at tables (6 responses)

- Better facilities or logistics needed (6 responses)
- Needed more time (5 responses)
- Decrease the number of topics discussed (3 responses)
- Other (12 responses)
- 32 total responses

Key themes from responses to the question, “What would you like to see done differently in any future events?” include ensuring a mix of stakeholders at the breakout tables that better represent a cross-section of the city, providing additional time on each issue, and covering fewer topics to allow for deeper dialogue.

Has today's event helped you re-envision your role in Neighborhood Planning?

- Yes (6 responses)
- No (4 responses)
- Reinforced previous view of role (3 responses)
- Reinvigorated desire to participate (2 responses)
- Other (13 responses)
- 28 total responses

Of the 18 responses to the question “Has today's event helped you re-envision your role in Neighborhood Planning?” six indicated “yes” while four indicated “no.” The “yes” responses commented that they felt an additional motivation to participate in neighborhood planning process. The comments accompanying the “no” responses indicated their perception of their role did not change.

What do you feel is the most important action item that was discussed today?

- Empower neighborhood plans (6 responses)
- Better definition of purpose and goals for planning process (6 responses)
- Clearly define process (3 responses)
- Increase education (2 responses)
- Increase outreach (2 responses)
- More authority to neighborhood (2 responses)
- Early formation of neighborhood contact teams (2 responses)
- Other (19 responses)
- 42 total responses

Key themes from responses to the question “What do you feel is the most important action item that was discussed today?” include increasing the

authority of neighborhood plans and accurately defining the purpose and goals of the planning process.

Any last comments?

- General appreciation for workshop (10 responses)
- Facilitators were good (2 responses)
- Another workshop would be worthy (2 responses)
- Other (10 responses)
- 24 total responses

A call for “Any last comments?” generated much appreciation for the hard work and effort that went into orchestrating the Next Steps Workshop.

Full Text of evaluation comments:

Do you feel that today’s event was worthwhile? Why or why not?

Affirmative

44

Negative

2

Workshop was informative.

“Yes, informative about status of neighborhood plan process.”

“Definitely worthwhile. Information sharing is empowering.”

“Very educational.”

“Yes. I learned a lot plus it was good for networking in the future on these issues.”

“Yes. Expanded awareness and knowledge of other neighborhoods in other parts of the city with similar and different issues.”

“Yes, good education and networking. Dr. Smith was a major positive influence.”

“Yes. As a fist-time attendee I was made more aware of my role in assuring that the needs of my community as well as those across the city are met.”

Workshop was collaborative and allowed exchange of viewpoints.

“Yes, allowed staff, current and future council members to hear neighborhood viewpoints in a collaborative atmosphere.”

“If the process changes, it will have been worthwhile. Simply getting together for its own sake also has value.”

“Yes. It allowed me to express my concerns about the process and make suggestions for improvements.”

“Yes. I was able to hear many other viewpoints.”

“Yes – this was an excellent exercise that allowed many to express their opinions and ideas. I hope the city administration takes the results seriously and incorporates it into the administrative actions.”

“There was a diverse group at my table – extremely worthwhile.”

“Yes, allowed staff, current and future council members to hear neighborhood viewpoints in a collaborative atmosphere.”

“Totally great to be at table with city staff and community’s diverse members to achieve a balance of goals and vision for ‘hoods/city.”

“Yes, got together the right people to solve to problem.”

“Yes, definitely – a real attempt to turn hindsight into foresight to improve collaboration going forward.”

“Getting people together who participate in neighborhood planning is important to enhance the overall NP process by encouraging collaboration, NOT the isolated, rigid limits for planning areas and process.”

“Absolutely – It brought a wide range of participants together to work towards a common goal – improving the neighborhood planning process.”

“Yes. Allowed a lot of us to find we have the same ideas and goals.”

“Yes – I think it helped to understand the various perspectives of the staff, neighborhoods, business owners, etc.”

“Yes, City, neighborhood people came together to share ideas as citizens of the Austin community.”

“Yes – gave everyone the opportunity to share and hear different points of view on planning’s future in Austin.”

“Yes – good to brainstorm with other concerned people.”

No business and development interests represented.

“It was ok, however, the biggest flaw was the non-representation of business and development interest.”

“No. Few participants of the building sector.”

Many challenges are ahead.

“Yes. Need to improve the process. Challenge will be to balance need for increased density vs. neighborhood desired.”

“Yes, we need to establish a comprehensive template for neighborhood planning.”

“Will be worthwhile if things change based on our input.”

“Some good action ideas. Today will be worthwhile ONLY if they are adopted.”

“Yes – people heard results of UT’s work – Lack of trust between neighbors and city and with neighborhoods.”

“Assuming the City actually uses the recommendations, yes.”

“Absolutely – Staff and Planning Commission and Council saw our commitment first-hand. If they don’t take it seriously now, then... God help us.”

“It’s definitely the beginning of a good conversation. The future will be the true measure of the worthiness.”

“Only if the recommendations are translated into action.”

“Absolutely brought out the divisiveness and difficulty of finding common ground but that it will be possible.”

Outliers

"Yes, it was well-organized and productive."

"Yes – glad to know the city is listening and the university-related component (the study) added integrity to discussion."

"My goodness it was great! The students did a great job collecting and compiling the information. Dr. Wilson's presentation was great."

"Worthwhile! Met other community activists."

"Yes, but too much talking cutting into 'work' time."

"Yes – more than I expected."

"No – the planning process is flawed and is not objective."

"Yes. Government by the People, for the People."

"Yes – very productive – thoughtful group at table – but, I had a previous 'positive' experience with neighborhood planning."

"Yes, because some excellent ideas were put on the table."

"Yes. I learned a lot plus it was good for networking in the future on these issues."

"Definitely. Came up with specific ideas. All stakeholders (staff, Planning Commission, residents, 'absent' developer) understood need for density. Thought of concrete changes to improve neighborhood planning."

What would you like to see done differently in any future events?

Decrease the number of topics discussed and focus on fewer topics.

"Keep half-day format but allocate more time to each of fewer topics."

"Focused sessions on particulate issues with a view to problem-solving (i.e. outreach)."

"Perhaps fewer topics so more in-depth."

Needed more time.

"Maybe until 2:00 pm. We were rushed at the end."

"Less rush to produce action items."

"More time on specific issues. Flush out real actions over time."

"A little more time."

"More advance time for participants to create comments, recommendations."

"This could easily have been a 2-day event."

Better diversify at tables.

"Ensure mix of city and neighborhood representatives at breakout tables."

"Include a TRUE cross-section of the Austin community. Again, just inviting only residents weakens any information created in this forum."

"Get every member of the Planning and Zoning Staff and every City Council member to spread out among the breakout groups and participate as equals with citizens/neighbors."

"Make sure we don't have 2 staff at one table while no staff are at another (I'm glad my table had staff, but other tables 'missed out' by being all neighborhood folks."

"Any/more representation from development community. They need to be approached directly."

"Broader participation, more diversity."

Better facilities or logistics needed.

"Use more rooms to disperse groups to reduce ambient noise."

"Have more rooms for breakouts."

"Not hold it n a holiday or busy weekend."

"More A.C."

"Have more coffee and water."

"Not ask for \$5 so often."

Outliers.

"Longer – Entire community involved – not just neighborhood planning process."

"Time for each part (small parts) of the agenda should be clearer."

"Continued input from citizens and more benchmarking/best processes from other cities."

"I want to address the entire group [?] to offer a model for the template (D. Llanes)."

"Charge small fee per person to cover costs – offer scholarships so no-one is left out. Encourage high school and college class participation."

"Excellent idea to bring food TO planning groups."

"Event was well done – best city planning event I've attended."

"Tighter control on the discussion so that we could: stay on task, be respectful of one another."

"Discuss specific problems facing city staff vis-à-vis working with contentious neighborhoods."

"Build political will to implement."

"Facilitation and organization was excellent – made productive use of time. Food always helps!"

"There is a lack of trust between neighborhoods and city officials. Consider what can be done to change this perception."

Has today's event helped you re-envision your role in Neighborhood Planning?

Affirmative: 6

Negative: 4

Reinvigorated desire to participate

"It has reinforced my desire to participate."

"Yes. Reinvigorated me."

Reinforced previous view of my role

"No, just confirmed my role."

"No – I think I'm doing the right thing."

"Yes, it has not only helped but encouraged me to stay the course."

Outliers.

"Just starting planning process so this was a good first step."

"Yes – learn more be more involved."

"I am more hopeful of real change in the NP process because 98% of participants want neighborhoods to have more power."

"No, I'll continue to try to make it work."

"I am additionally encouraged and additionally confident that our neighborhoods can achieve an excellent sustainable, affordable quality of life."

"Yes – Good to know others are dealing with same issues and hopeful we can coordinate efforts for more clout."

"I'm TRYING really hard to regain optimism about the value of my investment in our neighborhood plan... but I can't say I'm over that hump yet."

"A little bit, yes. How to affect it in a city-driven process is the real problem."

"Yes. I am a staff person. I just hope I have backing from the rest of the department! And from Council and City Management."

"It has given me hope that improvements will be made."

"No."

"Learned a lot about neighborhood/citizen perspective."

"Yes. Need to be more informed re: purpose and implementation of neighborhood plans and the process to be followed by city officials and neighborhoods."

What do you feel is the most important action item that was discussed today?

More authority to neighborhood.

"Shifting paradigm to one that recognizes primary responsibility and authority rests with neighborhood."

"Giving more power back to the neighborhoods."

Empower neighborhood plans

"Enforce NP through code – all the time."

"Empower neighborhood planning by including infrastructure projects identified in neighborhood plans in the CIP bond package."

"Make approved neighborhood plans enforceable by law."

"Codification of neighborhood planning."

"Codify neighborhood planning to be able to enforce."

"Creating planning development districts to codify in an ordinance the development standards articulated through the goals and objectives of the neighborhood plan."

Additional Education.

"On-going education."

“Education.”

Increase participant outreach

“Getting stakeholders (residents, owners, business, etc.) involved at beginning of process, as had been the case in early NPs.”

Clearly define process

“City, staff, and stakeholders need to clearly define the scope of neighborhood planning and to honor the process that is developed.”

“Standardize the process for neighborhood planning. Commit to enforcement.”

“The vision for neighborhood planning and structure.”

Better definition purpose and goals for planning process.

“Defining goals at beginning of process.”

“Clarification of City’s goals and reasons for goals (affordability, density, etc.). These goals should be made clear from outset.”

“Setting goals by City Council for neighborhood planning.”

“Need for Council to clarify and be up front re: neighborhood planning purpose and then respect the resulting plans.”

“Get Council resolution on NP purpose and outcomes.”

“Council needs to clarify what the neighborhood planning process is about – what are the desired goals.”

Early formation of neighborhood contact team

“Changing from late-created neighborhood contact team to early-created team.”

“Move the formation of the NP contact team to very early in the process, give them more responsibility and the resources to assist with outreach, education, etc.”

Outliers

“Lack of trust.”

“How to move toward implementation of neighborhood plans.”

“1. Formulate goals to improve NP process. 2. Require commitment by City Council and Planning and Zoning to implement these goals. 3. Implement periodic evaluation of progress in realizing these goals by subjecting them to empirical evidence. Make periodic evaluation of actual realization of visions/goals via actual development events a regular part of NP process on into the future.”

“Dissatisfaction of citizens with process.”

“City’s role in planning.”

“Make process more open, especially to have (require) a neighborhood representative present at all meetings where developers and agents meet with City Council members or Planning Commissioners.”

“More resources need to be allocated to neighborhood planning all the way along the process.”

"The one that did not get put on the screen. The City must use technology to stop violators of code from securing another building permit until the fines are paid. For each additional violation, the fines will increase."

"The process drivers (people) being more important than city-led aspects."

"Needed change in neighborhood planning folks and staff relationship."

"Removing zoning from the neighborhood planning process. Moving it to use as a tool for implementation."

"Providing resources to recruit representative planning group."

"Need for resources and direction from Council. Need historic and conservation districts. Early planning team."

"Process should be restarted."

"Privatization."

"Accountability of our government to the People – in long-term, comprehensive decision-making."

"Density goals."

"Making the process more efficient by requiring separate facilitator mediator and planner (maybe privatize) and shortening it, and making sure more people are involved."

"Need for accountability in implementation of neighborhood plans. The importance of honoring decisions made in neighborhood plans."

Any last comments?

General appreciation for workshop.

"This ran really smoothly. Congratulations to those who worked so hard – you know who you are!"

"Thanks for doing this. Just the symbolism of doing this is important."

"I really appreciated the report Dr. Wilson gave about the findings of the UT grad study."

"Thanks to Pat Wilson and the students at UT, to Tim Mahoney and the vendors!"

"**Thank you** to the UT CRP classes – if anyone had a chance to breathe life back into this dying beast (NP), you guys did it. Now we wait and see..."

"Thank you for providing this opportunity."

"Thanks for hosting this. It was worth it."

"The CRP students did an exceptional job! The future of city planning is in good hands."

"Good job! Excellent work by UT students!"

"Good job! Well done!"

Facilitators were good.

"My facilitator was good."

"I really appreciated the people skills of our facilitator, Ms. Marx."

An additional workshop would have worth.

"A follow-up session in one year would be excellent."

"Do this every 3 to 4 years – Don't wait 10 years. Award extra goal implementation and recognition to neighborhood plans."

Outliers

"Keep UT CRP faculty and students involved as resources."

"Good first step!"

"Good Luck!"

"Implementation and enforcement need to be honored by staff, Council, and all citizens."

"Focus on Central Texas Region and City as a whole."

"Prevent planning process co-optation."

"Please encourage prompt consideration and inclusion of results in ongoing neighborhood planning (i.e. not just put off changes and continue business as usual)."

"Alas, it is always a challenge to reign in the blabbers. But, God bless them."

"Keep the conversation going and continue to strive for results-driven change."

"We need better coordination between the City and neighborhood planners to allow more response time for considering adoption of new planning tools."