DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN

Background and Implementation

Downtown Commission
September 19, 2018
Boundaries

• NORTH: Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
• SOUTH: Lady Bird Lake
• WEST: Lamar Blvd.
• EAST: IH 35
WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN (DAP)?

• A reflection of the community’s vision, values, and priorities for Downtown;
• A 20-30 year action plan for Downtown;
• A 183 page action plan for Downtown containing over 100 implementation recommendations for improving Downtown;
• A key element in realizing the Imagine Austin (comprehensive plan) vision for the city.
THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

- A **dense and livable pattern of development** that supports a vibrant day and nighttime environment.

- An **interconnected pattern of streets, parks, and public spaces** that instill a unique sense of place and community.

- A **multi-modal transportation system** that is convenient, sustainable, affordable, and a viable alternative to the automobile.

- A beloved fabric of **historic places, buildings, and landscapes** that celebrate the unique journey Austin has taken over the past 200 years.

- A **variety of districts and destinations** that support the creative expression of its citizenry through art, music, theater, dance, and performance.

- A **green “necklace” of trails** extending from Lady Bird Lake, and along Waller and Shoal Creeks into surrounding neighborhoods.

- A wide **range of housing choices** for individuals and families with diverse social and economic backgrounds.

- An **array of innovative businesses** – small and large – that are attracted to the Downtown by its rich human capital and unique sense of place.
DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN ORGANIZATION

Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Transportation Framework Plan

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN
- Historic Preservation
- Activities and Uses
- Density and Design
- The Public Realm
- Transportation and Parking
- Utilities and Infrastructure
- Leadership and Implementation

Core/Waterfront District Plan

Northwest District Plan

Recommended Code Amendments/Zoning Changes
- Zoning Changes
- Downtown Compatibility Standards
- Downtown Density Bonus Program
- Form-Based Design Standards

Recommended Ten-Year Investment Priorities
- Capital Improvements
- Operations/Maintenance
- Specific Initiatives (e.g., affordable housing, creative culture, etc.)

Recommended Governance/Management
- City Staffing
- City Organization, Roles and Responsibilities
- Downtown Development Corporation
- Public/Private Partnerships
DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN
Transformative Actions over 10 years

- Initiate a new generation of Downtown signature parks
- Amend the Land Development Code
- Provide permanent supportive housing
- Invest in Downtown infrastructure and water quality
The City Council adopted the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP) as an amendment to the comprehensive plan in December of 2011 and directed the City Manager to undertake the following implementation actions including:

- A regulating plan that implements downtown-specific development standards;
- Creation of new zoning districts
- A downtown density bonus program; and
- A downtown-specific compatibility framework.
94% of the DAP recommendations are complete, ongoing, partially complete, or planned.
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

1. Activities and Uses

2. Public Realm

3. Mobility

4. Utilities and Infrastructure
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Activities and Uses – Seaholm District & Central Library

City Public/Private Projects:

- Mixed Use Development, including:
  - Residential, Office, and Retail
- Multimodal Transportation Infrastructure
- Public Parking
- Open/Green Space
- Public Art

Central Library (Fall 2017)
Community focused building and services:

- Traditional library services
- Cafes
- Rooftop Gardens
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Activities and Uses – Permanent Supportive Housing

Capital Studios (Foundation Communities)
11th and Trinity Streets

• 135 housing units available to extremely and very low-income individuals, including 27 units of permanent supportive housing

• Provided Great Streets Improvements
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Activity and Uses – Downtown Density Bonus Program

• Approved by City Council (Ord. 20140227-054)
• Pathway to achieve community benefits including: affordable housing and streetscape improvements
• 9 of projects have received administrative approval, 8 more are under review
• $850,000+ collected in density bonus fees
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Activities and Uses – Red River Cultural District

Red- River Cultural District

- Recognized as a nationally acclaimed area with a unique historic, economic, and cultural heritage
- Designated by Council resolution: 20131017-036
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Public Realm – Downtown Parks

Downtown Parks:
• Wooldridge Square improvements;
• Republic Square Phase II complete;
• Brush Square Master Plan is underway;
• Waterloo Park design is in for permit review.

Congress Avenue Streetscape Project:
• Preferred concept is anticipated to be publicly presented early next year.
The transformation of downtown’s public realm through the implementation of Great Streets has been greatly advanced by the incorporation of street improvements as part of recently completed, under construction or planned COA Street Reconstruction Projects.

**Public Projects:**
- *Cesar Chavez Esplanade, Colorado, Brazos, 2nd, 3rd, and 8th Streets.*

**Private Projects:**
- Since the Program’s inception in 2001, more than 50 private projects have been built, are under construction, or are in the design/planning phase.

The total number of Great Street block faces through public and private projects = 200+ block faces or almost 13 linear miles of Great Streets!
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Mobility – Transit Service

**MetroRapid Bus Service**

MetroRapid is a service that brings together a set of unique features to result in quick, more convenient service for the community.

- North Lamar/South Congress (Route 801)
- Burnet/South Lamar (Route 803).

**Project Connect**

Connect people, places, and opportunities through a complete, congestion-proof system of reliable and frequent high-capacity transit services running in dedicated lanes or on tracks, away from other traffic.
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Mobility – Bike Share

Austin B-cycle has brought bike sharing to the Austin public by launching service in December 2013.

- Started with 11 stations and 110 bikes
- Today expansion to 76 stations and 650 is underway.

Summary Report | In 2018
---|---
Total number of trips | 265,000
Total number of miles | 715,000
Total number of calories burned | 28 million
Total Carbon Offset (lbs.) | 676,000
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Mobility – 2-way street conversions

Streets should operate in both directions to provide a more understandable and convenient circulation pattern, calmer traffic flows, and enhanced retail.

Converted:
Brazos (Cesar Chavez to 6th Sts.)
5th St (Brazos to IH 35)
Colorado (Cesar Chavez to 9th Sts.)

Brazos St. at 5th St.
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Mobility – Downtown Wayfinding System

• The “wayfinding” improvement project, an action item outlined in the DAP, aims to integrate a range of navigation tools for traversing the downtown area, such as signage and kiosks.

• Dynamic parking system installation currently underway

• Static directional signage anticipated to be installed early 2019.
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Utilities and Infrastructure

Waller Creek – flood control tunnel is complete and above ground improvements are underway

Little Shoal Creek Stormwater tunnel is complete

Ongoing replacement of aging wastewater infrastructure – often in conjunction with streetscape projects.
NEXT STEPS

• Coordinate with the future Land Development Code rewrite
• Continue coordination with multiple city departments and CapMetro on implementation actions.
• Coordinate with Commissions and stakeholders on potential DAP updates (as directed by Council)