



# From Chaos to Collaboration: A New Paradigm and Process for Public Engagement

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Mediator, Facilitator, Public Engagement Consultant



From Chaos to Collaboration





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I'm shameless!\*

“I don't have the power now, but I don't want it  
anyhow, so I gotta let it go...”

“Thought I'd never compromise...oh, but you  
convinced me otherwise...”

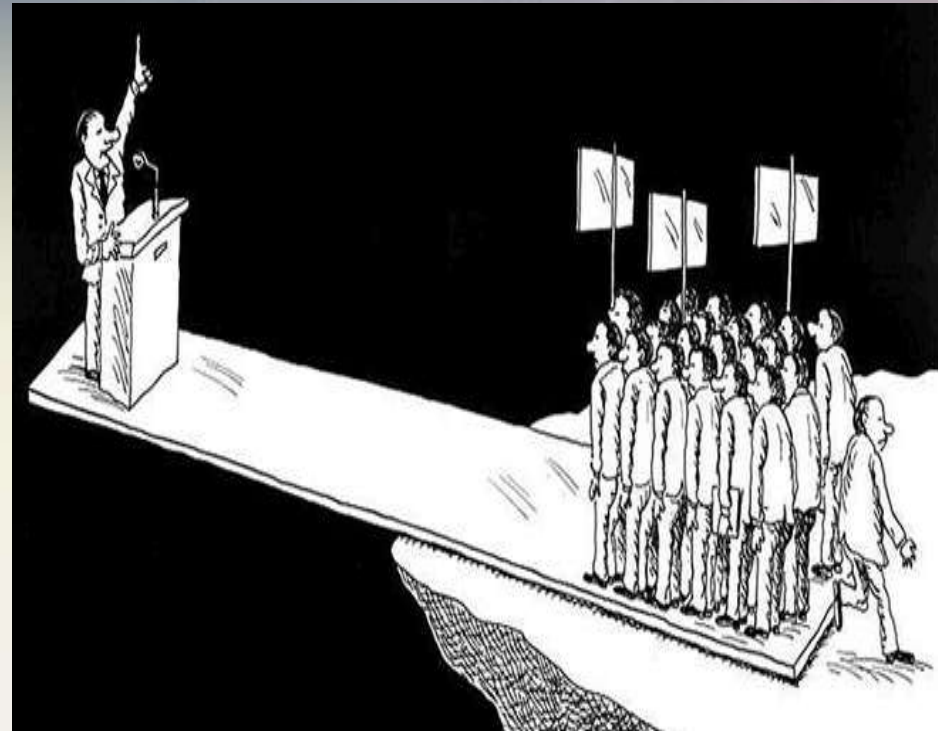
\*but not self-promoting  
From Chaos to Collaboration



**“I don’t have the power now, but I don’t want it anyhow, so I gotta let it go...”**

*Whether you give the public the “bully pulpit” or not, they can already “bully” their way onto the “pulpit.”*

*They’ll influence the process one way or the other; we might as well engage them proactively, thoughtfully, inclusively, and fairly*



# “Thought I’d never compromise, but oh you convinced me otherwise...”



public policy conflict resolution processes provide a forum to transform discourse and problem solving:



citizens engaged in public disputes can have:

- entrenched positions
- feelings of hostility toward other groups/viewpoints

a well-convened process enables:

- civic dialogue
- possible collaboration
- win, win solutions based on underlying interests



# The Public in Public Policy

- Find ways to include **all** affected stakeholders
- **Especially** hard to reach
  - Seniors
  - Disabled
  - Limited-English speakers
  - Youth
  - Low income
- Create a sustained **culture** of collaboration





# Why should this matter to planners?

- [What Is Planning?](#)
- When government officials, business leaders, and citizens come together to build communities that enrich people's lives, that's planning.
- [What Do Planners Do?](#)
- Planners help government officials, business leaders, and citizens create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live.
- [Becoming a Planner](#)
- Planning is a collaborative, dynamic field that offers the chance to really make a difference in the communities you care about.

*Credit: American Planning Association*



# Changing Views

## Customer

- Allows others to define needs and choices
- Consumers, not creators
- Think in terms of I/Me
- Wants services without bearing costs

## Citizen

- Accountable
- Committed
- Determines the future
- Exercises ownership
- Acknowledges that change comes through citizens



# Works in the private sector: why not public?



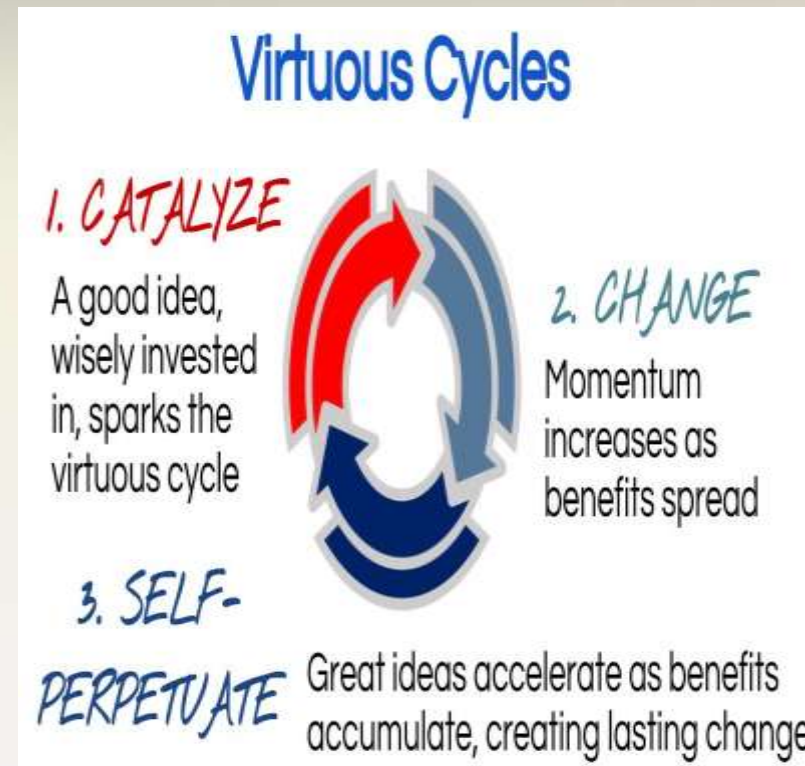
An advertisement for Neighbors Emergency Center. At the top, a young boy is shouting "WIN!". Below him, text reads "Go to LEGO.com/productfeedback to fill out a survey for a chance to win a LEGO product." The Neighbors Emergency Center logo is prominent, featuring a red cross and the text "neighbors EMERGENCY CENTER". The main headline says "YOUR OPINION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE!". Below this, it says "Leave us a review about your experience at Neighbors and get a FREE Starbucks Gift Card! Go to Google+ or yelp, or use the QR code below." There is an image of a laptop and a QR code. At the bottom, it says "WE'RE ALWAYS OPEN" and "24/7 ERcare". The address "1801 E. 51st St, Bldg. H, Austin, TX 78723" and phone number "512.322.5104 | NEC24.COM" are listed.





# Making the case for public engagement

- Benefits for consumers
  - Better services, delivered the way they want them
- Benefits for decision-makers
  - consumers become better informed and more motivated to get involved and support ideas if they have some influence over the agenda.
  - Better informed consumers are also likely to lead a drive for better quality engagement which will in turn support efforts to improve engagement.





# Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation



## Public participation :

- is based on the belief that **those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.**
- includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- **seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.**
- provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



# City of Austin Principles

## **Accountability and Transparency**

The City will enable the public to participate in decision-making processes by providing clear information on the issues, the ways to participate, and how their participation contributes to the decision.

## **Fairness & Respect**

The City will maintain a safe environment that cultivates and supports respectful public engagement and will expect participants to do so in turn.



# City of Austin Principles

## **Accessibility**

The City will respect and encourage participation by providing ample public notice of opportunities and resources and accommodations that enable all to participate.

## **Predictability & Consistency**

The City will prepare the public to participate by providing meeting agendas, discussion guidelines, notes, and information on next steps.



# City of Austin Principles

## **Creativity & Community Collaboration**

The City will use innovative, proven, and customized engagement solutions that are appropriate to the needs of the projects and the participants.

## **Responsible Stewardship**

The City will balance its commitment to provide ample opportunities for public involvement with its commitment to delivering government services efficiently and using City resources wisely.



# IAP2 Community Engagement Spectrum

*Increasing Level of Public Impact*

**Public  
participation  
goal**

## **Inform**

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

## **Consult**

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

## **Involve**

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

## **Collaborate**

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

## **Empower**

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.



# IAP2 Community Engagement Spectrum



## Promise to the public

We will keep you informed.

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

We will implement what you decide.

## Example techniques

- Fact sheets
- Web sites
- Open houses

- Public comment
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Public meetings

- Workshops
- Deliberative polling

- Citizen advisory committees
- Consensus-building
- Participatory decision-making

- Citizen juries
- Ballots
- Delegated decision

# Large public dialogue: Workshops & Summits



- Community workshops to discuss municipal bond projects
- Participants randomly assigned to a tables with ADR neutrals
- Task: allocate funds across four categories using “play money”
- Information around room, “dots” to vote for projects
- Allows for multiple forms of participation



# Deliberation and Simulation: “Chip Exercise”



**Goal:** Forge group consensus about transportation demands; develop alternatives for public review

- Participants asked to figure out where future residents and workers would go
- Included mobility and previous planning efforts



**IMAGINEAUSTON**  
Vibrant. Livable. Connected.

# “Deliberation To Go”: Meetings in a Box



- Similar models in *New Hampshire, Arizona, Washington, Texas* (“Desoto Dining & Dialogue”)
- Volunteers facilitate small groups
- Provides:
  - *Convenience*
  - *Flexibility*
  - *Safety*
  - *Honesty*



**IMAGINE AUSTIN  
MEETINGinaBOX**

# “Deliberation To Go”: Speak Week



- Engaging the un-engaged by focusing on:
  - Convenience
  - Safety
  - Anonymity
  - Diff' t levels of input/time





# Can you engage the public?

Over the course of a multi-month or multi-year planning process, how would you most effectively be able to engage the public?



Paper and electronic surveys



Interactive Community meeting



Online forum



Working groups/task forces



Mobile outreach/public booths



Portable self-guided "meeting in a box"



Open house



## Developing a vision

## Assembling a "growth scenario" for the future

## Developing details of the plan in several categories

## Reviewing the plan as a whole





# “Champions”: Long-Term Activities



- Task Forces, Working Groups, Boards and Commissions
- “Neighborhood College” (Hickory, North Carolina)
- AustinCorps
- Conversation Corps
- Youth Councils (Boston, MA; Novi, MI; Hampton, VA)
- Block Clubs (Cupertino, CA)
- International Leadership Academy (Skokie, IL)



# Why Conversation Corps?



- Go where people are
- Empower and engage the un-engaged and disempowered
- Foster culture of civility and consensus
- Develop citywide capacity for connecting community to government







# Conversation Corps

- Trained community facilitators host dialogue sessions across entire city at a variety of venues
- Solicit input and advice on variety of current topics
- Facilitators report input to government or agency, which in turn provides feedback to public on how input



# Why technology?



- Most Americans are already online at home and elsewhere (libraries, smart phones, etc.) or have easy access to a phone
- An online/text message/telephone-based engagement opportunity gives an outlet to those who:
  - **Have limited time**
  - **Feel uncomfortable speaking publicly**
  - **Lack the means or resources to meet in-person**



# What's the state of technology?



- 70% of Americans high-speed home Internet, 3% dial-up. *Varies significantly among ethnicity, age, education, \$\$*
- **>25% have no Internet access at home**
- Smart phones:
  - **90% of American adults have a cell phone**
  - **58% of American adults have a smartphone**
  - **29% of cell phone owners say cell is “something they can’t live without” (Pew Research Internet Project)**



# Reaching a greater audience: TV, Telephone, and Text



- [Overview videos](#) shown at community forum, social media, TV
- [Televised community conversations](#), with SMS, social media, and telephone technology



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# Texting

HEY COMMUTERS:

## Would you use a rapid transit line along the Boulevard to get to Center City?

Text Yes or No to:

# 215-987-5444



### How does this work?

Text your answer to have your response recorded. You'll get a series of 2 follow-up questions.

Your **privacy is important** to us. We won't use your phone number again.

### Why does this matter?

We are soliciting input for the **Philadelphia2035 Lower Northeast District Plan**, which will guide Philadelphia's physical development by making recommendations for zoning changes, city-owned land and facilities, and public investments.

For more info, go to <http://phila2035.org>



CODE for AMERICA



Philadelphia is a member of the Planning for Growth Network



CONNECT TO YOUR GOVERNMENT

## in 3 steps

**txt**

*your ideas about your neighborhood*

**reply**

*to ideas about your neighborhood*

**talk**

*about ideas in your neighborhood*

**text 718.514.6113**

# Nextdoor™



## **Austin Police Department launches Nextdoor**

[Austin Police Department](#) from [Austin Police](#)

Hello, this is Chief Art Acevedo and I am pleased to announce that starting today the Austin Police Department will be utilizing Nextdoor in an effort to facilitate a virtual Neighborhood Watch program and help foster neighbor-to-neighbor communications.

Nextdoor is a tool for us to effectively share crime prevention and safety information, such as alerts of property crimes in the area or suspicious activity. You can expect to receive hyperlocal crime and safety updates from us on Nextdoor, but your Nextdoor website is still kept private to only those who live in the neighborhood and who have a

# Surveys 2.0



1 WELCOME

2 PRIORITIES

3 Focus on → Approach A Approach B Approach C

**Approach C**  
Focus on meeting infrastructure needs on interstates only; increase investment in mobility, local priorities and non-motorized transportation options; accept significant deterioration in the condition of infrastructure on non-interstate highways.  
→ [More about this approach...](#)

Thank You! ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Community Improvements	→
Bridge Condition	←
Interregional Corridor Mobility	→
Roadside Infrastructure	←
Accessible Ped. Infrastructure	→
Traveler Safety	→

worse than today ← → better than today

4 SURVEY

5 STAY INVOLVED

What Might Approach C Look Like 20 Years in the Future?  
Click on icons below for more information.

# eComment on Meeting Items



## Agenda Items

Please select an Agenda Item to Comment on or Register to Speak at the Public Meeting.

1. WAIVE TEXT READING OF ORDINANCES A. Approve \*\* waiving the text reading of ordinances on this agenda pursuant to Solana Beach Municipal Code Section 2.04.460. Moved by Max Kambhampali, seconded by QAD1. Vote to Approve A. Approve \*\* waiving the text reading of ordinances on this agenda pursuant to Solana Beach Municipal Code Section 2.04.460. (Approved) new doc

Comment Register

2. MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING A. Approve \*\* the Minutes of the Regular and Closed Session City Council meetings held November 8, 2006 and Regular Session City Council meetings held November 29, 2006.

Comment Register

3. LIST OF DEMANDS (File No. 0000-30) A. \*\* Ratify the List of Demands

Back to All Meetings

## Public Comment on Agenda Item

### City Council Agenda

2. MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING A. Approve \*\* the Minutes of the Regular and Closed Session City Council meetings held November 8, 2006 and Regular meeting held November 29, 2006.

Your Position:  Support  Neutral  Oppose

Your Comment [or Record a Video Comment](#)

500 of 500 characters remaining

New Attachments:

Submit Comment

Back to All Meetings

Back to Agenda Items

Carrier 11:27 AM 100%

Planning Commission Meeting Item Details

Item Title: 1. Public Hearings/Planning Referrals and Appeals

Attachments: No Attachments

Public Comments

SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NEUTRAL
50%	30%	20%

- John Smith  
I think this is a great idea.
- Pete Davids  
This would adversely impact my neighborhood. Before...
- Tom Jacobs  
This is a definite plus. It should clear up a ton of issues.
- Aileen Roberts  
If we implement this, won't it cost more than it brings in?
- Jane Doe  
I'm not sure I agree with this. It seems like we should...

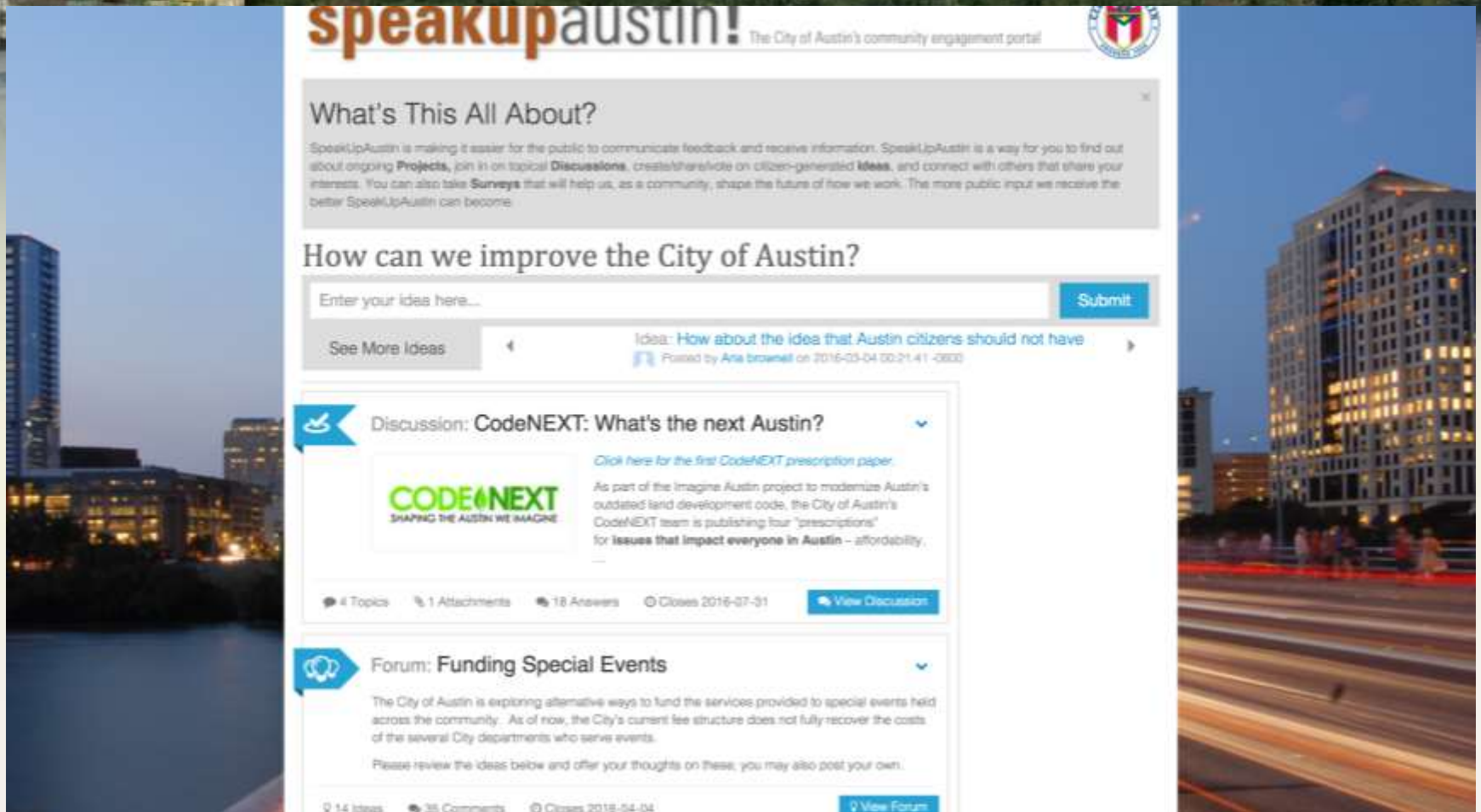
My Notes

Previous Item Next Item





# Community conversations online



The screenshot displays the 'speakup.austin!' website, which is the City of Austin's community engagement portal. The page features a header with the site's name and logo, followed by a section titled 'What's This All About?' explaining the platform's purpose. Below this is a form for submitting ideas, with a 'Submit' button and a 'See More Ideas' link. A featured idea is shown: 'How about the idea that Austin citizens should not have', posted by Arts browserll on 2016-03-04. The main content area includes a discussion titled 'CodeNEXT: What's the next Austin?' with a link to a prescription paper and a forum titled 'Funding Special Events' with a description of the city's funding exploration.

**speakup**austin! The City of Austin's community engagement portal

## What's This All About?

SpeakUpAustin is making it easier for the public to communicate feedback and receive information. SpeakUpAustin is a way for you to find out about ongoing **Projects**, join in on topical **Discussions**, create/share/vote on citizen-generated **Ideas**, and connect with others that share your interests. You can also take **Surveys** that will help us, as a community, shape the future of how we work. The more public input we receive the better SpeakUpAustin can become.

## How can we improve the City of Austin?

Enter your ideas here... [Submit](#)

[See More Ideas](#) **Idea: How about the idea that Austin citizens should not have** [Posted by Arts browserll on 2016-03-04 00:21:41 -0800](#)

### Discussion: CodeNEXT: What's the next Austin?

[Click here for the first CodeNEXT prescription paper.](#)

**CODENEXT**  
SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

As part of the Imagine Austin project to modernize Austin's outdated land development code, the City of Austin's CodeNEXT team is publishing four "prescriptions" for **issues that impact everyone in Austin** – affordability,

4 Topics 1 Attachments 18 Answers Closes 2016-07-31 [View Discussion](#)

### Forum: Funding Special Events

The City of Austin is exploring alternative ways to fund the services provided to special events held across the community. As of now, the City's current fee structure does not fully recover the costs of the several City departments who serve events.

Please review the ideas below and offer your thoughts on these; you may also post your own.

14 Ideas 35 Comments Closes 2018-04-04 [View Forum](#)

# Discuss like would in person... with a facilitator



- Active moderator(s) and subject matter experts
- Links or attachments to additional background information
- Open-ended questions
- Enforceable terms and conditions

A screenshot of a Facebook discussion thread. The top part shows a topic header: 'Topic: Code Prescription #1: Managing Growth and Maintaining Character'. Below it is the main text of the post: 'Here's [Code Prescription #1](#). How might the new land development code manage our growth while keeping Austin's character? What should the City allow, encourage or prohibit? What trade-offs are acceptable or unacceptable? What are some additional recommendations, not included in this Code Prescription, that would help preserve, protect and enhance the City's natural and built environment?'. Below the text is a '18 Responses' button. The bottom part of the screenshot shows a response from 'Tim Thomas' dated 'March 08, 2016 at 11:06am CST' with the text 'Do we want to maintain character? Most of the times I hear that I think of people trying to...'.

Topic: Code Prescription #1: Managing Growth and Maintaining Character

Here's [Code Prescription #1](#). How might the new land development code manage our growth while keeping Austin's character?

What should the City allow, encourage or prohibit? What trade-offs are acceptable or unacceptable?

What are some additional recommendations, not included in this Code Prescription, that would help preserve, protect and enhance the City's natural and built environment?

18 Responses

18 Responses

**Tim Thomas** at March 08, 2016 at 11:06am CST

Do we want to maintain character? Most of the times I hear that I think of people trying to...

# Brainstorm and rate different ideas



## How should we fund services for special events?

Enter your idea here...

**Submit**

**Forum: Funding Special Events**

The City of Austin is exploring alternative ways to fund the services provided to special events held across the community. As of now, the City's current fee structure does not fully recover the costs of the several City departments who serve events.

Please review the ideas below and offer your thoughts on these; you may also post your own.

Speak up, Austin?

14 Ideas 35 Comments Closes 2016-04-04

**Latest Ideas** Highest Rated Most Comments

**Idea: Standardized Tiered Fees**

**Brooke Cox** 19 days ago

Obviously, fees are essential for all events to contribute to the costs associated in City services required to put on events. I would recommend/request fees be based on the timeline of the event (the time it impacts these departments), as well as the event's status of for-profit or non-profit. If an event impacts departments and streets for less than a day, it should be charged less than an event that lasts several days. Non-profits that use event closures to fundraise or benefit the residents of Austin can see a huge impact on their event and the ability to produce it when crippling costs are enacted.

0 Comments 1 Vote Created

Vote Follow Share View

**Idea: TICKET OR WRISTBAND FEE TO FUND CITY SERVICES**

**Marla Cruz** 20 days ago

When tickets/wristbands for ALL events including the Erwin Center, UT games, music concerts throughout the city are sold, include a small fee that goes directly to fund city services. People come from all over the world for the huge events and from all over the US for others, collecting a fee from everyone adds up. Fee collected goes directly for event city services.

0 Comments 1 Vote Created

- Ideas can be pre-loaded or call for new ideas
- can be open-ended
- Votes are only in support of an idea, not against; easy to oppose, harder to recommend alternatives
- Host agency (city, etc.) can change status of idea to indicate staff's response and viability
- Can be easier for some to review existing ideas than generate new ones

# How to Spend Money

(Courtesy "A Balancing Act," Denver-based company)



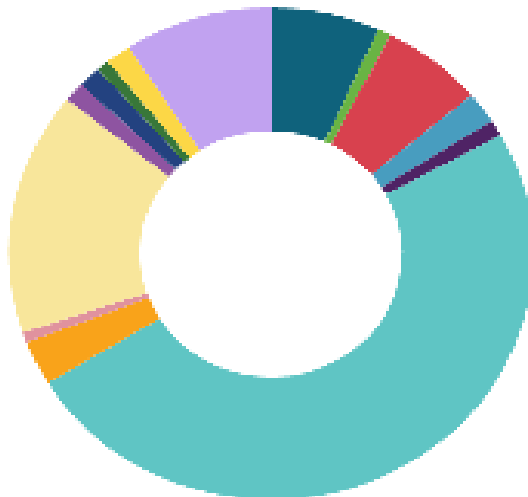
## City of Hartford

Tips

You are in deficit.



### Where the Money Goes...



### Spending

Police - \$38.6m	>
Parks & Recreation - \$4.8m	>
Fire & Emergency - \$36.4m	>
Health & Human Services - \$11.9m	>
Transportation & Transit - \$6.1m	>
Education - \$284.0m	>
Water & Sanitation - \$17.0m	>

# Writing a Law Together (wiki)



**\*NOTICE: The last day to submit draft legislation on this wiki is March 7, 2014\***

**Enter your text below:**

## **PROBATE CODE SECTION 1003**

(a) The court may, on its own motion or on request of a personal representative, guardian, conservator, trustee, or other interested person, appoint a guardian ad litem at any stage of a proceeding under this code to represent the interest of any of the following persons, if the court determines that representation of the interest otherwise would be inadequate:

- (1) A minor.
- (2) An incapacitated person.
- (3) An unborn person.
- (4) An unascertained person.
- (5) A person whose identity or address is unknown.
- (6) A designated class of persons who are not ascertained or are not in being.

**(7) A nonhuman animal who is either an estate asset or part of a trust res.**

*(The status of animals is inherently more than property as evidenced by animals being able to be beneficiaries of trusts pursuant to legislation. It makes sense, therefore, that when needed, a guardian ad litem could be appointed for them.)*

## **PROBATE CODE SECTION 21350-21356**

21350. (a) Except as provided in Section 21351, no provision, or provisions, of any instrument shall be valid to make any donative transfer to any of the following:

(1) The person who drafted the instrument.

**(2) Example additional clause here. By the same reasoning, no beneficiary of a will can be an executor of that will. THAT IS CRAZY. A TESTATOR'S CHILD(REN) ARE FREQUENTLY BOTH EXECUTOR(S) AND BENEFICIARY(IES).**

4 ☹️

2 🐾





# Keys to Success



- Identification of stakeholders, pre-existing issues, power imbalances, community spaces
- Accessibility and convenience to process and relevant information, transparency
- Understanding and knowledge of process
- Diversity of times for meetings
- Unique and enticing ways to engage people (online, face-to-face, door-to-door, in familiar surroundings)
- Communication/publicity across multiple media
- Opportunities to participate from beginning
- Framing the issue in an engaging way



# Mission...possible! I can help.



## Larry Schooler

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- Fellow, Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life, The University of Texas at Austin

[SpeakUpAustin.org](http://SpeakUpAustin.org)

[Annettestrauss.org](http://Annettestrauss.org)

[Austintexas.gov/community](http://Austintexas.gov/community)

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