

Open Government Partnership Subnational Pilot City of Austin 2016-17 Action Plan

Introduction	2
Open Government Efforts to Date	2
Austin's Action Plan Process	4
Austin's Co-Creation Approach	5
Austin's Commitment Themes	6
Austin's Commitments	8
Commitment 1: Shared Reasoning on a Complex Issue - Ending Homelessness	8
Commitment 2: Equity Assessment Tool	11
Commitment 3: Collaboration & City Departments - Open Governance Operating Board	12
Commitment 4: City Public Meetings	14
Commitment 5: Project Tracking	16
Appendix	20
How we will work through implementation	20
Project Phases	20
Teaming	21
Principles we will honor throughout our work	22
Closing	22

Introduction

Austin, Texas – a global city comprised of almost 2 million people in its metropolitan area – operates under a city council-city manager system of governance with a home rule charter. Our concerted efforts to increase transparency, accountability, and civic participation have yielded results: an innovative city council online discussion board; a comprehensive 30-year plan for Austin’s future co-created by its citizens; a foundational change to our election system that replaced our at-large council seats with single-member districts and brought diverse, geographically-representative voices to the governing dais; and annual hackathons with our local universities and civic volunteer brigade, Open Austin. Our work has culminated in Austin’s selection to join the OGP Pioneer pilot program, where these past initiatives will intertwine with new commitments to create a greater outcome for our city and the public we serve.

Open Government Efforts to Date

<p style="text-align: center;">Austin City Council Official Commitments and Goal-setting expressed support for open government and transparency:</p>
<p>Council Resolution 20110407-014, resolving to conduct business communications on publicly accessible platforms.</p>
<p>Council Resolution 20111208-074, resolving to commit “to Open Government and the principles of transparency, efficiency, and collaboration and seek[ing] to adopt an Open Government Framework with a comprehensive set of policies, initiatives, guidelines and standards.”</p>
<p>Council Resolution 20160225-017, resolving to respect the OGP open government principles, commit resources to participation in the OGP’s subnational Pioneer pilot program opportunity, and welcoming direct institutional support and a future mentorship role.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">City Management Implementation of Council Commitments and Goal-setting implemented several Administrative Bulletins expressing policy position and support for open government and transparency, including:</p>
<p>City Staff Communication Transparency Bulletin 08-06, in which all City staff commits to maintaining transparency and record keeping in their city communications.</p>
<p>City Staff Open Government Directive, guiding the implementation of City Council Resolution 20111208-074</p>

This Open Government Partnership Action Plan implementing [Council Resolution 20160225-017](#), resolving to respect the OGP open government principles, and commit resources to participation in the OGP’s subnational Pioneer pilot program.

Transparency

City Council Discussion Board: State law requires all discussions involving a quorum of city council to occur in posted public meetings, with the exception of discussions on the online message board where the conversations occur in real time and are accessible and searchable by the public. The City of Austin was instrumental in securing legislative change to allow this tool, and has been recognized as its first implementer and most prolific user.

Open Government Resources and Open Data: The City maintains an [Open Government resources webpage](#), to provide the public with a concentrated list of open government assets, whether related to financial transparency, open data, hackathons, open meetings, public information, council financial filings, campaign finance filings, or city Ethics Review Commission activities.

Campaign Finance Filings: Under Texas Election Law Chapter 254 - Political Reporting, all candidates, officeholders and political committees are required to file multiple campaign finance reports with the City Clerk’s Office. The Austin city council approved a resolution on June 25, 2015 mandating the creation of an electronic database providing almost immediate public access to all contributions and expenditures reported.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/campaign-finance-reports>

Citizen Participation

Imagine Austin & Code Next: Thousands of Austinites shaped the city’s comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, throughout a public process unprecedented in its inclusiveness, by submitting more than 18,000 public inputs over two years, describing their ideas for the city’s bicentennial in 2039. <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-participation>
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/codenext-community-engagement>

Community Engagement Task Force: [Council Resolution 20150129023](#) established a Community Engagement Task Force to engage the community in improving the City’s open government tools. <https://www.austintexas.gov/tfce>

Open Government Symposiums: The City regularly brings together transparency professionals from various governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, the media, and the

private sector for a day-long free community discussion of best practices, challenges, and changes. <http://www.austintexas.gov/opengov2015>

Accountability

10-1 Geographic Representation: In 2012, Austin voters elected to transition from an at-large system of electing council members to a system of geographic representation, whereby 10 council members are elected from single-member districts and a mayor is elected at-large. In 2014, Austin voters elected their first city council under the geographic representation system.

Open Data and Performance: The City has published over 300 data sets, with 4 to 6 new datasets being put online monthly, and routinely publishes performance reports:

<https://data.austintexas.gov>,

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-manager/performance-reports>

Open Government/Ethics and Compliance Division: The City's Law Department initiated a new division within its organizational structure in 2016, devoted exclusively to open government and ethics. The attorneys and staff in this division provide legal advice and ethics training citywide to every city employee every year, as well as to boards and commissions, and elected officials. <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/ethics-and-compliance>

City Auditor: The Austin City Charter created the Office of the City Auditor to assist the city council, citizens, and city management in establishing accountability, transparency, and a culture of continuous improvement in operations and service delivery.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/auditor>

Public Information Request Team: The Law Department includes a team which receives and responds to public information requests for city government documents, with a state-mandated turnaround time of 10 business days to deliver the information.

Austin's Action Plan Process

The City of Austin, as a member of the inaugural cohort of the Open Government Partnership's Subnational Pioneer Program, has prepared five design briefs outlining its five OGP commitments for 2016-17.

We approach our commitments from the perspective that open government provides the best **means** by which we achieve our **end** - resolving a problem or seizing an opportunity. Any city commitment undertaken with accountability, transparency, tech innovation, and civic participation will successfully increase the level of trust and improve the delivery of services in the everyday lives of our citizens.

We are grateful to our civil society partners who agreed to provide a measure of accountability and to participate in the co-creation of our commitments. Leadership Austin, Open Austin, and Vision Zero ATX initially committed to serve as a cornerstone of our OGP participation, and will be joined by any number of additional civil society partners who wish to be involved and contribute to the OGP process.

Austin's Co-Creation Approach

Austin's open government efforts have progressed through phases over the years. First, we successfully published transparently. Second, we excelled at intensive community input. To progress, we must now create together. Co-creation involves learning, creating with that knowledge, and learning again. Therefore, feedback loops are central to our 2016-2017 commitments.

The City of Austin's co-creation process rests upon a foundation of comprehensive community engagement, which intensified in the months just prior to our joining OGP. In September 2015, Austin's leadership launched a community summit to work in partnership with our citizens to bring equitable, sustainable, and transformative development to East Austin, a historically significant but historically underserved area. Over 450 community members participated in an event called "The Spirit of East Austin," which yielded just under 2000 comments.

In May 2016, a council-directed Community Engagement Task Force completed its year-long work and provided a report with a description of community engagement tools currently in use in the city; innovative techniques and technologies used across the country; identification of best practices; and recommendations for enhancing existing resources, including fiscal implications. The City's OGP co-commitments will advance implementation of this community-created Task Force final report and its recommendations on how to increase civic participation.

The Task Force's creation flowed from a monumental governance change in Austin. In November 2014, the city council transitioned from a 7-member council elected at-large to an 11-member council comprised of 10 single-member council districts, with only a mayor elected at-large. The transition created exponentially-increased attention by citizens, candidates, and newly elected council members on civic and community engagement, particularly related to

searching for ways to enhance and support real civic involvement in decision-making. At the new council's first meeting on January 29, 2015, the members created the Task Force on Community Engagement to identify these changes. The Task Force submitted its final report on May 6, 2016. The City's OGP commitments will advance implementation of this community-created Task Force final report and its recommendations on how to increase civic participation.

Following the April 2016 announcement of Austin's inclusion in the first Pioneer program, the City's Innovation Office created a process to build upon these engagements beginning with the discovery of specific pain points that we might use our commitments to solve. In June, we launched our efforts at the ATX Hack for Change, an annual hackathon hosted by St. Edward's University. We invited participants to help us with design research -- interviewing residents, civil society members, city employees, and city officials -- in an effort to listen for opportunities and pain points that could be the basis for a specific, ambitious, relevant, and feasible commitment. We asked ourselves this essential question: what cornerstone of open government can we activate, in collaboration with civic partners, to solve for this opportunity or pain point?

Austin's Commitment Themes

Our design research approach revealed a series of pain points. These pain points coalesced into repeated themes across our city, from people of all ages and backgrounds, evolved into four commitment themes - understandability, collaboration, decision making, and progress-tracking. The commitment themes are as follows, listed with their pain point problem statements and source.

Understandability:

1. How might we increase general understandability of local government so that we help people navigate issues of concern? - ATX Hack For Change research
2. How might we increase understanding of complex processes at the city, to help answer "Who do I contact for what outcome?" - ATX Hack For Change research
3. How might we help the public's ability to navigate various city strategic plans, thereby increasing transparency and the ability for advocates to collaborate on policy issues? - Vision Zero ATX

Collaboration:

4. How might we increase multi-sector collaboration to reduce narrow tasks to City departments, commissions, task forces, or committees that result in scenarios in which downstream problems are neither identified nor addressed? - Vision Zero ATX
5. How might we develop alternate ways to receive citizen feedback, similar to the feedback systems used at the state legislature? - Council Member

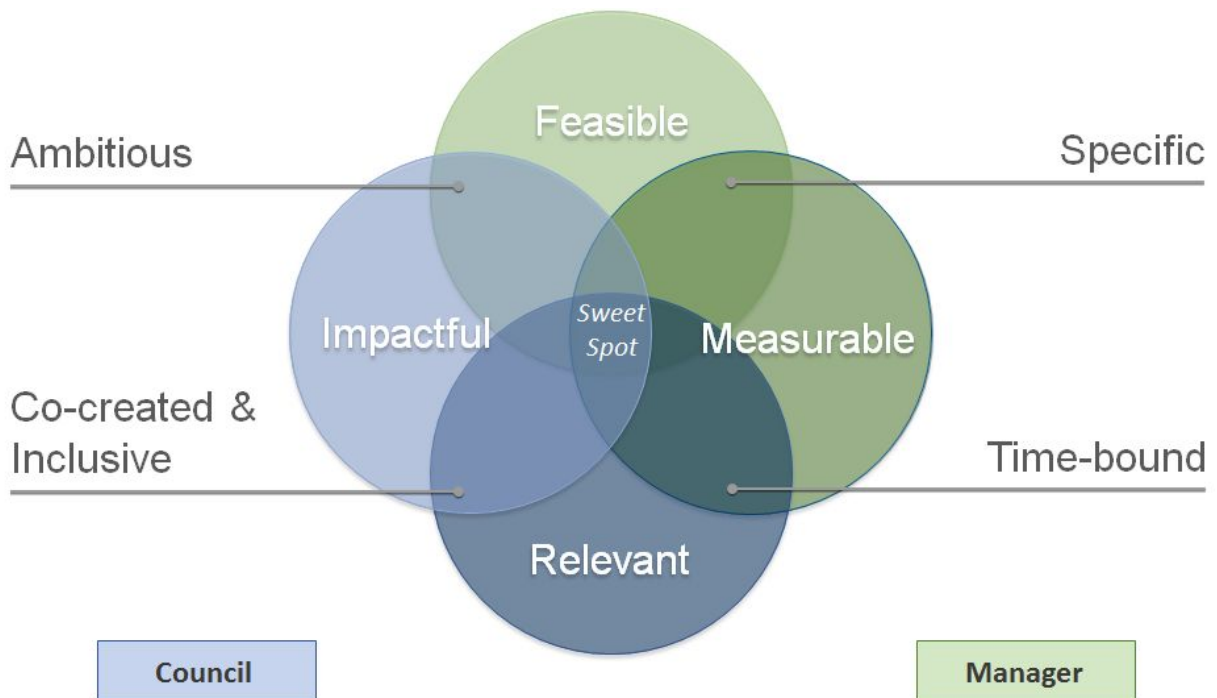
Decision-making:

- 6. How might we solve for late night governance (given that council meetings can regularly go beyond midnight), a situation which is neither transparent nor effective in considering impacts of decisions, and which makes it difficult for the public to understand how and why decisions are made? - Vision Zero ATX
- 7. How might we increase our collective shared reasoning around complex issues, in an age of oversimplification? - Leadership Austin

Tracking progress towards critical goals:

- 8. How might we develop an equity assessment tool that is used transparently to support decision-making? - Community feedback related to The Spirit of East Austin initiative
- 9. How might we get a better sense of what departments are working on, what state of progress the projects are in, and how the status and details relate to making progress on the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan? - Community member

Our approach and themes have provided a framework in which to design specific projects that will serve as our initial five OGP commitments. We collectively curated them for how they relate to our city’s challenges and opportunities, as well as how they relate to one another. Progress in one commitment must nurture progress within greater commitments. To illustrate, our “understandability” commitment also supports the theme “collaboration;” our “collaboration” theme also supports better “progress tracking” towards common goals; and all of these commitments better support the theme of “decision-making.”



Each commitment in each of these theme categories is designed to strike an ideal balance between the abstract and concrete; to reflect the “sweet spot” of interest, impact, and feasibility; and to offer us a way to solve for an opportunity or pain point that is achievable in the immediate year of our Pioneer pilot program time period. Over the course of the coming year, we will proceed through phases of co-creation, with each phase representing an opportunity for community participation and evaluation, before moving on to the subsequent phases. In this way, we will roll out a co-created approach to implementing each of our commitments.

Austin’s Commitments

The City of Austin OGP commitments for 2016-17 are:

Commitment 1: Shared Reasoning on a Complex Issue - Ending Homelessness

To further the city’s goal of ending homelessness, we commit to fostering **civic participation** and **transparency** by co-creating a systems map with a multi-sector team that works towards greater understanding and shared reasoning around this complex issue, and which strengthens collaboration and decision-making.

Short Description: Co-create a systems map of homelessness for shared reasoning around this complex issue to better inform funding and policy-making.

Leads:

Civil Society Partners: Ann Howard, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition; Bill Brice, Downtown Austin Alliance, Christopher Kennedy, Leadership Austin

Government facilitator: Kerry O’Connor, City of Austin Chief Innovation Officer

Project Brief:

We design this project to answer two pain points from our civil society partners:

1. How might we increase multi-sector collaboration to reduce scenarios in which downstream problems are neither identified nor addressed? - Vision Zero ATX
2. How might we increase our collective shared reasoning around complex issues? - Leadership Austin

Modern city challenges have strong, complex dynamics that make it difficult to anticipate the impact and unintended consequences of public action. **Shared reasoning involves the**

sharing of assumptions and the understanding of tradeoffs of a complex topic, with the goal of creating informed choices and decisions.

To demonstrate how the development of a shared reasoning might work, we chose the topic of ending homelessness based upon the readiness of a coalition of community and government partners to do this shared reasoning work together.

We make this shared reasoning commitment in this context: Many people experiencing homelessness find themselves stuck in a relentless revolving door of emergency shelters, justice systems, and emergency services. In August 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice argued actions that have the outcome of [criminalizing homelessness are unconstitutional](#). Interrupting this revolving door, preventing the criminalization of homelessness, while responding to community safety concerns, requires creative, multi-sector strategies as well as broad community awareness and understanding.

One strategy involved the [Homelessness Outreach Street Team](#) (HOST), Austin’s new collaborative initiative to proactively address the needs of people living on the streets. HOST brings together the expertise of police officers, behavioral health specialists, a paramedic, and outreach social workers to bridge the gaps between social services and public safety for hard-to-reach clients.

A second strategy involves systems mapping our resources and service delivery gaps. Leveraging these invigorating partnerships, we will build a systems map to inform policy from a bottom-up direction. The map will be informed by the pain points, experiences, needs, and barriers of a) those experiencing homelessness, b) those delivering services, and c) community members experiencing the symptoms of a system that has inadequate resources to effectively serve the needs of the most vulnerable.

1.1 Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for this project
1) The City of Austin has better ways to manage community concerns around homelessness without criminalizing the condition of homelessness.
2) Funders of efforts to end homelessness can better coordinate to a) connect those experiencing homeless to housing, and b) prevent people from sliding into homelessness in the first place.
3) People who care and want to engage can figure out how to participate in helping to end homelessness.
4) City of Austin policies and programs related to ending homelessness are developed <i>with</i> , not just <i>for</i> , the intended beneficiaries and those responsible for implementing the tasks.

1.2 Exploration Questions

Open questions that we may need to answer in order to reach our desired outcomes
1) How might we focus our efforts in stages of the homelessness experience - from living on the edge, losing housing, living in survival mode, and reconnection into housing?
2) For living on the edge and reconnection stages: How can we create more affordable housing opportunities?
3) For living on the edge and prevention of homelessness: Why are people becoming homeless? What preventative actions can we take?
4) Survival and Reconnection stages: How can we engage the broader community? How can we reduce stigma and social barriers - remove "us/them" and create "us"?
5) Reconnection stages: How might we lower the attrition rate - those relapsing into homelessness?
6) What resources are lacking to meet the needs of those that are homeless, and to prevent homelessness, and address mental health issues and substance abuse?

1.3 Project Milestones (see [Appendix](#) for phase descriptions)

1.3.1 Clarify Phase: December 2016 - February 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Hypothetical Systems Map
- Synthesis of Community Feedback - experiences, questions to answer, others to engage
- Research Plan

1.3.2 Framing Phase: February 2017 - April 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Insights from Research
- First draft of Systems Map

1.3.3 Conceive/Prototype/Test Phase: April 2017 - May 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Feedback sessions on Systems Map
- Second iteration of Systems Map
- Highlight of gaps and areas of opportunity

1.3.4 Plan/Build Phase: May 2017-August 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Stable draft of Systems Map (never final, always iterative)
- Policy briefings for Government and Community Leaders
- Budget/funding recommendations for City Management and City Council

Commitment 2: Equity Assessment Tool

To advance the goal of achieving equitable outcomes for all members of the Austin community, we further our commitment to **civic participation, transparency, and accountability** by establishing an equity assessment tool to better support decision-making and track progress towards critical goals.

Short Description: Establish an equity assessment tool.

Leads:

Civil society partners: Alba Sereno, Vision Zero ATX and GO! Austin/VAMOS! Austin

Government facilitator: Brion Oaks, City of Austin Chief Equity Officer

Project Brief:

This project answers this pain point from our civil society partners:

- How might we develop an equity assessment tool to guide decisions that enable equitable outcomes throughout Austin? - participants in The Spirit of East Austin community event

2.1 Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for this project
1) Understand and evaluate the impact existing city policies and practices have on equity.
2) Enable city departments and the public to access an equity assessment tool during the budget process and throughout the year to evaluate and address equity challenges in the city.
3) Address significant inequities across multiple social determinants that impact the quality of life for many low-income communities, which are disproportionately found among communities of color.

2.2 Exploration Questions

Open questions that we may need to answer in order to reach our desired outcomes
1) Who is already doing equity work in the city?
2) How might we gather qualitative data from stakeholders working on equity from outside the city?
3) How might we use data from Government Alliance on Race and Equity assessment?

4) How might we research city budget allocation history and department/programmatic allocation history?

5) How might we establish overall equity standards (what does equity look like in our city- establish a definition that involves access to services, resources, participation, etc.) and then track back distribution of resources (internal use of and allocation to external)?

6) How might we curate a list of equity assessment tools and case studies, including Age Gender Diversity Mainstreaming effort from the United Nations?

2.3 Project Milestones (see [Appendix](#) for phase descriptions)

2.3.1 Clarify Phase: From December 2016 to February 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Equity Visioning Session event
- Synthesis of community feedback

2.3.2 Framing Phase: February 2017 - April 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Frame/parameters for system equity focus
- Report out on scan of the environment, and internal and external stakeholder alignment to frame

2.3.3 Conceive/Prototype/Test Phase: April 2017 - May 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Identify specific targets within departments to pilot tool for 2017-18 city budget cycle

2.3.4 Plan/Build Phase: May 2017-August 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Equity-focused departmental budgets for selected departments for consideration to city manager and city council
- First round of equity-focused budgets implemented in 2017

Commitment 3: Collaboration & City Departments - Open Governance Operating Board

To improve collaboration within the City of Austin and between the city and residents, we commit to furthering **civic participation** and **accountability** by adapting the City Manager's existing executive Open Government Operating Board to oversee broader open government efforts, including these OGP projects.

Short Description: Adapt the City Manager’s executive Open Government Operating Board to oversee broader open government efforts.

Leads:

Civil society partners: Mateo Clarke, Community Tech & Telecom Commission; Nic Moe, Vision Zero ATX

Government facilitator: Kerry O’Connor, Chief Innovation Officer

Project Brief:

This project answers these pain points from our civil society partners:

1. How might we increase multi-sector collaboration that results in scenarios in which downstream problems are neither identified nor addressed? - Vision Zero ATX
2. How might we develop alternate ways to receive citizen feedback? - Council members
3. How might we best manage, prioritize, and support the growing portfolio of technology and innovation initiatives? - City Manager’s Executive Open Government Operating Board

3.1 Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for this project
1) Collaboration is increased among city departments and with civil society partners.
2) Multiple avenues are created for feedback loops within government and between community members and organizations, all of which will help open government projects succeed at developing better outcomes.
3) City Management has a more collaborative and effective way of managing, prioritizing, and supporting the growing portfolio of technology and innovation initiatives.

3.2 Exploration Questions

Open questions that we may need to answer in order to reach our desired outcomes
1) Who at the city and in the community is pursuing open government projects, that is not currently involved?
2) How might the mission and purpose of this group be revised to encompass or interact with these open government projects?
3) What is an effective feedback loop for this environment?

4) What kind of support do open government projects need to be successful?

5) How might we create an awareness and feedback group to incorporate community feedback into projects?

6) How do open government principles influence the selection and responsibilities of key City Management positions like City Manager, Police Chief, Information Officer, Innovation Officer, City Clerk, etc especially in periods of transition.

3.2 Project Milestones (see [Appendix](#) for phase descriptions)

3.2.1 Clarify Phase: From December 2016 to February 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Assessment current state of the Open Government Operating Board's purview and structure
- Assessment the open government portfolio
- Review existing Open Government commitments and assess compliance

3.2.2 Framing Phase: February 2017 - March 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Publish proposed method for managing, prioritizing, and supporting open government efforts

3.2.3 Conceive/Prototype/Test Phase: March 2017 - May 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Report of tested governance process flow and feedback
- Document Open Government Operating Board process, success, and challenges

3.2.4 Plan/Build Phase: May 2017-August 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Draft recommendations to City Council, City Management, and other appropriate stakeholders
- Funding sources identified for Open Government, Open Data, Civic Tech, and Civic Innovation in City of Austin Budget.

Commitment 4: City Public Meetings

To help Austin community members better navigate issues of concern, and to make city decision-making processes more understandable and accessible, we commit to furthering **transparency** and **accountability** by gathering, sharing, and analyzing data on the activities during public meetings to recommend opportunities for efficiencies and effectiveness.

Short Description: Conduct an open analysis of city public meetings for increased understanding, accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Leads:

Civil society partner: Christopher Kennedy, Leadership Austin

Government facilitator: Sabine Romero, City of Austin Office of Innovation

Project Brief:

This project answers these pain points from our civil society partners:

1. How might we solve for late night governance (given that city council meetings can regularly go beyond midnight), a situation which is neither transparent nor effective in considering impacts of decisions, and which makes it difficult for the public to understand how and why decisions are made? - Vision Zero ATX
2. How might we increase general understanding to help people navigate issues of concern? - ATX Hack For Change research

4.1 Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for this project
1) Public understanding of the activities at public meetings is increased through access, both in person and electronically.
2) Council communication is improved with through new practices built on shared understanding of what works
3) The effectiveness of each meeting is increased, with a clear progression through debate.
4) Establish meaningful options for informational and decision flows that will have the effect of making public meetings more accessible to the public
5) Create a better understanding for citizens on how initiatives are funded and how departments use resources from the General Fund and other budgetary sources.

4.2 Exploration Questions

Open questions that we may need to answer in order to reach our desired outcomes
1) What is the current route for decision making at the city, as implemented by the new 11-member council?
2) How is this a better route than previous approaches?
3) What lessons have been learned from the first two years of experience?
4) What does the public want in a more effective process?

5) What might we learn from previous meeting transcripts - what patterns might we identify in what makes meetings proceed for a long duration?

4.2 Project Milestones (see [Appendix](#) for phase descriptions)

4.2.1 Clarify Phase: From December 2016 to March 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Research plan for interviews with stakeholders and members of the community and assessments of meeting recordings and transcripts
- Draft of data format for publishing information about activities during public meetings
- Storyboard of the city discussion life cycle

4.2.2 Framing Phase: March 2017 - May 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Report on meeting process themes and patterns
- Report on synthesis of interviews with stakeholders and community members

4.2.3 Conceive/Prototype/Test Phase: April 2017 - June 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Backlog of possible solutions for achieving the desired outcomes
- Identification of a council issue for testing possible solutions for achieving desired outcomes
- Feedback from stakeholders and community members about how different solutions performed

4.2.4 Plan/Build Phase: July 2017-September 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Recommendations for formalizing solutions that have proved effective during testing
- Refined storyboard of the city discussion life cycle
- Data format for publishing information about activities during public meetings

Commitment 5: Project Tracking

To better track our progress towards ambitious goals, we commit to **transparency** and **accountability** by creating an online project-tracking interface, using our OGP commitments as a first project.

Short Description: Create an online resource to track the progress of open government projects.

Leads:

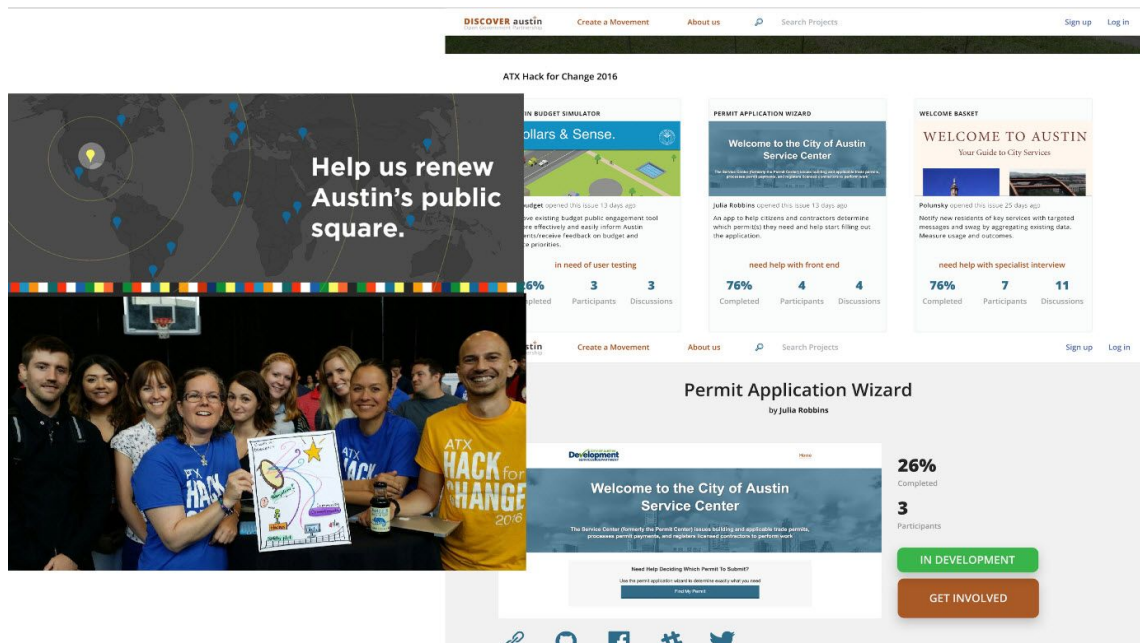
Civil society partner: Mateo Clarke, Open Austin

Government facilitator: Kerry O'Connor, Chief Innovation Officer

Project Brief:

We design this project to answer these pain points from our civil society partners:

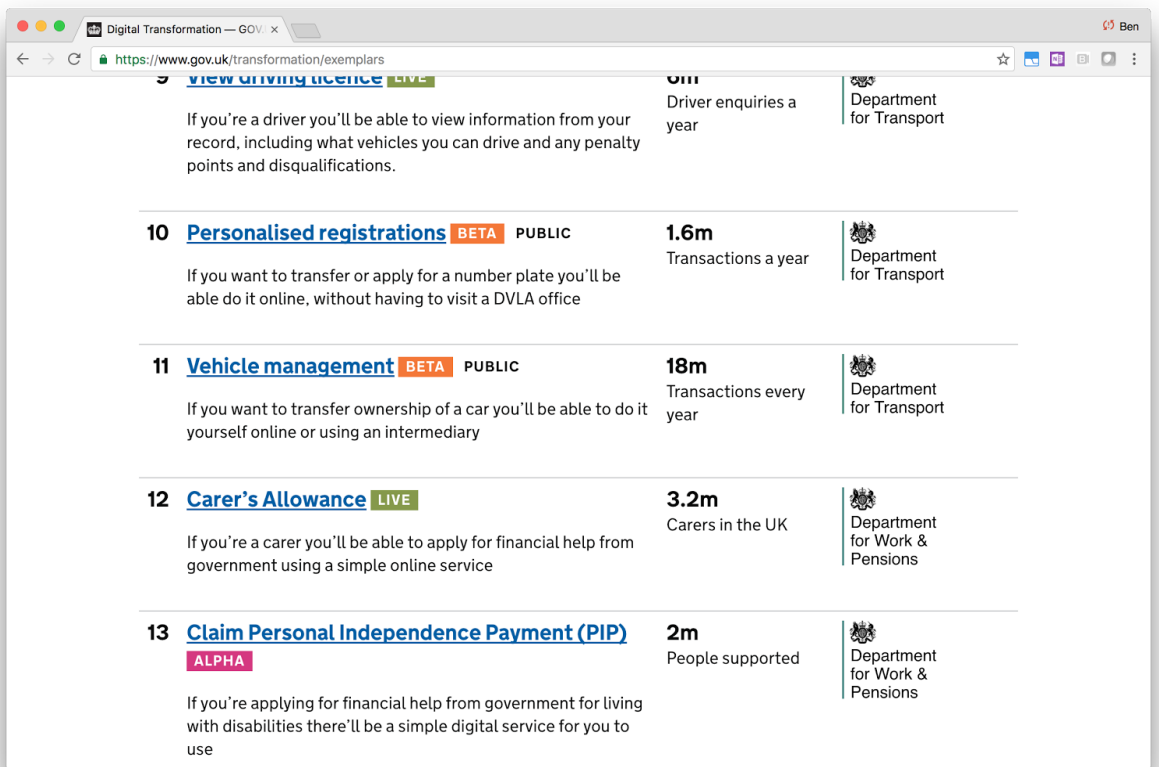
1. How might we get a better sense of what departments are working on, what state of progress the projects are in, and how the status and details relate to making progress towards our goals? - ATX Hack for Change participants
2. How might we build a platform for collaboration on any civic project? - Vision of ATX Hack for Change participants.



Project Tracking Vision of ATX Hack for Change team

5.1 Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for this project
1) The public will have a better sense of what projects the City is working on, the state of progress of those projects, how the projects relate to critical goals, and how they are funded.
2) Members of the public have meaningful ways to engage and collaborate on these projects.
3) Public engagement and commitment to civic goals increases.
4) City Departments have a better means of cross-pollinating projects with each other and collaborating with the community.
5) The public has a better understanding on how projects are funded.



Example from <https://www.gov.uk/transformation/exemplars>

5.2 Exploration Questions

Open questions that we may need to answer in order to reach our desired outcomes
1) What examples already exist that we might be able to borrow from?
2) What criteria does the public want us to use when deciding what projects to publish?
3) What information is critical in conveying project progress succinctly and with integrity?
4) How might we create meaningful opportunities for the public to engage with and collaborate on city projects?
5) How might we leverage Austin's civic tech community to improve the design and engineering of the solution?
6) Who will maintain the data about active projects?

5.3 Project Milestones (see [Appendix](#) for phase descriptions)

5.3.1 Clarify Phase: From December 2016 to February 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Report out on existing platforms
- Report out on public and inter-departmental interests in projects
- Report out on inventory of possible projects beyond these commitments.

5.3.2 Framing Phase: February 2017 - April 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Decision about what data about projects will be collected.
- Status update to Community Tech & Telecom Commission, Open Austin Meetup, other public squares.

5.3.3 Conceive/Prototype/Test Phase: April 2017 - May 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Alpha release of Project Tracking interface
- Online resource for viewing work in progress and tracking issues, questions, and feature requests from the community

5.3.4 Plan/Build Phase: May 2017-August 2017

Expected deliverables:

- Beta release of Project Tracking Interface in alignment with ATX Hack for Change 2017
- Live release of Project Tracking Interface
- Prioritized backlog of potential improvements

Appendix

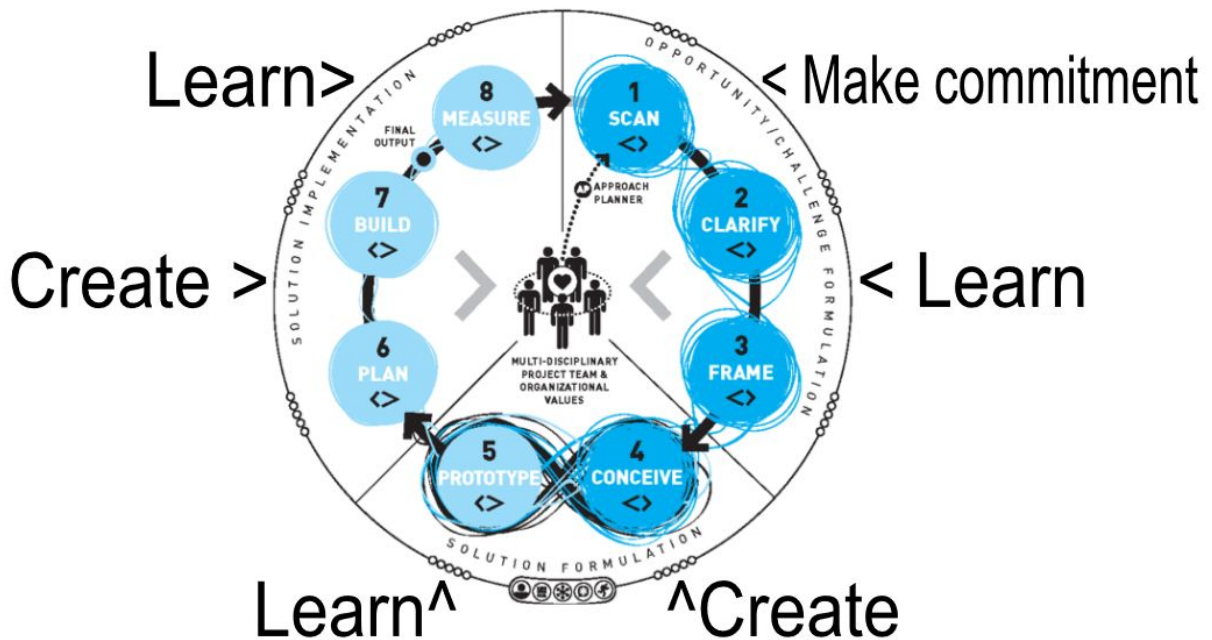
How we will work through implementation

This commitment document represents a living, evolving project plan for each of our commitments. For sustainable, co-created results, we will follow an alternating pattern of learning and creating, described below.

Project Phases

For all projects, we will focus on outcomes, not just building things.

We begin work with a **Clarify** phase which, depending on the project, can include researching more about the topic, the problem, the desired goals, and outcomes. This research may be desk research; interviewing neighbors, stakeholders, or governmental staff; or sharing and compiling joint knowledge in a meeting. After this initial research, we will pull together insights based on what has been learned, share them, and start the next phase of framing the exact nature of the challenge to be solved.



*Co-creation = alternating between learning and creating, together
Co-Creation framework courtesy of [Humantific](#)*

In the **Framing** phase, we may pivot or change direction based upon what we have learned. We may realize that our assumptions were incorrect, and we need to solve for something different. We will explore what has been blocking us from solving the problem in the past. We will re-affirm why we are heading in the chosen direction. We will frame what we need to achieve our outcomes.

In the **Conceive/Prototyping/Testing** phase, we will rapidly alternate between create and learn. By working with neighbors, stakeholders, and governmental staff, we will generate ideas (create) and test them to find the viable path forward (learn). The process of prototyping or testing enables us to determine which concepts will most likely deliver upon the desired outcomes - before we invest a lot of time, energy, and resources.

The **Plan/Build/Measure** phase concludes our project. Once we have landed upon the concept or solution that will get us to our outcomes, we will make sure to set the project up for sustainable delivery, and to include establishing performance measures to inform any necessary course correction.

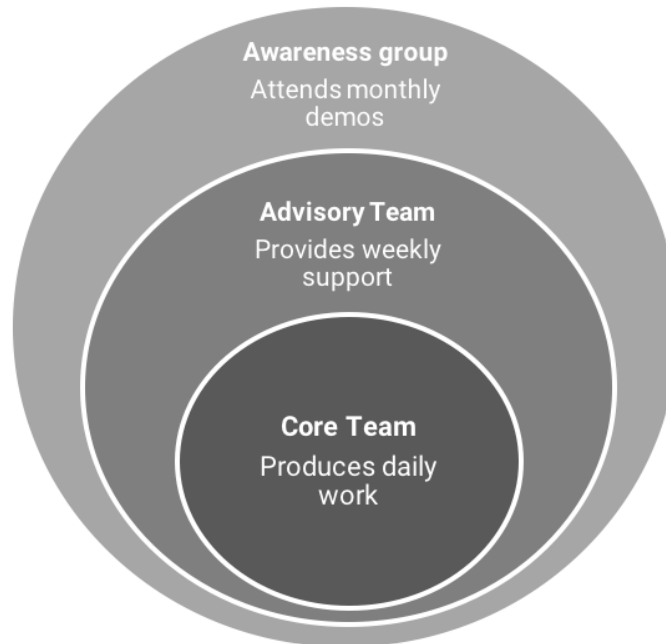
Teaming

For best collaboration design, we suggest a conceptual model for teaming around our commitments.

Project teams can consist of three main groups:

1. The **Core Team** consists of people who will be working on the project for at least 50% of their time every day.
2. The **Advisory Team** consists of people who will provide subject matter expertise as needed - possibly as frequently as weekly.
3. The **Awareness Group** consists of anyone who may be interested in the progress of the project, including department staff, other city staff, and members of the public - possibly as frequently as monthly.

We note that Commitment 5 - the project tracking tool - may enable our work to be done in the open, so that anyone may follow along at any time, and not be restricted to in-person meetings.



Principles we will honor throughout our work

Projects that proceed in this manner tend to benefit from shared values that support creativity and trust. To this end, we strive to:

- ★ Assume well-meaning in the actions of others.
- ★ Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- ★ Frame the problem first. Frame the problem, first. Frame. The. Problem. First.
- ★ Remember that we're designing for our neighbors.
- ★ Default to inclusion.
- ★ Embrace our discomfort zones.
- ★ Realize that democracy is a contact sport.
- ★ Give and receive feedback as a gift.
- ★ Make small bets - try it out, you just might like it.

Closing

We wish to close by expressing our gratitude to the Open Government Partnership, its member nations, our national leadership, and our city leadership for making our involvement in OGP possible.

The City of Austin's 2016-17 OGP Commitments are our first steps towards a global approach to open government, and an acknowledgment of our respect for the OGP attributes of accountability, transparency, innovation, and civic participation. They also form a platform that can integrate the goals of multiple sectors of our community, as evidenced by the inclusion here of our Task Force on Community Engagement's goals and recommendations.

The City of Austin values this opportunity to participate in an international discussion of good governance, with the goal of making "all boats rise" in our effort to learn from one another's experiences, to improve the world in which we co-exist, and to embrace a future of collaboration at all levels of government.