

# City Hall not Permitting and Development Center

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Vice Chair, Zoning and Platting Commission

# Appropriate meeting place?

## City Hall

- Symbol of democracy and political discussion
- Landmark building
- Downtown
- Conveys gravitas
- Designed for public hearings
- Land use & other commissions have met here since City Hall opened
- Comfortable
- Easy for public to see commissioners and for commissioners to see public
- Keep tab of meetings from lobby

## Permitting and Development Center

- *Name says it all* – where developers get permits
- Is developer-focused
- Result of city's goal of "one-stop permitting" push
- Office building
- Multi-purpose room

# Moving meetings further away from south Austin

- More difficult for residents, applicants and volunteer commissioners
- Less bus service
- Force south Austinites to travel through downtown at rush hour
- I-35 is not a viable route at 6 pm
- South Austinites must already contend with crossing one of five downtown bridges to reach City Hall; travelling northward would make the commute worse
- A question of equity



# Highland Mall is *not* the center of transit

Closest bus stop half mile away from  
PDC

No pedestrians

Few bus riders

Poor lighting

No hustle and bustle of downtown's  
Republic Square and Lavaca bus stops



# Bus service

## City Hall

Republic Square SB stop *.2 miles away*

Lavaca NB stop .2 miles away

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 17, 19, 20, 30, 801,  
803

**Seven high-frequency bus routes**

Busiest bus stops in the city

## PDC

Bus stops on Airport & Highland Mall Blvd, *.6 miles & .5 miles away*; Red Line *.6 mile* walk

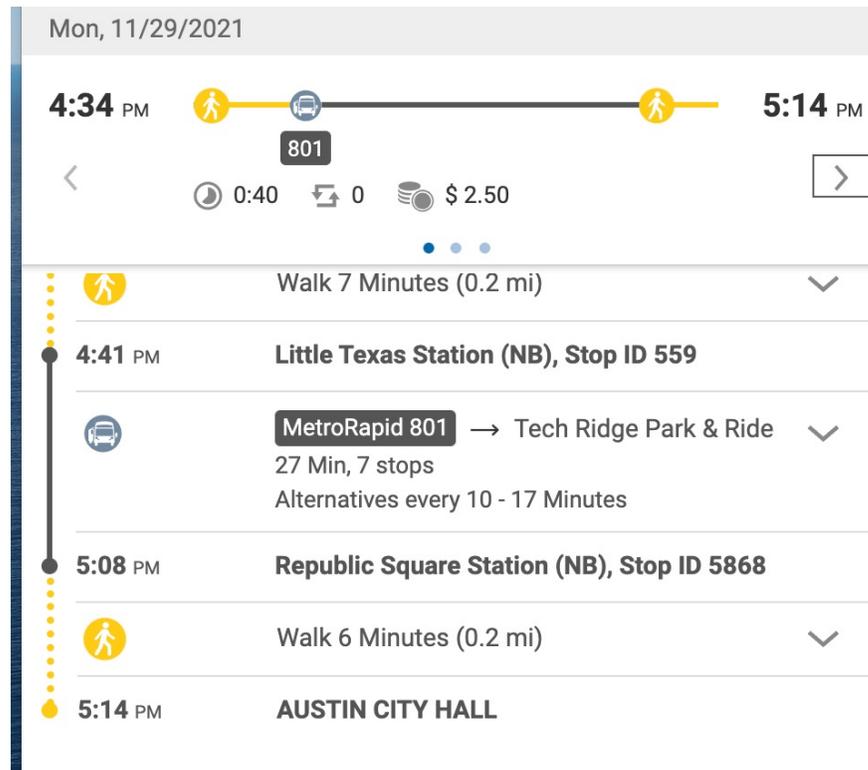
7, 324, 337, 350

**Two high-frequency bus routes**

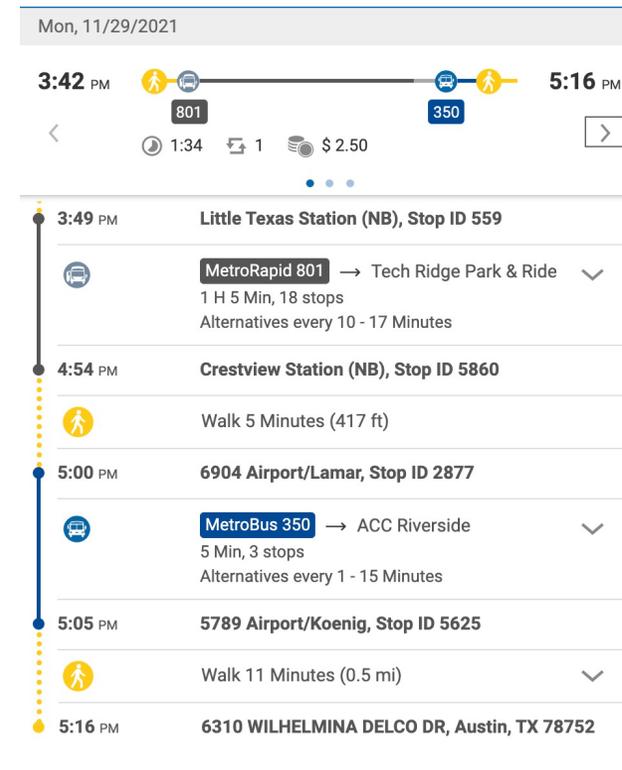
No one at the bus stops at night

# D2 bus ride

## City Hall – 40 minutes, no transfer



## PDC – 94 minutes, one transfer\*



\* Must walk 5 mins. from one bus stop to another, including crossing Lamar

# Personal safety at risk

Immediately  
across from  
one entrance  
to the PDC  
(the entrance  
*with* the signs)



No lighting  
No sidewalks  
No cars  
*No people*

# Personal safety at risk



Immediately across from another entrance to the PDC



Parking lot lit by adjacent Holiday Inn

# Personal safety at risk

Bus riders  
must pass  
this dimly lit  
construction  
site with no  
sidewalks

*And no  
people*



# City Hall more secure

- Metal detectors and security outside chambers at all times
- Secure parking
- Outdoor lighting
- Bus stops are busiest in city
- Downtown full of pedestrians
- Many businesses open late

PDC  
multipurpose  
room, south side



# Moving meetings to PDC sends the wrong message about who should participate

- Transit dependent cannot attend or will have a harder time reaching the meeting
- Potential volunteer commissioners who rely on transit will be less inclined to apply
- Residents south of the river may be less inclined to be commissioners or to speak at commission hearings
- Forces people to rely on cars
- Voters just approved transit improvements yet city wants to move commission meetings to less transit-accessible PDC

*Says Austin not serious about equity and fighting climate change*

# From memo to City Council about the PDC:

(June 29, 2021)

The PDC brings together resources and expertise from multiple City departments which provide permitting and development services for our community. The new facility is designed to provide a seamless development process, all in one place, for residential and commercial customers and special events. All pertinent department representatives will be co-located at the PDC.

- *States explicitly that PDC is for the development customer*
- *“Seamless development process”*
- *Did not mention that land use commissions would move to the PDC*

# City rationale for move to PDC

(October 19, 2021)

- Staff at PDC – although this is NOT true. Staff for ZAP meetings is at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and One Texas Center locations
- Implication that city views volunteer commissioners like paid staff, moving them without consultation or discussion
- Lots of parking!

room for 351-person occi  
969-parking space garage  
or to February 2022 Rather

- Does not acknowledge inconvenience to public, applicants and commissioners
- Uses Zucker Report as excuse

# Since staff invokes the Zucker Report

- Critical study of DSD and PAZ that was originally withheld from the public
- Focus was on city staff esp. customer service (i.e. not returning phone calls) & length of permitting process
- Released only when City Council proposed resolution asking it be released
- Released with redactions and was noticeably edited
- **Acknowledges commission meetings at City Hall with NO mention whatsoever of moving them**
- Zucker makes many recommendations on assisting commissions that the city ignores
- City ignores recommendation that City Legal attend ZAP & PC meetings

Austin activists push for planning report, only to find it redacted

Posted: 12:00 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015

Email  Email {0} Facebook  Share {26} Twitter  Tweet {1} ShareThis  sharethis {32}

By Lilly Rockwell - American-Statesman Staff

## After push from concerned citizens, city releases draft of Zucker Report

Lilly Rockwell

Published 12:01 a.m. CT Oct. 12, 2016 | Updated 10:12 p.m. CT Sept. 26, 2018

### Public Notice: Closeout!

Zucker Report finally put to bed? Eh, sorta.

BY NICK BARBARO, FRI., FEB. 22, 2019

**453.** *Recommendation:* The Development Services Manager for the Current Planning Division should determine when a particular item requires legal representation or other specialized technical staff (e.g., environmental) at the PC or ZAP and ensure that a qualified attorney from the City's Legal Department is in attendance to answer questions.

# Contrary to city's memo, Zucker Report mentions that commissions will *remain* at City Hall

**167.**     ***Recommendation:*** Purchase iPads or laptops computers for Commission members, if they are not currently available in hearing chambers, so

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Austin, Texas

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*Zucker Systems*

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**that agenda packet materials can be viewed electronically at hearings instead of on paper.**

# PDC multi-purpose room

## Not designed for public hearings



No dais, awkward layout, movable tables and stackable chairs.

Used as a polling place for the last election

Does the city really expect the public, staff, applicants and commissioners to sit for hours on these stackable chairs?



Thank you!