

## Summary: SRCC Proposed Position Paper 2019 Regarding Land Use Code Rewrite

### 1. TRANSITION ZONES

**We agree** that the City should allow for more housing density along the corridors of Congress Avenue, Riverside, IH-35, Ben White Boulevard, and on parcels already identified in the *Greater South River City Combined Neighborhood Plan*.

*However*, the proposed application of transect zoning to single-family houses in close-in neighborhoods unfairly targets some homeowners. All neighborhoods in Austin should share equally in the responsibility for providing more affordable housing units and increased density.

### 2. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS ARE PART OF AUSTIN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**We agree** with the reference to Neighborhood Plans, which have been carefully and thoughtfully worked out over long periods of time, and in many cases voted on by a majority of residents. Neighborhood Plans were adopted as City ordinances and are still in force.

*However*, we disagree with proposed maps that ignore Neighborhood Plans. Although we recognize that we need more density along corridors (see point 1), the neighborhoods themselves should help the city locate them since they know the areas best.

### 3. PRESERVATION / DEMOLITION

**We agree** with The Imagine Austin Plan, which advises that comprehensive urban planning and design should protect historic areas and help maintain neighborhood character.

*However*, McMansion FAR limits are not sufficient to discourage the extensive demolition of residences within the central neighborhoods. Preservation incentives, such more flexible requirements for ADUs that encourage preservation coupled with greater density rather than new development, are a positive step to avoid extensive demolitions.

### 4. FLOODING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**We agree** with the proposed zoning changes' goal to address environmental concerns, such as a decrease in total impervious cover, especially in light of the vulnerability of SRCC neighbors to flooding, according to post Atlas 14 floodplain definitions. Up-zoning should not result in downstream flooding.

*However*, developers often remove trees that prevent erosion and decrease temperatures. These trees add to the value of our property, and we have the right to rigorously protect our property values in the State of Texas. The current infrastructure, such as drainage, water, wastewater, and utilities, likely would not support the proposed increase in density. The City of Austin cannot afford litigation expenses if property owners suffer damages because of overdevelopment.

## 5. AFFORDABILITY

**We agree** that Austin needs more Affordable Housing, especially close to large employers to help cut our traffic congestion. People earning 50-60% Median Family Income, including many government, nonprofit, academic, small business, service workers and young professionals, flee our city because of lack of affordability. SRCC has numerous affordable units in older homes, ADUs, and multifamily homes today.

*However*, we disagree with fee-in-lieu option for developers who receive greater entitlements in exchange for community benefits. 20% of the units should be on-site affordable housing, and other developments such as boardwalks and climbing walls should not be considered an alternative to building onsite affordable housing.

## 6. COMPATIBILITY

**We agree** that increased height on the core transit corridors may be necessary in order to increase housing.

*However*, we believe that we should retain compatibility standards within the neighborhoods in order to retain the character, decrease congestion, and increase safe walkability.

## 7. PUBLIC ACCESS TO DECISION MAKING

**We agree** that public access to the LDCR process and final product is necessary and appropriate. There are three periods in which public input should be maximized: 1) access by owners to City staff regarding personal lots; 2) access to Planning Commission considerations of the revisions; and City Council meetings to vote on revisions.

*However*, we believe that decision making should rely on accurate, transparent data. Furthermore, the current schedule for consideration and adoption of the revision does not allow for adequate public input and approval.