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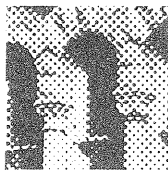
STAFF
Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director
Lori Martin
Antiques Show Director

July 23, 2008

The Honorable Will Wynn
Mayor, City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Mayor Wynn,

Re: Code Amendment: C20-2008-003 - DMU - CURE Amendment



HERITAGE
SOCIETY OF
AUSTIN

P.O. BOX 2113
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768
512-474-5198
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The Heritage Society of Austin (HSA) understands that the Council may soon consider an ordinance amending Chapter 25-2 of the City Code regarding the application of the Central Urban Redevelopment (CURE) combining district to property designated Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) district.

Although a copy of the proposed amendment has not been made available, it is our understanding that the ordinance would allow for compatibility requirements to be discretionary in their application to DMU-CURE zoned properties. We agree with your Planning Commission's strong recommendation against the adoption of this ordinance.

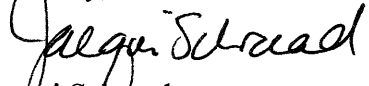
A significant number of properties potentially impacted by this ordinance are located in the historic downtown neighborhoods bounded by Lavaca Street, MLK Boulevard, Lamar (Shoal Creek) and 6th Street. The first draft of the Downtown Austin Plan, presented and embraced by Council in January of 2008, specifically recognized the historic character of these downtown neighborhoods as currently "at risk" due to development "expanding out from the traditional core." The Plan specifically established as a goal how to "maintain . . . the inherent qualities of these [downtown neighborhoods] as we encourage new growth and density that are essential for a healthy downtown and region."

We believe it unwise to place these downtown neighborhoods at further risk, especially in light of the commitment of the City and numerous stakeholders to the ongoing downtown planning process. Again, quoting from the first draft of the Plan: "Without a purposeful idea of how these areas should evolve or how new development should fit in, we are in danger of losing some of downtown's most unique areas." This statement in the Plan strongly implies that more regulatory oversight is necessary – not a retreat from what currently exists.

With your Downtown Plan now underway (at significant cost to the City) and still incomplete, we don't see abandoning a significant tool to protect these specific

downtown neighborhoods from incompatible development as a “purposeful idea” based upon careful and deliberate consideration. For these reasons, HSA urges you to oppose this proposed ordinance amendment.

Sincerely,


Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Pro Tem Brewster McCracken
Council Member Sheryl Cole
Council Member Lee Leffingwell
Council Member Mike Martinez
Council Member Laura Morrison
Council Member Randi Shade