

August 19, 2009

The Honorable Lee Leffingwell
City of Austin
P. O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

**NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®**

**Southwest
OFFICE**

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and Members of the City Council,

I am writing you as Director of the Southwest Region of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to add our voice of support for the pending request to revise and update Austin's Downtown Plan to include a mechanism for the transfer of development rights (TDRs) for historic warehouse district.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit organization chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1949 to promote the historic preservation policy of the United States and to further public participation in the preservation of the nation's historic resources. As part of our charge, the Trust supports governmental laws and policies that help preserve historic resources — particularly *local* preservation laws. As I pointed out to you in our letter of a few weeks ago, the Trust is keenly interested in Austin, the site of our annual National Preservation Conference in 2010. We thank you for the decision you made to greatly improve Austin's historic district ordinance.

The present change will undoubtedly encourage the rehabilitation of structures in the Warehouse District. This sort of preservation will only add to the vitality and viability of the city and "recycling" an entire commercial district is one of the best examples of smart growth and sustainability. The National Trust is aware of approximately twenty large cities that have also successfully adopted provisions for TDRs to assist with the preservation of historic districts and neighborhoods. While programs vary greatly, they can be a highly effective tool for guiding and managing growth and density in a way that preserves distinct community character. With the passage of this ordinance to permit density bonuses, the city will be encouraging preservation of an important historic area and spurring property values. Austin will be an even greater showplace when the nation's preservationists descend on the city for the 2010 National Conference.

The National Trust and its Southwest Office appreciate the opportunity to present its position to you and the Council. We stand ready to assist the city and the Heritage Society of Austin wherever possible to protect your historic structures and districts. We look forward to showing off all of the city's assets to preservationists from throughout the U.S. at our 2010 National Conference.

Very truly yours,



Jonathan H. Poston, Director

Southwest Office
800 Main Street, Suite 1030
Forth Worth, TX 76102
P 817.332.4398
F 817.332.4512
E swro@nthp.org
Serving: AR, NM, OK & TX

National Office
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
P 202.588.6000
F 202.588.6038
E info@nthp.org
www.PreservationNation.org



Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Libby Buuck, *Eules*
Troy Ainsworth, *El Paso*
J. Travis Roberts, Jr. *Marathon*
Susan Lassell, *Austin*
Kathleen Beirne, *Houston*

Directors

Vaughn Aldredge, *Austin*
Richard Collins, *Dallas*
Chris Culak, *Dallas*
James A. Edwards, *Aledo*
Anna Glover, *San Antonio*
Lori Martin, *Austin*
Andy Obermueller, *Austin*
Jim Ray, *Austin*
Penny Redington, *Austin*
Wes Reeves, *Amarillo*
Don Reimers, *Houston*
Jill Harrison Souter,
San Antonio
Jerre Tracy, *Fort Worth*
Lynn Vogt, *Dallas*

Ex-Officio

Jonathan Poston, *Fort Worth*
Sam Collins, III, *Hitchcock*
F. Lawrence Oaks, *Austin*
Violetta Forsythe Lill, *Dallas*

Directors Emeriti

Lunelle Anderson, *San Marcos*
Janet Francis, *San Antonio*
Richard Meyer, *Austin*

Advisory Council

John Cuellar, *Dallas*
Anne Dennis, *Marshall*
Tommy Honeycutt, *Lometa*
Paul Koeppe, *Fort Worth*
Peter Flagg Maxson, *Austin*
Kimberly Michelson, *Seabrook*
Paula Peters, *Dallas*
Gary Williams, *El Paso*
Patrick Heath, Chair, *Boerne*

Executive Director

Krista Schreiner Gebbia

August 19, 2009

The Honorable Lee Leffingwell, Mayor
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and City Councilmembers:

Preservation Texas wishes to express its opposition to any city plans or zoning changes that would negatively impact the historic character of the Warehouse District and other historic neighborhoods and landmarks in Austin. The historic commercial buildings contribute to the city's economic growth through their ability to generate federal historic tax credits for the developers of these properties. Additionally, the Warehouse District is an uniquely Austin locale which attracts heritage tourists, the country's fastest growing tourism sector industry.

As the leading advocate for the historic resources of the Lone Star State, Preservation Texas – and the thousands of Texans who support its efforts – endorses the Heritage Society of Austin's efforts to preserve the historic neighborhoods in Austin. Austin is a world-class city due to the efforts of its citizens and leaders.

Preservation Texas applauds the City's commitment to preserving Austin's historic buildings. The Council's recent support of the changes to the historic district ordinance is a commendable act. Preservation Texas hopes that the City continues to ensure that planning and City actions provide protection for historic districts and landmarks.

Preservation Texas, a nonprofit organization, exists to ensure that our proud Texas heritage is preserved and, to that end, that Austin's historic fabric of remains intact. I, along with the nineteen-member board of Preservation Texas, respectfully request that the Austin City Council continues its support to protect the historic character of the city of Austin.

Thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Krista Schreiner Gebbia
Executive Director

PRESERVATION TEXAS, INC.
P.O. BOX 12832
Austin, Texas 78711

Voice: 512-472-0102

Fax: 512-472-0740

Email: info@preservationtexas.org

A Statewide Partner with The National Trust for Historic Preservation

www.preservationtexas.org