

July 20, 2017

To: Austin Mayor Steve Adler and The Austin City Council

Hancock Neighborhood Association asks that Mayor Adler and the City Council provide us with a detailed explanation of who exactly, prepared the proposed zoning map of our neighborhood. Further, we ask that Mayor Adler and the City Council explain by what criteria or methodology our neighborhood and our individual properties were targeted for up-zoning. Finally, we ask that Mayor Adler and the City Council explain why we were not given the opportunity to make a case for or against the proposed designation rather than having these proposed changes imposed by non-elected consultants and staff.

Mayor Adler, in his 2017 “State of the City” address said, “For starters, let’s agree that we will not force density in the middle of neighborhoods. There’s no sense in shoving density where it would ruin the character of the city we’re trying to save in the first place, where it’s not wanted by its neighbors, and where we would never get enough of the additional housing supply we need anyway.”

And yet, during the development of the proposed CodeNEXT zoning project, the drafters of the proposed code and associated zoning maps have done just what the Mayor said the planners should not do — by proposing the up-zoning of almost all of our century old neighborhood. CodeNext consultants have treated the residents of Hancock with contempt. Most have never visited our neighborhood. They have ignored the goals of the community-wide *Imagine Austin* project and the neighborhood plans created after thousands of hours of work by our neighbors and other Austin citizens.

Worse, the CodeNEXT consultants claim that widespread zoning changes are needed in Hancock and other older neighborhoods because our homes are “economically inefficient.” This is an entirely inappropriate basis for considering the future of established residential neighborhoods.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed CodeNEXT makes zoning-related decision-making much less representative. It gives unelected city staff the power to make important decisions related to zoning and parking while diminishing the oversight of city boards and commissions, whose members are appointed by our elected officials. The proposed code would also truncate review of staff zoning decisions by the City Manager and City Council. The proposed CodeNEXT will also reduce avenues for the residents of Hancock Neighborhood and other Austinites to protest and appeal zoning decisions.

HANCOCK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION