

From: Pei-San Brown

Sent: Friday, July 07, 2017 11:58 PM

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Cc: Daniel Brown <daniel.s.brown@gmail.com>

Subject: Community Concerns about CodeNext

Hello Mayor Adler, City Council Members, and Zoning and Planning Commission Staff,

My name is Pei-San Brown and I'm a concerned resident who lives in Pemberton Heights. My husband, Daniel, and I are submitting our comments for your consideration.

We feel that the stated purposes of the new code will not be achieved by its implementation specifically regarding the goals stated below. From the January 2017 draft (1A-1 pg.1), the new code "establishes procedures and requirements to...

(3) Classify land within the city's zoning jurisdiction into base districts and overlay zones in order to regulate the use and development of land in a manner that:

- provides light, air, access, and open space;
- facilitates a mix of uses and promotes compact, pedestrian-oriented development;
- conserves historic resources and neighborhood character;
- minimizes traffic congestion and enhances streetscape and pedestrian environment;
- encourages development in areas with adequate public services and amenities; and
- provides opportunities for diverse housing types across all income levels.

(5) Protects lives, property, and the natural environment by reducing the impact of floods, erosion, and water pollution."

We contend that the new code will not achieve what it is intended to achieve because of several factors:

- The new code will not encourage light, air, access, and open space as it claims. Pemberton Heights already has a lack of open spaces (there may be 4-5 traffic triangles that I can think of off the top of my head). Light is also necessary at night for safety, and the neighborhood only has a street light every couple of blocks. As for air and access, adding more congestion to a neighborhood encourages neither.
- The new code will not facilitate a mix of uses and promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development. Only a handful of streets have sidewalks at all, and those that do only have sidewalks on limited portions of their streets, making pedestrian activity precarious as cars race through our neighborhood (we are close to and parallel to Mopac, so this happens quite a bit). Because pedestrian activity is already so dangerous in our neighborhood, especially along Harris Blvd (our street), Jefferson, Westover, Northwood, and Wooldridge, encouraging mixed use (and thus increased traffic and congestion) without first addressing the lack of sidewalks and parking is irresponsible.
- The new code does not conserve historic resources and neighborhood character. It is skewed heavily towards developers, and thus instead of conserving historic resources and neighborhood character, developers will demolish older homes in order to replace them with multi-unit developments on a single or adjacent lots. If you've seen what's been happening in Clarsville (e.g. 1205 Elm Street - 8 condos by Milestone Homes starting at \$650,000 for 867SF), you'll realize that developers are not interested in building for accessibility - they are interested in building to make a profit. Aligning our next residential building code with their desires simply benefits developers, not the community. Those developers who are interested in maintaining historic resources and neighborhood character are already working within the current code to restore (beautifully) older homes in the neighborhood.
- The new code will not minimize traffic congestion or enhance the pedestrian environment. It will instead encourage developers to purchase lots in the neighborhood in order to maximize their profits - they'll do this by building as many units as they can possibly fit on each lot. The new code also doesn't require as much off-street parking for each residential unit, which means our streets will be more crowded than they already are with cars. When cars are parked on the street, driving and walking become much more precarious as drivers speed through the neighborhood, swerving to avoid cars parked on the sides of the roads. Additionally, when walking at night with very limited sidewalks and lighting, cars parked on the sides of the streets become extra obstacles to manage, especially when walking with children and pets and at the same time attempting to avoid speeding cars.
- While the new code claims to encourage development in areas with adequate public services and amenities, Pemberton Heights is not one of those areas and should be excluded from this type of mixed use, high traffic, high congestion development. We lived downtown in a condo for 6 years and didn't mind the traffic because we expected it living downtown. Downtown is a prime example of how well mixed-use plans can work. However, forcibly injecting development into a historic neighborhood without adequate public services and amenities is again extremely irresponsible.
- The new code will not provide opportunities for diverse housing types across all income levels. With rules favoring developers, those businesses will try to maximize their investments in the neighborhood by charging premium prices for their smaller, denser properties - just look at the prices downtown (2 miles away).
- The new code will not protect lives, property, and the natural environment by reducing the impact of floods in our neighborhood. Our streets already overflow with every significant rainfall. With more density and thus more impermeable surfaces, the neighborhood will be placed in an even higher risk of flooding.

Thank you for considering public comments during this time. We appreciate all of the work that you've put into this plan and are confident that you will take into consideration all of our concerns and make the best decision possible for Austin.

Pei-San and Daniel Brown

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