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January 10, 2013

Dr. Mary Gay Maxwell, Chair
Mr. James Schissler, Secretary
Ms. Robin Gary, Vice Chair
Mr. Robert Anderson
Ms. Mary Ann Neely
Ms. Marisa Perales
Ms. Jennifer Walker

RE: Covered Bridge Planned Unit Development

Dear Environmental Board Members,

This letter is to provide a summary and explanation of the Covered Bridge PUD (CB PUD) project as we move forward to the public hearing process. This has been a long process for the multiple landowners and they are anxious to gain approval and move forward with the development of the project.

The goal for the CB PUD is to re-arrange the land use “furniture” on the multiple properties, to dismantle the existing entitlements associated with a majority of the property, while remaining sensitive to the environmental conditions of the area. While the properties enjoy intense development rights today, the landowners do not want to develop the property with the insensitive land uses, from both an environmental and neighborhood standpoint, that have been pursuing the property for many years. Further, the property described as Tract 1 went through a multi-year Neighborhood Planning process of which the outcome was to designate this Tract 1 as Mixed-use and this was passed unanimously by Planning Commission and City Council. The Planned Unit Development process was chosen as the best method to achieve the goals.

The CB PUD is comprised of multiple tracts and landowners across the 38.122 acres located at the intersection of SH 71 and Covered Bridge Drive. Two creeks bisect the property, and essentially, the ownership of the 4 tracts. Refer to the attached Land Use Plan and other exhibits relating to the CB PUD application.

Existing zoning and entitlements are in place that currently allow for intense, unrestricted commercial use for the 14.88 acre Tract 1, 150 multifamily / condominium residential units for Tracts 2 & 3A. Tract 4 is currently developed with a driveway and access easement for the benefit of multiple property owners, including the City of Austin for access to the Oak Hill Regional detention Facility. A Restrictive Covenant (attached) provides entitlements to older (1980) Williamson Creek Development regulations for 32 acres which includes standard sedimentation / filtration for water quality. Other RC provisions do not bode well for environmentally sensitive development. In total, the development rights across the entire PUD entail 17 acres. The goal with the CB PUD, as stated above, is to terminate the RC and shift the land uses around in a more sensitive manner.

The proposed CB PUD Tract 1 is to be developed with commercial uses across the SH 71 frontage with the bulk of the property targeted for multifamily residential. This places the most intense development on the north side of the creek to minimize the traffic that could otherwise cross the creek. Working with City of Austin staff, the suggested water quality for all 3 tracts north of the creek is to be a bio-filtration pond capturing the storm water of not only the development, but also ½ of the SH 71 pavement that would not otherwise ever be treated.

CB PUD Tracts 2 & 4 is to be developed with Congregate Living facilities which are much needed for the growing aging population of Austin. The existing driveway on Tract 4 is to be upgraded to a full size fire lane to provide access to this very low intensity use located across the creek. The Pecan Grove setting on Tract 2 offers a very appropriate setting for this use. The water quality for all development south of the creek is to be to non-degradation standards. While Tract 4 is currently the only tract subject to current regulations, we are seeking Code Amendments, with staff insistence and support, which allows an increase in the impervious cover on this Tract 4 to help push the development away from the creek located on Tract 2.

CB PUD Tract 3 is not to be developed with any impervious cover per City staff insistence and left as open space to provide for a vegetated filter strip to serve any future development on abutting the Covered Bridge Property Owners Association Amenity Center.

There are 40 Heritage Trees across the CB PUD properties with 38 of these located on Tract 2. The CB PUD property owners are terminating the current entitlements that would remove the inapplicability of the Heritage Tree regulations and are, with the PUD approval, forever protecting each and every Heritage Tree on the property. The setting of the Pecan Grove on Tract 2 is a quaint and beautiful setting better suited for the tranquil atmosphere associated with a Congregate Living use versus the retaining the ability to remove these trees for a condominium development.

Current entitlements do not provide for any limitation for cuts / fills or construction on slopes. With the PUD approval, there will be restrictions on these limits sufficiently and minimal enough to provide for the development as shown on the Conceptual Plans. The amount of cut on Tract 2 is necessary to provide for ADA access across the multiple buildings associated with the Congregate Living use and to provide for areas of sanctuary outside the locked down facilities in case of emergency.

Working closely with the neighborhood, their support is provided along with a laundered list of prohibited uses, height reductions, and setbacks. It is this list of prohibited uses that eliminates any possibility for service stations, auto sales, auto repair, exterminating services, pawn shops and other uses that are not environmentally or neighborhood sensitive.

Two of the more prevalent numerical considerations to reflect that the CB PUD is superior than existing entitlements are:

- 1) Impervious cover is reduced from 758,814 s.f. afforded under current entitlements to 537,000 s.f. with the development envisioned with the CB PUD.
- 2) Pollutant loadings are significantly reduced from development under existing entitlements compared to the development envisioned with the CB PUD.

Covered Bridge PUD			
Comparison of Williamson Creek WQ removals versus proposed CB PUD Pollutant removals.			
Pollutant	Williamson Creek Total Pollutant Removed	Proposed PUD Total Pollutant Removed	Increased Removal Comparing PUD to Williamson Creek
TSS	2458#	5533#	225%
TP	2.52#	6.19#	247%
TN	11.99#	46.0#	383%
COD	794#	3267#	412%
BOD	105#	274#	261%
Pb	0.46#	1.42#	306%
FC (in colonies)	6.76×10^{12}	4.68×10^{12}	719%
FS (in colonies)	1.50×10^{12}	3.99×10^{12}	266%
TOC	181#	735#	407%
Zn	0.87#	2.36#	270%
Note: Pollutant removals are measured in pounds removed per year, except for FC and FS which are measured in colonies per year.			

For the above reasons coupled with a long list of other superior items associated with a CB PUD approval such as Integrated Pest Management Plan, rainwater harvesting, increased open space, increased landscape requirements, to name a few, we respectfully request your support for a positive recommendation to move the Covered Bridge Planned Unit Development forward to Planning Commission and City Council.

Sincerely,



A. Ron Thrower