

East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Team

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Cristina Valdes, chair

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February 15, 2012

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR CREATING THE VELASQUEZ PLAZA POCKET PARK LOCATED AT E. 5TH STREET AND MEDINA STREET R.O.W. IN COLLABORATION WITH OWNERS AND DEVELOPERS OF THE NEW CORAZON APARTMENT COMPLEX

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Several members of the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Team's Land Use/Design Committee have attended several meetings and a formal presentation of the proposed Corazon Apartment Complex under development by Cypress Real Estate Advisors. As presented, the Land Use/Design Committee as well as the Resident Representative for that part of our neighborhood support this new development. Of particular interest was their proposal to enter into a long-term interlocal agreement with the City of Austin to develop and maintain the Velasquez Plaza Pocket Park which is one stop on the five mile Tejano Music Legends Trail which passes through our neighborhood. On February 15, 2012, Land Use/Design Committee members who attended these meetings and the formal presentation proposed to the full voting membership of the ECC Neighborhood Planning Team to endorse the apartment complex and the adjacent Velasquez Plaza Pocket Park. It was supported by a majority of the voting members of the Team.

We encourage the various City of Austin departments, other governmental agencies, and private funding organizations to join this collaboration and expedite the funding, permits and contracts necessary to get construction underway because this abandoned R.O.W. is a magnet for illegal dumping, open air drinking and drug use, and creates a lot of runoff and erosion that spills onto E. 5th Street which is going to undergo major construction later this spring.

Our Neighborhood Plan along with the Capital Metro's Saltillo Redevelopment Plan call for creating pedestrian walkways across the 11 acre tract owned by Metro in order to improve north-south linkages on all streets currently severed by the rail line. Improving the abandoned R.O.W. on Medina Street at E. 5th Street was envisioned as part of our Plan and is even depicted in the Future Land Use Map. It is addressed in our Parks and Environment Goals and Objectives to create more pocket parks, green spaces, and green corridors. This project specifically meets Action Step # 107 which states "Create incentives for new businesses to develop pocket parks which could include waiving development review costs or utility permit fees as well as grants or public-private partnerships..."

We look forward to an ongoing working relationship with the developers and city staff who will be negotiating an agreement and implementing this creative public-private project in our neighborhood planning area. If we can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to call on us. On behalf of the Velasquez Family, the Austin Latino Music Association, and all the folks who want to see this pocket park become a true community gathering spot, we remain . . .

Forever optimistic,

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|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cristina Valdes | Susan Benz | Jeff Thompson | Molly O'Halloran | Lori Cervenak-Renteria |
| Chairperson | Resident Sector 8 Rep | Land Use/Design Co-Chair | Land Use/Design Co-Chair | Tejano Trail coordinator |
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