

**Recommendation for Council Action – Backup
Floodplain Variance Request – 1010 W. 10th Condos**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

1. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CAUSE ADVERSE FLOODING ON OTHER PROPERTY. The applicant’s engineer submitted technical data that indicates that the proposed development will not increase flood heights.
2. SAFE ACCESS. Access for the proposed building will be provided via Baylor Street. First responder personal and building occupants will have safe access to and from the proposed building during a 100-year event.
3. PROPOSED FINISHED FLOOR ABOVE MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEVATION. The proposed building will have its finished floor elevation above the City of Austin minimum elevation requirements, which require the finished floor elevation to be at least one foot above the 100-year floodplain elevation. The finished floor elevation of the proposed building is 7.2 feet above the 100-year floodplain.
4. PROPOSED PARKING DOES NOT MEET CODE REQUIREMENTS. The proposed parking area associated with the building is within both the 25-year and 100-year floodplains. The maximum depth of flooding in the proposed parking lot is 3.5 feet in a 25-year flood event and five feet in a 100-year flood event.
5. HARDSHIP CONDITIONS FOR THE PROPERTY DO NOT EXIST. The City approved a site plan permit for this lot in June 2008 for a residential condominium project that also received an administrative floodplain variance due to the fact that the parking area was elevated out of the floodplain. Failure to allow construction of proposed parking area within the floodplain would not impact the potential use of the property. The property does not meet the hardship conditions criteria as defined in the Building Code.

APPLICABLE CODE AND VARIANCES REQUESTED

- I. LDC Section 25-7-92 (A) and (B) Encroachment on Floodplain Prohibited prohibits encroachment of a building or parking area on the 25-year and 100-year floodplains.

VARIANCE REQUESTED: *The applicant requests a variance to allow placement of a building and associated parking within the 25-year and 100-year floodplains of Shoal Creek.*

- II. LDC Section 25-7-152 Dedication of Easements and Rights-of-Way requires that the owner of real property proposed to be developed dedicate to the public an easement or right-of-way for a drainage facility, open or enclosed, and stormwater flow to the limits of the 100-year floodplain.

VARIANCE REQUESTED: *The applicant requests a variance to exclude the footprint of the proposed building from the requirement to dedicate a drainage easement to the full extent of the 100-year floodplain.*

PREREQUISITES FOR GRANTING VARIANCES AND FINDINGS:

Per LDC Section 25-12-3, Technical Codes, Section G105.7 Variances, variances shall only be issued upon consideration of the following prerequisites:

PREREQUISITE

1) A technical showing of good and sufficient cause based on the unique characteristics of the size, configuration or topography of the site.

Insufficient causes for issuing a variance may include the following:

- *Less than a drastic depreciation of property.*
- *Convenience of property owner.*
- *Circumstances of owner not land.*
- *To obtain better financial return.*
- *Property similar to others in neighborhood.*
- *Hardship created by owner's own actions.*

2) A determination that failure to grant the variance would result in exceptional hardship by rendering the lot undevelopable;

The location of the floodplain on the property is a characteristic of the land. Hardship refers to the effect of the floodplain status of the land on its use; it does not refer to personal or financial circumstances of the current owner of the land. In fact financial hardship, inconvenience, aesthetic considerations, physical handicaps, personal preferences or the disapproval of one's neighbors do not qualify as exceptional hardships. The applicant has the burden of proving exceptional hardship. FEMA advises that the reasons for granting floodplain management variances must be substantial and the proof compelling. The claimed hardship must be exceptional, unusual and peculiar to the property involved.

3) A determination that granting of a variance would not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary

FINDING

1) **CONDITION IS NOT MET.** The applicant has not demonstrated a good and sufficient cause that justifies the need for the proposed parking area to be located in the floodplain.

2) **CONDITION IS NOT MET.** The City issued a site plan permit for this property in 2008. Failure to grant this variance would not render the lot undevelopable.

3) **CONDITION IS NOT MET.** The proposed development does not increase flood heights. The development does increase public safety threat due

public expense, nor create nuisances, cause fraud on or victimization of the public or conflict with existing laws or ordinances.

4) A determination that the variance is the minimum necessary, considering the flood hazard, to afford relief.

Relief is defined as respite from unnecessary hardship. Unnecessary hardship is defined as:

- *Loss of all beneficial or productive use.*
- *Deprivation of reasonable return on property.*
- *Deprivation of all or any reasonable use.*
- *Rendering property valueless.*
- *Inability to develop property in compliance with the regulations.*
- *Reasonable use cannot be made consistent with the regulation.*

5) Notification to the applicant in writing over the signature of the building official that the issuance of a variance to construct a structure below the base flood level will result in increased premium rates for flood insurance, and that such construction below the base flood level increases risks to life and property.

to the increased risk associated with having a parking lot with excessive flood depths.

4) **CONDITION IS NOT MET.** The City issued a site plan permit for this property in 2008 that also received an administrative floodplain variance due to the fact that the parking area was elevated out of the floodplain. This current variance request is not the minimum necessary.

5) **CONDITION IS MET.** The finished floor elevations of the proposed building will be a minimum of one-foot above the 100-year floodplain elevation.