

Date: 05/19/2017

To: Planning Commission

Re: **Removing 2/3 vote threshold to override owner and designate historic landmark zoning**

The Austin Infill Coalition requests that you **vote NO on deleting section 25-2-355 subsection (C)**. We oppose changing the 2/3 majority rule currently in use by the Historic Landmark Commission's historical zoning recommendations as it is a crucial component of the checks-and-balances system needed by our city.

Deleting section 25-2-355 subsection (C) would only serve to:

- Slow desperately needed housing development in urban core neighborhoods, making it even harder for families and municipal workers to find good housing options when the Mayor and CodeNEXT are committed to providing MORE quality housing options and a city that is compact and connected.
- Add cost and uncertainty to an already over-onerous process.
- Rob (mostly minority) families of the generational wealth their elders worked so hard to build since this rule change WILL make their property less valuable on the open market.
- Make it even harder for (mostly lower-income) families to make necessary improvements to their private property, essentially incentivizing people to live in unsafe conditions.
- Incentivize sprawl.
- Damage our tax-base a time when City funds are sorely needed--historic tax breaks are LARGE!
- Trample on individual property rights in a very 'unTexan' way.

Our research and front-line experience shows this change would create an incredibly easy opportunity for misuse of the Historic designation for non-historic means and be harmful to Austinites in a multitude of ways.

This change will also diminish the value and integrity of things that are truly historic since scores of older but *not* truly historic structures will now be zoned 'historic.'

Realize many supporting this proposed change are not pro-preservation, they are anti-development. Historic zoning is NOT a tool to thwart development. The 2/3 majority sets an appropriate bar when attempting to override an owner's wishes concerning his or her own private real estate—do not change this.

Lastly, City councils and commissions are already overburdened—can you imagine how many additional historic appeals this change would create? The backlog and tension and distraction from more pressing issues will be costly! Additionally, cases ruled on by City Council are often decided on based by politics and election cycles, not historical merit.

A 2/3 majority provides the appropriately-balanced framework that is needed for this process. Vote no! Austin, as a whole, will pay a great price if you do not!

Thank you,
Austin Infill Coalition

The Austin Infill Coalition is an open group that typically meets the second Monday of each month at 11:30am. The coalition strives to unite urban infill development professionals and promote broad cooperation in order to affect positive change in Austin's built environment, with particular regard to housing.

Item C-17

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PUBLIC COMMENT

2211 Iva Lane

Austin, TS

TX 78704

June 8, 2017

Attn: Mr. Greg Dutton

Planning & Zoning Dept.

505 Barton Springs Rd.

Austin, TX 78704

Re: C20-2017-001

Dear Mr. Dutton:

This letter is being sent to voice my opposition to the proposed change from a super majority vote by council to a simple majority when there is a proposed zoning change to historic zoning where the property owner is opposed.

Thank you,

Camille M. Perry