



Rainey Neighbors Association

February 11, 2019

Dear Esteemed Design Commissioner,

2019 Board of Directors:

Sandra De Leon

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A City Council resolution was passed in 1999 directing the City Manager to work with the Rainey Neighborhood to facilitate discussions leading to land use objectives and priorities for the neighborhood. Of special concern was the vulnerable nature of the neighborhood due to its relative isolation and susceptibility to the negative effects of larger scale projects in the vicinity. (Resolution No 990603-81, Austin City Council Meeting, June 3, 1999) Today, the Rainey Neighborhood has eleven infill projects in various stages of the permitting process for new development with five of those projects surpassing 45 stories in height.

There are significant mobility issues in the Rainey Neighborhood as a result of the rapid growth predicted in 1999. Factors that contributed to these issues include: the absence of any process that assessed the infrastructure prior to the upzone from SF-3 to CBD; the lack of process that studied, optimized and informed the appropriate level of density and mixed-use for the area; and Rainey is bordered on three sides by Waller Creek, Lady Bird Lake and IH-35, leaving only two main access points in and out of the neighborhood. Rainey was built to accommodate single-family homes on long blocks, a pattern that impedes circulation, unlike the street grid in the downtown core with shorter blocks that create connectivity. Add to the mix a maximum FAR of 15:1 with unlimited height. To date, Rainey has yet to implement a comprehensive master plan. In the absence of a plan, and given the accelerated pace with which new development is occurring in the area, the neighborhood is requesting that these five conditions be formally adopted in the Rainey Street Subdistrict.

- Adopt a comprehensive mobility plan, like the Rainey Traffic Study, formed collaboration with the Rainey Neighbors Association, specifically addressing the unique mobility issues in the Rainey Subdistrict.
- Approval of current entitlements, 8:1 FAR and below, for site plans on the condition that they are accompanied by corresponding improved infrastructure, especially mobility infrastructure that is based on the 34 mobility recommendations outlined in the Rainey Street Traffic Study.
- Approve infill that does not alter the current street dimensions nor speed limit.
- Approve infill that promotes ancillary amenities in addition to restaurants, such as retail that provides goods and services to Rainey residents.
- Amend code to allocate half of density bonus to Rainey-specific benefits other than affordable housing.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our requests. We look forward to working with the city to create a vibrant, walkable neighborhood for residents and visitors in the Rainey Street District.

Sincerely,

Sandra De Leon
President, Rainey Neighbors Association