

August 21, 2020

Austin Planning and Zoning Department  
Attn. Kate Clark  
One Texas Center  
505 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, Texas

Re: Commentary on Case Number C14-2020-0067

Dear Ms. Clark:

I am the owner of Unit D2 at the Cardinal Condominiums (707 Cardinal Lane, ATX 78704). I have owned the unit since 2010.

I am writing to express my opposition to the application for rezoning at 3504 South First Street, designated as Case Number C14-2020-0067.

In my understanding, the purpose of the application for rezoning is to enable the construction of an apartment complex and parking garage, consisting of hundreds of units, on both the 3504 South First Street property, and the property that is currently Mercury Hall.

While I acknowledge the need to create new housing developments in Austin, to accommodate the growing population, and in particular to build additional affordable housing, to address rising income inequality in our city, I think that this particular proposed project at this particular location will have negative impacts on the neighborhood and homeowners to the west of South First Street, as far as Garden Villa Lane.

My concerns and objections fall into three primary categories: traffic congestion; neighborhood environment; and financial impacts on home and condominium owners.

**Traffic Congestion:** The section of South First Street just north of Ben White is highly congested (an effect which may be currently suppressed by reduction in traffic during the pandemic, but that will revert to its prior condition in time). The congestion is exacerbated by narrowness of South First Street, the lack of a turn lane, and the limited visibility due to the hilly terrain. It is often nearly impossible, if not downright dangerous, to try to make a left turn from Cardinal Lane onto South First

Street. Adding hundreds of residents' cars to the mix at the current location of Mercury Hall is going to make a bad situation considerably worse. Has a formal traffic study been conducted on the impacts of the proposed project at this point?

**Neighborhood Environment:** The neighborhood that includes Cardinal Condominiums, and the blocks to the west and south, toward Garden Villa Lane and the Galindo Elementary School – in contrast to South First Street itself – is a secluded and quiet area. One can walk two abreast in the street, walk one's dog, or bicycle with children, in safety and comfort. I anticipate that, with the addition of a huge apartment complex on the west side of South First, given the congestion on South First, apartment residents will inevitably attempt to access the apartments from South Second and South Fifth. This is going to dramatically increase both the speed and volume of traffic in the neighborhood, changing its character.

Further, residents and owners at Cardinal Condominiums will be impacted not only by these effects, but by the looming presence of what I understand will be a 60-foot structure (which in reality will be 70-75 feet, given that the Mercury Hall property sits higher than the condo buildings). For at least some units at Cardinal Condos, including especially Buildings D, where I am an owner, Building C, and Building E, this will reduce privacy, increase noise, and likely block sunlight.

**Financial Impacts:** I believe that the proposed project will almost certainly have negative financial impacts on the owners at the Cardinal Condominiums, and likely more broadly in nearby blocks to the west. I know my own circumstances best, so let me use them as an example. I think that my case is likely extreme, given location and timing, but it is not unique.

As noted, I have owned Cardinal Unit D2 for ten years, although my residence is about one-half mile south in South Austin. In November 2019, I took a decision to place D2 on the market, before the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic became clear. I am 67 years old, and selling Cardinal D2 at a good market price is part of my retirement planning.

Cardinal Building D is immediately west of the Mercury Hall site, and the front door and yard of Unit D2 look up at the Mercury Hall buildings.

My tenants departed at the end of February 2020. I then spent approximately \$15,000 readying the unit for sale, and put it on the market the first week of May. While D2 has not yet sold, there has been a good deal of interest from potential buyers despite the pandemic.

Now that I have come to know the scope of the proposed development at 3504 South First and the Mercury Hall site, I think my plan to sell at this point is essentially in the dumpster. Who is going to buy a high-end condominium next door to a property that will be a major construction site for two plus years, and that will thereafter have a huge apartment complex looming over what had been a very private yard?

Again, as noted, I think that my case is probably extreme, given the location of Cardinal D2, and the fact that I am trying to sell my unit. However, I believe that property values throughout the Cardinal Condominium complex will suffer negative impacts due to the new project, and that these effects, while perhaps less, will likely be felt in the nearby blocks to the west.

I appreciate your consideration, and your bringing my concerns to the attention of the Planning Commission.

Best regards,

Howard Curtis  
4418A Lareina Drive  
Austin, TX 78745

E-mail: [REDACTED]  
Cell: 5120547-7116

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Cc: Stacy Jackson, Goodwin & Company

## PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION

This zoning/rezoning request will be reviewed and acted upon at two public hearings: before the Land Use Commission and the City Council. Although applicants and/or their agent(s) are expected to participate in a public hearing, you are not required to participate. This meeting will be conducted online and you have the opportunity to speak FOR or AGAINST the proposed development or change. Contact the case manager for information on how to participate in the public hearings online. You may also contact a neighborhood or environmental organization that has expressed an interest in an application affecting your neighborhood.

During its public hearing, the board or commission may postpone or continue an application's hearing to a later date, or may evaluate the City staff's recommendation and public input forwarding its own recommendation to the City Council. If the board or commission announces a specific date and time for a postponement or continuation that is not later than 60 days from the announcement, no further notice is required.

During its public hearing, the City Council may grant or deny a zoning request, or rezone the land to a less intensive zoning than requested but in no case will it grant a more intensive zoning.

However, in order to allow for mixed use development, the Council may add the MIXED USE (MU) COMBINING DISTRICT to certain commercial districts. The MU Combining District simply allows residential uses in addition to those uses already allowed in the seven commercial zoning districts. As a result, the MU Combining District allows the combination of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses within a single development.

For additional information on the City of Austin's land development process, visit our website:  
[www.austintexas.gov/planning](http://www.austintexas.gov/planning).

Written comments must be submitted to the board or commission (or the contact person listed on the notice) before the public hearing. Your comments should include the board or commission's name, the scheduled date of the public hearing, and the Case Number and the contact person listed on the notice.

Case Number: C14-2020-0067  
Contact: Kate Clark, 512-974-1237  
Public Hearing: August 27, 2020, City Council

Michelle Ampiel

Your Name (please print)

707 Cardinal Ln K-2, ATX 78704

Your address(es) affected by this application

M. Ampiel

Signature

8-22-20  
Date

Daytime Telephone:

504-875-6900

Comments:

Cardinal Ln Condominiums  
President of the board - Benjamin Cochran  
Meeting: August 25, 2020

If you use this form to comment, it may be returned to:  
City of Austin, Planning & Zoning Department

Kate Clark

P. O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767

Or email to:

[Kate.Clark@austintexas.gov](mailto:Kate.Clark@austintexas.gov)

I am in favor  
 I object

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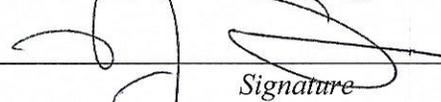
**Case Number: C14-2020-0067**  
**Contact: Kate Clark, 512-974-1237**  
**Public Hearing: August 27, 2020, City Council**

Justin Simmons

Your Name (please print)

707 Cardinal Ln, Unit G Austin 78704

Your address(es) affected by this application



Signature

8/23/20  
Date

Daytime Telephone: 512-694-0304

Comments: This change in zoning would increase traffic in our neighborhood and on an already heavy traffic S 1st St.

I am in favor  
 I object

If you use this form to comment, it may be returned to:  
City of Austin, Planning & Zoning Department

**Kate Clark**  
P. O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767

Or email to:  
**Kate.Clark@austintexas.gov**

## Clark, Kate

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**From:** Cynthia Trucksis  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2020 9:29 AM  
**To:** Clark, Kate  
**Subject:** planning commission meetingcase Number C14-2020-0067

\*\*\* External Email - Exercise Caution \*\*\*

Cynthia Trucksis  
707 Cardinal, N! Austin, TX 78704

Hello, Kate: I would like to register my objection to the proposed changes to the zoning at 3504 S. 1st Street. If construction must be done at this site, there should be a traffic impact study during "normal" traffic periods. The neighborhood already sees a back up in traffic from Ben White and with the blind spot at the top of the hill, the situation would get worse. furthermore, the location of the proposed variance would put an unsightly garage at the peak of the hill on 1st. There are other solutions to up! Thank you.

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**Case Number: C14-2020-0067**

**Contact: Kate Clark, 512-974-1237**

**Public Hearing: August 27, 2020, City Council**

*Benjamin Cochran*

Your Name (please print)

*707 Cardinal Ln #1 Austin, TX 78704*

Your address(es) affected by this application

*[Signature]*

Signature

*8/24/20*

Date

Daytime Telephone: *830-570-4221*

Comments:

*The mixed use building with its five levels of parking garage will add substantial traffic to the corridor already known for being dangerous due to limited view over traffic East on Cardinal Ave. toward 51st St. Additionally the structure proposed does not match the eclectic feel of the neighborhood and will affect value of surrounding homes.*

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