

Citizen Stakeholder Comments on items #2 and #3 on Planning Commission Agenda for July 27, 2021

For All City of Austin Planning Commissioners

Case **NPA-2021-0026.01**

Zoning Case **C14-2021-0039**

AGAINST

July 26, 2021

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Greetings Planning Commissioners:

Thank you for listening to my voice on behalf of our community. I appreciate your efforts to provide service with integrity and thoughtful consideration on behalf of all of us in Austin .

I agree with Ms. Lovera's written statements I read in the case file about the damage it can do if you approve and recommend the applicant's proposed zoning changes. Her words and concepts are right on target.

The parcels under consideration as tract 1 and 2 are **already zoned appropriately** on the Neighborhood Plan (NP) Future Land Use Map (FLUM) if the health and well-being of the neighborhood and their contribution to the city overall is any part of your consideration.

I, and many others deeply invested in this community for the long term, spent two and a half years of our lives, our time, energy, and focus, working closely with City of Austin professional planning staff in crafting our neighborhood plan and FLUM. We did that because we believe the city of Austin's story that our neighborhood has value for its residents, businesses, schools, institutions, and culture, and can achieve an intelligent, integrated, harmonious greater good for our community and thus contribute to the larger city through the self determination of our neighborhood plan. We missed our kids' dance recitals, soccer games and spelling bees, etc. to do the intensive work to get it right. And we did get it right. Planning Commissioners recognized that, City Council recognized that, and between them made it an ordinance.

In those two and a half years we examined every parcel, every possible zoning option, every corridor, and existing and possible uses in the context of the goals, objectives, and vision for the planning area as it fits in the larger city. The FLUM zoning on each parcel is connected and integrated with those goals and objectives to serve the overall whole vision of this becoming and remaining a thriving healthy part of north Austin.

I see from the staff backup report that staff cherry-picked bits and pieces of the NP narrative, took those out of their true context, and twisted them around in trying to find a way for them to benefit the applicant by erroneously applying them to these tracts. It is so disappointing to see this. The truth is

there are other parcels to which those density and commercial objectives and goals actually do apply and you can see them in the FLUM, typically along THE ACTUAL, REAL corridors, and that is exactly where the applicant can and should seek to develop the intensity of use they desire for their profit goals.

Here are some neighborhood plan goals, priorities, and recommendations that **actually do apply** here: My current comments are *italized* and *in red font*.

**Transportation Goal:** Pedestrians, motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and mobility-impaired neighbors should be able to safely and efficiently travel throughout the North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area and to the rest of the City.

**The safety of both pedestrians and motorists needs to be upheld and ensured.**

The NLCNPA is bounded by four major traffic corridors: North Lamar Boulevard, I-35, Braker Lane, and US Highway 183. Several neighborhood streets serve as cut-through routes, connecting these corridors to one another. These routes include Grady Drive... The accessibility and convenience of the major corridors has led to an increase in vehicular traffic and speed along the streets within the planning area, compromising the safety of those traveling throughout the NLCNPA.

**Land Use Goal:** Create a well-balanced land use pattern that benefits everybody in the North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area by assigning appropriate land uses to particular properties.

Limit the encroachment of intense uses into the residential portion(s) of a neighborhood

- ☐ Place complementary uses next to one another
- ☐ Establish a logical pattern of uses
- ☐ Place more intense uses (e.g., industry, commercial) along large, arterial roadways and away from residential neighborhoodsto limit adjacent incompatible uses.

**Priority Action Item 9 Limit the construction of new, large multi-family residential complexes throughout the NLCNPA.** (Recommendation 121)

In the planning process, stakeholders noted the need to provide housing options for current and future residents of the NLCNPA. To maintain a balanced residential character, housing options (both owner-occupied and rental units) must be readily available. However, **when compared to other planning areas, the NLCNPA contains a disproportionate amount of rental units and large apartment complexes.** Of the total number of residential units in the planning area, 80 percent are rental and **nearly 69 percent of all housing units within the NLCNPA are in multifamily developments** (Table L)<sup>22</sup>. Stakeholders thought **further development of such complexes should be restricted throughout the neighborhood:** they believed **a more balanced mix of housing options and homeownership opportunities will stabilize the area.**

**Recommendation 122** New, more intense residential development should contain a mixed use element and **be located along major roadways.** *Middle Fiskville,*

*Brownie Drive, and Grady drive are NOT major roadways. IH-35 service road, North Lamar, Rundberg, and Anderson Lane are. The FLUM accurately represents the reality.*

**Preserve the commercial/industrial area in the northeastern corner of the NLCNPA. (The purpose of commercial means COMMERCIAL, not to defeat that goal by more intense residential through adding on MU)**

Although there are a few houses interspersed throughout the area, the northeastern corner of the NLCNPA is primarily a commercial district. Its relative separation from nearby residences makes this location ideal for the types of businesses currently operating—auto repair, storage, a major manufacturing facility (Golfsmith), and a variety of retail outlets and services. Neighborhood stakeholders suggested two land use categories for this corner of the NLCNPA so to provide residents a variety of commercial services: commercial and neighborhood commercial. The commercial designation will be applied to the majority of this area while a handful of properties along Braker Lane, between Georgian Drive and Middle Fiskville Road will be designated neighborhood commercial. The neighborhood commercial designation will be more complementary to the single-family houses along the north side of Braker Lane.

**Objective L.9: Create a node of commercial activity in the far northeastern corner of the NLCNPA. (The purpose of commercial means COMMERCIAL, not to defeat that goal by more intense residential through adding on MU)**

**Recommendation 140** Apply the commercial and neighborhood commercial future land use designations to the northeastern portion of the NLCNPA. See the Future Land Use Map for the properties to which each future land use designation is applied.

These tracts are in the Eastern Crescent. We may be just a hair geographically west of IH-35, but we are more like the rest of the Crescent, like East Austin once was, than anywhere to our west. Our demographics in race-ethnicity, educational attainment, income level, economic opportunity level (and lack thereof), etc. make that clear.

The destruction of East Austin, the displacement and systemic dismantling of the long-term cultural communities there that public officials NOW go on record to lament as terrible, unfair, and “not who Austin really is,” could only be done with the support, the complicity, of past city of Austin officials supporting decisions to allow profit-driven developers and real estate opportunists to take down those communities piece by piece for their own greater profit, driving out those long term Austinites who had made the place what it was. Several of the cultural and economic refugees from that disaster in East Austin facilitated by city officials moved here and settled because we were affordable, accepting, and didn’t yet have developers seeing us as the next fruit ripe for profit-picking.

They see us now. Big Time. That is one thing this re-zoning application represents.

As Commissioners appointed by Council having this awesome trusted responsibility and power over the lives of fellow Austinites, please do not assist in the dismantling of my community through

recommending these piecemeal, inappropriate land uses and zoning decisions that will then only encourage more profiteers to come and take our community apart.

There is land in the NP FLUM zoned for the intensity level folks say Austin needs. These investors can buy that and build in an appropriate place that best serves the neighborhood and the city overall, and still make a tidy profit. We specifically built into the FLUM that opportunity to expand this kind of residential housing in places that make sense, even though for decades we've already been one of the highest density areas of Austin. Please deny this application and direct the developer to consider those opportunities instead.

Again, thank you for reading my input.

Respectfully,

Lyn Galbreth

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