

Parks and Recreation Board
Date: Tuesday, September 28

Subject: 305 S. Congress Avenue PUD application

Motion by: Laura Cottam Sajbel, District 9 Seconded by:

RATIONALE:

DRAFT

Whereas, the City of Austin recognizes the South Central Waterfront property as one of the few remaining locations near downtown that offers public access to Lady Bird Lake and Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail,

Whereas, considerable time and effort from 2012-2015 was spent gathering input from stakeholders--neighborhoods, affordable housing proponents, environmentalists and watershed specialists, city staff from multiple departments, Austin Water, Economic Development, Austin Energy, transportation, consultants, and landowners—to envision the best use of this parcel for the residents of Austin,

Whereas, the stakeholders crafted a beautiful, well-documented, and vetted Vision Plan, providing a signature public park and trail, which was approved by City Council in 2016,

Whereas, the goals set for the South Central Waterfront include establishing a lively, attractive pedestrian environment; expanding open space and create great public places; and enhancing connections to and along the waterfront;

Whereas, the City has appointed an Austin Economic Development Corporation, intended to guide development of this irreplaceable tract of land in the downtown area to benefit the public and the city,

Whereas, the 305 S. Congress PUD Amendment is being requested ahead of the City's implementation of South Central Waterfront rules and regulations, which are in the process of being codified,

Whereas, the 305 S. Congress Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment application asks for a significant increase in entitlements for the developers yet gives back less (seven instead of nine acres) in the parkland dedication than prescribed by the City's approved plan,

Whereas, a PUD amendment must prove superiorities to the established goals and provide specific details about implementation of those superiorities to be approved,

Whereas, the 305 S. Congress PUD Amendment has not responded to a number of key concerns from staff,

Whereas, the 305 S. Congress PUD Amendment does not allow the city oversight or control over programming in the public parkland and the trail,

Whereas, the 305 S. Congress PUD Amendment does not identify the trigger or timing of deeding parkland in a clear and precise manner, and could precipitate the closure of this land during construction,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Parks & Recreation Board denies the superiority of the 305 S. Congress PUD Amendment, as proposed, because it is found to lack critical parkland superiorities.

Be it further resolved that the issues listed below indicate some ways this PUD amendment could be resolved:

- Signature parkland must be properly deeded to the City of Austin, rather than left as easement in the PUD amendment, and the deeding of that parkland must be triggered by specific deadlines or progress in new development.
- Parkland dedicated to the City must be approximately nine acres. Six of the acres offered in the PUD Amendment are on land that is unbuildable, due to the waterfront overlay.
- Control over programming of the public parkland and trail must be awarded to the City of Austin, for public transparency.
- The Grand Staircase, with ADA compliance, must remain located next to Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge for public visibility and access to the parkland.
- Retention ponds with runoff from the development must be mitigated; As currently shown, one large pond under the bats would be deep enough to require fencing, and all three retention ponds locate runoff from the development on public land, taking valuable land from the signature park.
- The proposed 70-foot landing must be moved away from the sensitive area below the bats and shortened to 30 feet, the length required by the ordinance governing building on Lady Bird Lake.
- The trail must be adjusted according to recommendations set by the recently completed Safety and Mobility Study.

- Parkland dedication must increase by 20% per unit, as developers propose additional height and density, in addition to the full nine acres designated in the approved Vision Plan.
- The PUD amendment must provide for appropriate parkland amenities, such as playscapes.
- The PUD must comply with the updated land development code and with the codified rules and regulations for the South Central Waterfront.