

To: Small Area Joint Planning Commission October 22, 2021

RE: Case #C814-89-0003.02 305 S. Congress PUD (Statesman PUD)

Dear Zoning and Planning Commissioners,

My name is Brooke Bailey, and I was on the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board from its inception in 2009 until it was dissolved under 10-1 in 2015 and on the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board from 2017 until 2019. I am sending this letter on behalf of several of us who have been involved with Lady Bird Lake and the Waterfront Overlay for many years and are all in agreement about the following issues with the Statesman PUD proposal.

I was Chair of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board when the South Central Waterfront Vision Plan process was initiated and developed by Alan Holt and our Board. The process involved several years of meetings, charettes, walk-about, and other events that involved all stakeholders. Those stakeholders included landowners, neighbors, neighborhood organizations, developers (including Endeavor), and anyone else with interest in the future of the South Central Waterfront Area, which includes the Statesman property. The plan was developed and passed unanimously at Council. During the planning process all input was valued and there was no opposition from stakeholders when the final plan was released. An economist, Abe Farkas of ECONorthwest, was hired to help guide us in making sure all we were including in the plan was feasible economically, and what development trade-offs would be required to achieve the lofty goals of the plan-in other words could it be done, and could the developers still make a profit. The answer was yes. We recommend you study the data in the SCW Vision Plan, it will explain the methods and the numbers in much more detail.

Then the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board was formed in 2017 with the task of implementing the plan, of which I was elected Chair of a Board made up of people vested in the future of the South Central Waterfront. Our urgent goal was to get the Regulating Plan finished to codify the plan. At the time it was tied to CodeNext, so we went to Council several years ago, and they directed City Staff to unbind it and finish it. There was money in the budget to do this. City Staff refused to act-why I still do not understand because this was a plan that EVERYONE approved, and the Regulating Plan was 80% finished. To this day they still have not finished the Regulating Plan and the South Central Waterfront framework is not codified. We could argue that they are not following the vision framework since there is not a Regulating Plan for their site or the district, governance, and a financial mechanism in place to capture the financing required.

As you can see by my long term participation and commitment, and that of the co-signers, the citizen participation and contribution has been disrespected and disregarded. We, along with the applicant, have been engaged in the South Central Waterfront process long before the amended PUD was filed in 2019.

To be clear, we are not opposed to the redevelopment of the Statesman Property, and we understand why they are coming forward as an amended PUD due to the delays by staff. The opposition is the taking of entitlements such as height and FAR without the community benefits clearly defined (by a current market value dollar amount) which is not acceptable since public funds will need to be raised to complete amenities shown on plan.

We are encouraging Housing and Planning Department staff to be more transparent in their recommendations, especially those that disregard the existing entitlements and current regulations of the governing Waterfront Overlay Ordinance, Vertical Mixed Use Overlay, and especially the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan.

The provisions of affordable housing at 4% is the minimum, not the cap, for a district plan that calls for 20% of all units. Furthermore, the Vertical Mixed Use overlay already in place for the site requires a minimum of 10% affordability for all new housing. The plan allowed for extra heights to manage for above grade, structured parking requirements within the individual building envelopes. If the parking is submerged or placed in a plinth of indeterminate height, then why have heights well above those indicated in the vision plan been approved by staff?

We believe it is of utmost importance to hold Endeavor to the recommendations of the Environmental Commission, they are much more informed about these issues, and the health of Lady Bird Lake is primary to any discussion about

development along the shore and within the Waterfront Overlay.

The applicant has not shown a valid reason not to live up to their obligation on parkland. The economic constraints put forth do not match what the economist concluded, and those calculations were based on much lower building heights and FAR. I completely concur with the resolution put forth by the Parks Board on September 28th regarding the PUD proposal vs the South Central Waterfront Vision Plan Park requirements. It is exceedingly inferior to what is required.

The Vision Plan clearly defined street widths and design, it is important that the finished streets include all the elements including accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, the mobility-impaired, trees and plantings, and vehicle traffic. As those plans are still being finalized, I would hope that a condition of approval will include 'street design to be completed as shown in the SCW Vision Plan.'

The South Central Waterfront Vision Plan is a good plan and should be used as the framework for the redevelopment of the Statesman Property, but this applicant seeks to take advantage of the benefits of the plan without giving back fully in community benefits or superior design. An amended PUD on this site, which takes advantage of a legacy clause, is what we were trying to avoid, but now seems unavoidable, so please hold this applicant to the same lofty standards as the plan asks for on the most important site in the Central Austin area. As we promote density in this area, Lady Bird Lake, housing for all, usable parkland, safe and shared streets, and consideration of the contribution of citizen volunteer concerns are too important to compromise on.

Respectfully,

Brooke Bailey,

Former Member and Chair of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board & Former Member and Chair of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board

Wendy Todd,

Former Member of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board & Former Member of the Waterfront Overlay Task Force

Cory Walton,

Former Member of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board and Former Member of the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board

Linda Guerrero,

Current Member of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board