
From: Paul Gosselink

Sent: Friday, April 18, 2025 4:08 PM

To: Garcia, Ella <Ella.Garcia@austintexas.gov>; Estrada, Nancy <Nancy.Estrada@austintexas.gov>; Jim Montgomery; Megan Meisenbach

Subject: Concern about CEF (canyon rimrock) causing a slope collapse at 1501-1603 Shoal Creek Blvd

External Email - Exercise Caution

Please accept this memo outlining our concerns that the present set of plans for the proposed project can result in a collapse of the slope between the neighboring properties and the proposed project. We are requesting that the Planning Commission determine that this application should not go forward until the applicant provides an acknowledgement of the public safety risk associated with this same geology (Buda Limestone and Del Rio Clay and a canyon rimrock CEF) which has resulted in similar slope collapses in recent years (2018, 2019 and 2023) in nearby sites (Wooldridge Dr and Poplar St) is made AND a demonstration that this risk will be prevented so that our homes will not be damaged, or made unsaleable or, worse, slide down the hillside. Please distribute this to the PC members prior to the 4/22 hearing

Thank you

Paul Gosselink

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For any additional questions or concerns, contact CSIRT at
["cybersecurity@austintexas.gov"](mailto:cybersecurity@austintexas.gov).

PUBLIC SAFETY RISKS PRESENTED BY SHOAL CREEK DEVELOPMENT

CASE:C-14-2024-0155 1501-1603 Shoal Creek Blvd,

Introduction

The City Council will be called upon to consider the application of Citiscape to rezone the referenced property to allow the construction of a condominium/apartment project in the woods at this address. The applicant fails to identify a critical environmental feature (CEF) that must be considered at every stage of the review process due to the significant public safety risk it poses.

Request for Action

We request that this risk to public safety be considered in the public forum of a City Council meeting. Transparent public dialogue is appropriate in this case in light of the multiple slope collapses that have recently occurred in the nearby area. It is time for the City Council to realize that this problem requires policy direction, or the public safety and property damage problems will continue.

Valid Petition

The surrounding homeowners have filed a verified valid petition. These property owners and the Judges Hill Neighborhood Assn (JHNA) oppose the project as presently proposed. The principal basis for our opposition is the very real risk that the slope between the project and the homes on top of the surrounding hill will collapse, much like the recent collapses along Lamar Blvd at Wooldridge Dr and 910 Poplar St. This would damage our homes, make them potentially unsaleable or, worse, cause our homes to slide down the collapsed slope. The geologic features (Buda Limestone overlying Del Rio Clays) are the same geologic features found up and down Lamar Blvd. These features led to the collapse of the apartments at Barton Springs and Lamar, the "graffiti wall" project at 11th, and other sites. The confirmed canyon rimrock Critical Environmental Feature (CEF) on the steep slope between the project and our homes is the specific reason for our belief that the proposed project will result in the collapse of this slope. The applicant's, (Citiscape) present plans are to excavate the toe of this slope to construct a 3-level underground parking garage, which will trigger the collapse.

Public Safety Concern

We bring this issue to the attention of the Council at this time and in this manner because we are concerned that it may be our only opportunity to do so. The Council needs to be informed of the critical environmental feature (CEF) involved in this

decision. Stated alternatively, Councilmembers should never be put in a position where, after they act, they discover that they would have acted differently if they had been fully informed. The risk to public safety is so clear in this case that the Council must consider this risk in addition to the standard zoning factors when considering our valid petition.

Regulatory Violations

The presently proposed location of Citiscape's project significantly violates the 150-foot buffer between the CEF and the proposed project as set out in the Environmental Criteria Manual (ECM). The Council's recognition of the importance of adhering to the buffer requirements established by the ECM and Land Development Code (LDC) was recently reiterated by your approval in March of the requirement to conduct hazard zone analyses within 200 feet of a waterway. Moreover, none of the other requirements of Section 25-8-121 of the LDC have been provided, making the application incomplete. Indeed, there is no mention of the existence of the CEF in any application documents on file.

Expert Opinion

Our concern that our homes will be damaged or slide down the slope when it collapses can be easily demonstrated. We have prepared various slides that explain the geotechnical engineering basis for our concern. We have retained Dr. Robert Gilbert, Chair of the Department of Civil, Architectural, and Environmental Engineering in the UT Cockrell School of Engineering. Professor Gilbert has studied this specific stretch of Shoal Creek's geology for over 30 years and is familiar with multiple examples of similar slope failures nearby. He will explain that Citiscape's plan to excavate the toe of this slope to construct a 3-level underground parking garage will trigger the collapse.

Please include this memo in the agenda backup material for the Planning Commission and the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Gosselink

903 W. 16th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

From: Marisela Maddox

Sent: Saturday, April 19, 2025 5:12 PM

To: Garcia, Ella

Subject: Case # C14-2024-0155 1501-1603 Shoal Creek Boulevard

External Email - Exercise Caution

Dear Ms. Garcia and members of the City of Austin Planning Commission,

I write to express my opposition to the Shoal Creek Development at 1501-1603 Shoal Creek Blvd. as it is currently proposed by the applicant.

As a Judges Hill resident and a neighbor of the residents adjacent to this property, I am concerned that neither the applicant nor the Planning Commission has addressed the existence of the Critical Environmental Feature [CEF] at the applicant's property. The CEF, which was previously identified by city staff, presents a real threat to potential property loss and public safety.

The proposed development includes a three-story underground parking garage that will cut into the toe of the same topography as the CEF. Three recent nearby slope failures -- the Wooldridge Dr. slope failure, the Poplar St. Slope failure, and the 11th St. Graffiti Park slope issues -- within one mile of the proposed location are examples of potential outcomes. The fact that numerous examples exist of slope failures [and extreme property loss/damage] within one mile of the applicant's address should be a red flag to the COA Planning Commission and the City Council.

The adjacent neighbors' concerns for potential extreme property damage/loss have yet to be addressed by the applicant or city staff. What will the City do if the property owners above experience a slope collapse? Does another house slide down the cliff? What if someone is harmed in such a catastrophic event?

While I am not opposed to additional housing in Austin and our neighborhood, I am gravely concerned about a potential slope collapse that could damage homes at the top of the cliff, the proposed development at the bottom of the cliff, and occupants at either location.

We compel the developer to address these concerns for potential property damage and public safety.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Marisela Maddox

1809 Vance Cir., Austin, TX 78701