



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: 20260414-012: Support for Del Valle Food Co-Op Rezoning and Fee Relief

WHEREAS, the Austin-Travis County Food Plan, adopted by Austin City Council in October 2024, calls for expanding access to nutritious and affordable food for all residents (Goal 6), prioritizes community-led solutions, and emphasizes strengthening food markets and retail outlets in underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Co-Op is a community-driven initiative launched in 2023 to establish a neighborhood grocery store in East Austin — a location with limited retail access to healthy foods — with the goal of improving food accessibility, reducing transportation barriers, and providing a walkable, community-centered food retail option; and

WHEREAS, the project received a \$500,000 allocation from the City of Austin through the American Rescue Plan Act, representing a public investment in equitable food access and local economic development; and

WHEREAS, the co-op has been developed through strong, ongoing collaboration with community partners including Go Austin Vamos Austin (GAVA) and Austin Cooperative Business Association (ACBA), with community organizing and outreach central to designing a store that reflects local needs, priorities, and lived experience; and

WHEREAS, Phase I activities have been completed, including business planning, creating a market study, cooperative incorporation, governance development, and hiring operational leadership, demonstrating readiness for next-phase site planning and implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Co-Op has established over 40 paid member-owners and has secured additional membership pledges, reflecting sustained local support and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Co-Op has identified a development site at 5807 Ross Road to serve East Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, the selected site is within an area identified in a 2023 market feasibility study as having strong potential to support a neighborhood grocery store; and

WHEREAS, the selected site also meets key feasibility criteria, including access to utilities, location outside of the floodplain, proximity to public transportation, and accessibility to surrounding neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Cooperative Property is currently zoned townhouse and condominium residence (SF-6) district, a zoning designation which does not allow the use of this property as a grocery store; and

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Co-Op has secured site control through a lease agreement with the property owner, including authorization to pursue rezoning and an option to purchase the property; and

WHEREAS, the standard rezoning process is estimated to cost \$10,000 or more, including application fees, planning or legal support, and site/engineering coordination, creating a financial barrier for this community project; and

WHEREAS, a Council-initiated rezoning could allow the City to handle much of the staff and legal work, lowering costs to around \$3,000 and supporting a faster, more successful rezoning; and

WHEREAS, there is precedent for city-initiated rezoning on private property to support community or public-serving uses, including the [2005 Pioneer Farms case](#), which successfully received a Council-led rezoning for a living-history museum and educational use; and

WHEREAS, property owners have successfully rezoned undeveloped parcels from SF-6 (single-family residential) to LR (Neighborhood Commercial), as shown in this example ([linked here](#)), showing that this type of rezoning is recognized and feasible; and

WHEREAS, more than half of the \$500,000 public investment has been allocated to foundational project development, including community engagement, market studies, training, site acquisition, and business planning, and the remaining funds are essential to ensure the Del Valle Food Co-Op can launch successfully and operate effectively;

WHEREAS, the Del Valle Food Co-Op has adapted its development approach from a proposed shipping container to modular school portables to better meet local building and zoning requirements and streamline permitting; and

WHEREAS, these modular buildings became available through communications with Austin ISD, providing a unique opportunity to repurpose existing school portables for community food access; and

WHEREAS, the portables are scheduled to be ready for transport in summer 2026, while AISD schools are not in session, and due to planned school consolidations and closures, the district cannot store the buildings beyond this summer, creating a firm, time-sensitive window for their transfer; and

WHEREAS, rezoning of the site at **5807 Ross Road** is required before the modular buildings can be transported, installed, and operational, creating a time-sensitive opportunity that underscores the need to expedite the rezoning process; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning serves a clear public purpose by advancing adopted City policies, addressing documented food access disparities, and supporting equitable economic development in an underserved area; and

WHEREAS, this request is limited to a single, site-specific rezoning tied to a publicly supported, community-serving project and does not represent a broader change in zoning policy or process; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Austin Travis-County Food Policy Board recommends that:

- **Austin City Council initiate and support a Council-led rezoning process** for the property at 5807 Ross Road to enable development of the Del Valle Food Co-Op and allow for food sales use;
- **City Council waive, reduce, or subsidize rezoning-related fees**, or otherwise assume responsibility for such costs, to remove financial barriers for this community-based project;
- **City Council expedite the rezoning process** to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with applicable legal and procedural requirements, in recognition of the project's time-sensitive implementation timeline;
- **City Council coordinates across relevant City departments** (including Economic Development and Planning) to facilitate successful and timely project delivery.

Date of Approval: April 13, 2026

Record of the vote: 10-0

Vote in Favor: Andrea Abel, Lisa Barden, Marissa Bell, Joi Chevalier, Nitza Cuevas, Kacey Hanson, Seanna Marceaux, Melody McClary, Erin McDonald, Natalie Poulos

Vote Against: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: Beth Corbett, Andy Smith

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Rohlich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

City of Austin, Office of Climate Action and Resilience, ATCFPB Staff Liaison