



# AUSTIN DESIGN COMMISSION

Feb. 15/2007  
#68

ELIZABETH MCKINNEY  
CHAIR  
GIRARD KINNEY  
VICE CHAIR  
JUAN COTERA  
JOAN HYDI  
HOLLY KINCANNON  
PERRY LORENZ  
PHILLIP REED  
RICHARD WEISS  
JEANNIE WIGINTON

February 13, 2007

Mayor Will Wynn  
Council Member Sheryl Cole  
Council Member Betty Dunkerley  
Council Member Jennifer Kim  
Council Member Lee Leffingwell  
Council Member Brewster McCracken  
Council Member Mike Martinez

Re: East Avenue PUD (aka: Concordia Site)

GEORGE ADAMS  
STAFF LIAISON

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Members of the East Avenue PUD development team, including Andy Sarwal, Larry Speck and Alice Glasco, recently presented their proposed PUD to the Design Commission on January 22, 2007 in advance of their hearing at council, and a Design Commission subcommittee also met with the developers and representatives of the adjacent neighborhoods in a separate meeting, all to prepare the Design Commission to make a recommendation to Council regarding the PUD.

The Commission is generally very supportive of the concept of dense nodal urban developments interconnected by transit, and recognizes that these nodes will have different parameters than those in downtown. Height, massing, and F.A.R. need to respond to its particular environment. The Concordia site is an ideal node due to its proximity to IH35, the University of Texas and other employment centers. Here however, connections other than roadways do not currently exist. We support the developers' intention to encourage UT and Capitol Metro to connect the PUD through bus routes, but further attention regarding impact on the roadway network and transit connections should be given by all parties. This development should be regarded as a major Transit Oriented Development, and a destination of future streetcar and commuter rail.

Additionally, the PUD as presented is lacking the kind of detailed information upon which substantive recommendations and agreements can be made. This lack of information, coupled with frequent changes in the locations of the height zones, result in conflict and confusion in the approval process. While current PUD application requirements may have been met, urban infill proposals such as this one may require greater information and detail, and this should be considered by council in the future.

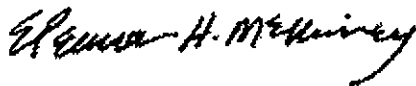
The Commission agrees with the recommendations of staff regarding permitted uses, but offers these separate additional comments:

1. Some assurance should be made that the internal street system and parks will be public places and not restricted to the exclusive use of the internal residents.

2. Connections to the existing streets to the west and north should be made which would help integrate the new development into the fabric of the city. At the least, Kim Lane should be connected to the primary interior street with a two way street adjacent to the planned park. The vehicular connection should be park-like in character. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should be made between the PUD and Luther Lane and between the PUD and Harmon Avenue.
3. Some significant element of affordable housing over and above the ordinance minimum should be incorporated into the plan beyond the proposed car share program.
4. The Design Commission encourages planning that utilizes height to achieve a higher F.A.R. without the need for height in zones nearer existing neighborhoods.
5. The towers should sit upon a base form which is significantly shorter than the towers, and which defines a street wall not exceeding 60 feet.
6. Mid-rise buildings should be located adjacent to the internal streets and the neighborhood in order to provide transitions and buffering.

The Design Commission commends the communication between the neighborhoods most affected by the development and the developer, and encourages a solution that can meet both the quality of life goals of the neighborhood and the development goals of the applicant.

Sincerely,



Eleanor McKinney, Chair  
Austin Design Commission

Cc:  
Laura Huffman, Assistant City Manager  
Greg Guernsey, Director, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning  
Austin Planning Commission