

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REVIEW SHEET

Amendment: C2O-2008-009

Description:

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending Chapter 25-2-170 of the City Code to revise the boundaries of the East 6th Street/Pecan Street (PS) Overly District.

Background:

On April 24, 2008, City Council directed the City Manager to initiate a code amendment to revise the boundaries of the East 6th Street/Pecan Street (PS) Overly District to exclude the area west of Brazos Street and to bring the amendment to Council by June 19, 2008.

Departmental Comments:

The purpose of the East 6th Street/Pecan Street (PS) Overly District is to protect the historic character of East 6th Street/Pecan Street and to enhance the pedestrian character of the area. The revision the height restrictions for a portion of the district that does not include significant historic structures would promote the redevelopment without a negative impact to the surrounding historic district.

Following Council action on April 24th, property owners met with representatives of 6th Street Austin and The Heritage Society of Austin and offered the following joint recommendation.

1. The boundaries of the East 6th Street/Pecan Street (PS) Overly District not change,
2. For those properties west of Brazos Street, the 45th foot height limit be lifted,
3. All other provisions of the East 6th Street/Pecan Street (PS) Overly District remain in place.

Additionally, the property owners intend to apply for a zoning change to CBD-CURE in the future, at which point additional discussions may occur.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff supports the agreement reached by the property owners, 6th Street Austin and The Heritage Society of Austin.

Planning Commission Action:

May 13, 2008: The Planning Commission voted to support the agreement reached by the property owners, 6th Street Austin and The Heritage Society of Austin. (9-0).

City Council Date and Action:

June 5, 2008: The amendment is scheduled for action by City Council on June 5, 2008.

Ordinance Readings:

1st

2nd

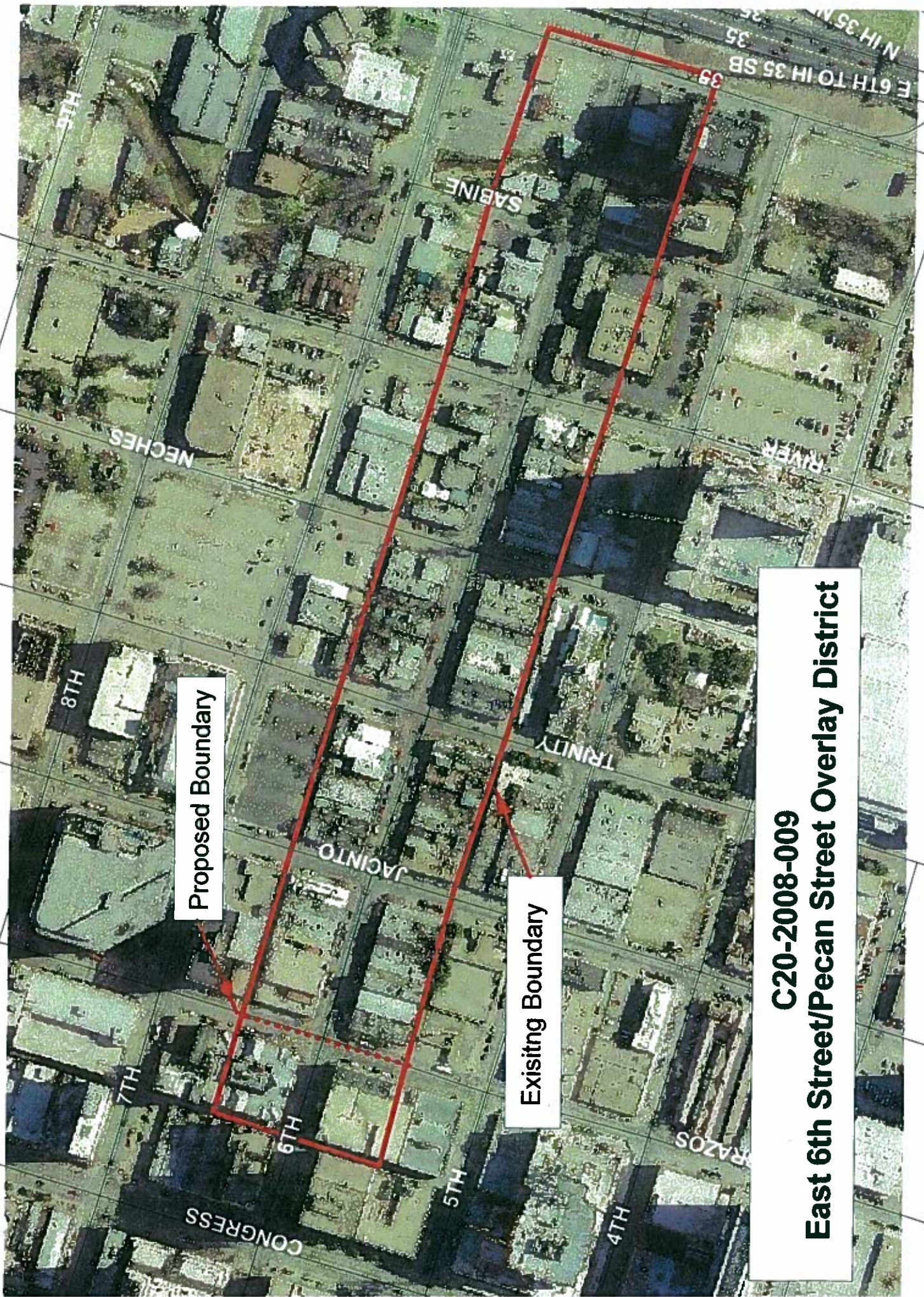
3rd

Ordinance Number:

City Staff: Robert Heil **Phone:** 974-2330

Email: robert.heil@ci.austin.tx.us

updated: 05/28/2008



Proposed Boundary

Existing Boundary

C20-2008-009
East 6th Street/Pecan Street Overlay District

6ixth

STREET • AUSTIN

May 12, 2008

Mr. Richard T. Suttle, Jr.
Armbrust & Brown, L.L.P.
100 Congress Avenue, Suite 1300
Austin, Texas 78701-2744

Dear Mr. Suttle:

Thank you for including Sixth Street Austin (formerly named Pecan Street Owners Association) in the discussion to potentially revise the East Sixth/Pecan Street Combining District boundaries to exclude the property held by Tom Stacy on the southwest corner of 6th and Brazos Streets. Representing property and business owners, Sixth Street Austin's mission is to advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the district's unique historic character, to foster a vibrant mixed-use district, and further E. Sixth Street as an important economic and cultural asset.

We believe Mr. Stacy's project will make a significant economic contribution to Sixth Street as well as bring more diverse offerings and a large concentration of patrons to enjoy the district. We understand that Mr. Stacy will apply later for a zoning change to CBD-CURE for the quarter-block, allowing the public to fully participate in a discussion of the appropriateness of the project. Therefore, we would support lifting the 45-foot height limitation on the quarter block bordered by Sixth and Brazos Streets, but believe the boundaries of the Pecan Street Combining District should remain. It is important that the district, and the larger National Register Historic District, maintain a consistent and cohesive character with Historic Landmark Commission oversight.

In supporting this modification, we anticipate the property will be designed in a manner respectful to the established streetscape of historic Sixth Street and the Driskill Hotel. This would include appropriate pedestrian-oriented uses along Sixth and Brazos Streets, specific design respectful of the historic district, and no curb cuts along Sixth Street west of Brazos to the alley. We also ask that you support the historic preservation and improvement of Sixth Street District by enabling mechanisms that incentivize the restoration of historic structures. We would be happy to work with you and the Heritage Society to achieve this goal.

We are pleased that there will be a significant gain of parking for public use. We look forward to future conversations on how the evolving design can support and enhance the adjacent historic areas while adding significant economic value for Austin.

Sincerely,



Bob Lander
Chairman, Sixth Street Austin Board

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May 13, 2008

Mr. Richard T. Suttle, Jr.
Armbrust & Brown, L.L.P.
100 Congress Avenue, Suite 1300
Austin, Texas 78701-2744

Re: Potential Revision of East Sixth/Pecan Street Overlay.

Dear Mr. Suttle,

On behalf of your client, Mr. Tom Stacy, you recently approached the Heritage Society of Austin regarding a potential revision of the East Sixth/Pecan Street Combining District, specifically seeking our response to a proposed amendment of the height restriction imposed by the District on the property held by Mr. Stacy on the southwest corner of 6th and Brazos Streets.

We appreciate you and your clients' affirmative steps to include the Heritage Society in the discussion of this potential amendment. As you are aware, HSA has advocated for and worked to maintain the various ordinances designed to preserve the unique and wonderful sense of place that makes Austin such an attractive and desirable community.

We understand that Mr. Stacy intends to include this quarter-block in a comprehensive mixed-use project encompassing the entire block bounded by 6th Street, Congress Avenue, 5th Street, and Brazos Street, and that the quarter-block is limited in height to 45 feet by the Combining District regulations (the current use is existing non-conforming). We also understand that this quarter-block does not include structures of historic significance and is not affected by any Capitol View Corridors. Finally, we understand that, in addition to changes in the height limitation, you subsequently will apply for a zoning change to CBD-CURE for the quarter-block, allowing the public to fully participate in a discussion of the appropriateness of Mr. Stacy's project.

Although the Heritage Society steadfastly supports the maintenance of all historic districts and protective restrictions, we are not opposed to revising the Combining District to lift the 45-foot height restriction currently applicable to this quarter-block parcel. For comprehensive planning purposes and the integrity of preservation measures, we believe the existing footprint of the Combining District should remain. It is important that the District, as well as the National Register Historic District that encompasses this area, maintain a consistent and cohesive



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character, and this may be achieved by retaining the footprint and Historic Landmark Commission oversight.

In not opposing this modification, we do believe and expect the property to be designed in a manner respectful to the established streetscape of 6th Street and of the historic Driskill Hotel. This would include appropriate pedestrian oriented uses along 6th and Brazos Streets, with no curb cuts along 6th Street west of Brazos to the Congress Avenue alley. We ask that you give due consideration to efforts to improve the historic section of 6th Street by enabling mechanisms for private owners to pursue façade restorations of their historic structures. We also strongly encourage you to work with neighboring entities, including the Driskill Hotel, to ensure adequate parking in the immediate area.

HSA recognizes that height and density should be encouraged in appropriate areas to improve the vitality of our downtown. We have long advocated that downtown development respect the preservation measures embraced and enacted by the community – including the existing View Corridors and the residential character of our recognized downtown neighborhoods. Because these measures do limit development capacity, we find it appropriate to work with developers such as Mr. Stacy to accommodate development where appropriate. We are available to continue conversations about ways the design of your project can evolve in a manner that supports the adjacent historic areas and enhances their value both to Austin and to your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "JPD", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Philip Donisi
President
The Heritage Society of Austin