



June 17, 2010

Greg Guernsey
Director, Planning and Development Review (PDR) Department
City of Austin
PO Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Greg:

On behalf of the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Austin, we appreciate staff working with us on the changes to the "definition of a remodel" ordinance. After extensive meetings over several months with stakeholders and the staff, the HBA believes the draft ordinance will be workable but wanted to follow up on two key items of concern. On May 11, the Planning Commission unanimously approved changes to the draft remodel ordinance but gave staff direction to work on two items:

(1) Review times for remodels. Complying remodels have a two-day turnaround; noncomplying/nonconforming remodels are proposed to have a seven-day turnaround. **Our understanding is that this language will remain the same; we support this language.**

(2) Specific language clarifying "A structure must maintain at least one original exterior wall, down to the framing and studs." **This current language is confusing to some of our members who are long-time builders within the City of Austin. The HBA would ask that the council consider approving the language as revised by Building Inspections Division Manager Dan McNabb:**

(a) No more than fifty percent of exterior walls and supporting structural elements of the existing structure, including load bearing ~~architectural~~ masonry walls, and in wood construction, joists, studs, sole plate and top plate ~~down to the framing or studs~~, may be demolished or removed. For purposes of this subsection, exterior walls and supporting structural elements are measured in linear feet and do not include the roof of the structure or interior or exterior finishes

We believe this revision more clearly defines the issue and would ask staff to present this change as a friendly amendment.

The HBA also requests that this letter to be included in the council back up material you prepare.

Sincerely,

Harry L. Savio, CAE
Executive Vice President

C: Don Birkner, Assistant Director, PDR
Leon Barba, Assistant Director, PDR
John McDonald, Residential Plan Review Manager
Dan McNabb, Division Building Inspection Manager
Brent Lloyd, Assistant City Attorney

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