



# AUSTIN DESIGN COMMISSION

February 28, 2011

RE: Park PUD

BART WHATLEY

CHAIR

JUAN COTERA

DAVID KNOLL

JAMES SHIEH

RICHARD WEISS

JEANNIE

WIGINTON

Dear Mayor & Members of the City Council,

We have reviewed this private project for its adherence to the Commercial Design Standards and the Urban Design Guidelines. This project is requesting PUD zoning.

The project is significant in that it strives to be superior to what could be developed under conventional zoning and offset a waiver of base zoning height on a small commercial site bordering a residential area. The Commission's review focused on the urban design characteristics of the project and the project context.

GEORGE ADAMS  
EXECUTIVE LIAISON

JORGE E. ROUSSELIN  
STAFF LIAISON

In our review, we made the following findings:

- The immediate area is part of Austin's urban core. This is an edge condition between primarily residential to the south and a mix of cultural institutions, parkland and downtown to the north.
- As an edge condition, the urban design guideline AW.4 to "Buffer Neighborhood Edges" is particularly important. The south portion of the project trades height and massing with treatment of trash, mechanical and lighting. The project does not show superiority in compatibility to residential to the south.
- Height is one of the waivers the applicant is seeking. Agreement about height was not reached by the Commission working group.
- The southern face adjacent to residential, as proposed, has no garage openings which is good in that light pollution and noise are controlled, however without openings there is a blank wall that lacks a human scale that would be compatible to residential.
- The primary elements of superiority relate to the Barton Springs frontage.
- Barton Springs Road is a Core Transit Corridor and current ordinances foster a pedestrian friendly frontage.
- The proposed project is successful with regards to the Urban Design Guidelines in how it creates mixed use development, incorporates civic art, avoids historical representation, emphasizes connections to parks & greenways, creates quality construction, and how it creates a building with a human scale along Barton Springs Road. The proposed project is lacking with regard to Urban Design Guideline elements of buffering neighborhood edges, and creating buildings with human scale (as it relates to the project as it faces adjacent residential).

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Bart Whatley  
Chair, City of Austin Design Commission