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December 9, 2013

Dear Mayor Leffingwell, Mayor Pro Tem Cole, and Council Members Riley, Martinez, Tovo, Morrison and Spelman:

As you know, codification of both the Downtown Density Bonus Program and the Rainey Street Subdistrict amendments are up for consideration by boards and commissions during the next two months. City Council will consider the final recommendations in February 2014. On behalf of HousingWorks, I would like you to consider the following recommendations to enhance both affordability and equity in our city:

1. **Onsite Affordable Housing.** Maintain 5% onsite affordability requirements in the Rainey Street Subdistrict. The City of Austin has a responsibility to affirmatively further fair housing; onsite affordable housing would help to achieve greater geographic dispersion and facilitate affordability in higher opportunity areas. In addition, Rainey Street has a unique cultural and socioeconomic history that should be honored by inclusion of affordable housing.
2. **Serving the Needs of Austin's Downtown Workers.** Utilize existing data on the need for workforce housing in the area. There are more than 12,000 workers in downtown Austin (78701) earning \$1,250/month or less (approximately 30% MFI). There are more than 35,000 workers in 78701 earning between \$1,250/month and \$3,333/month (approximately 80% MFI). These numbers represent a large pool of potential renters and owners for affordable units in the Rainey Street Subdistrict.
3. **Affordability Terms.** Require rental units to be affordable for a minimum of 40 years and ownership units to be affordable for a minimum of 99 years. This policy aligns with other density bonus programs and reflects the city's core values with respect to affordability terms.
4. **Monitoring Requirements.** Ensure that units developed under these density bonus programs are identified, tracked, and monitored for the length of the affordability period. In order to ensure the success of the density bonus programs, it is imperative that these affordable units are affirmatively and aggressively marketed to income-qualified residents.
5. **Fair Housing.** Require that all developments taking advantage of density bonus provisions be prohibited from discrimination against people with housing assistance.

The Imagine Austin comprehensive plan calls on us to develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin. The Rainey Street Subdistrict amendments and related density bonus provisions present us with a unique opportunity to work toward that vision.

Thank you for your consideration of our input. If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at (512) 466-0574.

Sincerely,

Frances Ferguson  
President, Board of Directors