### NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW SHEET

### NEIGHORHOOD PLAN: East Cesar Chavez/Plaza Saltillo (TOD) Station Area Plan

**CASE#:** NPA-2020-0002.02 **DATE FILED**: July 31, 2020 (In-cycle)

**PROJECT NAME**: 6<sup>th</sup> & Onion (Zoning Case Name: Centro East)

PC DATE: June 22, 2021 June 8, 2021

ADDRESS/ES: 1501, 1509 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street & 1510 E 5TH ST

### DISTRICT AREA: 3

**<u>SITE AREA</u>**: 1.362 acres

**<u>OWNER/APPLICANT</u>**: Donald Reese, 6th & Onion East Master GP, LLP (6<sup>th</sup> & Onion East, LP) (6<sup>th</sup> & Onion East GP, LP)

AGENT: Armbrust & Brown, PLLC (Michael J. Whellan)

**CASE MANAGER**: Maureen Meredith, Housing and Planning Dept.

**<u>PHONE</u>**: (512) 974-2695

**<u>STAFF EMAIL</u>**: Maureen.Meredith@austintexas.gov

### TYPE OF AMENDMENT:

### **Change in Future Land Use Designation**

**From:** Specific Regulating District **To:** Specific Regulating District (There is no proposed change to the future land use map. The applicant proposes to change the building height from 60 feet to 85 feet)

### **Base District Zoning Change**

Related Zoning Case: C14-2021-0058 From: TOD-NP

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ADOPTION DATE:** East Cesar Chavez Plan adopted May 13, 1999. Plaza Saltillo (TOD) Station Area plan adopted December 11, 2008.

To: TOD-NP

### PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

June 22, 2021 – (Recommendation pending)

*June 8, 2021* - Postponed to June 22, 2021 on the consent agenda at the request of staff. [A. Azhar  $-1^{st}$ ; J. Mushtaler  $-2^{nd}$ ] Vote: 11-0 [J. Shieh and Y. Flores absent].

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff supports the applicant's request to increase the building height from a maximum of 60 feet to a maximum of 85 feet. If approved, the change will amend in the Plaza Saltillo Station Area (TOD) Plan document. There is no change to the future land use map.

**BASIS FOR STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**: The proposed residential development, which includes affordable housing units, will provide additional housing choices to people in the planning area and the city.

The property is located within the Plaza Saltillo Activity Center and is less than 500 feet south of E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, which is an activity corridor. The property is near public transportation, numerous businesses and is located across the street from the Plaza Saltillo Station. Increased density is appropriate at this location.

Below are sections from the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan:

### 1. Land Use, Zoning and Neighborhood Character

Neighborhood Vision: The neighborhood envisions commercial corridors that are safe and pedestrianfriendly. These corridors should be mixed use residential, commercial and include civic elements. Mixed residential and retail uses, such as stores with residences above are encouraged. Development should be compatible with the existing neighborhood, economically and environmentally sustainable and conducive to a blend of vibrant economic activity and quality of life. The neighborhood envisions open spaces, plazas and market places that contribute to friendly street activity. Compatible development is desired to preserve the beauty of the neighborhood and should accommodate existing families. They would like the barrier effect of IH-35 reduced and stronger connections between the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood and downtown should be developed. The neighborhood will work to retain the history, culture and diversity of the neighborhood and provide visual landmarks to highlight the history and cultural heritage.

- Goal 1: Provide zoning for a mix of business and residential land uses in the commercial corridors and selected other commercial areas.
  Primary resources: City of Austin and Travis County Tax Appraisal District
  - Objective 2: Encourage more retail and commercial services within walking distance of residents.

Goal 2: Ensure that new structures and renovations are compatible with the existing neighborhood and protect homes from incompatible business or industry.

Primary resources: City of Austin and public and private sectors

Objective 1: Ensure that all new or redevelopment projects are compatible with the existing character of the area in scale, density, design, and parking.

### LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

### EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USE ON THE PROPERTY

**Specific Regulating District** - This map designation is intended for areas that have an adopted regulating plan. This district will be identified on the Future Land Use Map, but is not considered a typical land use category. The purpose of this designation is to make the user aware of the Regulating Plan and that it should be reviewed for development regulations.

Approved Regulating Plans:

- 1. Plaza Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan
- 2. Martin Luther King (MLK) Boulevard TOD Station Area Plan
- 3. Lamar/Justin TOD Station Area Plan

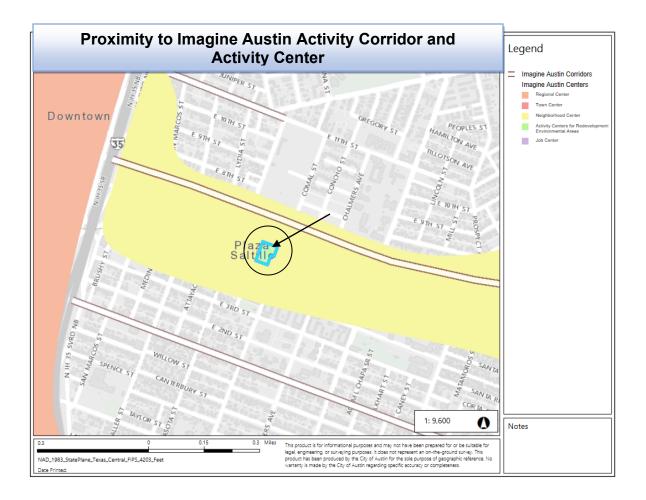
### IMAGINE AUSTIN PLANNING PRINCIPLES

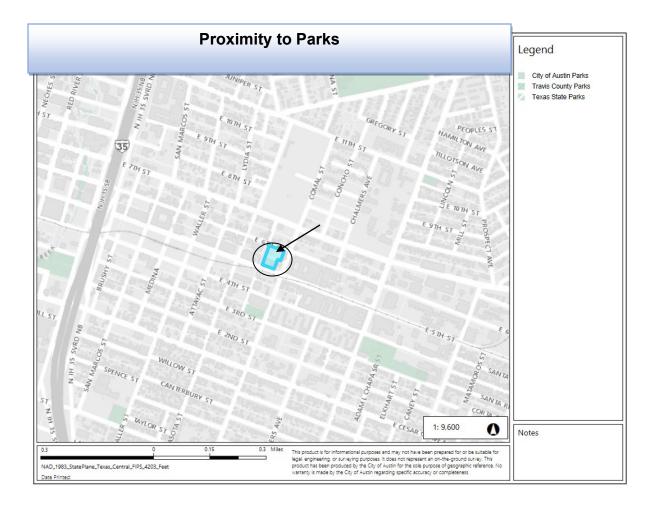
- 1. Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that provide a mix of housing types to suit a variety of household needs and incomes, offer a variety of transportation options, and have easy access to daily needs such as schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and other recreation options.
  - The applicant proposes a residential development which includes affordable housing units. This property is being developed in conjunction with the property to the west of Onion Street which will have office and retail uses. The proposed residential units will provide additional housing to the city and the planning area. The property is located near public transportation and numerous businesses.
- 2. Support the development of compact and connected activity centers and corridors that are well-served by public transit and designed to promote walking and bicycling as a way of reducing household expenditures for housing and transportation.

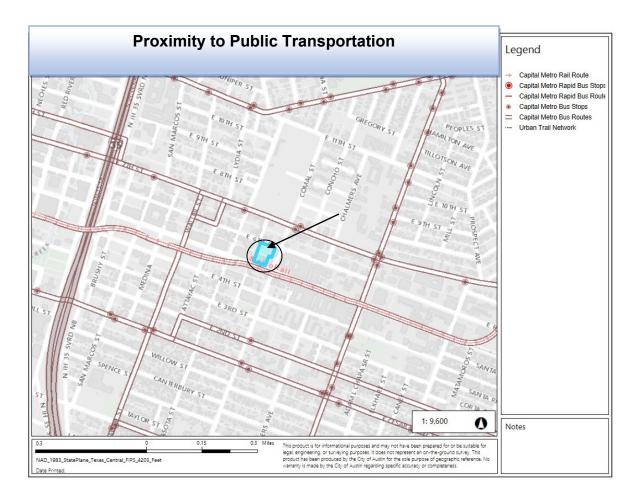
- The property is located within the Plaza Saltillo Activity Center, directly north of the Plaza Saltillo Station and within 500 feet of the E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, an activity corridor where mixed use developments are encouraged. The area is walkable and bikeable and has access to public transportation.
- 3. Protect neighborhood character by ensuring context-sensitive development and directing more intensive development to activity centers and corridors, redevelopment, and infill sites.
  - The property is located within the Plaza Saltillo activity center and less than 500 feet south of E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, an activity corridor.
- 4. Expand the number and variety of housing choices throughout Austin to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of our diverse population.
  - The proposed residential development will expand the number and variety of housing choices.
- 5. Ensure harmonious transitions between adjacent land uses and development intensities.
  - The proposed development is appropriate in this location close to public transportation and across the street from the Plaza Saltillo station.
- 6. Protect Austin's natural resources and environmental systems by limiting land use and transportation development over environmentally sensitive areas and preserve open space and protect the function of the resource.
  - The property is located within the Desired Development Zone.
- 7. Integrate and expand green infrastructure—preserves and parks, community gardens, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and the trails system—into the urban environment and transportation network.
  - The property is not proposed for a park use.
- 8. Protect, preserve and promote historically and culturally significant areas.
  - To staff's knowledge there is no historic or cultural significance to the property.
- 9. Encourage active and healthy lifestyles by promoting walking and biking, healthy food choices, access to affordable healthcare, and to recreational opportunities.
  - The property is located in a walkable, bikeable area with good public transit access.

1501 East 6th Street    Add scores to your site      East Cesar Chavez, Austin, 78702    Commute to Downtown Austin & 30 min View Routes	
🛇 Favorite 🕮 Map 🔍 Nearby Ap	partments
More about 1501 East 6th Street 교	
Walk Score 93 Walker's Paradise Daily errands do not require a car.	RED RIVER RED RI
Transit Score Good Transit	
<b>52</b> Many nearby public	
transportation options.	
Biker's Paradise	THE PLAN A CHANNEL CHANNEL
$\{591\}$ Daily errands can be	In all town of the second of t
accomplished on a bike.	Martin Middle School Cong Strange Strange
About your score	

- 10. Expand the economic base, create job opportunities, and promote education to support a strong and adaptable workforce.
  - The proposed residential development could provide some job opportunities.
- 11. Sustain and grow Austin's live music, festivals, theater, film, digital media, and new creative art forms.
  - The property is located near downtown which has numerous live music venues and where various multimedia festivals are held.
- 12. Provide public facilities and services that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease water and energy usage, increase waste diversion, ensure the health and safety of the public, and support compact, connected, and complete communities.
  - Not applicable because the proposed use is not a public facility or service.







### IMAGINE AUSTIN GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

### Definitions

**Neighborhood Centers -** The smallest and least intense of the three mixed-use centers are neighborhood centers. As with the regional and town centers, neighborhood centers are walkable, bikable, and supported by transit. The greatest density of people and activities in neighborhood centers will likely be concentrated on several blocks or around one or two intersections. However, depending on localized conditions, different neighborhood centers can be very different places. If a neighborhood center is designated on an existing commercial area, such as a shopping center or mall, it could represent redevelopment or the addition of housing. A new neighborhood center may be focused on a dense, mixed-use core surrounded by a mix of housing. In other instances, new or redevelopment may occur incrementally and concentrate people and activities along several blocks or around one or two intersections. Neighborhood centers will be more locally focused than either a regional or a town center. Businesses and services—grocery and department stores, doctors and dentists, shops, branch libraries, dry cleaners, hair salons, schools, restaurants, and other small and local businesses—will generally serve the center and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Town Centers -** Although less intense than regional centers, town centers are also where many people will live and work. Town centers will have large and small employers, although

fewer than in regional centers. These employers will have regional customer and employee bases, and provide goods and services for the center as well as the surrounding areas. The buildings found in a town center will range in size from one-to three-story houses, duplexes, townhouses, and rowhouses, to low-to midrise apartments, mixed use buildings, and office buildings. These centers will also be important hubs in the transit system.

**Job Centers -** Job centers accommodate those businesses not well-suited for residential or environmentally- sensitive areas. These centers take advantage of existing transportation infrastructure such as arterial roadways, freeways, or the Austin-Bergstrom International airport. Job centers will mostly contain office parks, manufacturing, warehouses, logistics, and other businesses with similar demands and operating characteristics. They should nevertheless become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, in part by better accommodating services for the people who work in those centers. While many of these centers are currently best served by car, the growth Concept map offers transportation choices such as light rail and bus rapid transit to increase commuter options.

**Corridors** - Activity corridors have a dual nature. They are the connections that link activity centers and other key destinations to one another and allow people to travel throughout the city and region by bicycle, transit, or automobile. Corridors are also characterized by a variety of activities and types of buildings located along the roadway — shopping, restaurants and cafés, parks, schools, single-family houses, apartments, public buildings, houses of worship, mixed-use buildings, and offices. Along many corridors, there will be both large and small redevelopment sites. These redevelopment opportunities may be continuous along stretches of the corridor. There may also be a series of small neighborhood centers, connected by the roadway. Other corridors may have fewer redevelopment opportunities, but already have a mixture of uses, and could provide critical transportation connections. As a corridor evolves, sites that do not redevelop may transition from one use to another, such as a service station becoming a restaurant or a large retail space being divided into several storefronts. To improve mobility along an activity corridor, new and redevelopment should reduce per capita car use and increase walking, bicycling, and transit use. Intensity of land use should correspond to the availability of quality transit, public space, and walkable destinations. Site design should use building arrangement and open space to reduce walking distance to transit and destinations, achieve safety and comfort, and draw people outdoors.

**<u>BACKGROUND</u>**: The plan amendment application was filed on July 31, 2020, which is incycle for neighborhood planning areas located on the east side of I.H.-35.

The existing land use on the future land use map is Specific Regulating District. There is no proposed change to the future land use map. The proposed change is a request to increase the building height from 60 feet to a maximum of 85 feet.

For more information on the proposed changes to the Plaza Saltillo (TOD) Regulating Plan, please see case report C14-2021-0058.

Amendments to Station Area Plans located within a city council approved neighborhood plan must go through the plan amendment process.

### 25-2-766.23 AMENDMENTS TO STATION AREA PLAN.

- (A) Council may, by zoning ordinance, amend a station area plan at any time.
- (B) Amendments to a station area plan may be proposed by land owners not more than once each calendar year for each property owned.

(C) For a station area plan that is within an adopted neighborhood plan area, an amendment to the station area plan must be reviewed and approved in accordance with the neighborhood plan amendment process established by council.

**PUBLIC MEETINGS**: The ordinance-required community meeting was held virtually on September 24, 2020. The recorded meeting can be found at this website: <u>https://www.speakupaustin.org/npa</u>. Approximately 442 meeting notices were mailed to people who own property or have utility accounts within 500 feet of the property, in addition to neighborhood groups and environmental organizations who requested notification for the area on the Community Registry. Four staff members attended the meeting, including Michael Whellan and Michael Gaudini, agents for the applicant, and four people associated with the applicant. Eight people from the neighborhood attended the meeting.

After staff gave a brief presentation, Michael Whellan, one of the applicant's agents, made a presentation with the following information:

- We are proposing changes to the Plaza Saltillo Station Area Plan and the Regulating Plan to increase the height to 85 feet.
- It would increase the FAR and trigger a requirement for long-term, income-restricted affordable housing units.
- The project does not include Cisco's property or the White Horse property.
- We are not requesting additional height on the west side of the property.
- The property is directly north of the Plaza Saltillo Station, which is at the heart of the plan, which is a unique opportunity to deliver on the Plaza Saltillo vision.
- The Plaza Saltillo TOD has four design principles:
  - o Greater density than community average
  - $\circ$  A mix of uses
  - Quality pedestrian environment
  - A defined center.
- The plan calls for mixed use projects with increased housing and connectivity near especially near the train station.
- We propose a robust mix of uses including residential, office, retail and restaurants where people can live, work, shop and socialize.
- (See presentation at the back of this report)

# Q: Is it wise to increase building height to 85 feet where there is only one ingress/egress on E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, which is a heavy pedestrian street? What about the southwest or northwest corner or Onion Street being utilized to some degree?

A: We spoke to Austin Transportation Department about the possibility of a second driveway entrance and exit on E 5th Street, but they rejected that idea. We can continue to work with the City on this. Onion Street is a dedicated pedestrian walkway with no vehicular traffic allowed. The other concern is getting the driveway too close given the volume that is anticipated from the train station. Like I said, this is something we will need to work with the City on.

## **Q**: Why is this request being done through the plan amendment process and not the rezoning process?

A: There is an ordinance that says the regulating plan amendment process is supposed to follow the plan amendment process rather than the rezoning process. The ordinance number is 20081211-082, but somehow this did not get into the City Code.

## Q: How does a 25-foot height increase contribute to your vision of transit supportive pedestrian and bike friendly project?

A: It is right next to the train station. Capital Metro and Austin Transportation Department has done work on reverse commutes that uses access to the transit system to go out from the city core to work in offices, retail, hospital and the service industry. Having a mix of uses in one location reduces the number of trips that any person has to take by vehicle when you have all these uses on a single block. The focus has been on creating a mixed use environment and one that has more housing which the Strategic Housing Blueprint has identified as a real need, particularly for affordable housing.

## Q: If increasing height is to increase affordable units, then why not forgo your rooftop amenity space to meet the goal and it can be a better compromise height?

A: This is a fair question. There is a possible alternative to use cement instead of wood to reduce the height to get below 85 feet.

# Q: If there is merit to increasing the building height, why not implement this change to additional lots that meets the same requirements as outlined for this development project? Why not just amend the plan?

A: Staff's response: To change the plan document would require City Council direction and action because it would require changes to the station area plan and the regulating plan which would be a significant change and would trigger an involved public engagement process. It's not something staff can just do themselves.

# Q: You mentioned 25 affordable units could be added in this project. How many affordable units will be provided at the 60-foot height instead of going to the additional 85 feet?

A: I don't know exactly at this time, but we could have those numbers to you by the 8 pm meeting the ECC NPCT, but it would be at least half of the units.

### Q: This seems like a one-off, that you are amending the plan for one development?

A: Because this is how the amendment process was set up if you want to amend the regulating plan to build something that is not currently allowed in the plan. CURE zoning was a way to do this, but that option does not exist anymore.

## Q: The Saltillo Plaza made has maintain a maximum building height of 60 feet. How is this project preserving the original vision of the district?

A: The TOD principles that have been articulated includes an increase in residential uses which is precisely what we are doing, increasing height to add affordable units. You really can't go much higher than this because of the International Building Code requirements it more difficult to build.

### **<u>CITY COUNCIL DATE</u>**:

ACTION:

July 29, 2021

#### Summary Letter from Application

#### **ARMBRUST & BROWN, PLLC**

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS 100 CONGRESS AVENUE, SUITE 1300 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2744

512-435-2300 FACSIMILE 512-435-2360

Michael J. Whellan (512) 435-2300 mwhellan@abaustin.com

July 28, 2020

Jerry Rusthoven, Acting Lead City of Austin Planning & Zoning Department 505 Barton Springs Road, 5th Floor Austin, Texas 78704

Re: Neighborhood Plan Amendment application for 1501 E. 6th St. (the "Property")

Dear Mr. Rusthoven:

I am submitting an application to amend the Plaza Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan (the "SAP") and the Regulating Plan for the Plaza Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan (the "Regulating Plan").

This application requests amending the relevant height maps within the SAP and the Regulating Plan to provide up to 85 ft. of height for the property at 1501 E. 6th St. This roughly 1.36-acre site is directly north of the Plaza Saltillo Station and sits within an Imagine Austin Center and a Transit-Oriented Development District – marking it as an appropriate location for increased housing and transit-supportive density. It is zoned with Transit Oriented Development – Neighborhood Plan ("TOD-NP") zoning and the TOD Mixed Use subdistrict.

The applicant plans to develop the Property as part of a broader project featuring a pedestrian and bicycle promenade that connects Plaza Saltillo Station to Sixth Street. The Property would abut the eastern portion of this promenade and is planned for housing over activated ground-floor commercial uses.

We are requesting an increase to the Base Maximum Height Map in the SAP (and the corresponding map reproduced in the Regulating Plan) for the Property in order to provide for additional housing, including Affordable housing. While this request would increase the achievable height, floor-to-area ratio ("FAR") requirements would ensure that the Property must participate in the Plaza Saltillo density bonus program in order to realize this additional height.

City Council adopted the SAP – and the Regulating Plan, which is an extension of the SAP – in Ordinance No. 20081211-082. Section 25-2-766.23(C) of the Land Development Code provides that Station Area Plan amendments within a Neighborhood Plan area follow the same process established for Neighborhood Plan Amendments. We are accordingly submitting a Neighborhood Plan Amendment to amend the Base Maximum Building Height Map located on {W0990374.1}

ARMBRUST & BROWN, PLLC Page 2

Page 39 of the SAP – and reproduced on Page 55 of the Regulating Plan – to reflect our requested 85 ft. of height for the Property.

I believe that this request, situated in the heart of the Plaza Saltillo TOD, provides a key opportunity for helping the City better meet its goals of increased housing, affordability, and transit-supportive density at a crucial location on the City's sole existing rail line.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am available to discuss our application in further detail.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Whellan

{W0990374.1}

Letter of Recommendation from the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan Contact Team



June 01, 2021

Planning Commission, City of Austin Via E-mail: maureen.meredith@austintexas.gov, Heather:Chaffin@austintexas.gov

#### RE: Plan Amendment Case: NPA-2020-0002.02 Zoning Case #: C14-2021-0058

Property Address: 1501 E. 6th Street (also known as 1509 East 6th Street and 1510 East 5th Street)

#### Dear Planning Commissioners,

Members of the ECC-NPCT attended the Virtual City Led Community Meeting regarding this project on the evening of September 24th and hosted a Special Meeting to further discuss this case following that event. In our Special Meeting, the applicant was able to quickly present building design reconsiderations that could produce the project at a height of 78 feet. We made good progress towards finding common ground between the applicant and the neighborhood. We trusted that given more time the expert team of architects and engineers on the applicants team would find ways to reduce the height of this project.

Our role is to preserve the integrity of our neighborhood plan and that of the Saltillo TOD. The Saltillo TOD was heavily researched, vetted, and considered by knowledgeable, capable folks. It's our plan. It's a smart plan, a good plan, one that feels good to the neighborhood, and one that says 60 feet is the appropriate height for buildings at this location.

Every 36 inches the ECC-NPCT gives away only adds 36 inches more to the next project's height increase request and our neighborhood suffers a slow "death by a thousand inches" if you will.

That said, as stewards of our neighborhood plan, projects that bring strong affordable housing components are welcomed and cannot be ignored. Increased height precedents have been established for projects that bring strong affordable housing and/or fee-in-lieu proposals to our team. Those precedents cap out at building heights of 75 feet.

The ECC-NPCT requested that the applicant seek solutions that cap the building height at 75 feet or less and we have requested that the applicant keep us informed of their progress. The applicant attended additional general meetings however no compromise on height was ever reached.

On May 19, 2021 at a general meeting, the ECC-NPCT voted to support the applicant's proposal to amend the zoning height definition in this case to change the base maximum building height from 60 feet to 85 feet strictly contingent upon the delivery of family friendly affordable housing units as defined by the City of Austin Affordable Housing Development Incentive Policy for Transit Oriented Developments.

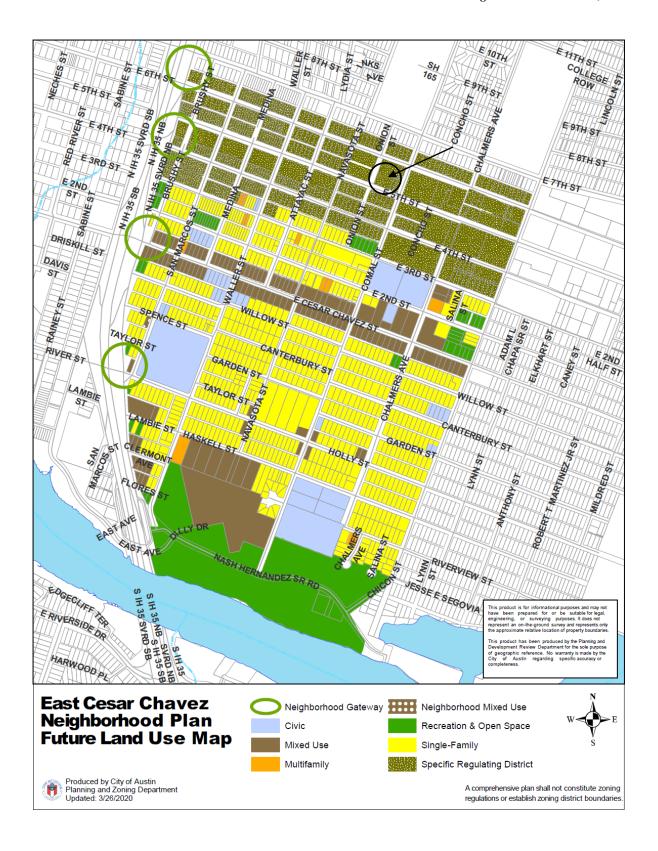
This proposal is one of very few projects that come before the ECC-NPCT that add real value to the neighborhood by including critically needed affordable housing. We trust that the Planning Commission will keep the areas 75' height increase precedents in mind when vetting this decision. We recommend that the Planning Commission consider the applicant's proposal favorably.

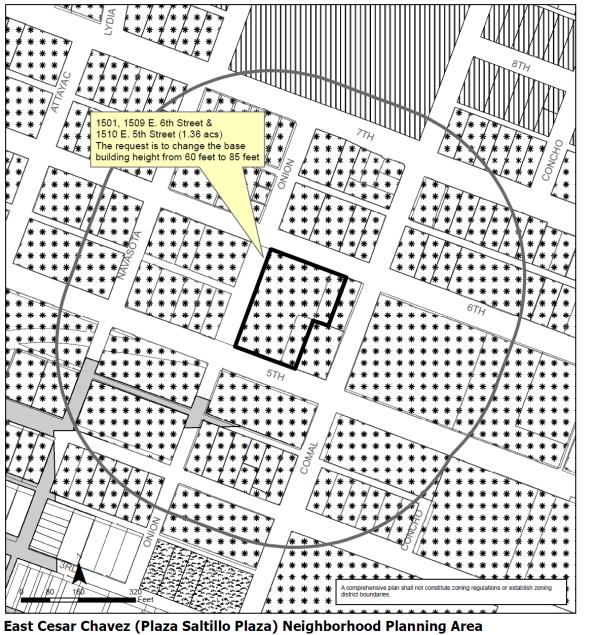
Page 2

Sincerely,

K Heaney Kristen Heaney Chair East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Team

CC: ECCNPT via e-mail Planning Commision via e-mail Council Member Pio Renteria, via e-mail

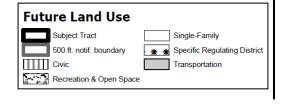




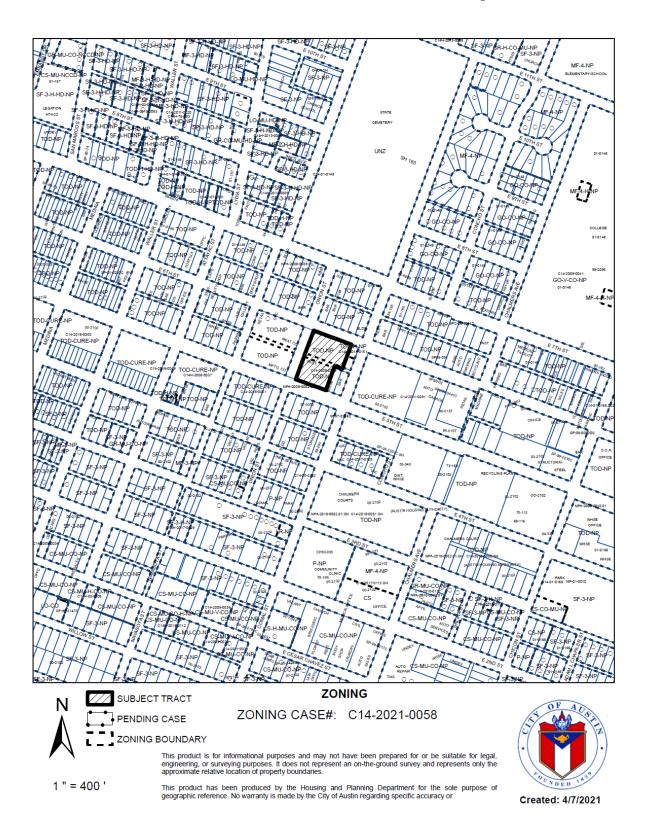
#### East Cesar Chavez (Plaza Saltillo Plaza) Neighborhood Planning Area NPA-2020-0002.02

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

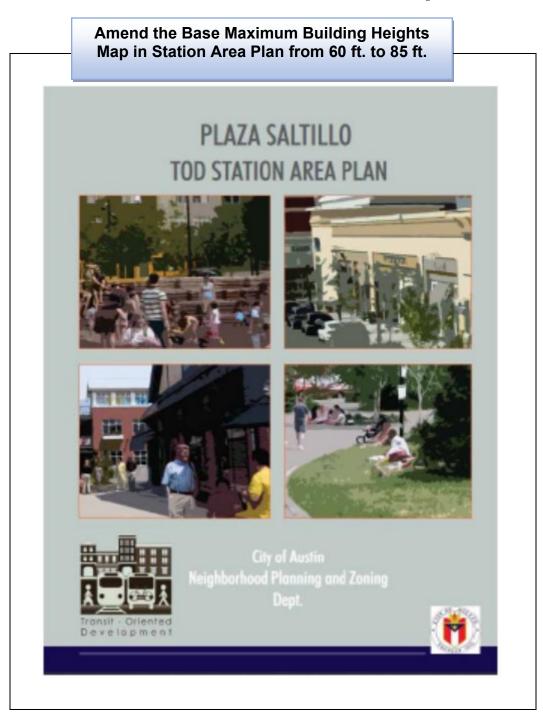
This product has been produced by the Housing and Planning Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

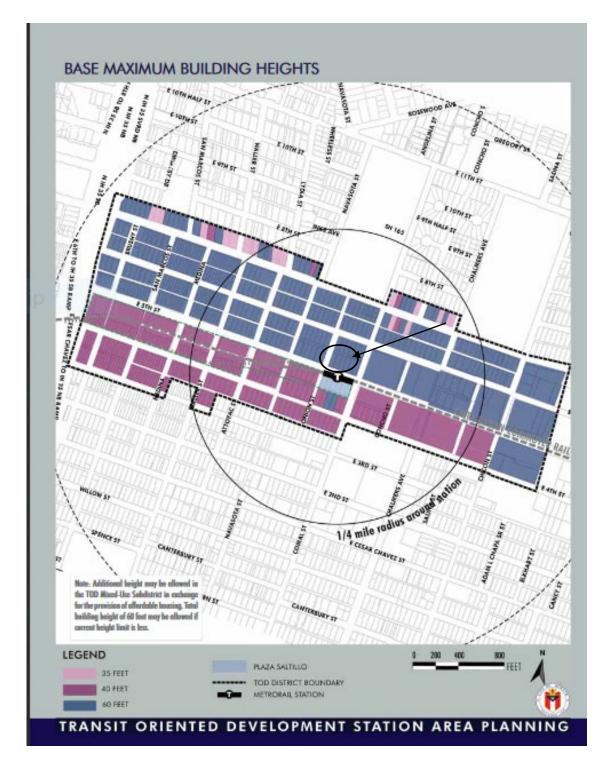


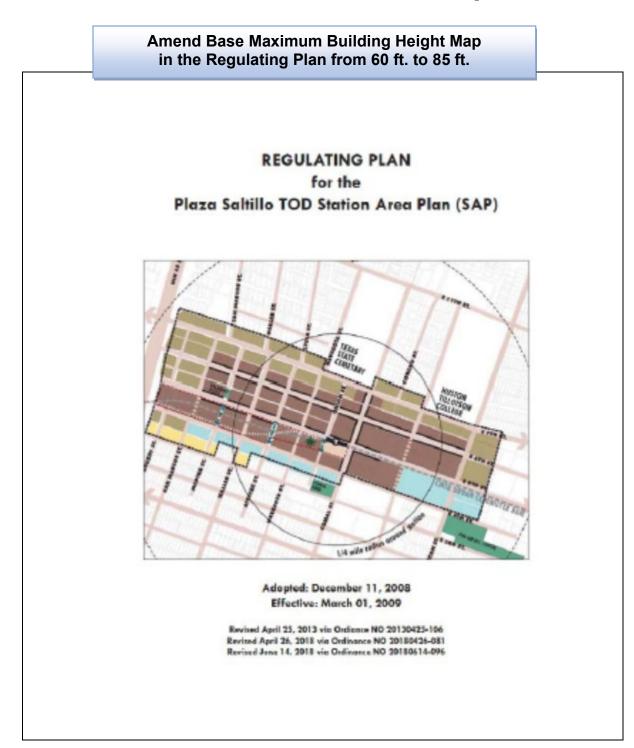
City of Austin Housing and Planning Department Created on 5/20/2021, by: MeeksS

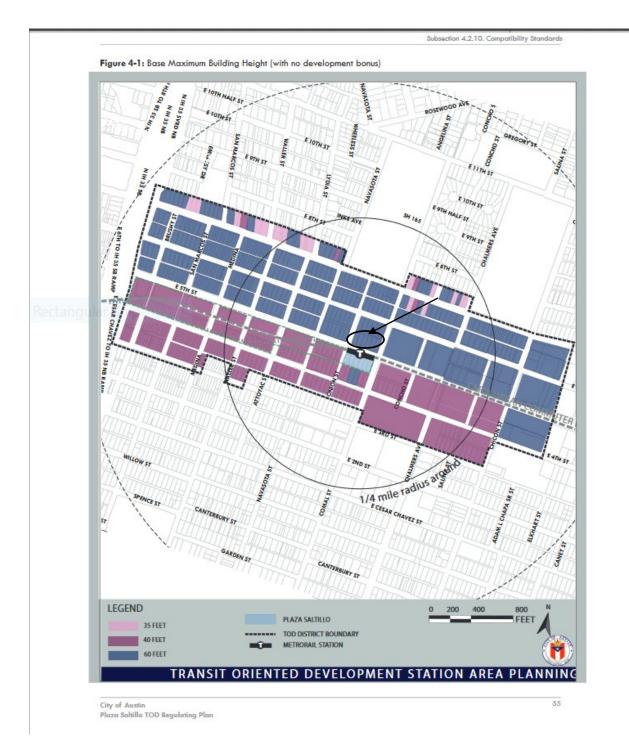


B-3









23





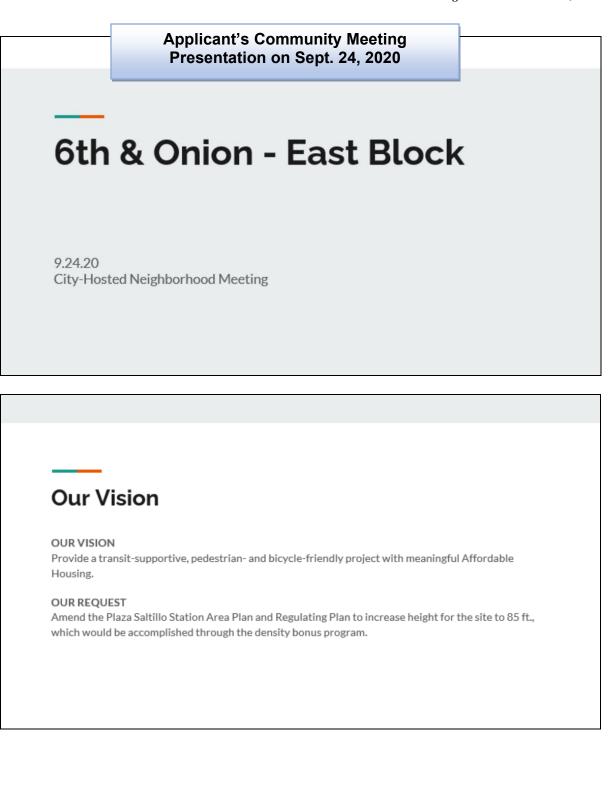
Future Land Use Map

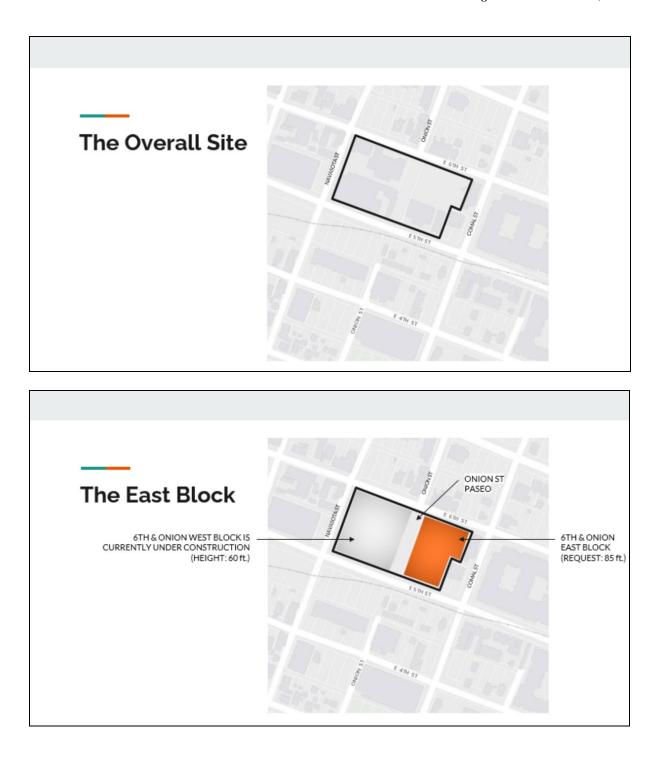


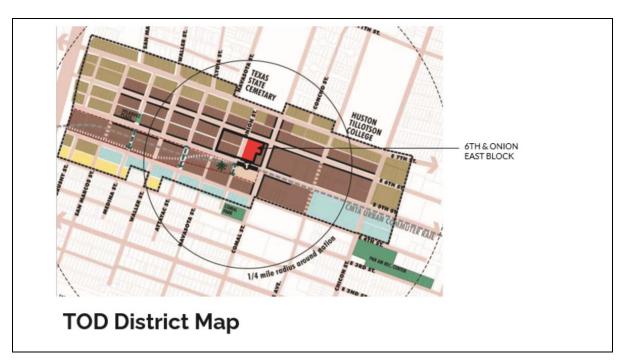
Zoning Map



Imagine Austin Growth Concept Map Activity Center and Corridor







### **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

TOD Design Principles from the Plaza Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan

- 1. Greater density than community average
- 2. A mix of uses
- 3. Quality pedestrian environment
- 4. A defined center











5th Street Looking East \*FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

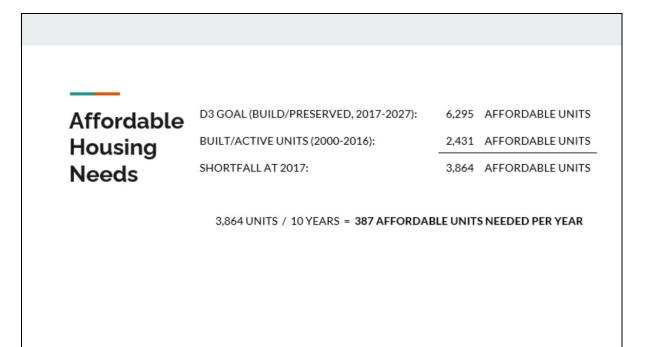


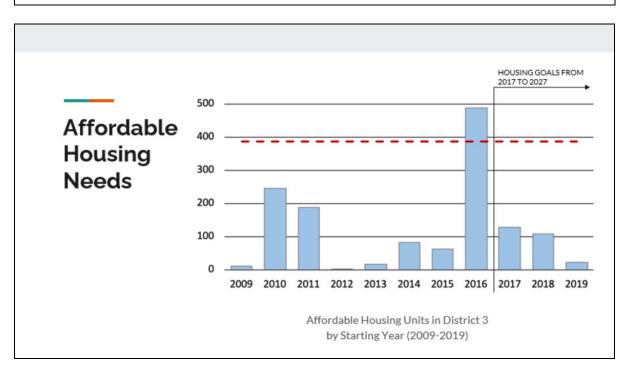
6th Street View \*FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

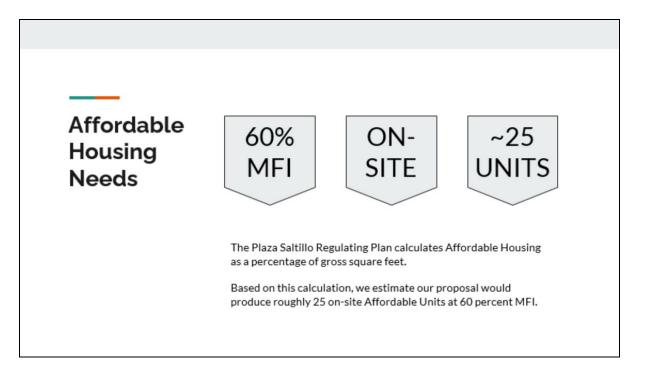
### Neighborhood Compatibility

Traditional compatibility standards would allow 85 ft. of height at 400 ft. from single-family. The East Block is 600+ ft. from the nearest singlefamily neighborhood.









### To Recap

The Plaza Saltillo Station Area and Regulating Plans establish a vision for the neighborhood that prioritizes transit-oriented and walkable projects and prioritizes increased height within core areas.

The East Block of 6th & Onion sits at the heart of this planning area, adjacent to the Plaza Saltillo train station -- marking it as an appropriate place for additional height and housing.

Our request for 85 ft. of height on the East Block would allow for a transit-supportive, walkable project that provides meaningful affordability and maintains compatibility with the closest single-family neighborhoods.