

**Willis Hunt – ARA Board Chair | Gregory L. Smith – President & CEO**

June 7, 2022

RE: Agenda Items: #86, #118, and #119

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Alter, and Councilmembers,

The Austin Revitalization Authority (ARA) has been a longstanding contributor to and convener around the future of East Austin. We are eager to see the process of updating and aligning the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Street NCCDs and the Urban Renewal Plan come to a close and are thrilled to see so many stakeholders weighing in to ensure that these vital corridors are equipped with the zoning and land use tools to allow the legacy of a vibrant and thriving African American Cultural Heritage District to shine.

During the discussion of Item 53 at the Council meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>, it was referenced that ARA had provided a letter of support for the modifications being made to the NCCDs and URP, and the organization wanted to take an opportunity to clarify its recommendations.

As a stakeholder in this process, ARA's primary objective is to see that the approved modifications are in keeping with the area's original vision articulated in the Central East Austin Master Plan and the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Street Urban Renewal Plan adopted by City Council in January 1999. Since its adoption, the City Council continued reinforcing that vision through the eleven modifications made to the plan, the last of which was codified in December 2018. These have each been in alignment with the original plan, which was the culmination of a major community engagement and visioning effort with long-time residents. Last year the URB worked on this modification to align the two documents. ARA was in full support of their carefully considered recommendations, which were also aligned with the original vision.

Fast forwarding to the Council meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>, ARA was pleased to see that the motion sheet supported the URB's recommendations. However, the organization was surprised and concerned by the addition of proposed allowable uses such as cocktail lounges, business trade schools, transportation terminal, and others that were explicitly excluded from Central East Austin Master Plan. These uses, conditional or by-right, do not support neighborhood oriented, sustainable development on East 11<sup>th</sup> or East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

We hope that the previous thirty years of work that has been done to capture the wishes of East Austin residents on this matter will be honored.

We look forward to being a part of future conversations,



Gregory L. Smith