

Dear City Council Members, CAG Members and City Officials:

At July's Code Advisory Group (CAG) meeting, staff discussed the criteria for selecting focus areas for the CodeNext project. The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) and the Hyde Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (HPNPCT) have already communicated with CAG their interest in having the Hyde Park neighborhood (with immediate adjoining areas as appropriate) selected as one of those focus areas.

Hyde Park is representative of other neighborhoods in the City and therefore would be an ideal focus area for CodeNEXT.

HPNA's previous letter to CAG described the many features and development patterns that Hyde Park shares in common with other Austin neighborhoods. In this letter, we would like to draw CAG's attention to a common trait Hyde Park shares with other old central-Austin neighborhoods. In the 1920's, before Austin had zoning, there were both businesses and homes on Guadalupe Street in Hyde Park. When Austin's first zoning ordinance was adopted in 1931, a 1/2 block deep commercial corridor (labeled "C") was designated along Guadalupe abutting single family homes facing Avenue A. As the City started paving commercial streets, a commercial corridor emerged on Guadalupe, much like the other older commercial corridors in the City at that time. The 1931 City of Austin zoning map indicates how commercial corridors were designated on streets emanating from downtown. These were all 1/2 block deep and abutted single family homes and zoning in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Over the years, as more commercial districts were created, all of the C districts were designated the most intense in the city with the CS designation.

In recent years, Hyde Park and North University Neighborhood, through their NCCDs, modified the intense CS zoning along Guadalupe from 27th-47th by revising permitted land uses, limiting heights adjacent to homes, eliminating front setbacks for commercial buildings, and adding mixed use in order for the commercial development to be compatible with adjacent homes. In commercial areas that were not too close to homes, height limits were set higher. The North University NCCD included a Transition District to address bulk and height compatibility between homes and businesses. Please see the NCCD map, available at the following link:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/north_nccd.pdf

Consequently, choosing Hyde Park as a focus area would help the CodeNEXT process to understand the role of older commercial corridors in Austin's central core neighborhoods and the solutions that have already been applied to their growth through NCCDs. This is in contrast to the later developed commercial corridors of North Lamar, Burnet, and South Lamar, which were developed with deeper commercial lots. The geometry on these streets allows for more intense development because buildings next to the main street can be taller and denser; and there is more space between those streets and single family homes, thereby allowing for a longer transitioning between commercial and residential uses. In contrast, where older commercial corridors abut neighborhoods, there is generally only a 1/2 block of commercial zoning and it directly abuts homes.

We would further note that the 1931 zoning map shows that 1/2 block commercial corridors abutting residential areas existed in many neighborhoods at that time. Hyde Park is one of the neighborhoods on this map that share this zoning and development pattern. Those neighborhoods include Hancock, North University, West University, Windsor Road, Old Enfield, Old West Austin, Zilker, Bouldin Creek, South River City, Riverside, East Cesar Chavez, Holly, Central East Austin, Chestnut, Rosewood, Upper Boggy Creek, and Highland.

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We thank you for your attention to this letter and re-assert our neighborhood's interest in being selected as a focus area. We have an active neighborhood association that is very interested in participating in the process and in engaging in a thoughtful discussion of all the issues.

We look forward to working with you on this process.

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