



RECA
REAL ESTATE COUNCIL
OF AUSTIN

September 29, 2014

Dear Mayor and Council:

On behalf of the board of directors and members of the Real Estate Council of Austin, I'm writing to reiterate our support for a truly comprehensive, meaningful and enduring transformation of Austin's land development code and process.

Austin's continued and consistent rapid growth is creating severe challenges to our city's infrastructure, cost of living, tax base and quality of life. We at RECA share the community's vision of an affordable, livable and vital city that works for everyone. To make that vision real, we need to write and implement land use regulations with both flexibility and predictability. We need to create a system that allows for innovation and can scale rapidly to meet the kind of demand we see in Austin's residential and commercial real estate markets right now.

It is no secret that the current Austin code and process are thoroughly broken and falling significantly short of achieving these important objectives. Neither RECA nor many other stakeholders are satisfied with the status quo, and the CodeNEXT initiative has been a critical and welcome effort that brings those stakeholders together with the city's staff and consultants. We urge that we continue down the path that led us here.

The CodeNEXT Team has admirably diagnosed what's wrong with Austin's current code and land-use regulatory environment. Its recommendations for approach alternatives are, in our view, all necessary, and we look forward to developing further clarity around the choices now facing the City Council.

Whichever approach is chosen needs to be one that allows the city to do *all* the work necessary to fix our broken system once and for all and provide for our needs well into the future. We believe in order for a comprehensive rewrite, consistent with Imagine Austin, to be achieved, approach three (3) should be considered and recommended. Austin's built environment is evolving much too quickly for us to view bringing the code up to date and fixing its most egregious problems, as a suitable end result of CodeNEXT. Rather, this effort must position Austin to move forward and allow for new land use strategies that can address our ever-increasing needs for quality sustainable development and compact and connected affordable living.

Most of all, it is imperative that city leaders move forward now and not defer this discussion to some point in the future. There should be no dispute now that we need a new code and process. New members of the 10-1 council will have plenty of opportunity to shape that new code and process once they take office, in consultation with all of their constituents and stakeholders. We look forward to being fully engaged in that work.

Regards,

KC Willis
Chair

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