



CONGRESS
FOR THE NEW
URBANISM
CENTRAL TEXAS
CHAPTER

CHAPTER OFFICE

P.O. Box 685261
Austin, TX 78768
info@centraltexasenu.org
www.centraltexasenu.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cid Galindo
President
Mike Clark-Madison
Vice-President
Leah Bojo
Treasurer
Katherine Gregor
Secretary
Lee Einsweiler
Sean Garretson
Allen Green
Mike Krusee
Matthew Lewis
Michele Lynch
Pam Power
Erika Ragsdale
Garner Stoll
Laura Toups

Sinclair Black
Director Emeritus

NATIONAL OFFICE
140 S. Dearborn St.
Suite 404
Chicago, IL 60603
Tel: 312-551-7300
Fax: 312-346-3323
cnuinfo@cnu.org
www.cnu.org

October 29, 2014

Mayor Lee Leffingwell
and members of the Austin City Council
City of Austin
301 W. Second Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Code Amendment Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Microunits

Dear Honorable Mayor and Council:

The Central Texas Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism fully endorses the intent of City Council Resolution 20140327-040, which directs the City Manager to reduce or eliminate parking minimum requirements and site area requirements for dwelling units of less than 500 square feet located on Core Transit Corridors, Future Core Transit Corridors, and in Transit-Oriented Development Districts. However, ***the Chapter can support a plan for microunits with changes we outline here. We urge you to amend the development code to reach the stated goal by reasonably eliminating those two named requirements (i.e. parking and site area) for microunits.***

Unfortunately, the proposed code amendment only contemplates projects composed entirely of microunits. It neither encourages microunit development in the places where residents can most easily live without a car, nor furthers our progress toward CodeNEXT's goal of a more effective and functional Land Development Code.

The CodeNEXT Code Diagnosis found that our current code is a labyrinth: a ball-in-chain for our dynamic city. The diagnosis foresaw the need to move forward with basic code amendments (low-hanging fruit) while we work on the overall rewrite. ***Austin is currently in a housing crisis and we cannot easily sit back and wait for CodeNEXT to solve our problems, as the Planning Commission recommends.*** We must take steps now to make more housing options available to the citizens of Austin immediately and prudently. Therefore, CNU urges you to reduce the regulatory burdens on microunits to essentially eliminate the parking minimum requirements and the site area requirements for units of less than 500 square feet, as the resolution directs. This solution would encourage more small units closer to the center of the city, and would work with the Vertical Mixed-Use ordinance to add smaller units to existing projects without potential cross-purposes between the Vertical Mixed-Use program and microunits.

CNU is a multi-disciplinary organization recognized globally as a leader in city-building. The local members of the Congress for the New Urbanism stand ready to provide assistance and expertise on this topic that affects affordability, an issue at the forefront in Austin today.

Regards,

Cid Galindo, President
Congress for the New Urbanism, Central Texas Chapter