



January 25, 2016

**CONGRESS
FOR THE NEW
URBANISM**
*CENTRAL TEXAS
CHAPTER*

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Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members Houston, Garza, Renteria, Casar, Kitchen, Zimmerman, Pool, Troxclair, and Gallo

Re: January 28, 2016 Council Agenda Item 85 – “Small Lot Amnesty”

Honorable Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Council Members,

The Central Texas Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism urges you to vote against this proposed amendment to the Austin Land Development Code.

This item comes to you with a negative affordability impact statement, without a recommendation from your Planning Commission, and conflicts with the goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan to create a more affordable, diverse, and sustainable city. Meeting Austin’s affordability goals is especially challenging in the central city infill areas affected by this change.

Imagine Austin calls for more “smaller-lot single family houses.” (Section LUT A2 page 228) Recognizing smaller existing platted lots is one of the few means currently available to help achieve this important objective. As your affordability impact statement indicates recognizing these platted lots as buildable helps mitigate higher home prices.

Since many existing homes are on similar sized lots allowing the construction of new homes on these lots is entirely respectful of Austin’s neighborhood character. Subchapter F (commonly called the “McMansion Ordinance”) ensures that new homes are constructed in a manner compatible with the massing and scale of existing homes.

The Congress for the New Urbanism has long advocated for diverse neighborhoods with a variety of lot sizes, housing types, and price levels. This is a founding principle and addressed in our Charter:

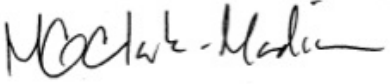
“Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community” (The Charter for the Congress for the New Urbanism- The Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor-Item 13).

We support the Mayor's goal of building 100,000 additional homes by the year 2025 but fear this amendment makes this goal less attainable. These heritage lots are a gift from our past that can help us achieve a more affordable and sustainable 21st century city.

We lost the ability to develop these smaller lots in 1946, during an area of exclusive and racially discriminatory zoning, when increases in minimum lot sizes and other regulatory measures were adopted to promote racial and economic segregation. This is an opportunity to reverse these policies and clearly indicate that you support inclusive zoning that allows for the construction of diverse neighborhoods.

Again, we urge you to reject this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mike Clark-Madison", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Mike Clark-Madison
President, Central Texas Chapter of CNU
The Congress for the New Urbanism