



# WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

April 22, 2024

Organized 1973

TO: City of Austin Planning Commission  
RE: H.O.M.E. and City Wide Compatibility Land Development Code Amendments

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Members of the Planning Commission,

The West Austin Neighborhood Group supports the preservation and creation of more affordable housing in our neighborhood and throughout Austin. We want more people and families of all income levels to have the opportunity for home ownership, but the city-wide “one size fits all” changes to all of Austin’s single-family zoned properties, as currently written in the H.O.M.E. Ordinances, is not the solution.

The City of Austin’s **Housing Cost Analysis** (May, 2022) states:

*No two parcels face the same development costs and variations in regulatory code, environmental conditions, and market dynamics all impact a site’s development potential. This makes it very difficult to extrapolate the cost of developing housing across a wider geographic area.*

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/pio/document.cfm?id=412476>

Housing prices are market driven and based on specific AREAS, cost of land, demolition, construction, permitting and other fees. **What gets built at what price (single family homes, duplexes, townhomes) depends on what will generate the most profit for the builder / investor.** The WANG area has some of the highest cost to build in the city. Granting more land development entitlements by right to home builders and developers via smaller minimum lots, greater impervious cover and FAR will *not* guarantee more affordable housing in 78703. This might result in more homes on less land at the same or higher price per square foot as existing homes, but at what cost? More buildings/ impervious cover means more tree loss, loss of green space, flooding, Urban Heat Island effect, pollution and damage to parkland and water sources.

And while more market rate housing may be added to some Austin neighborhoods under H.O.M.E., **it will NOT BE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**, and will cause displacement in neighborhoods where land values are less than 78703. A recent **report for the City’s Equity Office by Rich Heyman, PhD states:**

*The HOME Initiative is unlikely to achieve its goals of increasing affordability in Austin and will likely lead to higher property values throughout the city, as well as continued gentrification and displacement in lower-income neighborhoods, home to many of Austin’s residents of color.*

[utexas.box.com/v/heyman-home-report](https://utexas.box.com/v/heyman-home-report)

The West Austin Neighborhood Group is part of the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Planning Area. We support our Neighborhood Plan as a part of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. We support adding density in a measured approach, area by area, based on public engagement and the unique conditions in each area, rather than a “one size fits all” blanket change to all single-family zoned properties in the city. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, The Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan Contact Team sent the attached letter to the Planning Commission and Austin City Council. The West Austin Neighborhood Group respectfully asks that you consider this alternative to the H.O.M.E. Ordinance:

**We ask that the Planning Commission and Council postpone action on Phase 2 and Compatibility amendments and direct staff to create a new Zoning District that incorporates the elements of H.O.M.E. (Phase 1 and 2) to replace Ordinance No. 20231207-001. Applications for this District and Neighborhood Plan Amendments could be considered contextually on a case-by-case basis through the regular zoning process.** This would accommodate both the Council’s objectives for greater density opportunities and the community’s interest in having contextual decision-making in which the public can participate.

Sincerely,

Holly Reed, President  
West Austin Neighborhood Group  
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