



Cedars Neighborhood Association, Inc.

January 31, 2020

The CNA and its membership are dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Cedars as it moves from a once-challenged neighborhood to a vibrant urban community.

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Hon. Council Adam Medrano
Dallas City Council, 2nd District
City of Dallas
1500 Marilla St.
Dallas, TX 75201

Commissioner Joanna Hampton
City Plan Commission, District 2
City of Dallas
1500 Marilla Street, 5BN
Dallas, Texas 75201

SUBJECT: CEDARS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED PD 317 REZONING

Dear Council Medrano and Commissioner Hampton,

I am writing to you as a representative of the Cedars Neighborhood Association, "CNA" and stakeholders in the Cedars regarding PD 317, and the upcoming vote by the City Plan Commission, planned for February 6, 2020. We respectfully request the vote be moved to March 5, 2020, allowing the CNA and stakeholders time to complete recommendations for preservation of legacy buildings and reduced parking requirements. We provided these recommendations to the staff in previous meetings with the intent to preserve legacy building stock in the Cedars, rather than having to demolish them for parking lots.

As one of the oldest and most historically significant neighborhoods in Dallas, the Cedars has the potential to be one of the most successful, vibrant, and unique districts in the country. The highly sought-after and ever-elusive qualities of walkability, mixed-income, affordability, and environmentally sound design are well within reach of the Cedars neighborhood. Creating a shared vision and the regulatory environment in which it can take shape is possible if all stakeholders work together, listen carefully to each other's interests, and seek a good faith agreement based on those interests.

Putting together a plan that preserved the legacy buildings of the Cedars is smart urban planning. Recent studies from Next City¹, Congress for New Urbanism² and Strong Cities³ confirm what we've learned from years of experience in Dallas – ordinances that limit density and reduce the supply of housing units built in an area contribute to a shortage of diverse and affordable housing. Additionally, the preservation of existing buildings in good condition is a key component of sustainability. LEED guidelines promote reuse of structures to preserve their, as well as reduce the climate impact, versus building a new structure.⁴ Simply put, preservation of existing viable buildings should be maximized. We must find a way to meet the growing need for housing that includes preserving legacy residential, retail, hospitality, and commercial buildings.

If the City of Dallas chooses to move forward with the zoning policies put forth by City staff, it will stifle the potential of our neighborhood. Current zoning would require the need for more than 200



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square feet of parking for every 100 square feet of restaurant and bar space. Even with parking abatements for legacy buildings and those near the Cedars D.A.R.T. station, the building to parking ration would still be approximately 1:1. As many of the area's legacy structures were built at or near zero lot line, abatement does not provide a path for redeveloping and preserving the buildings for hospitality or retail use. Instead, the City's recommendations would make the development of legacy buildings economically unfeasible, resulting in further demolition and significantly reducing standing commercial stock.

After decades of tearing down older buildings in downtown Dallas and the surrounding area, the city has seen tremendous success in projects that reused legacy buildings without imposing modern parking requirements. We look to the examples of Deep Ellum, Bishop Arts District, and downtown Dallas for how planning that balances the preservation of legacy buildings while providing sufficient parking, along with multiple transportation options that reduce parking needs, can create thriving and vibrant urban neighborhoods. For the future development of the Cedars, we need to look at where transportation and use will go in the next ten, twenty, or thirty years, and all evidence points toward reduced car ownership and effective alternatives, reducing the need to pave our neighborhood with parking lots.

We have a rare opportunity both to reimagine the Cedars as a signature and inclusive district in Dallas, and to maintain the character of the neighborhood, which goes back to the earliest day of this city. We cannot squander this opportunity in favor of regulations that are more appropriate for suburban strip malls and ill-suited to a mixed-use urban neighborhood.

We thank you for considering the request and suggestions put forward in this letter, and look forward to working closely with City Council and City Plan Commission to craft the rules and regulations for a community-created vision that ensures a bright future for the Cedars.

Best Regards,

Christopher Weiss
Interim President
Cedars Neighborhood Association

CC:

Monica Moreno, Council Liaison District 2
Vernesha Cathey, Council Assistant District 2
Neva Dean, Deputy Director, Sustainable Development and Construction
Vasavi Pilla, Senior Planner, Sustainable Development and Construction
Christine Haddad, Interim Vice President, CNA
Catherine Edwards, Interim Treasurer, CNA
Margarita Martín-Hidalgo Birnbaum, Interim Secretary, CNA
Summer Whitley, Communications Chair, CNA
Cedars Neighborhood Association Membership

1. [Survey of 50 U.S. Cities Sees Benefits of Historic Preservation, Jen Kinney, November 28, 2016](#)
2. [Great idea: Rethinking Parking, Robert Steuteville, June 5, 2017. Congress for New Urbanism](#)
3. [We Forbid What We Value Most Benjamin Ledford, November 21, 2017. Strong Towns](#)
4. [Sustainable Historic Preservation. WBDG Historic Preservation Subcommittee August 26, 2019](#)