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HousingWorks
AUSTIN

October 24, 2023

Dear Mayor Watson, Austin City Council Members, and Austin Planning Commission Members:

HousingWorks Austin supports adoption of the initial set of proposed amendments to the land development code to implement the Home Options for Middle-income Empowerment (HOME) initiative and the removal of dwelling unit occupancy limits in the land development code that are currently under consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council.

HousingWorks believes the intent of proposed amendments would allow for the development of a greater diversity of housing types and living arrangements than currently allowed in single-family zoning districts, which would increase access to attainable housing opportunities for households at a range of income levels, especially for first-time home buyers and seniors wishing to remain in their communities, and increase housing opportunities in high opportunity areas.

We further recommend that the Council consider providing direction to City Staff to increase access to programs that ensure low and moderate income homeowners are able to avail themselves of increased development potential of single-family lots and are protected from predatory real estate activities. Such programs might include financial counseling, access to capital, legal and technical assistance, and ensuring clear titles are held by property owners.

We thank the City Council for their leadership on these issues and hope our recommendations can help improve the efficacy of the proposed amendments. If you have any questions, please email me at nora@housingworksAustin.org and/or John-Michael Cortez, Advocacy Committee Chair, HousingWorks Board of Directors at jmvcortez@gmail.com.

Best Regards,

Nora Linares-Moeller
Executive Director