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HousingWorks
AUSTIN

June 5, 2023

Dear Mayor Watson, Mayor Pro Tem Ellis, and City Council Members:

HousingWorks Austin writes in support of items 40, 41, and 45 on the June 8, 2023 Austin City Council agenda.

The resolutions initiate amendments to the Austin Land Development Code in order to create new affordable housing density bonus programs and modify residential compatibility standards in order to facilitate the increased development of affordable and attainable rental and ownership housing. These items could play a critical role in expanding affordable rental and ownership housing throughout our community without relying on City subsidies to create units. In addition, by relaxing compatibility standards citywide, as a community we can expand equitable opportunities to create affordable and attainable housing units citywide.

We further recommend that in developing the proposed ordinances, City Council and staff consider equitable dispersion of housing opportunity, and specifically ensure that new housing opportunities be provided for in high-opportunity areas, particularly west of MoPac Boulevard where the city has struggled to achieve its goals for creating more affordable and attainable housing units since the adoption of the Strategic Housing Blueprint.

Additionally, as staff is developing these ordinances, we recommend that steps be considered to ensure that new affordable housing programs are calibrated to ensure maximum community benefit and participation in the program. New programs should also be assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact participation in existing programs, and the benefit gained from them.

The HousingWorks Austin Board of Directors applauds the City Council's continued efforts to identify and enact changes to the Austin Land Development Code to facilitate more affordable and equitable housing opportunities, despite the City's ongoing legal dispute that could stymie the overwhelming public will in favor of meaningful actions to address Austin's affordability challenges. HousingWorks strongly encourages the Council to continue its efforts while vigorously defending its actions in the Courts, so that our city may remain an affordable and welcoming place for all.

Best Regards,

Nora Linares-Moeller
Executive Director

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