

From: smontgomery@milawaz.com
Subject: Opposition to Rezoning - Case Number Z-41-18 - High Rise at 7th Street/Thomas Rd.
Date: October 9, 2018 at 5:29 PM
To: mayor.williams@phoenix.gov, council.district.1@phoenix.gov, council.district.2@phoenix.gov, council.district.3@phoenix.gov, council.district.4@phoenix.gov, council.district.5@phoenix.gov, council.district.6@phoenix.gov, council.district.7@phoenix.gov, council.district.8@phoenix.gov



Dear Honorable Mayor Williams and City Council Members:

I have been a resident of the Country Club Historic District for 17 years. I love my neighborhood. However, I am strongly opposed to the rezoning referenced above, which would allow for a high rise development at the Phoenix Country club directly adjacent to my neighborhood.

I have attended the meetings before the Encanto Village Planning Committee and the City of Phoenix Planning Commission. I have listened to the developer and the testimony of my neighbors both against (many) and in favor (some) of the project. At this point, however, I join with numerous fellow neighbors to oppose the high rise and the unjustified spot re-zoning it represents. **I respectfully ask that you deny the requested.**

Key concerns are as follows:

- Out of Character for our Neighborhood. It is inappropriate to develop this high-rise multi-family building in the location proposed. This may be a nice development, but the location of 7th Street/Thomas is not an appropriate site for this project. The project - which would be at least **140 feet tall** - is not contemplated by the City's Planning documents for **a reason**. Highrise type developments belong in the Central Corridor. The high rise should not be developed directly adjacent to historic, single family homes in Phoenix Country Club Historic District (a recognized historic district under the National Historic Preservation Act and applicable State Law).
- Privacy. The inappropriate height of this high rise will allow its residents to have a close up view of many of my neighbor's back yards and houses. This seems inappropriate for the surrounding residential neighborhoods (as acknowledged by the General Plan). While the developer has argued that mature trees will provide some privacy for the houses down below, this argument misses the point. **It is not the responsibility of homeowners to build and maintain a fortress of trees and shrubs around their property to preserve their privacy – privacy that they have rightly enjoyed for years and have a justifiable expectation of enjoying in the future. This is the obligation of you, the City of Phoenix, and again, its why we have publicly reviewed planning documents.** Indeed, the September 4, 2018, Staff Report which recommended against this zoning raised a number of concerns about the project, noting the inconsistent aspects of the project relative to many of the goals of the General Plan and other City planning documents.

- Precedent. Many of us are concerned that the development of this project outside the confines of the Central Corridor and the requirement of the City's planning documents will lead to other projects of this type in our area, raising the question of why Phoenix has a General Plan in the first place? Once a decision is made to allow the above referenced development, it will not only irreparably change the character of our area, but it will set a precedent for future developments.
- Property Values/Blight. It is very likely that the presence of this high rise, and potentially future high rise developments that it will pave the way for, will adversely impact property values in our neighborhood, particularly near the high rise(s). The lack of privacy and potentially noise, traffic, and light disturbance may result in blight. Houses near the proposed high rise may become disfavored by dedicated home owners due to the concerns noted above, which will undoubtedly result in those houses being sold, and perhaps turned into rentals, Airbnb or other more transient uses, whose owners will not maintain the character, integrity and safety of the neighborhood like committed historic homeowners would. Although the developer has argued his development will "stabilize" the corner of 7th Street and Thomas, he has failed to provide any credible support for this other than vague promises and speculation that his high income development will naturally encourage new developments at the abandoned gas station and old doughnut shop/check cashing building nearby. Unsupported suggestions of this type by the developer are not credible and should not be considered by the Council when weighing this project. Also, what is to say this improvements at the corner of 7th St. and Thomas will not happen regardless of the high rise development that is presently before the Council? Certainly, our neighborhood has demonstrated its ability to support quality restaurants and local shops in the area, as witnessed by the slate of new in my neighborhood and along 7th Street.

In sum, this high rise is a dangerous step for Phoenix, that disregards the planning documents so carefully and publicly thought through over the years. While some on the recent Planning Commission openly pondered if the lower number of units proposed for the current "luxury" high rise would be better than a "typical apartment complex" that could be developed at the site, I think this presents a **false choice** and this line of reasoning should be rejected. The developer has indicated that he has **no intention of developing a several story apartment complex** at this site and it is doubtful there is space or the interest at the Country Club for this type of project. While there might be a great project for the Country Club at this spot – one that would meet the interests of the Country Club and the financial goals of a developer – a 140+ foot high rise is not the right project and you need only look to your General Plan to confirm this fact.

I hope you will consider these concerns and the concerns of others at the upcoming Council meeting on this zoning request. The request should be denied.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at the number shown below.

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