

Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition



HISTORIC FRANKLIN SCHOOL

Via Email

Encanto Village Planning Committee
C/O Hannah.Bleam@phoenix.gov

Re: Case No. Z-41-18: H-R at the Northeast Corner of 7th Street and Thomas Road

Dear Encanto Village Planning Committee Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition. We are a coalition of people who live throughout the historic neighborhoods within the City of Phoenix. We come together because we value the history of Phoenix and we seek to share our love of our City's historic neighborhoods to preserve not only the buildings but to also help stabilize and build strong communities.

We are distressed to witness the Applicant's entitlement overreach outside of the City core, the Central corridor, and outside the Midtown TOD Policy Plan. The Applicant relies on zoning entitlements from the 1960's to justify High Rise (H-R) High Density zoning on the northeast corner of 7th Street and Thomas Road. Although the applicant maintains that the property will only be redeveloped to a height of 175 feet, we have little confidence that such a stipulation will not be altered at a future date.

There are a significant number of single-family homes in the shadow of the proposed H-R zoning: to the North across a parking lot (homes on North Country Club Manor), South across Thomas (homes in the Country Club Park neighborhood), East across another parking lot (homes on East Country Club Drive) and West across 7th Street and some commercial uses (homes in La Hacienda Historic District). Although the Applicant's proposal is detrimental to these homes, the real issue is the 2018 rezoning precedent that will be created. We will have cast aside decades of planning, decades of assuring neighbors that they can rely on planning policy, to return to the wild west of zoning entitlements that were handed out in the 1960s, such as the entitlement for Crystal Point that the Applicant relies on. Since the 1960s, Phoenix has designated the city core for H-R development, it has designated the Central Corridor for H-R development, and the MidTown TOD Policy Plan provides for more dense development near the light rail stations.

The Phoenix City Code provides that H-R zoning districts only belong in a “few areas” that “generate exceptional amount of activity of a commercial nature”.

631 High-Rise H-R District—High-Rise and High Density District

The High-Rise H-R is intended to be a special district to allow greater building height and density within those few areas of the City that, by their strategic location and intense land use, generate exceptional amounts of activity of a commercial nature. Within these areas of greatly intensified activity the H-R districts may be combined with the R-4, R-4A, R-5, C-O, C-1, C-2, C-3, A-1, A- 2, P-1 or P-2 districts and shall control in those requirements which it sets forth.

There is no dispute of fact that the corner of 7th Street and Thomas Road is not one of our city’s few areas that generate an exceptional amount of activity of a commercial nature.

The MidTown TOD Policy Plan identifies and demonstrates distances to the light rail stations.



MidTown Policy Plan TOD page 3. The map shows that the North East Corner of 7th Street and Thomas is not within a quarter mile radius of a light rail station where the high density is to be

encouraged. The project is not even with the half mile radius. Furthermore, where the MidTown TOD Policy Plan describes Walkable Urban Code zoning, the height and intensity decreases the further from the central corridor, with the most height and intensity specified for along the light rail line, typically reducing in proximity to single family homes.



MidTown TOD Policy Plan at p. 103.

MEDIUM INTENSITY DISTRICTS

T5:5 T5:6 T5:7

Characterized by a broad mix of buildings types that integrate retail, offices, and residential units adjacent to the Light Rail Corridor, averaging 56 to 100-feet in height.

Setback standards provide a buffer when adjacent to single-family residential or Historic Preservation districts. Maximum Height: 56-feet (T5:5), 80-ft (T5:6), 100-ft (T5:7)

HIGH INTENSITY DISTRICTS

T6:7, T6:15 & T6:22

Characterized by high rise buildings adjacent to the Light Rail Corridor with the highest intensity of mixed uses. Development may incorporate forecourts and open spaces available to the public.

T6:HWR - A high intensity, height waiver district to ensure equivalent entitlement

Walkable Urban Code, at p. 2. The MidTown TOD Policy Plan does not specify any intensity district east of 3rd Street.

The City of Phoenix General Plan promises to stakeholders a level of certainty and reasonable expectations as to living in our city, and these promises will be broken by approving High Rise (H-R) High Density zoning districts throughout parts of the city where the plans do not permit it.

CERTAINTY & CHARACTER

What makes a city a great place to live are its robust vibrant neighborhoods. *There is a level of certainty one expects to have and quality of life one expects to maintain while living in a great city. The goals and policies that are outlined in the General Plan were created so residents have a reasonable expectation and level of certainty while living in our great city; certainty in regards to quality of life and compatibility.* The success, stability and certainty our neighborhoods can provide only strengthen our city and region's vitality and prosperity.

At p. 107 (Italics emphasis added).

*Every neighborhood and community should have a level of **certainty**.*

At p. 107 (Italics emphasis added).

Furthermore, the General Plan assures residents that the goal is to:

Create new development or redevelopment that is sensitive to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhoods and incorporates adequate development standards to prevent negative impact(s) on the residential properties.

At p. 107 (Italics Emphasis added).

This project is an assault on the certainty that the existing plans and zoning provide to neighbors and as a rezoning opportunity, it is completely out of scale with the surrounding area. Only by looking back toward the high rises in the Central corridor and up to Crystal Point project, which is based on outdated 1960s entitlement planning, can the Applicant show any existing high-rise development within a mile.

Finally, the Applicant absurdly attempts to urge that its suburban designed high rise meets the goals of the MidTown TOD Policy Plan and the Walkable Urban Code. The proposed building does not: the parking structure is not lined with outbuildings, the project does not face 7th Street or Thomas Road, the project does not encourage the use of public transit because it makes the walk to transit as long as possible, the project contains more parking space than mandated by the code, and the project has no interaction with the public right of way at the street level anywhere near the corner of 7th Street and Thomas Road. The proposed site plan actually distances the tower and its future residents from the very corner that the Applicant claims the project will revitalize.

The H-R zoning at the northeast corner of Thomas and 7th Street is inappropriate, whether 175 feet or 250 feet, because the project will be damaging to existing neighborhoods and open the floodgates to similar inappropriate applications outside of the City core, the Central Corridor, and the MidTown TOD Policy Plan. These neighbors

should not have a high rise approved on the northeast corner of 7th Street and Thomas Road. We ask you to reject rezoning application case number **Z-41-18**.

Sincerely,

Opal Wagner
Vice President