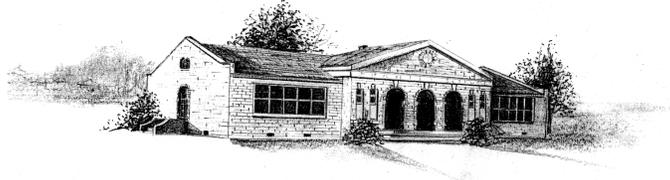


# **Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition**



HISTORIC FRANKLIN SCHOOL

October 15, 2018

## Via Email

Mayor and City Council

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

## **Re: Case No. Z-41-18: H-R at the Northeast Corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Thomas Road**

Dear Mayor Williams and Members of the City Council,

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 wrote to the Encanto Village in opposition to this matter before the City Planning Staff published their report, and our directors have attended both the Encanto Village meeting and the Planning Commission. The City Planning Staff's report in this matter makes it clear that the neighbors are not somehow overreacting to the proposed application of § 631 High Rise (H-R) High Density zoning district among long established neighborhoods of single-family homes with historic houses. Our experience has been with H-R zoning is set loose from well-defined areas, it brings down the nearby neighborhood, and it is bad for older homes. This proposal is a problem for our city. It is particularly a problem for historic homes in La Hacienda Historic District, homes along Country Club Drive, Country Club Park Historic District, and it will ultimately be a problem for the Coronado Historic District.

As outlined in the City Planning Staff report, this proposal for H-R zoning is contrary to the General Plan and the Midtown TOD Policy Plan. The City Planning Staff report mirrors many of the issues we raised in our letter to Encanto Village, which we attach rather than repeat. The discussion at the Planning Commission was shocking, there was almost no discussion of the recommendation of the City Planning Staff report. The Planning Commission recklessly abandoned planning principles, the concerns of neighbors, and the concepts of a walkable city developed to support the billion dollars of public money invested in the light rail.

The Planning Commission recommended high rise zoning simply because it hopes that the rezoning will promote the construction of a concrete building on the parking lot instead of the wood buildings that are being built elsewhere. (Notably, the Club has not stated any intention to build a wood building on the parking lot if the H-R zoning application is denied.) Having a concrete high rise building where it does not belong does not remedy any issue with 5-7 story height wood buildings being built in the Downtown and Central corridor, many times where H-R exists. *Whether a developer can obtain financing for a high rise should not be the deciding factor for the City to allow it on a random parking lot, because that is not planning.* The Midtown TOD Policy Plan is part of the ReInventPHX initiative, and the City received millions of dollars from HUD to develop specific *local* policies that were ignored by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission's indorsement of H-R, anywhere an applicant can obtain financing, also creates uncertainty and is an unprecedented policy shift away from the certainty provided by the General Plan as to investments in height, density and intensity being made in the Village cores. In one fell swoop the Planning Commission violated both the specific local policy plan as well as the General Plan, rendering millions of dollars in planning and decades of work superfluous.

Allowing H-R zoning anywhere defeats the certainty that everyone relies on as to where H-R zoning will be allowed. This upsets the property values for existing H-R zoning districts, and it initiate problems in the immediate area of the rezoned property. It encourages speculation around the newly rezoned property that properties in the vicinity will also be allowed to rezone to a more high, dense and intense entitlement. Some owners will no longer invest in their properties and move out. Many

properties become rentals which are never improved, because they are not viewed as having value for the existing home, and they fall into disrepair, and the issue spreads down the street like a plague. *You may look no further than the neighborhoods that fell into disrepair for decades on Third Street between Thomas and Osborn*, where one recently became Alta Midtown and the other is about to become Crescent Midtown. Owners moved out and speculators bought and held-- *for decades* --the properties in disrepair and a problem for the City, in areas that were flanked on two sides by incompatible uses, while the La Hacienda Historic District and Country Club Park Historic District neighborhoods flourished.

Proposing now to surround La Hacienda Historic District with H-R zoning, between H-R on Third Street and now on the Corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Thomas Road, it may become the next victim of the unintended consequences of allowing H-R anywhere. Country Club Park Historic District and Coronado Historic District could be next. Historic Districts have helped the City maintain a residential component in and near downtown and have spurred and enabled the current growth of new housing options, *the only effort needed to help preserve our existing neighborhoods and our history at this time is to follow the General Plan and the MidTown TOD Policy Plan and deny the Application*. We ask you to reject rezoning application case number **Z-41-18**.

Sincerely,

---

President  
GG George