The following series of resolutions was passed by members of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association present at the Association’s meeting on November 4, 2019

Members of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) welcome growth that allows more people to reside in our already dense, diverse, eclectic, and historic neighborhood, while retaining and expanding the characteristics that make Hyde Park special. HPNA recognizes that the draft Land Development Code has positive goals that we support, but we do not believe the draft is likely to achieve many of the Council’s stated goals and may have unintended negative consequences in several areas.

Since May, we have advocated for a process through which neighborhoods can participate in the LDC rewrite and help identify areas appropriate for additional density, and were grateful to learn that we would be afforded this opportunity. However, HPNA cannot submit an alternate zoning map at this time under the parameters and timeline offered by the city.

The draft LDC was released October 4th, the Supplemental Staff Report with recommended amendments and corrections was released October 25, and no summary of subsequent Planning Commission decisions has been released yet. The map submission deadline of November 6 does not leave our neighborhood adequate time to respond; per our bylaws and prior practice, we are not in a position to set forth a proposal with such sweeping implications without a diligent community input process. Additionally, we cannot comply with guidelines that call for the exact level of additional zoning categories that the draft map has proposed for an already dense urban neighborhood.

At the same time, we welcome the opportunity to work with city leaders to identify opportunities in the neighborhood for increased density that are more context sensitive than those that accompany the linear corridor designations set forth in the draft. Through extensive communications with HPNA members and residents, we know there is support for true residential-scale missing middle housing and ADUs that respect existing development patterns. We hope we will have the opportunity to work with the city to find solutions.

We propose the following (4) HPNA resolutions and their submission in lieu of an alternate map:
1. Affordability: Every effort must be made in Hyde Park and city-wide to support income-diverse neighborhoods.

Considering that:

- Income diversity in Hyde Park and beyond is threatened if the proposed Code allows additional unit entitlements without requiring an on-site affordability component.
- Local real estate experts have estimated that increased entitlements under RM1 upzoning may raise the value of lots by over 50% in North Central Austin. Such a change would accelerate property tax increases in Travis County where newly assessed land values (which are beyond historical trends) would encourage the destruction and re-development of currently affordable housing stock.
- Fee in lieu programs, where a developer pays a fee into an affordable housing fund rather than include affordable housing on site, should be discouraged; on-site affordable housing is preferable and should be supported to the extent allowable.
- Because most homeowners lack the capital and credit required to build multi-family structures, we believe increased entitlements under the proposed new code will primarily benefit institutional investors. In order to preempt a massive transfer of wealth, the City of Austin should ensure that at least some of the additional development in our city builds wealth for our residents and our community. Pre-approved plans, streamlined permitting processes, and supported applications should be considered for individual homeowners who want to add density through a second unit or ADU; particular consideration should be made to ensure historically underserved populations and communities are able to take advantage of these locally-focused efforts.
- The proposed Code allows 25% of the units in RM, MS, MU1, MU2, UC, DC and CC zones to be licensed full-time Short Term Rentals (full-time STRs are also allowed with an administratively approved Minor Use Permit in MU3 and MU4). In other words, up to a quarter of new units mapped within transition corridors or regional centers could be reserved for tourists, unavailable for housing Austin residents. If the city believes that a lack of housing supply is driving our affordability crisis, it is unconscionable to let this 25% provision stand, and is in direct conflict with the goal of the Land Development Code to provide more housing for residents.

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association therefore resolves that the Land Development Code must sufficiently protect existing affordable housing and produce onsite affordable units, particularly in high-opportunity areas like Hyde Park.
2. Duval Street: Duval Street must not be designated a corridor for zoning purposes.

Considering that:

• Duval is a two-lane street with speed bumps to slow traffic and no direct through traffic north of 56th Street, has no shoulder, and (except at 45th Street) no center turn lanes.
• The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan classifies Duval as a Level 2 Collector and lists its Street Type as “Local Mobility.” (Duval was also not designated as a transit corridor for planning purposes under Imagine Austin and, north of 51st Street, Duval is too narrow to stripe.)
• Unlike Guadalupe or Lamar, Duval is not a major right of way, but begins just north of the UT campus and dead ends 2.3 miles later at the Texas Gas Service equipment parking lot. (As a reference, the Airport Blvd and Guadalupe/Lamar corridors are both 5-lane rights of way traversing over 7 miles and 16 miles respectively). Two-lane roads like Duval are unfit to serve as longitudinally dense corridors.
• Parking is currently not allowed along most of Duval Street due to its bike lane and many homes do not have alley access for automobiles.
• It is uncertain whether Duval will continue to have increased bus service frequency, especially if the plans for a Red River or Guadalupe rail line materialize.
• The proposed transition areas radiating from Duval would dramatically upzone a 4-7 block-wide area running the 2.3 mile length of Duval which currently consists of a mix of older, market affordable small scale homes, duplexes, small scale multi-family, townhomes, and large apartment complexes properly placed at major intersections.
• By-right entitlements would increase unit density to 6 units per lot (with the possibility of up to 10 units per lot), and building heights up to 50 feet. Impervious cover would increase to 60% (which increases the possibility of flooding) and on-site/off-street parking requirements would be eliminated at a time when street parking on Duval is prohibited.
• The narrow side streets adjacent to Duval will become highly congested with parked cars. Many of these adjacent streets do not have sidewalks, and, under current parking patterns, can often only accommodate one-way traffic. Additional parking on these streets raises concerns about emergency vehicle accessibility, trash collection, deliveries, work crews and other basic services.

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association therefore resolves that Duval Street, and similar roads, should be removed from the list of streets that are designated as transit corridors under the proposed new Code.
3. Local Historic District: The integrity of Local Historic Districts must be protected.

Considering that:

- Hyde Park has a multiple-property National Register District and a Local Historic District that was approved by City Council.
- City representatives and neighborhood residents dedicated many hours to research, refine, and approve Hyde Park’s Local Historic District. Much of this work was generated at a grassroots level, and HPNA retained and funded consultants for the creation of both historic districts.
- Citizens representing diverse perspectives within the neighborhood worked with the City on multiple components of the Local Historic District guidelines, including: design standards, a database of contributing-structure requirements, boundary lines, and character-defining guidelines. After HPNA approved the local historic district proposal, representatives negotiated with the city’s Historic Preservation Office, Planning and Zoning Department, and City Council to clarify and strengthen the guidelines.
- Unique historical treasures, including Fire Station #9, the Moonlight Towers, the Elisabet Ney Museum, the Baker School, the Log Cabin at Shipe Park and 41 individual historic landmark homes are located in the neighborhood. In all, hundreds of homes, businesses, and places of worship in the neighborhood are recognized as contributing structures to its Historic Districts.
- The city has recognized the importance of Historic Districts as part of our shared local, state, and national heritage through its recent investment in the development of design standards for use in current and future local historic districts.
- As the first streetcar suburb, Hyde Park is integral to the history of Austin. Hyde Park was originally created to be and still is a neighborhood with transit-supportive density.
- The integrity of Local Historic Districts relies on protecting not only contributing and designated historic structures but also the character of the built environment in which they live. The proposed upzoning and relaxed compatibility requirements, particularly with regard to height and setback provisions, goes against the COA Historic Design Standards currently under consideration.
- As determined by architectural historians and preservation specialists, the proposed “Preservation Bonus” will not, in fact, preserve a structure’s design, materials, decorative details, or character-defining features. As such, it is not a bona fide preservation tool. The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association therefore resolves that the Land Development Code must do more to adequately protect Local Historic Districts and historic properties.
4. Infrastructure: Infrastructure improvements must be completed before greater density is allowed.

Considering that:

- There have been three water main breaks north of 45th Street in the past six months, each causing significant damage to local homes, property, and roads, including sinkholes.
- Localized and/or creek flooding takes place annually at 45th Street, along Avenues A, B and D and on Speedway, with significant damage and posing continuing threats to homes and property.
- The City of Austin’s planned Guadalupe Storm Drain Improvements have not yet been implemented and will only bring the system up to current levels of need and the Watershed Stabilization Project approved in 2018 was indefinitely postponed due to lack of funding.
- The proposed LDC raises impervious cover within the Waller Creek watershed, which encompasses Hyde Park, against Council direction
- The proposed code eliminates parking requirements within ¼ mile of corridors while sidewalks are only 38% complete within Hyde Park. For pedestrian safety, sidewalks and crossings must be significantly upgraded before parking requirements can be reduced or eliminated.
- The elimination of onsite parking will also jeopardize bike safety and negatively impact bikeability in a neighborhood with a Bike Score of 93, according to Walk Score. Active transportation plans should be reviewed and funded in anticipation of these and other unintended consequences for cyclists.
- The city must also understand what additional investments are needed to address mundane daily concerns like curbside and alleyway trash collection in areas where there will be more cars parked on the streets and more units per property, each with its own garbage, recycling and compost bins.

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association therefore resolves that the Land Development Code must include infrastructure improvements, with no additional density granted before these upgrades occur.

In addition to calling on the city to address the four specific issues above, the Neighborhood Association urges the city to ensure that appropriate operations planning and budget forecasting occur before any new code is enacted. Each city Department should be required to submit an analysis of the budget impacts of enacting the new code (including staffing additions and training costs) with analysis to include any and all resources required for fully-supported code application, code enforcement, and related operations.