



Meeting Notes
February 8, 2021

Call to Order

Recording started by Tamara Fou.

Sonny Garza, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Welcome by Co-Chairs

Mr. Sonny Garza, Co-Chair, took the roll and presented the speaker rules. 17 committee members were present during roll call. There were 81 participants.

Director's Report: Jennifer Ostlind, Deputy Director, Planning & Development Department welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioned the following:

- The goal of this project is to encourage a wider variety of housing products and making it easier to do the right kind of development.
- If you have any questions, please call the Planning & Development Department at 832-393-6600 or visit our website at HoustonPlanning.com

Suvidha Bandi: Today's discussion points are:

- Conservation districts discussion
- Recommendations for secondary dwelling units
- Preliminary ideas for small lot developments
- Homework activity & next meeting
- Public comments

Conservation Districts:

Roman McAllen: The purpose of today's presentation is to:

- Provide a recap on the concept of Conservation Districts;
- Note highlights on the draft ordinance; and
- Receive your input on the preliminary draft

Character and preservation tools:

- Minimum Building Line Ordinance
- Minimum Lot Size Ordinance
- Prohibited Yard Parking Ordinance
- Historic districts
- Protected landmarks
- Heritage districts (created in the past year)
- Conservation Districts Ordinance (ongoing)

Purpose of Conservation Districts:

- Preserve, maintain, and protect the community character and heritage of neighborhoods having distinctive characteristics and patterns of development
- Historic districts maintain status quo; however, there are areas where change is welcomed but an appropriate level of protection is desired
- Encourage new development that is compatible with the proposed Conversation Districts

Eligibility for application:

- The area contains at least one block face;
- The area has consistent physical attributes of scale and development; and
- The area is contiguous with boundary lines drawn to the logical edges of the area or subdivision, as may be indicated by a creek, street, subdivision line, utility easement, or other boundary.

Criteria for designation:

- Common streetscapes, street patterns, significant community sites, or land use patterns creating an area identity;
- A common pattern of improvements, and landscaping, or building setbacks on the properties;
- A common scale or bulk among buildings and structures, roof heights, location of garages, or other building footprint elements; or
- The proposed district is an area that was planned or developed by or for historically underrepresented or disenfranchised communities.

Menu of elements:

- Building height or number of stories;
- Building size, massing;
- Principal elevation features;
- Lot size, coverage;
- Front and side setbacks;
- Off-street parking and loading requirements;
- Roof line and pitch;
- Paving, hardscape covering;
- Building orientation;
- General site planning (location of primary and ancillary 17 structures);
- Urban architectural character;
- Garage entrance location;
- Fences and walls;
- Entrance lighting;
- Driveways, curbs and sidewalks;
- Demolition; and
- Building relocation.

Review of development applications in Conservation Districts:

- Conservation District boundaries shall be entered into the City's permitting system to flag them for historic presentation office review.
- Staff shall review each application for compliance with the standards in the adopting ordinance.
- Historic preservation office may request the advice of an HAHC commissioner or apply to the HAHC for review and comment in particular cases where additional expertise is required.

Kim Mickelson: We have been working hard with staff on this draft ordinance based on your input. As you read through it, we welcome any feedback or comments. We're still working on some issues with staff. We may make some further modifications. This is an iterative process.

Conversation District Questions? Comments?:

Sherri Smith: Thanks for the overview. On the list of elements, can you indicate more than one element for the basis of creation for a Conservation District?

Roman McAllen: You're referring to the criteria for designation list?

Sherri Smith: This menu of elements list is for someone who is applying or the elements that must be met to create a Conservation District?

Roman McAllen: A Conservation District application can choose to ask to have a variety of these menu of elements regulated. These aren't required for application eligibility. They're just a potential list of elements that could be regulated. If an area is only asking for a minimum lot size or minimum building line, we would discourage them from applying for a Conservation District. They can just use that standing program.

Sonny Garza: If someone is asking for a Conservation District to regulate more than minimum lot size or building line, could minimum lot size or building line still be included as part of a Conservation District for streamlining?

Kim Mickelson: Yes, this would be a way to combine separate procedures or petitions.

Lisa Clark: How do these Conservation Districts compare to minimum building line or lot size applications in terms of area? Do they need the same percentage of residents?

Roman McAllen: A neighborhood will need the support of owners within 51% of the tracts in the proposed district for that district to move forward.

Kim Mickelson: We haven't worked out all the logistics on that yet.

Lisa Clark: Yes, I don't want it to be a shortcut or streamline. It needs to be the same across petition types. When an application is submitted to the Planning Department, how does the public know that their property is on hold until this district is created or not? Is it like applications for other ordinances?

Kim Mickelson: We've tracked a similar timeline for Historic Commission applications. I'd like to do that same review for other applications like minimum lot size and prohibited yard parking.

Lisa Clark: What if you have 8 lots—4 on each side: one block face side wants it (and those lots are owned separately by different owners) but the other block face side doesn't (and those lots are owned collectively by one owner), how does the owner who collectively owns one of the block faces appeal this decision? The same way they would for other applications?

Kim Mickelson: These will go to the Historic Commission and then on to Council for adoption. In this draft, either the Historic Commission or the Council can modify the boundaries or the guidelines that are developed in the ordinance for that particular Conservation District.

Roman McAllen: A key factor that came out of that Supreme Court case that happened related to preservation in Houston was that Houston's preservation ordinances must comply with Chapter 211. On the notification part of it, there's a rigorous requirement that would need to be met.

Zion Escobar: I have a clarification question on the eligibility criteria. Criteria B: "Existing historic districts may not be converted into Conservation Districts." Could someone provide clarification on exactly what that means? Particularly for a neighborhood like Freedmen's Town which is a federal historic district? Would that preclude us from seeking a Conservation District?

Roman McAllen: Good catch. That should read "local historic districts can't convert." I think it would be nice to be able to convert local historic districts into Conservation Districts, but I don't think I'd have the support of the Historic Commission.

Kim Mickelson: The idea is that we don't want to lose historic districts. We do foresee a time when you could be a historic district in addition to a Conservation District because the Conservation District deals with some other elements.

Zion Escobar: Wonderful. So this is an "and" not an "or"?

Kim Mickelson: Yes.

Peter Freedman: How does the voting work? How is the 51% calculated on a block?

Roman McAllen: The same way it's calculated for a historic district but with different buy-in needed. It's calculated based on tracts. If you own side-by-side lots, it's considered 1 tract. We need 51% of the tract owners to buy-in for the application to move forward. This way, it avoids having one owner from having a greater impact.

Sonny Garza: At Planning Commission, for minimum lot size applications, don't we use more metrics? The percentage of total owners per block as well as the percentage of total property per block? That helps give us some balance.

Roman McAllen: I'm not familiar with that process. Is that within the ordinance?

Kim Mickelson: I'm not sure if it's written into ordinance, but we'll make sure to look at that to see how it's balanced. Excellent question, Mr. Freedman. We want to make sure this is used as a shield, not a sword.

Curtis Davis: In terms of the right to vote on this, this is conceptually treated as a property interest concern, not a civic interest concern. Can you speak to why this requires property owner votes and not resident votes?

Kim Mickelson: I would say that it's set up based on notice requirements set up by State legislation. This has generally rolled into most City regulations. We can open the discussion for what it means for residents as well and how we might balance that.

Curtis Davis: If you're a registered voter, you can be notified—your address is there. Is there a legal framework that requires it? If not, can we consider residency for voting eligibility? In many cases, there are more renters coming online as a percentage of the population than homeowners. As property is owned absentee or by corporate interests, residents become underrepresented or not represented at all. That's my concern.

Kim Mickelson: There is a legal framework for consulting owners. Imagine if tenants imposed restrictions on your property without the owner's permission. This is like other things that we have in this city that are generated from the ground up—typically grassroots by residents—but we must notify the owners. We can make sure we layer in additional notification to residents as well.

Neal Dikeman: What exactly are the key differences between this and the historic district ordinance in terms of set up and governance? I would find it very concerning if tax ID were the decision factor at a block level. I have quite a few properties that could be outvoted at 51% based on percentage of total tracts. This seems like a recipe for a fight. Doing it on a lot basis seems more reasonable.

Roman McAllen: A historic district requires an area to have a majority of historic structures—that's not a requirement for Conservation Districts. Historic districts require 67% of all property owners versus 51% for Conservation Districts. Historic districts regulate in significantly more detail than Conservation Districts.

Neal Dikeman: So the Historic Commission is involved in Conservation Districts?

Roman McAllen: Yes, just in the approval of creating the Conservation District. We haven't explored appeals yet.

Mike Dishberger: I hope we have an opportunity to see a final draft of this. The devil is in the details. I agree with Neal. I own property in some areas where I put a bunch of properties together under one tax ID because it's easier for tax purposes. I could see a situation where one person owns 75% of the land on a block and gets

outvoted because it's per owner. I'd like to see it measured based on percentage of front footage. I don't want this to be an easier go around for creating historic districts—then most of the city is covered by these. 51% is not a heavy bar. We're making it an easier bar by saying one owner per property. What about residents in ADUs? I'm for Conservation Districts. I just don't want it to become a tool that takes over Houston because it's easy to pass.

Lisa Clark: My concern is about using tax IDs. If I get outvoted based on tax IDs, that's not fair—that is a property taking. It needs to be lot by lot. They should not be combined as a tract. I agree with Mike—we should get a chance to look at the final draft of the ordinance to review the details. I agree with the idea of Conservation Districts. I just want to know exactly what we're agreeing to.

Megan Sigler: 51% means an automatic Council hearing and adoption?

Sonny Garza: If there's 51% and someone sends in a protest, then it goes to Planning Commission. If it's 51% without protest, then it goes straight to City Council based on my understanding.

Roman McAllen: To be clear, the 51% just allows the application to move forward to the Historic Commission. Under the current draft, 51% doesn't take the application straight to Council.

Megan Sigler: So if it gets 67%, it goes straight to Council?

Kim Mickelson: If it gets to 51% as a Conservation District, it goes to Historic Commission and then to City Council regardless of whether there's a protest or not. So more of them will get seen. Is your comment that they should also go through Planning Commission?

Megan Sigler: I feel like when applications for minimum lot size come to Planning Commission at 51%, there's such great dialogue for the public. I hope Conservation District applications get the same chance—whether it's at Planning Commission or Historic Commission.

Scott Cubbler: I'm representing the Super Neighborhood Alliance. I sympathize with developers, but all of us have lived in environments where we'd like the opportunity to review things before they get sent through. I'm hearing concerns that we don't want an additional review. Maybe the review time should be limited?

Lisa Clark: I'd like to answer on behalf of developers. I think there's been a misunderstanding. We want these applications to be reviewed. We don't want these applications to be pushed through if there's a protest. We want everyone who owns property to have a fair say in what happens to their land. It's not a review issue.

Scott Cubbler: So you're fine with 51% as long as we're clear about what 51% means.

Lisa Clark: Sort of. If there's 51% with a protest, we want there to be a forum for protestors to speak on behalf of their property. It shouldn't just sail through Council at 51% without review.

Kim Mickelson: We know from a legal perspective that we must be sensitive to property owners' property rights and notifications. Yes, that application is 51% and all of those will be reviewed by Historic Commission—with or without objections. There's a robust opportunity for public comment. The ordinance drafts will be made publicly available.

Neal Dikeman: For clarification, can you walk through how noncontributing, nonconforming properties, or demolition is handled after the Conservation District set up? Are these administratively handled? Is there any notice period? What is the mechanism that you have envisioned?

Roman McAllen: The processes are very different for Conservation Districts. We're not talking about contributing and noncontributing buildings at this point. As part of the draft ordinance, the Conservation District application must specify what they'd like to regulate. If there's enough buy-in, I suppose that an application can specify a particular house or collection of structures that they're concerned about. Right now, we're not looking at it in that regard. It's hard to compare this to historic districts because we're not going to craft an inventory of structures.

Neal Dikeman: If someone establishes a Conservation District that has 8 houses on a block and one is very different than the others, is that house carved out or grandfathered? How is it handled in the set-up process and what happens if you want to make a change to it going forward?

Roman McAllen: This is a bit different. The City of San Antonio has a lot of Conservation Districts that are not regulated by Historic Preservation but they're still a preservation tool.

Kim Mickelson: We're not contemplating contributing and noncontributing structures. The idea is that the adopting ordinance for each Conservation District would regulate several items from the menu of elements list. During the public review process, staff would be instructed to draft design guidelines that would guide staff. Those would be incorporated into the ordinance and would be done with such clarity that development applications would be administrative approvals by staff. They would not go through Commission review. Refer to page 5-6 for more information about the administrative process. You wouldn't be going for a certificate of appropriateness like you would in a historic district.

Neal Dikeman: I can see this as a much more streamlined tool—I understand the value of that. I'd like you all to consider some level of clarification on the grandfathering process of things that don't fit. I want to be sure there's clarity on this before a Conservation District application is submitted.

Megan Sigler: If there's a house that needs to be torn down or you want to build something on a vacant lot in a Conservation District, you're going to have to meet the criteria that the 51% have put on that lot? That will be known in the ordinance? This will be handled by staff review?

Kim Mickelson: Yes.

Megan Sigler: That will be known before if there's a replat?

Kim Mickelson: Based on the adopting ordinance and those design criteria, we anticipate in our first test runs that a lot of this will deal with bulk and scale of buildings—not architectural style per se. These areas once created will be flagged in the permitting system just like they are for minimum lot size or historic districts. If you come in with plans for a vacant lot in that district, the system will flag it and notify staff that the application needs to be reviewed by Historic Preservation.

Megan Sigler: I do have a concern about the lot versus tract voting process. There needs to be something that's a little fairer for the property owner that does have multiple lots.

Roman McAllen: I think we pulled over that lot/tract language over from what is existing within the historic district application process. I'll look back at that to make sure that it feels equitable.

Sonny Garza: Yes, let's look at that. If we're talking about consensus here, it seems like most here are concerned about getting a fair shake and gets a hearing. Those seem like the two items that are most contentious currently.

Recommendations for Secondary Dwelling Units:

Suvidha: Single family residential definition (today):

- One building containing not more than 2 separate units (duplex)
- One dwelling and a detached secondary unit of not more than 900 SF
- A building containing one dwelling unit on one lot that is connected by a party wall to another dwelling unit on an adjacent lot

Attached vs. detached secondary dwelling units (today): Maximum of 2 dwelling units allowed on single family restricted lots 3500 SF or larger when not prohibited by deed restrictions. 2 parking spaces required for single family.

- Attached: No maximum second unit size; requires 2 additional parking spaces
- Detached: Maximum second unit size is 900 SF; requires 1 additional parking space

We want to increase housing options in the city. **Graphics highlighting housing unit construction by type between 2015-2019 within Houston; the high costs of car ownership; car ownership data trends; and research demonstrating an increasing preference for smaller urban homes near amenities within the Houston area:** See recording.

Proposed Recommendations for secondary dwelling units:

- 3500 SF minimum lot size
- Remove size limit for detached secondary unit
- Parking based on unit size (attached/detached): 2 off-street parking spaces for main unit
- +0 if second unit \leq 1000 SF
- +1 if second unit = 1001-1200 SF
- +2 if second unit $>$ 1200 SF

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- No parking minimum if close to transit for either unit: within ½ mile buffer from high frequency bus, rail, park & ride and transit stations; within ¼ mile buffer from high comfort bikeways and bike stations
 - Limit 1 curb cut per lot (12-15')

Result of the proposed recommendation:

- Increase the variety of home options
- Need for units with no parking or reduced parking
- Incentivize smaller units
- Provide equity for Houstonians
- Allow property owners to build net worth
- Preserve permeable area

Recommendations for Secondary Dwelling Units Questions? Comments?:

Sonny Garza: I want to remind everyone of the purposes of this committee. We're trying to create greater density with more housing options in Houston while keeping communities together. We're not trying to cut corners to make it easier for developers. More housing options might mean more accessory dwelling units or smaller homes on smaller lots.

Scott Cubbler: The Kinder Institute did a study recently about this. It got some pushback from my colleagues about ADUs getting dilapidated over time. At that point, owners might not be able to rent the unit out, but their property taxes will not reflect that. Are we potentially creating a burden on the taxpayer?

Suvidha Bandi: Interesting comment. It could happen but that could happen even if it's a single home or any other structure. I'm not sure that we'll be able to control that with development regulations.

Sonny Garza: I understand your point. To use a terrible analogy: if you buy a house that you can't afford, you're going to find yourself in a bad place. I don't think we have any kind of insight based on what's happened in other places—even in California.

Scott Cubbler: I don't know if we're going to have a solution to this. It was just an interesting point that came up. California is interesting to look at because you're looking at an environment with an entirely different socio-economic situation. I'm not trying to stop the conversation—it was just a point of discussion among the Super Neighborhood Alliance.

Curtis Davis: Just a quick point in response to that question. If you look at cities with current owner-occupied multifamily housing, you'll find that housing is generally well cared for over time. If it's dilapidated, there are general economic conditions within the district or city that are driving that rather than the individual forces. Worcester and Boston, Massachusetts are good examples of cities that have seen a renaissance and stabilization of the 3-unit housing type over the past 20-30 years.

Sonny Garza: I used to own a duplex some years ago. When I went to sell it, I thought I'd get the same price per square foot as a single-family home. I was surprised to learn that I would get a good 30-35% less. If this is still the case, there might be a built-in savings there that maybe we haven't considered.

Neal Dikeman: I think this is fantastic. Why was the curb cut limit added? We're seeing that in many cases there are more than one curb cut already there for a duplex unit. I see no reason why a second unit needs parking at all. There's a huge demand for 1 and 0 car residences especially for second or third units on a property. I've had projects tied up for more than 2 years waiting on this exact thing because the second unit was just a couple of square feet too big. It's unclear to me that distance is needed to transit. The residents that we have who don't have a car use Uber—it's high frequency as needed. They're not using normal commute patterns.

Peter Freedman: I really do like these rules. The curb cut limit makes sense on smaller lots—you don't want to restrict the amount of street parking. What about corner lots or larger lots? It makes sense to have an access point on each street. If you have a 10,000-15,000 SF lot, I would hate to limit that to a single curb cut.

Sonny Garza: Is there a provision for a variance in that case, Suvidha?

Suvidha Bandi: That's a good point. The reasoning for adding the curb cut limit is to minimize excessive driveways like we see on front loader lots with 25' wide driveways which is essentially 2 driveways. If we allow 2 units on one lot with the allowance of 2 driveways, that recommendation goes against our goal of not having too many pedestrian conflicts with driveways along the sidewalk. We will take a second look at corner lots. The variance request is a legal question.

Sonny Garza: If this passes as written, I want to make sure there are options for a little bit of variability, so we don't have a completely hard and fast rule. We can address that next time. Dipti, did you want to jump in?

Dipti Mathur: The variance provision may be possible. Where we're going with these rules is a collection that can't be separated. If you're doing a 1000 SF ADU, you must do only one curb cut. Maybe we should look at large or corner lots, but the idea is to improve walkability and reduce pedestrian conflicts with cars—decrease the probability of accidents.

Mike Dishberger: Again, this is great. The corner lot is interesting. Maybe you limit it to one curb cut per street and even reduce the driveway to 12' maximum. In some cases, you could even decrease that to 8' if Public Works would allow that. I'm a builder. I like doing these detached garages—this will really help. For duplexes, maybe the extra parking space threshold is 1400 SF instead of 1200 SF. 1200 SF might be a little small. You're really going to increase the number of ADUs with this. People are waiting to do this kind of work.

Suvidha Bandi: Regarding the curb cuts, we're trying to avoid an entire frontage filled with a driveway curb cut.

Scott Cubbler: I'm thrilled that we're having these discussions because I want to counter everything that Neal Dikeman said. The reason why we have these requirements for different parking spaces is to keep the cars from being parked on the street. In ten years from now, if we all get rid of our cars and use Uber because of driverless

vehicles, then we can re-address that conversation. As of now, most people have vehicles. I'm concerned about the access to transit aspect because there are bus stops everywhere so developers won't put parking spaces in. I think the numbers that you have here are very appropriate and will serve to try to move the vehicles from being parked on the streets.

Lisa Clark: This is great. The purpose is to get the cars off the street, but also open the streets up for more parking. Not allowing so many curb cuts allows you to have some more parking spaces—and the recycling and trash trucks aren't hitting vehicles while they're trying to pick trash up. I think this helps so many things in the city. As Suvidha shared, we don't want just driveways or dangerous situations for pedestrians. I agree with the corner lot exception and I think we also need to think about lot size. I live in an area where there are a bunch of really large lots and I can see numerous people here who would love to do ADUs but they may need that second curb cut because their lot is so large. I think we need to consider what the true maximum lot size is to limit to just one curb cut so variances aren't required every single time.

Colin Scarff: It's not unusual for cities to have driveway spacing requirements for driveways—the City probably already has them. One solution to the issue is that you set a metric that says you can't have a driveway closer than a certain distance from another driveway. So larger lots would get an extra driveway.

Lisa Clark: That's an excellent point.

Curtis Davis: To echo everyone, staff has done a fantastic job on putting this together. Building on what Colin said, should we not also consider linear feet of frontage as part of the curb cut formula?

Richard Smith: We do have spacing requirements for driveways right now. It's currently set that there should be a minimum distance of 10' between driveway edges for residential. We limit them for commercial to approximately 1 per every 20'.

Sonny Garza: I would like to see more of that. I don't think we're doing that in many of our townhome communities.

Suvidha Bandi: We want to make sure that one of our goals is to reduce the number of curb cuts that take away from the pedestrian realm. We will look at establishing a distance between curb cuts—especially if the curb cuts are both on the same property.

Sandy Stevens: I think there are some wonderful ideas that are in this proposal. The concern that I have is that we still drive cars. Because of parking elimination, the neighborhood that I live in will have additional parking pressure put on it. You can't get to a grocery store in my neighborhood without a car. In some instances, Uber would be the option, but even though we're bordered by 2 light rail stations on either end of the neighborhood, it's hard to get to a grocery store.

Jeffrey Kaplan: I just want to say to that point, if there is pushback on parking, neighborhoods have seen investment in micromobility and transit-oriented development, especially within the TOD ordinance. Those

neighborhoods are seeing the built environment adapt to the proximity. In one of the projects that we're doing now, we have a micro urban grocer that is specifically going into food deserts in burgeoning neighborhoods where an H.E.B. won't go in and are catering to people within a mile. They're going to carry under 500 SKUs and price low and high with local farm produce based on the clientele. If our code does reflect proximity, there's a huge demand for people living in these neighborhoods to live car-free or car-lite. Whereas, if you're in a suburban neighborhood that doesn't have a tight grid or mobility, it's harder.

Suvidha Bandi: Overall, from the comments, what I heard is that we must take a second look at the one curb cut per lot and see if we can establish some criteria on corner lots or on lot size. There are also certain concerns about parking. One point that I'd like to make is the kind of development we see today is a result of rules prepared when I was born—almost forty to fifty years ago. What we do today will impact far into the future. The rules are promoting car-free living—property owners can decide to add more spaces. It's just that the minimum will not be required by the City. I really appreciate the great comments from the committee on this topic.

Homework:

Lynn Henson: Visit Let's letstalkhouston.org/livable-places to:

- Read Public Square's "Testing New Ideas with Cottage Courts" article by Robert Steuteville
- Read Public Square's "Micro-townhouses designed for flexibility" article by Robert Steuteville

Next Meeting: March 8th

Public Comment:

Kevin Strickland: The Assistant Director talked about walkability and livability which are 2 sides of the same coin. I would encourage the committee that 50% of Houston is unwalkable. For the work that you're doing, we must solve walkability—it's not an option, it's a must-have. Here are some examples of issues that the committee might be able to tackle. Firstly, right-of-way encroachments. The City is very lax on reclaiming it. Builders are encouraged to leave boulders in right-of-way—once they're there, they're hard to get rid of. Secondly, broken sidewalks—it's probably a funding issue but unless we fix the broken sidewalks, people are not going to be able to reach their public transportation safely. Lastly, sidewalk exceptions. I think this is left over from Walkable Places and it's a big loophole. Hundreds of sidewalk exceptions have been granted since 2020. Any gains we make at filling sidewalks are lost because of the sidewalk exception.

George Frey: My comment or request is more for Roman, Suvidha, and the Planning Department. I'm a big fan of Livable Places but sometimes it's very difficult to get some information and understand what's out there and available. Earlier in the call, you talked about this new Conservation District program. A lot of it is very similar to other programs that are out there. For me as an ordinary citizen, it's very difficult to navigate all the websites and understand all the different programs and requirements. Even listening to all commissioners here, I wonder how all the rules compare to other programs—it's overwhelming. I request that you be able to summarize this and show this on your websites so that we can more easily apply for it in a one-stop-shop. I live within SNC14, and I'd like to be a part of this program, and I think more than 51% of my neighbors would like to see it as well. I've submitted a couple of requests via email to Walkable Places and I'd like to know how to proceed with it.

Aimee Von Bokel: Actually, I think I need to learn more about this organization before I comment. I just had some questions about flooding and displacement. I think I'll read over the materials and come back next time.

Tanya Debose: I'm with the Independence Heights community. Thank you to Roman and the Planning Department for putting together the language for the Conservation Districts. Communities like Independence Heights are very historic and have very few tools to protect themselves or chart a path for the character of the neighborhood that we want to see. I'm a fifth-generation descendant of the people who started this community, and what I see everyday is a lot of new townhomes with front loaded garages going up in our community where people drive in their garage, and we never see them. This is a community filled with front porches where people know each other and their neighbors—that's how we like it. I believe that a tool like a Conservation District would allow us to develop with our new neighbors in an equitable way where everyone in the community can feel at home. We in Independence Heights support this Conservation District ordinance.

Randall Baxley: I like the Conservation Districts and the ADU recommendations coming forward that limit minimum parking. The street parking does need to be addressed in some way as well—don't want to have people with 3 cars parking on the street. If we look back in time at Bellaire and other neighborhoods, there were townhouses that were build and people thought those were destroying the neighborhood, but they continued to destroy the neighborhood. Here on the northside, we're next. The townhouses have begun and I'm not sure how that will affect the ability to have Conservation Districts in areas that already do not meet the standards with 4 to 6 units on a lot.

Danny Asberry El: I want to support the Conservation Districts because I want to make sure people have the tools even if they don't have the ability. I want to support those who don't always have a tool to always preserve their own neighborhoods and their own cultures and development. I recently just came from the Middle East and I saw them use the conservation concept with their people and it was wonderful. Everyone got what they wanted and felt at home where they were. I'm born and raised in Houston on the northside over by Homestead and I know what developers can do. So, I support the Conservation District effort all day long.

Alan Watkins: I'm with the Houston Housing Collaborative, ADUs came up in one of our general monthly meetings. A question was raised around affordability. If you have a current family homeowner who lives in a lower income neighborhood who hears about ADUs but is necessarily able to afford them, is it possible to potentially reduce some of the costs? Maybe that's a developer conversation. Are there ways in which costs can be reduced for low-income families who would like to put an ADU on their existing property? If someone could circle back, that would be awesome.

Mark Williamson: I'm very excited about this Conservation District but do think there was quite a bit of confusion about the quantification of the qualification for doing the application. Tracts versus lots, and property owner rights versus minority owner property rights need to be really clarified to be fair to all the constituents there. Some of the things people said from memory conflict with what I know of the proceedings in other venues. Also, for ADU size and driveway issues, another feature that works well in our neighborhoods is twinned driveways where adjacent properties have no arc between 2 driveways—it's effectively one wide curb cut

instead of having to dance around multiple curb cuts. That also provides additional space for trash cans and for parking.

Meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.