



HERITAGE SOCIETY APPLAUDS AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL FOR ACTION TO ENCOURAGE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

AUSTIN—The Heritage Society of Austin (HSA) has applauded the Austin City Council for their action August 6 to ease requirements for neighborhoods to establish historic districts.

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"Future generations of Austinites and visitors will have a better chance to experience our community's rich heritage thanks to the far-sighted decision of our council members," said HSA President Julian Read.

The action by Council modified the city's ordinance relating to historic districts by lowering the threshold of percentage of landownership required to support applying for district status from 60 percent to 51 percent, the level required by such Texas cities such as San Antonio, Houston and Galveston. Dallas and El Paso require no resident approval.

Read praised the efforts of the Heritage Society Preservation Committee in achieving a longtime goal of the organization.

"Co-chairs John Donisi and Lin Team, their fellow committee members, and Executive Director Jacqui Schraad all have given untold hours of time and efforts to this vital action to help community groups preserve their neighborhoods," Read said. "We are grateful to the Council for their response."

John Donisi said, "The Heritage Society thanks the entire City Council for its unanimous support of the revisions to the preservation ordinance. This is a huge victory for Austin -- for preservation, for sustainability and for economic development. This completes a major initiative by our new Mayor and Council, as Austin prepares for the honor of hosting the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Annual Conference in 2010."

"These revisions bring us in line with our peer cities on historic districts, establishes a tailored demolition by neglect process, and melds our Austin values by incorporating sustainability into the district process in a manner unmatched in Texas and likely nationally. We'd like to thank the broad coalition who supported and assisted in this effort," said Donisi.