

**CITY COUNCIL
DOWNTOWN DENSITY BONUS REQUEST
SITE PLAN REVIEW SHEET**

CASE NUMBER: SP-2024-0238C **CITY COUNCIL
HEARING DATE:** July 24, 2025

PROJECT NAME: 305 W. MLK – Home2

ADDRESS: 305, 307, and 309 West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

OWNER: PA Hospitality – Austin Downtown, LP

APPLICANT: Thrower Design (Victoria Haase)

URBAN DESIGN STAFF: Jorge E. Rousselin, CNU-A Phone: (512) 974-2975
Jorge.Rousselin@austintexas.gov

**SITE PLAN
CASE MANAGER:** Randall Rouda Phone: (512) 978-4665
randall.ruda@austintexas.gov

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN: Downtown

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The applicant is requesting administrative approval for the construction of a 13-story hotel comprised of 168 rooms with retail and streetscape improvements in accordance with the Downtown Density Bonus Program (DDBP). The project is participating in the DDBP for bonus area up to 8:1 floor-to-area (FAR) to be granted administratively.

PROJECT REQUEST:

In accordance with [LDC Section 25-2-586\(B\)\(6\)](#), the applicant is requesting, from City Council, additional floor-to-area ratio (FAR) from 8:1 to 11:1.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMISSION ACTION:

Design Commission: October 28, 2024:

The motion that the project 305 W MLK, located at 305 West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, does not comply with the Urban Design Guidelines for the City of Austin in accordance with Land Development Code § 25-2-586 (C)(1)(a)(ii) was approved with the following friendly amendments on motion by Commissioner Howard, seconded by Vice Chair Meiners on a 9-0-1 vote. Commissioner Carroll abstained. One vacancy on the dais.

The friendly amendment from Vice Chair Meiners was that the project is not in compliance with the following Urban Design Guidelines:

- AW.5 – Incorporate Civic Art in Both Public and Private Development
- PS.1 – Protect the Pedestrian Where the Building Meets the Street
- PS.2 – Minimize Curb Cuts
- PS.4 – Reinforce Pedestrian Activity
- PS.6 – Enhance the Streetscape
- PS.7 – Avoid Conflicts between Pedestrians and Utility Equipment

- PS.9 – Provide Pedestrian-Scaled Lighting
- PS.10 – Provide Protection from Cars/Promote Curbside Parking
- PS.12 – Provide Generous Street-Level/Windows
- PS.13 – Install Pedestrian-Friendly Materials at Street Level
- B.2 – Provide Multi-Tenant, Pedestrian-Oriented Development at the Street Level
- B.3 – Accentuate Primary Entrances
- B.4 – Encourage the Inclusion of Local Character
- B.5 – Control On-Site Parking
- B.7 – Create Buildings with Human Scale

The friendly amendment by Commissioner Wittstruck was to encourage the removal of the driveway along the principal street and provide access via the alley; and if not feasible, align the driveway to the edge of the site to maximize public space and pedestrian entry. The amendments were accepted by the maker of the motion, Commissioner Howard, and Vice Chair Meiners, who seconded the motion.

Planning Commission Public Hearing: May 27, 2025:

The motion to close the public hearing and approve staff recommendation on the consent agenda made by Commissioner Woods, 2nd by Commissioner Skidmore, Commissioner Howard abstaining on 17 (Haney off the dias at 6:30 pm) was approved unanimously; Commissioner Anderson off dias.

Council Public Hearing: June 5, 2025 – postponed to July 24, 2025

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Gatekeeper Requirements:

To participate in the Downtown Density Bonus Program, projects must first satisfy the gatekeeper requirements as described in LDC [25-2-586\(C\)\(1\)](#), which are:

1. To substantially comply with the Urban Design Guidelines
2. Execute a restrictive covenant committing to provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages, consistent with the Great Streets Standards, and
3. Execute a restrictive covenant committing to achieve a minimum two-star rating under the Austin Energy Green Building program using the ratings in effect at the time the application is submitted.

For this project, the applicant has provided sufficient documentation to meet the gatekeeper requirements, as outlined below:

- The project will implement streetscape improvements consistent with Great Streets standards along West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard with a pedestrian-oriented design featuring wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, and streetlights.
- The applicant has committed to achieving a minimum **two-star** rating under the Austin Energy Green Building Program.
- The applicant has provided documentation indicating they will substantially comply with the Urban Design Guidelines and Staff has found the project substantially compliant with the Urban Design guidelines.

Bonus Area Analysis:

The applicant seeks a total “Bonus Area” – defined by [Section 25-2-586\(A\)\(1\)](#) as “the gross floor area that exceeds the maximum floor-to-area ratio allowed with the site’s primary entitlement” – as the bonus area approved administratively between 5:1 and 8:1 FAR (as permitted by [Section 25-2-586\(B\)\(3\)](#)), and

the bonus area above the administrative allowance of 3:1 FAR (as permitted by [Section 25-2-586\(B\)\(6\)](#)), up to a maximum 11:1 FAR.

The applicant has proposed to achieve 100% of the bonus area allowances through the following means:

1. Bonus area from 5:1 to 8:1 FAR: Pay **\$173,994.00 of fees-in-lieu** for affordable housing, to satisfy Section 25-2-586(E)(1)(b)(i).
2. Bonus area from 8:1 to 11:1 FAR: Pay **\$173,754.00 of fees-in-lieu** for affordable housing (to satisfy Section 25-2-586 (B)(6) and 25-2-586(E)(1)(b)(i).

With this, the applicant has met the Code requirement to go above and beyond what's required to achieve the administrative FAR allowance for community benefits Section 25-2-586(B)(6)(d)(1).

All fees-in-lieu above, totaling **\$347,748.00** will be paid into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the request for bonus area above what is allowed administratively by Section 25-2-586(B)(3), up to a maximum 11:1 FAR, due to the additional community benefits that will be realized in exchange for the additional bonus area.

PROJECT INFORMATION





SITE AREA	9,039 square feet	0.22 acres
EXISTING ZONING	DMU	
TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS	N/A	
CAPITOL VIEW CORRIDOR	No	
PROPOSED ACCESS	Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	
	Allowed/Required	Existing
FLOOR-AREA RATIO	5:1	N/A
BUILDING COVERAGE	100%	100%

EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USES

	ZONING	LAND USES
<i>Site</i>	DMU	Computer Repair/Vacant buildings
<i>North</i>	CS-NP	University of Texas/Robert B. Rowing Hall
<i>South</i>	DMU	Multifamily/Greenwood Towers & Condominiums
<i>East</i>	DMU	Restaurant
<i>West</i>	DMU	Restaurant

ABUTTING STREETS

Street	ASMP Required ROW / Existing ROW	Pavement Width	ASMP Classification
Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	80'	50'	Corridor Mobility – Level 3


 PROJECT BOUNDARY
 LOT BOUNDARIES
 ZONING DISTRICTS

This product

Downtown Density Bonus

Site Plan Case#: SP-2024-0238C

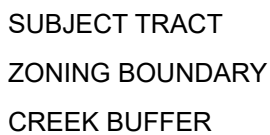
Address: 305, 307, 309 W Martin Luther King JR. Blvd

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Created: 4/14/2025

The logo of the City of Austin, featuring a shield with a red and white design, a blue banner across the middle, and a blue eagle perched on top. The shield is set within a circular border containing the text "CITY OF AUSTIN" at the top and "FOUNDED 1839" at the bottom.

Created: 4/15/2025

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Rousselin, Jorge](#)
Subject: Planning Commission Meeting - May 13 - Case Number: SP-2024-0238C
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 2:10:54 PM

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External Email - Exercise Caution

Jorge,

Many thanks for your follow up on Friday (telephone call and email) regarding my interest in the proposed increase in FAR for this hotel development. Victoria Haas with Thrower Design was kind enough to share more information regarding the project. Unfortunately, there are gaps that leave some of our questions unanswered.

I have registered to speak in opposition to the proposed change. The board of directors representing the Cambridge Tower Council of Owners voted unanimously to oppose the change, so I will be representing the Council.

The proposed ingress and egress for the hotel defy the realities of that location. We believe the safety and utility of pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and public transit are not served, in addition to the negative impact on quality of life in the neighborhood. I was unable to locate documentation regarding the impact on traffic congestion, whether vehicular or otherwise. An opportunity to enhance pedestrian movement and safety would be lost.

While I would hope the matter could be postponed for consideration by the Planning Commission until more information can be received, I wanted to let you know about these developments. Again, I want to thank you for the courtesy and promptness of your reply.

Thank you for your public service.
John

John Hildreth
cell: [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Rousselin, Jorge](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SP2024-0238C
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 3:46:17 PM

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External Email - Exercise Caution

Jorge, I hope to virtually attend at least the speaker session at this evening's Planning Committee meeting, and would like to speak against the Applicant's requested increase of the FAR from 8.1 to 11.1 FAR.

My comments are essentially these:

The FAR has already been increased from 5.1 to 8.1, and the requested increase would take it to 11.1. The resultant density would undoubtedly increase the number of trips through this already-congested neighborhood.

I understand that because of the small size of the lot the Applicant wants to use the narrow alley between Guadalupe and Lavaca as the sole exit for the project. This means that the exit to Guadalupe will require the traffic to go through Cap Metro's counterflow bus lane, and that the exit on Lavaca will contribute to the traffic jam at MLK, and will tempt drivers to cross 3 traffic lanes and a bus lane in order to enter MLK going East.

Talley will also be subject to possible closure or interference when the corner lot is developed, or the tiny lot next door is developed, as it inevitably will be.

Jorge, I very much appreciate the help you have been in this process. Thanks!

William R. Allensworth

1801 Lavaca St. #12A

Austin, TX 78701

[REDACTED]
