

revised October 6, 2025

~~October 4, 2025~~

City Council & Mayor
City of Austin

Re: Rezoning Cases C14-2025-0049 and NPA-2025-0008.01

Dear Council Members and Mayor,

This letter requests that you **deny** two requests for rezoning the historic Rosewood Elementary School / Austin Can Academy property in District 1 including denial of: (1) rezoning the part of a property that faces the Sol Wilson and Bedford from Residential to Commercial Mixed Use (case C14-2025-0049) and (2) rezoning the entire property from Civic to Mixed Use (case NPA-2025-0008.01).

The subject property has a different setting on the north than the south, as appropriately reflected in the current zoning. The subject property faces Rosewood Street on the south, Hargrave Street on the west, Sol Wilson Street on north, and Bedford Street on the east. Rosewood and Hargrave Streets are larger streets that have other public and commercial uses and larger vehicle capacity. Sol Wilson and Bedford Streets are lined with single-family residences and both terminate in dead-ends. Please see attached for an overlay showing adjacent property uses and street types as well as photographs of the area.

This rezoning application is inappropriate since it pushes commercial use into a neighborhood of single-family residences, is along two low-capacity, ASMP Level 1 dead-end streets, and is unbalanced with the zoning on the Sol Wilson Street to the east of Bedford Street.

In the virtual public meeting hosted by the City, the developer (who doesn't currently own the property) expressed a desire to adaptively re-use the historic Rosewood Elementary School building and construct additional buildings and parking on the site. They reported that single-family housing is planned for the area currently zoned single-family residential. If the developer is planning to have single family housing in single family zoned area, why request Commercial Mixed Use & rezoning entire property from Civic to Mixed Use.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that Single-Family Residential zoning be retained on low capacity Sol Wilson and Bedford Streets where adjacent to single-family housing, in accordance with the developer's own plans. I also recommend that part of the property be rezoned to Commercial where the historic school building is located, where adjacent to existing Commercial zoning, public uses, and higher capacity streets. An overlay showing this option (compared to the existing zoning and application zoning) is attached.

Over 40 Homewood Heights residents have met regarding the rezoning. We are unanimous in FIVE main desires for the property:

1. **We are opposed to rezoning.** Rezoning is not necessary for the planned redevelopment as reported in the virtual public meeting. We are supportive of building housing where currently zoning for housing.
2. **We are supportive of the adaptive re-use of the historic Rosewood Elementary School and encourage historic designation.** I researched the history of the school and am including that information on the following page.
3. Should part of the property be redeveloped into a commercial use, we want it to contain a use that is **compatible with the neighborhood and be a place that neighbors experience as inclusive.**
4. We want any new use to **not increase traffic on the neighborhood streets** of Bedford and Sol Wilson, especially since these are dead-end streets.
5. We are supportive of the construction of single-family housing on the site and want it to be **affordable housing.**

My neighbors and I appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,
Kim Barker
1170 Bedford Street
Homewood Heights
Rosewood Neighborhood Association

History of Rosewood Elementary School

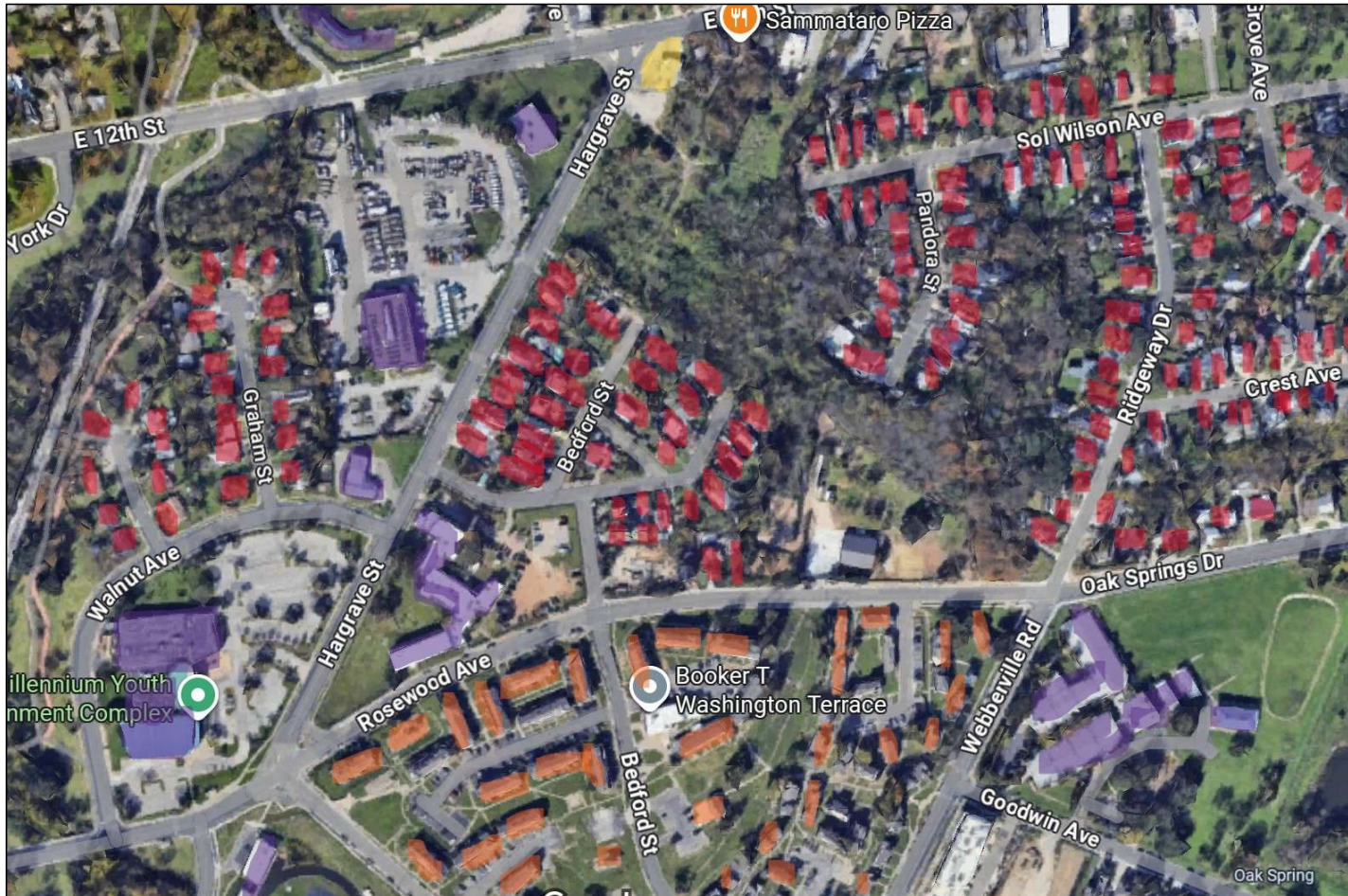
The historic Rosewood Elementary School opened in East Austin during the era of segregation, following the Austin City Plan of 1928 that called for public services for Black residents to be located east of East Avenue. The school began forming in the early 1930s, with multiple land acquisitions between 1932 and 1935. Classes were first held in frame buildings that were moved to the site including the Wheatville School building and an additional building previously located at House Park. Officially named Rosewood in 1932 at the recommendation of Austin Colored Teachers, the school grew quickly, with enrollment increasing dramatically as the surrounding neighborhoods were constructed. A permanent six-room brick building was completed in 1936, funded in part by the Public Works Administration.

Over the decades, Rosewood Elementary continued to grow and adapt. The school was expanded in 1940 with additional classrooms and a boiler house. A frame building was relocated to the site from Esperanza School to serve as a lunchroom at around the same time. Brick and concrete additions in 1951 and 1956 included more classrooms, cafetorium, administrative space, and covered porches. Despite the additions, the school faced overcrowding through the 1960s, leading to double sessions and the use of portable buildings.

In the mid-1980s, it transitioned into the F.R. Rice School, an alternative high school created as part of a broader effort to improve graduation rates and provide alternatives to expulsion. The school was named for F.R. Rice who retired from AISD in 1972 after serving as principal of Blackshear Elementary for more than 40 years where he pioneered a hot lunch program and established one of the first libraries at a Black elementary school in the region. He also served as the supervising principal at Rosewood Elementary for approximately ten years after the original permanent building was constructed.

The building returned briefly to elementary use before being sold to Texans Can in 2003. The Austin Can Academy operated a high school in the building until it closed in spring 2025, marking the end of the property's use as an educational institution deeply tied to the history of East Austin and its Black community.

Adjacent Property Uses

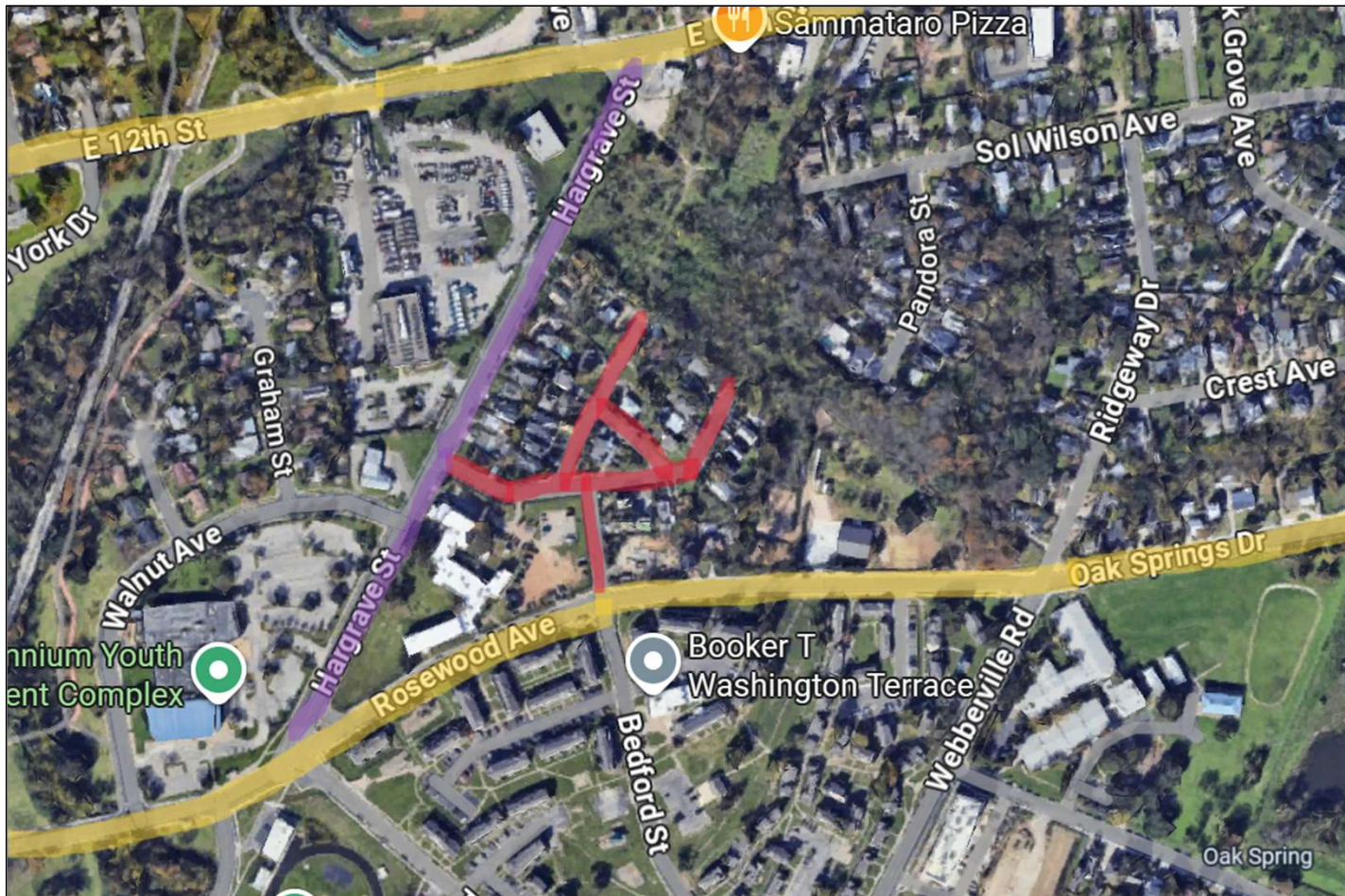


- Public
- Commercial
- Single-Family Housing
- Multi-Family Housing

Subject Property Location



Adjacent Street Types

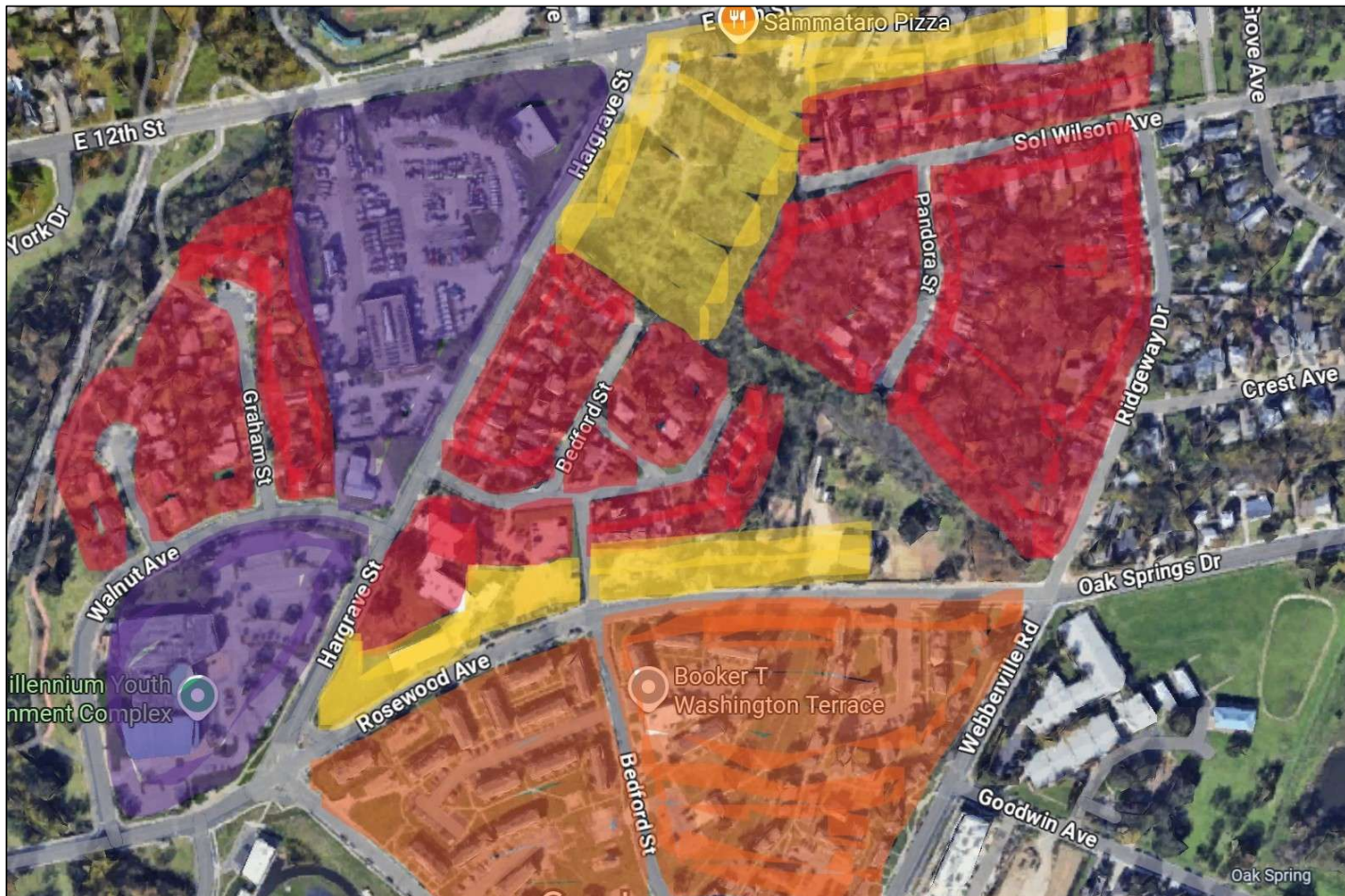


- ASMP Level 2
- ASMP Level 2
- ASMP Level 1 -
Dead-end streets

Subject Property Location



Current Zoning

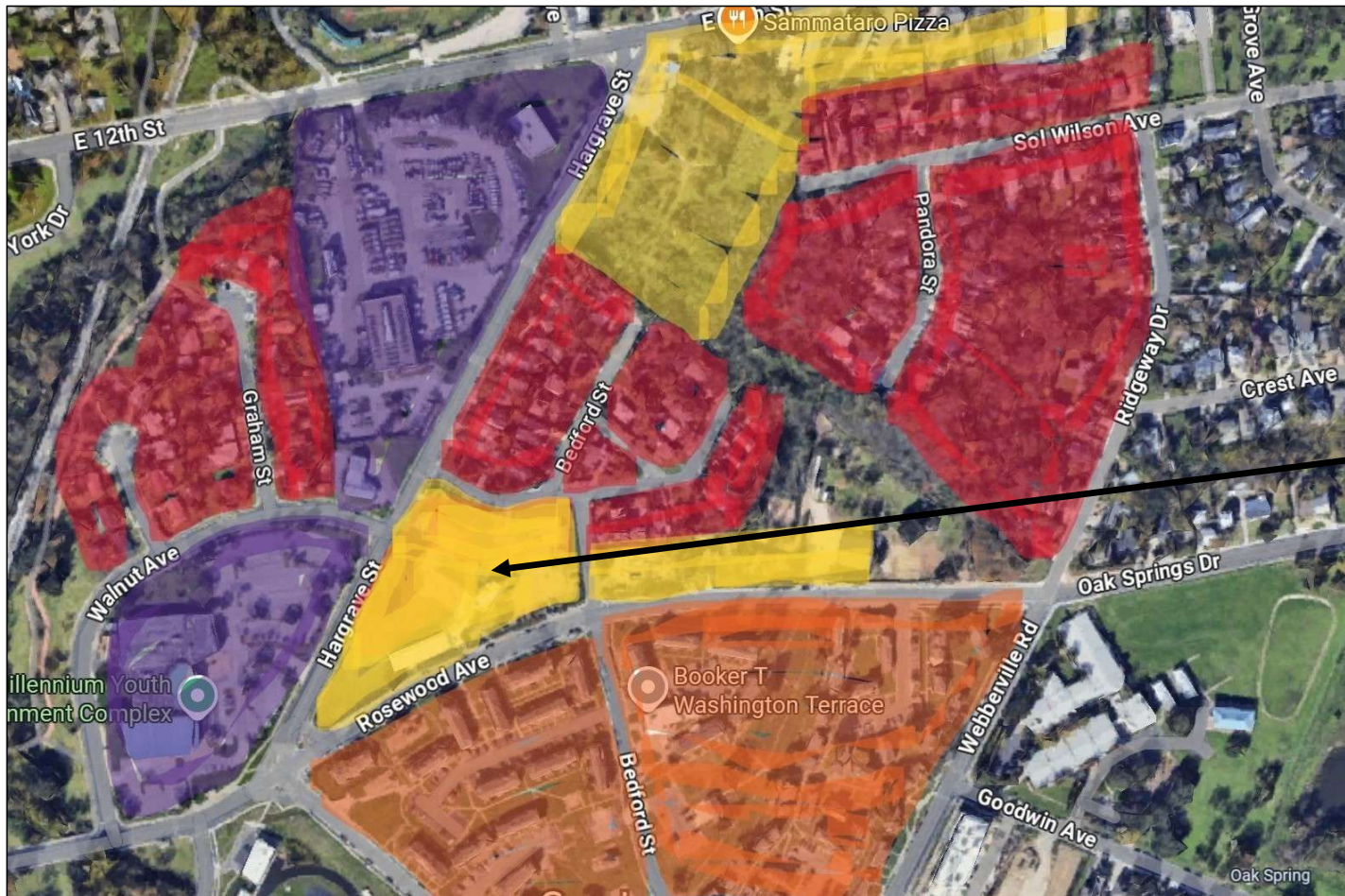


- Other
- Commercial
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

Subject Property Location



Zoning Change under Consideration

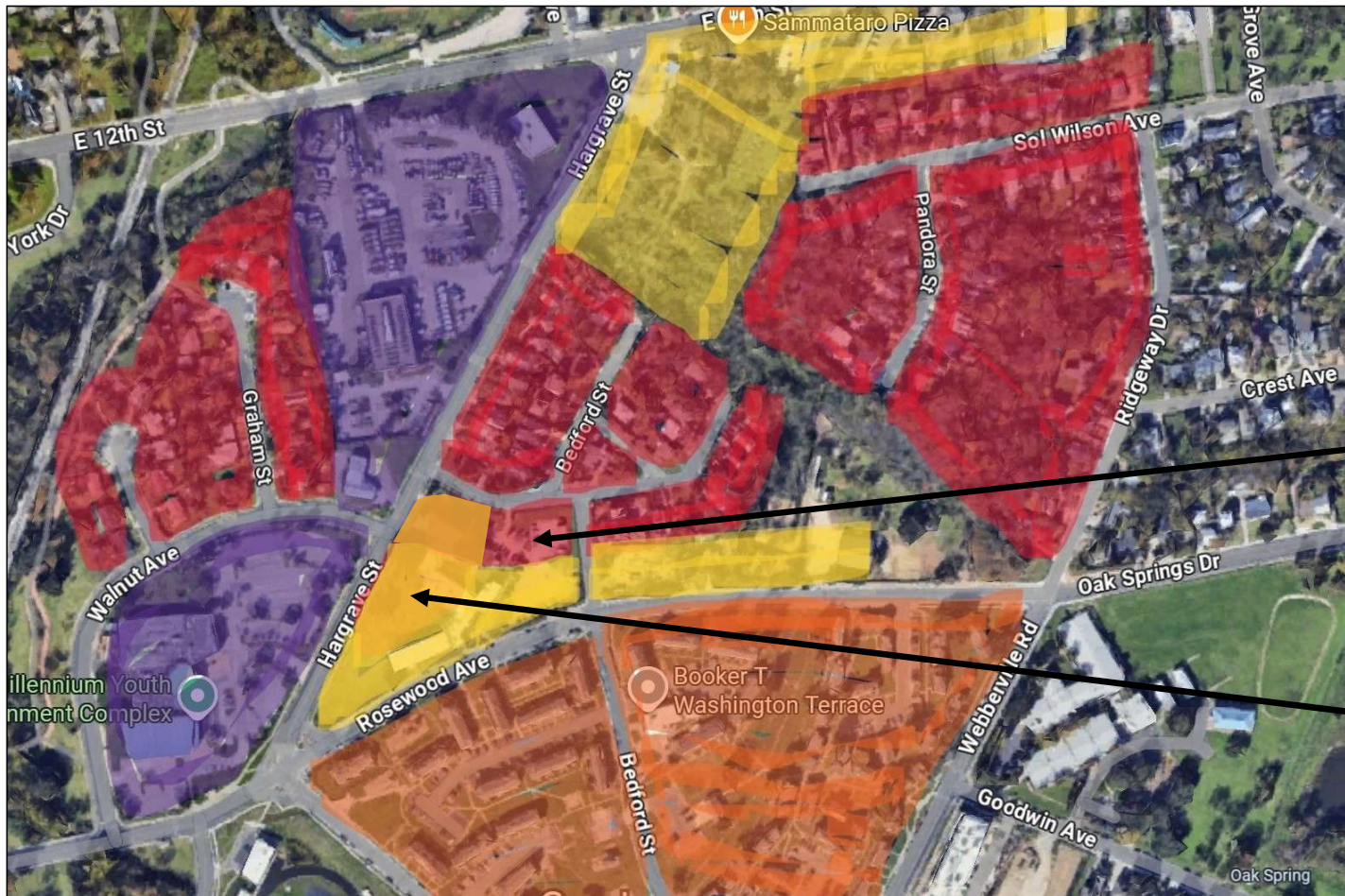


- Other
- Commercial
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

Incompatible due to:

1. Pushes commercial use into a neighborhood composed of single-family residences
2. Presence of two low-capacity, ASMP Level 1 dead-end streets,
3. Unbalanced with Sol Wilson Street east of Bedford Street

RECOMMENDED ZONING



- Other
- Commercial
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

Retain Single-Family Residential zoning where adjacent to other SF Residential zoning, single-family housing uses, and ASMP 1 streets

Re-zone to Commercial where adjacent to Commercial zoning, public uses, and ASMP 2 streets and where the historic building is located

Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 2 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to multi-family housing (at left) and higher capacity roadway including bus route and bike lane

Rosewood Avenue



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 2 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to multi-family housing (at right) and higher capacity roadway including bus route and bike lane

Rosewood Avenue



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 2 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to Millenium Youth Entertainment Center (public use at left) and higher capacity roadway including bike lane

Hargrave Street



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 2 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to Millenium Youth Entertainment Center (public use at left) and higher capacity roadway including bike lane

Hargrave Street



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 1 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to single-family houses (at left and center) and low-capacity street that terminates in a dead-end

Sol Wilson Street



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 1 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to single-family houses (at left and right) and low-capacity street that terminates in a dead-end (behind the photographer)

Bedford Street



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 1 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to single-family houses (at center and right) and low-capacity streets that terminate in dead-ends

Bedford & Sol Wilson Streets



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 1 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to single-family houses (at left, center, and right) and low-capacity streets that terminate in dead-ends

Bedford & Sol Wilson Streets



Photos of the Property Adjacent to ASMP Level 1 Streets



This part of the property is:

Adjacent to single-family houses (at left, center, and right) and low-capacity streets that terminate in dead-ends

Bedford & Sol Wilson Streets



Photos of the Dead-End Streets



Bedford Street



Sol Wilson Street

