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November 1, 2023

RE: [Item 24](#), 11.2.2023 Meeting of Austin City Council

Dear Mayor Watson, Mayor Pro Tem Ellis, and Members of the Austin City Council,

[Preservation Austin](#) exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. We strongly support Council Member Ryan Alter's resolution ([Item 24](#)) to minimize barriers to house relocation and deconstruction within Austin's city limits, and to build awareness around these sustainable strategies in this era of climate change. Every year hundreds of smaller and historic-age homes are demolished and thrown into the landfill. We see these homes as opportunities, not trash, and laud the Council Member for his leadership in shifting this narrative.

The number of house relocation projects within Austin's city limits has significantly decreased over the past decade, in large part because of procedural red tape, development fees, and complex permitting processes. Preservation Austin proudly supported 2023's "[House Relocation: A Practical Guide for Austin, Texas](#)" with funds from our [Matching Grant Program](#). The guide provides step-by-step instructions for use by Austin residents, developers, and design and construction professionals. It includes simple, clear, and accessible policy recommendations that the City of Austin could adopt to make this process easier to access.

Diverting older, historic-age homes from the landfill through house relocation would support the following city goals:

- **Affordability:** Smaller, older homes are among the most affordable options for renters and lower- to middle-income earners. Relocating smaller, older homes to create density elsewhere provides an opportunity to preserve the naturally occurring affordability of existing housing stock.
- **Sustainability:** House relocation provides an alternative to the landfill. Our [research](#) shows that construction and demolition debris comprises 25% of Travis County's three municipal landfills. Significant diversion is necessary for the City of Austin to meet our Zero Waste goals by 2040.
- **Preservation:** 85% of relocated houses in the past ten years have been moved outside city limits. Making relocation more accessible within Austin's city limits means saving our cultural and historic fabric for use by our own community, and creating more housing opportunities for Austinites.

Preservation Austin is grateful to Council Member Alter for spearheading this initiative, and to Council Member Pool, Council Member Fuentes, Council Member Velásquez, and Mayor Pro Tem Ellis for co-sponsoring this item. Thank you for your consideration and your service to the City of Austin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melissa A. Barry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Melissa Barry, President