

From: [Santos Ramirez](#)
To: [Public Testimony](#)
Cc: [ONeill, Kevin](#); [Willett, Nathan](#); [French, Lindsay](#); [Rogers, Wes](#); [Melissa Patterson Hazley](#); [Robinson, Melissa](#); [Rea, Crispin](#); [Bunch, Eric](#); [Curls, Darrell](#); [Parks-Shaw, Ryana](#); [Bough, Andrea](#); [Duncan, Johnathan](#)
Subject: Opposition to CD-CPC-2023-00141
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 10:50:38 AM

Dear Members of the City Council:

As a Westside resident, I would like to express my opposition to the Westside Heritage Urban Renewal Plan CD-CPC-2023-00141.

Here are some of my concerns:

The organization proposing this plan does not have the Westside's best interests at this time, nor have they had in the past decades. The Hispanic Economic Development Corporation conducted a blight study under the pretense of a 353 tax abatement plan a few years back. That plan was misleading and very controversial in their version of a 353 tax abatement plan. They own properties located on the Westside that are blighted and outdated on the facade, and they also bought a building at 2720 Jarboe St. that has sat there since the project was shut down due to not following Federal guidelines. The Executive Director, Mr. Zamora, owns multiple properties that are very blighted. Here's a list of a few of them- 1301, 1311, 1315 W 23rd Street Trafficway, 2316 Bellevue Ave, and 2713 Jarboe St. These are just a few examples of why we as a neighborhood have a robust biased opinion towards the Westside Heritage Urban Renewal Plan.

Also, the following as stated below:

Lack of Public Engagement: Many Westside residents have yet to understand the complete 27-page plan document, given that this plan would be in effect for 15 years; all of our neighbors deserve to understand it, not just a small group of people.

Lack of Transparency: Many questions have yet to be answered. The lack of transparency due to the lack of community engagement is concerning.

Redundant and Unnecessary: Tax incentives for the most vulnerable homeowners in our neighborhood already exist with the 353 plan. Homeowners can pay much less for a much longer tax incentive with the 353 plan. A total of **\$3,500** in home improvements is an insurmountable cost for anyone struggling to pay property taxes.

Does not Serve Intended Population: Most small business owners in the Westside do not own the land they operate on. Tax incentives should not be directed to a few [wealthy] commercial landlords. There are better ways to serve the actual intended beneficiaries—small business owners.

Ambiguity: The plan contains language that leaves room for misinterpretation and potential misuse by developers. Because of this, the plan can be exploited by developers to pursue projects that do not align with the best interests of our Westside neighborhood. Given the long history of our neighborhood, development with tax incentives should be considered on a case-by-case basis rather than a blanket policy.

Preservation of Historic Character: The plan states that the Westside neighborhood has a rich historical and architectural heritage. We agree that we want to preserve the historic character. Given the vague language and contradictory statements throughout the plan, we are concerned that the plan would not adequately protect our neighborhood.

Rewards Vacant Land Hoarders: This plan rewards owners of vacant property who hoard various lots of vacant land with a tax incentive. While previous versions of this plan only incentivized vacant land owners with properties adjacent to their residences, that is no longer the case with the plan's final version. Tax incentives should not be used to buy time for land hoarders waiting for the highest bidder.

I respectfully request that the City Council vote against the Westside Heritage Urban Renewal Plan and consider my and many community members' concerns.

Thank you for your time, and we hope you have all the facts before approving this plan.

Kinds regard,
Santos Ramirez
WestSide Resident since 1983