



CITY OF HOUSTON

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The Honorable Paul Bettencourt
Chairman, Senate Committee on Local Government
Room 3E.16 Capitol Building
Austin, Texas 78701

RE: Senate Bill 2037 related to the regulation of platting and subdivisions of land by a municipality or county

Dear Chairman Bettencourt:

On behalf of the City of Houston, I write in opposition to Senate Bill 2037 and ask that this written testimony be included in the formal legislative record for SB 2037. The City and I thank the Committee and Chairman for the opportunity to comment regarding this proposed legislation.

SB 2037 involves amending Section 212.003 to further limit a municipality's authority in their extraterritorial jurisdiction. We are particularly concerned about the following:

- *Modifying 212.003(a) to remove a municipality's ability to regulate access to public roads.* The City's subdivision standards require that all platted tracts have frontage on public streets and/or qualifying access easements to ensure safe access by property owners and emergency personnel. We regularly encounter situations where a proposed subdivision plat would leave an abutting property owner landlocked without his or her knowledge. These property owners look to the City to prevent this from happening. In these situations, we work with the developers to find reasonable solutions. Removing the City's authority to require access to a public street could result in hazardous conditions where development occurs without providing for the necessary infrastructure.
- *Adding 212.003(a)(6) to specify that municipalities cannot regulate sizes, dimensions, frontages, setbacks or other components of lot density.* Subdivision lot standards ensure new developments have adequate access to streets, space for infrastructure such as water meters, access for emergency personnel and green space, all of which are particularly important to community members. Every two weeks the Houston Planning Commission hears comment from ETJ residents in opposition to proposals for high-density, single-family developments. Also, removing a density restriction, without corresponding changes to the public street dedication requirements, would hinder the City's ability to ensure safe and orderly traffic circulation and access. There would be too many units with too few streets to accommodate the increased traffic burden.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you through the duration of this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ostlind

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