



R-28

Date: June 5, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Council Member Gary DeLong, Third District 
Council Member Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District 

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Neighborhood Character Stabilization Plan**

The 2010 Strategic Plan states, "Our neighborhood infrastructure is gradually deteriorating...we need new public policy, infrastructure and land planning strategies to ensure reinvestment in our neighborhoods." The Plan supports neighborhood efforts to create beauty and pride by establishing Strategic Action N4.4 to "develop and implement neighborhood identity initiatives that create or extend physical neighborhood identity and cohesiveness through master planning..." and Strategic Action N4.6 to "promote historic preservation and neighborhood appreciation"

The character of our neighborhoods is being irreversibly altered as the phenomenon of "mansionization" and "tear-downs" tears across fabric of our city. The term "mansionization" is commonly defined as new construction or additions on residentially zoned lots that are out-of-scale with the surrounding neighborhood, but which comply with the current City zoning regulations. The City must act now to prevent further damage to the character of our neighborhoods as "tear-downs" that include demolitions and major remodels have increased by nearly 500% since 2005.

We are requesting the City Council's consideration to enact a "Neighborhood Character Stabilization" (NCS) plan. The NCS would evaluate current zoning design guidelines and review of floor area ratios (FAR) to achieve consistent guidelines. If a demolition or major remodel is determined to be acceptable under the NCS, the massing, height, set backs and density must be carefully codified. This process would be an improvement over our current system of granting variances, not letting developers know that preservation and adaptive re-use are vital to our city, and continuing to allow inappropriate building throughout the city, thereby creating an extremely difficult development process for investors, homeowners and residents.

Recommendation: **Request the City Manager to report to the City Council on development of a "Neighborhood Character Stabilization" (NCS) plan to prevent the demolition of character defining structures. The "NCS" could include an educational component, financial incentives and design guidelines and permitting to enforce adaptive re-use and restoration.**