



The Museum Park Neighborhood Association seeks to enhance the quality of life within our diverse neighborhood, home to 14 museums and cultural institutions, four churches, three schools, numerous businesses, galleries, and owner-occupied residential properties. Houston's cultural and arts district, known by Houstonians as the Museum District, sits mostly in this neighborhood, which serves as a destination for millions who come each year to visit the incomparable collection of treasures.

However, a potential development by the Hines Corporation of the block bordered by Southmore, Caroline, Oakdale, and San Jacinto with a 22-story high-rise creates multiple concerns for the residents, institutions, and businesses within Museum Park. A joint meeting of MPNA (residents) and the Museum Park Super Neighborhood (businesses, cultural institutions, churches) held July 17, 2013, led to the following list of concerns.

- **Site Selection.** Primary among the concerns is the location chosen for development. To make way for the proposed high-rise with eight stories of parking at its base, Hines will demolish the historic Winslow Court Apartments, the 1919 building at San Jacinto and Southmore, and possibly the 1913 Macatee House, recognized for its meticulous and accurate restoration. In a city with few protections for its historic architecture, thoughtful developers can help to maintain a sense of history for this neighborhood by choosing a more appropriate spot.
- **Scale.** The height and scale of structures should enhance and respect the local architectural language. However, a 22-story tower will dwarf the Clayton House and Gardens and possibly the 1913 Macatee House, both beautifully restored in recent years and both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Asia Society Texas Center, designed by Yoshio Taniguchi to minimally impact its surroundings while providing a sense of tranquility and humility, will be overshadowed by a tower. Strategies to limit vertical impact could include underground parking and/or decreasing the number of stories.
- **Street Life Impact.** MPNA is working hard to improve walkability for its millions of visitors each year as well as for the residents who use the sidewalks daily. A high-rise with primarily vehicular entrances and parking at the street level eliminates all street life on the block. Recent developers have responded to concerns of residents to enhance the neighborhood through the creation of retail businesses at street level. Such design can promote connection between the high-rise residents and the neighborhood while complementing street level activity.
- **Design.** All development should strive to enhance the local architectural language. Surrounded by both significant historical buildings as well as modern minimalist architecture, any new structure should reflect those surroundings.



- **Traffic.** All development should enhance mobility for pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles. Adding perhaps as many as 400 cars to the already heavily trafficked neighborhood without thought to minimizing their impact would ignore current Museum Park efforts to improve mobility for everyone. A design limiting vehicular entrance to Oakdale via San Jacinto would help limit congestion on Southmore and Caroline supporting safer circulation. This would require working with the City of Houston to close Oakdale at Caroline and with METRO to add a crossing on the rail at Oakdale and San Jacinto.
- **Infrastructure.** Museum Park is already suffering the growing pains of current revitalization. The impact of additional demands on the water/sewer system, the electrical grid, even cable and phone lines must be carefully assessed.

Development is an integral part of renewing and revitalizing our city and our neighborhood. As Museum Park celebrates its 100th birthday this year, it seeks a balance that respects the past and looks to the future, while at the same time maintaining the unique character of the neighborhood.