Date: May 13, 2025

To: Mayor & City Council
From: Mike Scott

Re: Proposed Land Use Change from LDR to HDR – at Approx. 800W & Hwy 91

Since I'll be out of town and unable to vote, I want to briefly explain why I would vote no on the proposed land use change from Low-Density Residential (LDR) to High-Density Residential (HDR).

I'm just sharing this for your information. To stay on the safe side of the Open Meetings Act, please don't reply. Thanks for understanding and thanks for considering my perspective.

Land Use Planning Shouldn't Be One Parcel at a Time
The applicant's request for R-2-10 zoning may be a reasonable fit for this property and it fits with some of the goals in our General Plan. But that's not the issue.

The issue is that the land use map, meant to reflect a cohesive, citywide vision, does not currently designate this area for High-Density Residential. If we believe this or any other area should be reclassified, that conversation should happen at a citywide level. Otherwise, we risk approving land use changes in isolation, which undermines our long-term planning efforts.

Land use decisions don't just shape Ivins' future, they determine whether we preserve the character we already value. When we start altering the land use map one parcel at a time, we're not planning for our community, we're reacting to individual requests. Strategic planning demands that we zoom out, evaluate housing types, density, location, and neighborhood context, and make decisions with a broad citywide lens, not piecemeal.

Of course, if there's a truly compelling reason to change the land use on a specific parcel, we should consider it. But in this case, I don't see a compelling reason.

HDR Opens the Door to More Than Just R-2-10
Approving HDR doesn't just allow R-2-10, it opens the door to more intensive zones like R-TH (townhomes) and R-M (multifamily). A rezone to R-2-10 today does not prevent a future rezone to something denser tomorrow.

Are those higher-density zones inherently bad? Not necessarily. But we can't answer that without stepping back and evaluating where different housing types best fit within the city as a whole.

Even if that's not the applicant's intent, intent can change. Once the land use map is amended, future councils will have far less discretion to deny uses that are technically permitted. We need to be confident not only in what's proposed, but in everything the HDR designation allows.

Yes, the Legislature Wants More Density. But It Has to Be Strategic
I recognize that the Legislature is pushing cities toward higher density to help address affordability. And our own Moderate-Income Housing Plan supports that goal. But responding by increasing density one parcel at a time is not thoughtful planning, it's reactive. And reactive decisions lead to unintended consequences that are hard to undo.

Strategic Growth Demands a Citywide Lens
If it's time to revise the land use map (I believe it is), let's do it deliberately. Let's take a citywide look at where additional density makes sense, and what types of housing will help meet our goals. The land use map is supposed to provide predictability, for both residents and developers. If we believe it's outdated, we should revise it as a whole, not redraw it one exception at a time.