

Letter to community from Poe Elementary PTO regarding the impact of the possible development of the Ashby High Rise on Poe Elementary School

October 11, 2007

The Poe Elementary School PTO opposes the development of 1717 Bissonnet as a high rise mixed use development with approximately 200 residential units and 460 parking spaces. This project is only four blocks from Poe Elementary School and would detrimentally affect the school as outlined below.

First and foremost, we, as parents and teachers of elementary school-age children, have safety concerns regarding children walking and/or riding bicycles and scooters to and from school during what is already a busy traffic time on Bissonnet. Many of our students travel Bissonnet to get to Poe. The increase in traffic along this route, and the resulting increase along Shepherd and Greenbriar due to the density of a high rise with many residents using those streets to access Highway 59, would create a potentially hazardous situation for our children. In addition, congestion along these roads could cause drivers to detour onto the streets immediately adjacent to Poe, such as North Boulevard, South Boulevard, Hazard, Woodhead and Dunlavy. This would create a dangerous situation as young pedestrians and cyclists cross these streets to get to and from our school.

Secondly, the desirability of our neighborhood as a place to raise a family must be considered. Poe is a very desirable elementary school choice for those of us who live in the residential neighborhoods of Southampton and Boulevard Oaks, and it is desirable as a Magnet school to a fair number of students who live outside of our neighborhood boundaries. A high rise in the midst of a quiet residential neighborhood will certainly decrease the number of families with children who choose to live here. This can potentially reduce the number of neighborhood families who choose to send their children to Poe, ***a strong population on whom we rely on for much of our fundraising and volunteer support!*** Poe cannot afford to lose this strong, loyal volunteer base which comprises our active PTO.

Time and again, all around Houston, we have seen how developers can erode the integrity of a neighborhood, all starting with one project that is so out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. The parents of the Poe PTO oppose the Ashby High Rise project because of the negative effects we believe it could have on the safety of our children, and on the desirability of our neighborhood as a place to live for families with children.

Sincerely yours,

Marci Arnold
Poe PTO President 2007-2008