



Questions and Comments to Proponents of the CodeNEXT Draft

June 2, 2017

- Why were neighborhoods not involved in the mapping process?
- How can you justify the arbitrary and capricious mapping and ignoring the Future Land Use Maps in neighborhood plans?
- How can regular citizens be expected to comment on an incomplete and complex 1,100-plus-page draft, which is changed weekly?
- The prior City Council directed the consultants to try out several transect zones in neighborhoods that would want to have a pilot project. When and why did that change?
- Planning theories come and go; current residents should not be used for an experiment. What works on greenfields (undeveloped land) does not necessarily work in established neighborhoods.
- Who is making all of these sweeping policy decisions?
- The Mayor's so-called "Austin Bargain" says that density should not be forced on existing neighborhoods. Let's hope that he keeps his word.
- This Code will damage single-family neighborhoods that are already dense, compact, and walkable and have various housing types. Why do you want to change them?
- Our comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, calls for increased density on major corridors, activity centers, and growth centers. Why did you ignore this when mapping and instead put density in our neighborhoods?
- City staff and consultants claim that the proposed T3 zones are like today's SF-3 zoning. This is not the case. The most commonly mapped T3 zones allow multiple "Cottage Corner" and "Cottage Court" buildings and tiny lots that don't require subdivision for maximum build-out.
- Why do you think a multiplex is right for single-family neighborhoods?
- Why do you think that adding businesses in the middle of neighborhoods will lead to increased density?
- Despite assurances to the contrary, even Non-Transect zones would see the replacement of the current residential and commercial zoning classifications and, in some instances, permit more residential density than currently allowed, including, for

the first time, ADUs. Non-Transect zones would also blur the distinction between office and retail and would allow bars and nightclubs where they are not allowed today. To do all this, Non-Transect zones reduce or eliminate on-site parking and promote mixed use. Why is no one explaining this truthfully?

- The draft code creates a hodge-podge of setbacks and building designs, which would alter our streetscapes and would change the character of our neighborhoods. Did you consider all of the prior citizen input into neighborhood plans and the McMansion ordinance?
- This code will exacerbate displacement of working families and seniors. Increasing allowed density results in higher revenue potential for investors and will drive up land values, property taxes, and rents.
- How will the addition of multiplexes, ADUs, cottage courts, duplexes affect the property appraisals of neighboring properties?
- Who is studying the socioeconomic impacts of the proposed code?
- What will be the cost to taxpayers for additional infrastructure in our neighborhoods, e.g., water lines, sidewalks, street repair?
- Have the drafters of the code considered its impact on our schools and the displacement of families with children?
- Is Austin to become a city owned by investors?
- Where is the flood mitigation plan?
- Where is the promised Wildland Urban Overlay?
- This Code will exacerbate economic and racial segregation.
- What makes you think converting our streets into jammed parking lots will not make them unsafe and un-walkable?
- Will Residential Parking Permits be removed?
- By reducing required commercial and residential on-site parking is the Code attempting to somehow force us out of our cars and onto some imagined public transit?
- Residents have an emotional and financial investment in their homes and neighborhoods – this Code process should not be rushed. Why can't you take your time and get this right?
- How can you justify demolishing existing moderately affordable housing to be replaced by expensive infill?
- Isn't this just a plan to redevelop my neighborhood and drive me out?
- Who will profit at our expense?
- The consultants have admitted that the transects were mapped because of market forces, that is, that the market wants to redevelop our neighborhoods.
- Do you think it is good policy to change an overwhelming percentage of single-family lots in Heritage, Clarksville, and Central East Austin into multiplexes? Other neighborhoods, including Brentwood, Rosedale and Bouldin, would be devastated under the proposed maps.

- How can we reasonably comment on the Code without seeing the density bonus plan, which won't be released until after the comment time period?
- Why do neighborhoods with the smallest lots have the greatest burden caused by density and unaffordable in-fill?
- Do you think it's a good idea to give city staff more discretion without public input?
- Imagine Austin requires a new land code to respect neighborhood plans. How can you justify deleting the sections in the draft that did that? Please give us a better reason than the draft was in "error".
- Do you think it's a good idea to have 3 zoning systems: transects, non-transects, and the current Chapter 25 rules? I thought that the need to update the current code was the reason we initiated this \$6 million project in the first place?
- Do you think this code actually simplifies anything?
- Why do you use a 5-county forecast for Austin's housing needs?
- Why is it a good idea for Transect Zones to allow expensive ADUs of 1,344 square feet and for Non-Transect Zones to allow ADUs of 1,100 square feet? ADUs need to be scaled down to 800-850 square feet to be affordable and compatible with neighboring properties.
- Why do bars and nightclubs no longer have special zoning?
- Why is there no longer any office zoning?
- Where is the proof that developers will build affordable "missing middle housing"? History shows that they will only build market rate housing units. Missing Middle is a type of housing, not a price point.
- Residents who are not familiar with land use codes cannot easily enter comments on the code and maps. Even those who are find it cumbersome, inefficient, and time-consuming.
- Members of Austin's Planning Commission and Zoning and Platting Commission and other relevant Boards and Commissions continue to try to understand the complexities of the Code draft. The City Council is still trying to understand it.
- Many of the mistakes and problems with the draft Code and the mapping are the result of a lack of transparency during this process and by not releasing the Code in sections for review and comment.
- For the sake of affordability, why doesn't the draft code prescribe smaller houses on small lots?
- The Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequalities Report recommends that every new City code, ordinance, plan, or policy be reviewed and approved by the Chief Equity Officer whose responsibility it should be to identify any potential negative consequences for people of color, as well as potential for improvement to proactively make reparations for those negatively impacted by current and prior codes, ordinances, plans, or policies. This would include the current draft of CodeNext.
- The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan identifies the development and maintenance of affordable housing throughout Austin as a top priority, stating that a key challenge is

"encouraging the preservation of affordable housing in neighborhoods across the city and in activity centers and corridors;" How is this occurring under CodeNext?

- Where is the City staff and CodeNEXT consultants' evaluation of the potential net loss or gain of market affordable housing and income-restricted affordable housing when calibrating new site development standards and when mapping changes in development entitlements relative to the existing site development standards and mapping of development entitlements?
- Are the site standards so restrictive that it will force the scraping of a home instead of building additions to existing housing?
- Many duplexes in the transect zones are converted one-story 1930s homes. The draft Code's standards do not allow this building form, which is compatible with existing older neighborhoods' style.
- Is the underlying purpose of the new draft Code to make Austin's transect-zoned neighborhoods the domain of the affluent and investors and to push us out?