



Austin Raza Roundtable
February 13, 2017

Mayor Steve Adler and Members of the Austin City Council
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mayor Adler and Members of the Austin City Council:

We, the Austin Raza Roundtable, want to share with you some serious concerns that we have identified with Code Next as just released.

Our greatest concern is that the new code will fuel even more and faster displacement of longtime residents and businesses in East Austin, where our communities have already experienced tremendous gentrification in the past five to ten years. In this, we believe that Code Next is actually the most recent tool of institutionalized racism. Related to this, there are some specific issues that are cringe-worthy:

- Increased by-right development of non-residential uses in residential areas and expanded administrative approval may leave residents out of decisions affecting them.
- Increased density and/or streamlined permitting will not lead to equity; for low-income families, there is no real difference between a \$650K house and a slightly smaller \$450K house.
- Increased density is not curbing sprawl, it is just changing the class and color of those forced to sprawl—it is pushing out those who can least afford commuting costs.
- Focus should be on "missing bottom" not the so-called "missing middle".
- New construction is geared toward wealthy singles, not families with kids.
- Increased entitlements will result in higher property taxes.
- "Imagine Austin" is widely viewed in East Austin as "Imagine Austin Without Poor People;" the families who built Austin are now being forced out.
- Concern that the new T6 zoning category will result in the "final cleansing" of single family residential East Austin.
- The new code does not address increased flooding that will surely accompany increased density without upgraded infrastructure.

Things that could be done in Code Next to ameliorate but not erase these concerns:

- Apply the same standards to all neighborhoods across the city rather than requiring

density in East Austin and spacious development in West Austin.

- Eliminate subsidies for market rate housing.
- Incorporate recommendations of the Mayor's task force on institutionalized racism when the report is presented in March.
- Encourage modular/manufactured/mobile homes affordable to Workforce Families.
- Eliminate voluntary density bonuses from the new code.
- Include policies for reparation for displacement and relocation in the new code.

If you need to contact us, you may contact Dr. Jane Rivera, our facilitator, at 512-971-8304 or via email at janehrivera@austin.rr.com.

Sincerely,

Raza Round Table of Austin:

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