



CODENEXT IS FAR FROM DEAD

Despite the common view that CodeNEXT is dead, down at City Hall they are busily resurrecting it behind the scenes. Both the Planning Commission and the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development department are moving at full speed for the adoption of zoning rules that create so-called “transition zones.” These transition zones would cut one-quarter to one-half mile into neighborhoods along the City’s corridors.

The Neighborhood Housing group shamelessly disparages the work of the City Demographer (whose numbers prove that Austin doesn’t need to change zoning to accommodate newcomers), [saying](#) that these numbers are just his “opinion.” They even mischaracterize their own Strategic Housing Blueprint by omitting references to planned “activity centers” when calculating where affordable housing should be placed. Their [plan](#) would place 31% of the City’s housing goal for the land within ½ mile of the corridors, an area that covers almost the majority of the City. What they also fail to mention is that the construction of new housing in existing neighborhoods would be preceded by the displacement of the people who already live there, followed by the demolition of existing housing, the most affordable housing there is. Their obvious plan is to use this same methodology to re-zone land for what they call “mid-density” housing in these same transition zones. It’s just CodeNEXT’s “missing middle” with a different label. At the same time, the City’s draft [Strategic Mobility Plan](#) focuses on “*requiring . . . densities*” along corridors, with a map soon to be released.

Meanwhile, at the Planning Commission, influential Commissioners recently attempted an end-run around the City Council’s August directive to the city manager to come up with a new process for amending the land development code. It is due in January. The commissioners’ [plan](#) is to zone one-quarter mile from corridors into neighborhoods to allow high-rise mixed-use apartments with businesses at ground level on commercially zoned property. This gambit was temporarily sidetracked by city staff, but the commission made it clear that they will be discussing it at their next meeting.

All this goes to show that CodeNEXT is not dead. It’s not even asleep.