



One of America's Leading Experts on Zoning Lives in Austin. Why Won't City Hall Listen to Him?



No Austinite knows more about city planning and municipal zoning than Jim Duncan.

Duncan is the former president of the American Planning Association and former head of Austin's planning department, and as a private consultant he has helped more than 200 cities across the nation successfully rewrite their land codes. During Austin's last major land-code revision, Duncan served as a valuable mediator, bringing all sides together to pass a rewrite with broad community support and unanimous approval by the city council.

Unfortunately, that's not the kind of city planning today's Austinites are accustomed to. Now the vice-chair of Austin's [Zoning and Platting Commission](#), Duncan has been a forceful critic of CodeNEXT and other recent attempts to revamp our land development code—a long, divisive process that has cost nearly \$14 million, tens of thousands of hours of staff time, and the precious trust of our community.

For three years, Duncan has tried to convince Mayor Steve Adler, his allies on the council, and municipal staff that they must abandon their closed-door, neighborhood-unfriendly approach to city planning if they hope to rewrite our land code. He laid out 10 concrete steps to restart and revamp the process. They included hiring a new project manager, cleaning up the current code,

accelerating small-area planning, and providing the community with greater transparency and accountability.

A few weeks back, Duncan released [a presentation](#) that looks back on his past recommendations and reviews the progress the city has made over the last year. Sadly, City Hall has taken none of the steps he suggested (except dropping the name CodeNEXT!). Click below to read it in full.



It's time for Mayor Adler and his supporters to start listening to our community's most experienced city planner. Reach out to them using the following contact information and tell them so! [Check this map](#) if you aren't sure which council member represents you.

Together we can build an Austin for everyone!

Mayor Steve Adler:

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You may send a single email to the mayor and all council members using [this form](#).