COUNCIL SHOULD STOP THE CODENEXT BLEEDING, REJECT THE CONSULTANTS' REQUEST FOR AN ADDITIONAL $2 MILLION, AND LEAD WITH A NEW WAY FORWARD ON CODENEXT.

After four years, no one likes CodeNEXT. Council should halt the process now and take stock. They should remove the consultants and city staff managers who got us in this mess and reach out and listen to their constituents, district by district, neighborhood by neighborhood, and see what residents want. The neighborhoods in each district know their communities' needs best. Armed with their consensus input, Council members can go forward with the support of their district and without being saddled with a poor product and broken process. **CodeNEXT needs a major reset to prevent an expensive, embarrassing flop.**

First, contact the Mayor and City Council and ask them to reject, this Thursday, the request of Opticos, CodeNEXT's consultants, for an additional $2 million. They have been paid $6 million, and if Council grants this latest request, we will have paid Opticos 4 times the original estimate! The consultants have failed miserably on hiring minority and women contractors, although diversity and inclusion are key goals of *Imagine Austin*. There is no reason to think $2 million more will result in greater success. We would just be throwing good money after bad.

The Council should take the consultants and our city staff managers off this project, and each member should spend the next three-four months talking with their constituents. Neighborhoods know best what they really need – and don't need. Let's gather our own communities' knowledge to get this right – together. Each council member should take $50,000-$100,000 for independent (non-city staff) facilitation and outreach, and obtain broad public input with the aim of reaching a consensus view in their district. The remaining funds should be used for very-low-income (50% of MFI) affordable housing, which Austin desperately needs.

After listening to their districts, Council Members can come back together and work from our current code and the salvageable parts of CodeNEXT. By then, we should have a new City Manager, who can hire a new Planning Director with fresh ideas and no CodeNEXT baggage. With new leadership, renewed community trust, and extensive public input, we can all work together to create a new land development code worthy of Austin.

CodeNEXT Draft 2 should be an embarrassment to the professionals and staff who produced it. It is missing whole sections; it is sloppy, inconsistent, and riddled with mistakes. It is too long, too convoluted, and too ambiguous. It fails to include best practices. It has been a staff-driven process, without real public input and without sufficiently experienced planning staff. The mapping process uses improper criteria (focused on maximizing redevelopment potential) and is an unlawful violation of our comprehensive plan. The map has been drawn behind closed doors to target the redevelopment of huge swaths of the City and will result in massive displacement of current residents—which is unacceptable to residents across the city. CodeNEXT is way beyond the scope authorized by the previous City Council. **CodeNEXT is a train wreck.**

It is time to recognize that Austinites will not accept a "cram-down" land development code from out-of-state consultants and inadequate planning staff. **It is time to PAUSE, RESET, and CHANGE DIRECTION. Let's do this together. Let's do this right.**

                                        Community Not Commodity