



Mayor Adler Calls Gentrification “a Good Thing” as Displacement in Austin Reaches Record Levels

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Austin is in the middle of a full-blown displacement crisis. The number of local residents pushed out of their homes by wealthy newcomers and gentrification has skyrocketed over the past 20 years, and City Hall’s controversial “Son of CodeNEXT” rezoning proposal [will only accelerate the trend](#).

Low-income residents of color have been the hardest-hit. Austin is the only fast-growing municipality in the nation [whose African-American population declined](#) between 2000 and 2010, and [it lost more Hispanic citizens](#) than every U.S. city except Denver over the same period.

That’s what makes the pro-gentrification remarks Mayor Steve Adler made this past weekend so disturbing.

The mayor was [making an appearance](#) at the Texas Tribune Festival when he declared that “gentrification is a good thing” because it brings “amenities” to neighborhoods that didn’t previously have them (even though the cost of those goods and services is often out of reach for existing residents). Adler then claimed gentrification doesn’t automatically lead to displacement. But nothing the mayor says can cover up the fact that he and the rest of the city council have no anti-displacement policy in place, and that they refuse to establish one before implementing the Son of CodeNEXT. They seem more interested in creating displacement than preventing it.

The East Side's upscale "Domain on Riverside" development is a perfect example. Thousands of middle- and lower-income residents will be displaced when their homes are demolished to make way for the 97-acre mixed-use complex. Opponents to the plan spent the summer producing online videos and [protesting city meetings](#), but it made no difference in the end. The city council paid plenty of lip service to the dangers of gentrification, but then granted [a preliminary approval of the development](#).

It's been the same story for two decades. The city council has passed more than 500 resolutions in the name of preventing displacement and providing affordable housing, and it has convened multiple task forces focused on the issue. But no real action has come of it.

The mayor and council had another opportunity with budget discussions this September. That's when Community Not Commodity, LULAC, the Austin NAACP, the authors of The People's Plan, and leaders of the Austin Neighborhoods Council joined the Development Without Displacement coalition in calling for the implementation of [the city's first comprehensive anti-displacement plan](#) and budget. The plan proposed the creation of a city department tasked with fighting displacement, and it identified \$18 million in the city's 2020 budget that could be reallocated for combatting the crisis.

The mayor and city council did what they always do with anti-displacement proposals: nothing. They declined to hold a vote on the plan and refused to put forth any substitute measures.

The inaction stops today! Contact Mayor Adler and your city council member, and tell them gentrification is *not* good. Tell them to pass Development Without Displacement's budget proposal *before* adopting a new land development code. ([Check this map](#) if you aren't sure which council member represents you.)

Together we can build an Austin for everyone!

Mayor Steve Adler

steve.adler@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2100

Natasha Harper-Madison (District 1)

natasha.madison@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2101

Delia Garza (District 2)

delia.garza@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2102

Sabino Renteria (District 3)

sabino.renteria@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2103

Greg Casar (District 4)

gregorio.casar@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2104

Ann Kitchen (District 5)

ann.kitchen@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2105

Jimmy Flannigan (District 6)

jimmy.flannigan@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2106

Leslie Pool (District 7)
leslie.pool@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2107

Paige Ellis (District 8)
paige.ellis@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2108

Kathie Tovo (District 9)
kathie.tovo@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2109

Alison Alter (District 10)
alison.alter@austintexas.gov | 512-978-2110