
Study Protocol Summary

Predicting NIMBYism in Austin's Housing Reform Era

Key Personnel

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IRB Contact

If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a research participant, you may contact:

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Study Purpose

Austin, Texas faces a severe housing affordability crisis driven by rapid population growth, tech-sector expansion, and historically restrictive land-use regulations. Recent housing reforms have coincided with organized neighborhood opposition to development using tools such as protest petitions, public testimony, and legal challenges. This study aims to:

1. Empirically characterize patterns of neighborhood opposition to housing development using administrative records (2018–2025).
2. Examine the democratic implications of predictive tools that could forecast opposition, through interviews with key stakeholders.

Research Questions

Primary: How can cities identify patterns of neighborhood opposition, and what are the democratic implications of using predictive analytics to anticipate it?

Sub-questions:

- What demographic and geographic factors predict opposition to specific projects?
- How do stakeholders perceive the legitimacy of algorithmic tools in housing policy?
- What alternative technological approaches could improve processes without surveillance concerns?

Study Design

This mixed-methods, minimal-risk study combines:

- **Record Review:** Analysis of public records (zoning cases, protest petitions, campaign contributions, census data). De-identified datasets will use coded IDs.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews (45–60 mins) with 10–15 stakeholders (city officials, neighborhood leaders, advocates, developers).
- **Observation:** Review of public meetings (Council, commissions).

Participation Details

Interviews: Conducted in-person or via secure videoconference. With permission, they are audio-recorded for transcription. Participation is voluntary; you may decline to answer or stop at any time.

Risks: Minimal risk. Potential breach of confidentiality is mitigated by secure storage, encryption, and reporting only aggregate/de-identified results.

Benefits: No direct benefit. Indirect benefits include informing more equitable planning practices.