

Geographic Analysis of Texas SB 840's Impact on Urban Development Rights and Potential Future Housing Market Development

Friday, October 24, 2025 2:30 PM (20 minutes)

Geographers have long examined how exclusionary zoning practices and NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) opposition constrain urban development, particularly regarding new urbanist principles and multifamily housing projects. These regulatory barriers have historically enabled affluent communities to maintain low-density residential character while displacing housing demand to other areas, contributing to spatial inequality and housing affordability crises. Local zoning review processes have served as key institutional mechanisms through which exclusionary practices operate, allowing organized opposition groups to block or significantly modify proposed developments. However, recent legislative interventions at the state level represent a fundamental shift in this dynamic, potentially reshaping the geographic landscape of urban development permissions. In summer 2025, the Texas legislature passed one of the most sweeping deregulations to land use law in US history. Signed into law by the governor and in effect as of September 1st, 2025, SB 840 allows mixed-use and multi-family developments by right in any area with current zoning that allows for retail, commercial, office, or light-industrial activity. As a result, any new proposal for mixed-use or multi-family development in cities with over 200,000 residents, located within counties with over 300,000 residents, will no longer be subject to the municipal zoning review process. In this paper, we present initial results of an analysis detailing the size of affected zones in each of the 19 eligible municipalities.

Is there a SINGLE day you are unavailable to present?

October 25, 2025

Is there a time of day you are unavailable to present?

Morning

Organized Session Details

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