

From the Austin Business Journal

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/news/2013/10/18/211-lamar-clears-final-zoning-hurdle.html>

Oct 18, 2013, 2:47pm CDT Updated: Oct 18, 2013, 3:18pm CDT

Residential tower on Lamar clears final zoning hurdle



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Austin City Council has approved a zoning change at 211 South Lamar that will clear the way for a 96-foot-tall residential building near Lady Bird Lake and across from the Zach Theatre.

The final 5-2 vote is the end of a contentious case that has been at times unusually bitter, even for Austin. The city's record on the projects path through commissions and city council grew [to more than 330 pages](#), including notes on the city's code, letters between the developer's lawyers and neighborhood groups and flyers from opponents of the project.

And there were plenty of opponents to the project. Much of the controversy was initially centered around the structure so close to Lady Bird Lake. By the end of the discussion, the project would touch on nearly all of the hot-button issues regarding development in Austin.

Both Councilwomen Kathie Tovo and [Laura Morrison](#) voted against the rezoning.

But with only two no votes, the developers and local attorney [Steve Drenner](#) – who represented them through the process – were able to convince the other five council members that the project was worth building. The developers leaned heavily on a large number of community and pedestrian-friendly improvements they pledged to provide in exchange for the taller building.

Negotiations with neighbors and a private deal with some opponents softened some of the opposition as well.

Check our [online coverage of the project](#) to see what it will look like.

Robert Grattan covers government, courts and economic development for the Austin Business Journal.

