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Hostile Zoning-Threat to Religious Liberty

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The mayor of Prichard, Alabama says that he will ask the City Council to adopt a “temporary” moratorium on the construction of new church buildings in areas that are zoned for business purposes—or may be zoned for business purposes in the future. Mayor Ron Davis said that his city, a community near Mobile, Alabama, needs the tax revenue from businesses that could be attracted to locate along “core corridors.” According to [The Mobile Register](#), the mayor said that areas zoned for business should not have churches taking up “too much space.” In an ironic twist, the City Council will meet in a church building today as it conducts its business. According to the [Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000](#), “No government shall impose or implement a land use regulation in a manner that treats a religious assembly or institution on less than equal terms with a nonreligious assembly or institution.” The Prichard City Attorney said that he was not familiar with the act, but doubted it would apply. He told the paper, “This is on building a building, not the religious activity that’s going to take place inside the building.” Perhaps the City Attorney would be well advised to read the law.

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