

Erwin, Nicole

From: wendy landman <wendy.landman@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 1:25 PM
To: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Comments and request for additional information regarding Multifamily Zoning

To Cambridge City Council and Planning Board -

In order to understand the ramifications of the proposed change in zoning, it would be very helpful to see some simple illustrations of maximum scale projects that could be built under the new ordinance, and to set the illustrations within existing neighborhood contexts.

For example:

- a 10,000 square foot lot on a side street in Cambridgeport
- a 15,000 square foot lot on a side street in North Cambridge
- a 20,000 square foot lot on Mt Auburn Street west of Harvard Square
- a 15,000 square foot lot on a side street in East Cambridge
- a 25,000 square foot lot on a side street anywhere in the City

Without having some examples in hand many people believe that 75 foot buildings could be built within 5 feet of existing 25-30' tall homes. Is this correct? There are also fears that there will be very little open space/landscaping accompanying projects. Is this correct? Or, would the outcome be quite different once the new zoning and existing building and safety regulations come into play?

Please let me know whether such illustrations can be provided.

I made this request at the public meeting held at the Senior Center, and sent a similar request to the Planning Board on November 11th but have not received a response yet.

Thank you,
Wendy Landman

--
Wendy Landman
26 Chalk Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-875-2752
wendy.landman@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 6:31 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: CDD Presentation Packet

Dear City Clerk,

Please kindly confirm that the CDD presentation at the Ordinance Committee is the same as one included in the Agenda Packet posted last Fri.

Anything to be included in communication to the City Council and its committees should have strict revision control.

Thank you for your help,
Young

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 8:08 PM
To: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: Huang, Yi-An; O'Riordan, Owen; Farooq, Iram; Planning Board Comment; Roberts, Jeffrey; Cotter, Chris; City Clerk; Joseph, Swaathi; Warren, Dominic
Subject: 11/19/24 Ordinance Committee Meeting re Multi Family Zoning Petition - Part 1 and Part 2

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

I hope this message finds you well. Regrettably, I was unable to attend today's committee meeting due to my caregiving responsibilities for my grandson.

Could you kindly confirm whether the presentation from the CDD at today's meeting was the same as the one presented at last week's Planning Board meeting? It would be helpful if documents presented to multiple audiences were consistently versioned, with any updates clearly indicated. Additionally, I would appreciate it if you could inform me whether the CDD included the Affordable Housing Stock Data – 2024 Update in their presentation.

As noted in the Housing Data & Facts document from Thursday, April 18, 2024, there are currently over 750 housing units under construction, and 3,950 units have been permitted. This suggests that we have already permitted 54% of the CDD's projected new housing units to be built by 2030, based on the current zoning regulations. Given this, I would like to respectfully inquire whether the Zoning Amendments as outlined in the CDD presentation is necessary or more targeted changes are warranted instead.

The Zoning Ordinance has evolved thoughtfully over the past century, and I believe it is important to approach any proposed changes with care, ensuring that decisions are made with full consideration of their long-term impact on the character and integrity of our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: raryals <raryals@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 5:13 PM
To: Planning Board Comment
Cc: cddzoning; City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Housing and Proposed Re-Zoning Ordinance

Dear Planning Board members,

We cannot house the world.

The numbers the city is using to support the need for so much more housing are not credible. Further we all know the "list" will keep filling up again, and again...

I fully support removing single or double family zoning requirements throughout the city (this is what we started to do, remember?)

I fully agree with streamlining and simplifying zoning, but I do not agree with **NO zoning**, with emasculating the Planning Board, with turning our neighborhoods over to developers to tear down perfectly good housing (never mind those who live there now) to build as much as they can to sell/rent at market rates (just fewer than the number of units to trigger the 20 % inclusionary housing requirement.)

I do not agree, with a climate crisis raging (and all of our city's pronouncements that we are working to ameliorate it), to allowing virtually NO setbacks, side and rear, and damned little at the front of the lot. Where do we plant trees and have them survive to provide a tree canopy to cool our overheated city/world? Where do our and your children play? It cannot always be at the park. As a mother and grandmother caring for children for 50 years I can tell you that is not realistic.

What happens to the neighboring properties' trees and plants? To their solar panels, many planted/installed at the city's behest and at significant cost?

I do not agree to 6 stories for market rate housing (13 for AHO!) everywhere in all of our neighborhoods as of right. There are places for such buildings in each of our neighborhoods, but with some **judgement** of where and **consideration** of the neighboring buildings. Four stories would fit better next to most of our city's 35-45 ft housing. Please consider that as a feature of this city, why many came here, stayed here, and many visit here.

It is remarkable how many (fellow citizens and officials) are quick to disrespect all the investment and hard work we (and our neighbors) have put in to improve our houses (mostly 2-4 family units) and our neighborhood over 30+ years. After all, this last century's housing plan (triple deckers and doubles, 2-8 units) still houses 40-50% of our city's renters.

Further, there are taller buildings proposed for the corridors and in the squares (13 stories), with housing over retail/office use, where taller buildings fit better, still with some planning **oversight and judgement** involved. Are those projected housing units in the city's numbers?

That **oversight and judgement** has to be provided by a zoning and planning board, with the power to do more than advise, and not tied down to folks trying to added dormers and enclosed sunrooms.

We need a realistic and believable projection of housing units needed *here* (and a real accounting for housing currently in progress and capable of being built in *the next 15 years*. And we need to acknowledge that we cannot, should not, have to do it all.

Mostly, we need a consensus of **ALL OF US** on just how many people can live **here**. That includes the need for significant infrastructure improvements (including power and water) and showing us that cost as well. We can never house everyone who wants to live here. Instead we need to work with the other cities in the region to build more multifamily housing where more land and open space is available, and we need a regional transportation system to make regional housing and jobs work. The answer cannot be that this burden is all ours, and damn the environment or the livability of our fair city.

Ruth Ryals, and James Cornie

115 Upland Rd.

Cambridge, MA 02140

Proud residents of a three-family house providing rental units for great tenants for over 30 years

Thank you,

--

Ruth Ryals

raryals@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: raryals <raryals@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 2:37 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; Farooq, Iram
Cc: Jim Cornie; City Council
Subject: Re: You do not need to destroy our fair city

Correction "inclusionary" not "exclusionary"

Ruth Ryals
raryals@gmail.com

On Tue, Nov 19, 2024 at 1:47 PM raryals <raryals@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear councillors,

We cannot house the world.

The numbers the city is using to support the need for so much more housing are not credible. Further we all know the "list" will keep filling up again, and again...

I fully support removing single or double family zoning requirements throughout the city (this is what we started to do, remember?)

I fully agree with streamlining and simplifying zoning, but I do not agree with **NO zoning**, with emasculating the Planning Board, with turning our neighborhoods over to developers to tear down perfectly good housing (never mind those who live there now) to build as much as they can to sell/rent at market rates (just fewer than the number of units to trigger the 20 % inclusionary housing requirement.)

I do not agree, with a climate crisis raging (and all of our city's pronouncements that we are working to ameliorate it), to allowing virtually NO setbacks, side and rear, and damned little at the front of the lot. Where do we plant trees and have them survive to provide a tree canopy to cool our overheated city/world? Where do our and your children play? It cannot always be at the park. As a mother and grandmother caring for children for 50 years I can tell you that is not realistic.

What happens to the neighboring properties' trees and plants? To their solar panels, many planted/installed at the city's behest and at significant cost?

I do not agree to 6 stories for market rate housing (13 for AHO!) everywhere in all of our neighborhoods as of right. There are places for such buildings in each of our neighborhoods, but with some **judgement** of where and **consideration** of the neighboring buildings. Four stories would fit better next to most of our city's 35-45 ft housing. Please consider that, if you care at all about the character of our neighborhoods/city and don't consider "character" a laugh line, or a reason to label me "white, elderly,

rich, out of it" because after 50 + years we and the bank co-own a property here. It is remarkable how many (commentors and councillors) are quick to disrespect all the investment and hard work we (and our neighbors) have put in to improve our houses (mostly 2-4 family units) and our neighborhood over 30+ years. After all, this last century's housing plan (tripple deckers and doubles, 2-8 units) still house 40-50% of our city's renters.

Further, there are taller buildings proposed for the corridors and in the squares (13 stories), with housing over retail/office use, where ttaller buildings fit better, still with some planning **oversight and judgement** involved. Are those projected housing units in the city's numbers?

That **oversight and judgement** has to be provided by a zoning and planning board, with the power to do more than advise, and not tied down to folks trying to added dormers and enclosed sunrooms.

We need a realistic and believable projection of housing units needed *here* (and a real accounting for housing currently in progress and capable of being built in *the next 15 years*). And we need to acknowledge that we cannot, should not, have to do it all.

Mostly, we need a consensus of **ALL OF US** on just how many people can live **here**. That includes the need for significant infrastructure improvements (including power and water) and showing us that cost as well. We can never house everyone who wants to live here. Instead we need to work with the other cities in the region to build more multifamily housing where more land and open space is available, and we need a regional transportation system to make regional housing and jobs work. The answer cannot be that this burden is all ours, and damn the environment or the livability of our fair city.

Ruth Ryals, and James Cornie
115 Upland Rd.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Proud residents of a three-family house providing rental units for great tenants for over 30 years

Thank you,

--

Ruth Ryals
raryals@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: raryals <raryals@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 1:48 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: raryals; Jim Cornie; City Council
Subject: Fwd: You do not need to destroy our fair city

Dear councillors,

We cannot house the world.

The numbers the city is using to support the need for so much more housing are not credible. Further we all know the "list" will keep filling up again, and again...

I fully support removing single or double family zoning requirements throughout the city (this is what we started to do, remember?)

I fully agree with streamlining and simplifying zoning, but I do not agree with **NO zoning**, with emasculating the Planning Board, with turning our neighborhoods over to developers to tear down perfectly good housing (never mind those who live there now) to build as much as they can to sell/rent at market rates (just fewer than the number of units to trigger the 20 % exclusionary housing requirement.)

I do not agree, with a climate crisis raging (and all of our city's pronouncements that we are working to ameliorate it), to allowing virtually NO setbacks, side and rear, and damned little at the front of the lot. Where do we plant trees and have them survive to provide a tree canopy to cool our overheated city/world? Where do our and your children play? It cannot always be at the park. As a mother and grandmother caring for children for 50 years I can tell you that is not realistic.

What happens to the neighboring properties' trees and plants? To their solar panels, many planted/installed at the city's behest and at significant cost?

I do not agree to 6 stories for market rate housing (13 for AHO!) everywhere in all of our neighborhoods as of right. There are places for such buildings in each of our neighborhoods, but with some **judgement** of where and **consideration** of the neighboring buildings. Four stories would fit better next to most of our city's 35-45 ft housing. Please consider that, if you care at all about the character of our neighborhoods/city and don't consider "character" a laugh line, or a reason to label me "white, elderly, rich, out of it" because after 50 + years we and the bank co-own a property here. It is remarkable how many (commentors and councillors) are quick to disrespect all the investment and hard work we (and our neighbors) have put in to improve our houses (mostly 2-4 family units) and our neighborhood over 30+ years. After all, this last century's housing plan (triple deckers and doubles, 2-8 units) still house 40-50% of our city's renters.

Further, there are taller buildings proposed for the corridors and in the squares (13 stories), with housing over retail/office use, where taller buildings fit better, still with some planning **oversight and judgement** involved. Are those projected housing units in the city's numbers?

That **oversight and judgement** has to be provided by a zoning and planning board, with the power to do more than advise, and not tied down to folks trying to added dormers and enclosed sunrooms.

We need a realistic and believable projection of housing units needed *here* (and a real accounting for housing currently in progress and capable of being built in *the next 15 years*. And we need to acknowledge that we cannot, should not, have to do it all.

Mostly, we need a consensus of **ALL OF US** on just how many people can live **here**. That includes the need for significant infrastructure improvements (including power and water) and showing us that cost as well. We can never house everyone who wants to live here. Instead we need to work with the other cities in the region to build more multifamily housing where more land and open space is available, and we need a regional transportation system to make regional housing and jobs work. The answer cannot be that this burden is all ours, and damn the environment or the livability of our fair city.

Ruth Ryals, and James Cornie

115 Upland Rd.

Cambridge, MA 02140

Proud residents of a three-family house providing rental units for great tenants for over 30 years

--

Ruth Ryals

raryals@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kavish Gandhi <kmbgandhi@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 1:12 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An; City Clerk
Cc: CH JC
Subject: Comment, CHJC, 10/19 Ordinance Committee

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Manager,

We, the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition, write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at today's Ordinance Committee hearing.

We share the goal of ending the legacy of discriminatory housing and zoning policies in Cambridge, which are part of centuries of oppression caused by our country's racial caste system. However, we are concerned that, as currently written, this proposal may cause further harm to the very communities it intends to support. For this reason, **we developed a petition, which you can find [here](#). The petition has three concrete proposals that would mitigate the risk of displacement and prioritize creating affordable housing.**

The important zoning amendment we propose is that zoning changes be conditionally limited to projects that cross the "Inclusionary threshold." In other words, we propose these changes only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing. Our concern with the current Community Development Department (CDD) Multifamily Zoning proposal is that it will encourage the demolition of triple-deckers and other multifamily buildings that currently provide much of the city's naturally occurring affordable housing. Our amendment would both reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. Therefore, it would likely result in even more subsidized units than CDD has projected under the existing proposal.

So far, the petition has received **positive feedback from the organizations in our coalition and numerous Cambridge community members, including 51 people who have signed the letter. At the Cambridge City Council meeting on September 16th, the council voted 9-0 in favor of sending our amendment to CDD for further analysis.** After an initial meeting with CDD staff, our coalition shared a [list of questions](#) regarding Multi-Family Zoning and our amendments on October 8th, for which we are currently waiting on full answers – though we are grateful for the analysis outlined below of the projected unit composition under the scenario of our amendment.

Since putting out our petition, our coalition has also talked more broadly about the base zoning. We agree that it is not tenable to maintain single-family base zoning, and support zoning all of Cambridge as C1, without the changes to C1 proposed in the zoning.

The CDD presentation today projects that the original city proposal would yield 90 projects, 1630 net new units, and 310 inclusionary units by 2030. The CHJC proposal would yield 70 projects, 1540 net new units, and 320 inclusionary units by 2030. That means the CHJC proposal would reduce the number of

projects by 20, which would mitigate displacement, but only reduce the number of net new units by 90 and would actually increase the number of inclusionary units by 10.

We urge you to support our amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Best,
Kavish Gandhi (on behalf of the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition)

Kavish

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 12:22 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Residents Alliance's Multifamily zoning position

11-19-24

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Manager,

The Cambridge Residents Alliance* Board supports allowing multifamily zoning city wide. The specifics of that change are very important. We do have proposed changes to the Multifamily zoning.

1. Increasing affordable housing has always been our top priority. In considering the proposed Multifamily upzoning, affordable housing is a major factor for us. That's why we agree with the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC) that **any new zoning for multifamily housing should only apply to projects that have Inclusionary housing**, which means the building is larger than 10,000 square feet or has more than 9 units.

*Without that change to the proposed zoning, many more smaller buildings will be demolished, and tenants will be displaced, without any provision of new affordable housing. CDD estimates that over 40% of the new projects will **not** have Inclusionary housing.* Many of those older buildings have what is referred to as Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing, meaning they are less expensive than new market housing. With lower land costs in the eastern part of the city, we are concerned that this loss of NOAH may happen more there. We want to make sure that zoning changes that are intended to increase access to housing in Cambridge do not unintentionally decrease housing affordability. This approach would also **limit an increase in land costs for smaller lots in the denser parts of the city, where there is already lots of multifamily housing.**

Of note, *CDD's projections do not include land costs or construction costs, nor do they estimate the effect of the zoning on land costs.* Without including those variables, the CDD projections are less reliable. Please ask CDD to discuss which variables are included in their model, and why.

We note that the CDD presentation today projects that the original city proposal would yield 90 projects, 1630 net new units, and 310 inclusionary units by 2030.

The CHJC proposal would yield 70 projects, 1540 net new units, and 320 inclusionary units by 2030. That means *the CHJC proposal would reduce the number of projects by 20, which reduces displacement, but only reduce the number of net new units by 90 and would actually increase the number of inclusionary units by 10.*

In addition to applying the new zoning only to buildings that have Inclusionary housing, there are other aspects of the proposed zoning that the Residents Alliance would like to change.

2. We think that there should be **no reduction in project review requirements.** We believe the current project review requirements are not the reason for the slowdown in new housing construction in

Cambridge. Instead, this slowdown has happened across the country and is caused largely by external economic factors such as high interest rates. The review process is working well in Cambridge, and results in better buildings for the new residents and for existing neighbors. The project review process proposed in the draft zoning would omit the opportunity for input for many buildings. In contrast with AHO buildings, which have only advisory review due to the complexity and slowness of public financing, market-rate buildings do not need less review in order to be built, as shown by the project for 227 units at 745 Concord Ave.

3. We think that meaningful open space is important, both for humans and the environment. Therefore, we think that **in residential areas, at least 75% (not 50%) of the open space requirement should be met by permeable surfaces**, which will allow trees and shrubs. For mixed use areas where there is no front setback on the street, such as along Mass. Ave., impermeable surfaces such as rooftops could count as open space.

4. Similarly, we think **side and rear setbacks of at least 5 feet should be required***, which will enable windows and light on all sides of the new building, will enable trees and shrubs, and will reduce impacts on existing buildings. *If both the old and new buildings are built to the property line, no side setback would be required, enabling row houses.

5. We think that the maximum 6 floor height in residential areas should be 70,' not 75'. We note that the 2022 Planning Board report, titled *Update on Discussions of Allowing Multifamily Housing Citywide*, said new zoning should "Allow a broader range of uses but with limitations on building size. This would allow for additional unit types while keeping building sizes consistent with the prevailing neighborhood patterns." The current zoning proposal does not follow this Planning Board recommendation. Our proposal is closer to that recommendation.

With these changes, housing development is incentivized in a way that reduces displacement, and is more livable.

We ask that Planning Board members consider these proposals seriously and adopt as many as possible. We think adoption of these proposals will increase support for the Multifamily zoning across the city.

Lastly, please ask the Community Development Dept. (CDD) to provide findings on: A) the zoning's impact on households earning below 50% AMI. Specifically, please ask CDD to respond to CHJC's [list of questions](#) about the zoning, including likely displacement impacts. I note that the [Envision Housing Dashboard](#) says Cambridge is "falling behind" on the portions of residents who earn 50% or less of AMI or earn 50-100% of AMI. This means Cambridge is gentrifying. The Council needs to know how much this zoning will accelerate that problem.

B) the zoning's impact on building 100% Affordable Housing. We are concerned that land prices will rise due to the zoning increasing land values, making it harder for AHO buildings to compete, and fewer AHO units being built. Will more costly land mean they can compete less well for state funds? Even with allowing 13 floors, will as many AHO units result compared with current zoning, given that AH developers have not wanted to build that high?

This information is needed for Councilors and residents to understand the zoning's impacts and understand how to design zoning that reduces negative consequences.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President

Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*

<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

* The Cambridge Residents Alliance was formed in 2012. It works for a livable, affordable, and diverse Cambridge. It is citywide and run by volunteers.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan4th Nicholas <dan4th@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 12:03 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In favor of Residential upzoning

Hello,

I've been receiving a lot of mail from a vocal minority of my neighbors asking me to oppose the residential upzoning, so I wanted to reach out to make it clear - I support the proposed ordinances, and hope to see many taller AHO buildings in the coming years.

thanks

Danforth Nicholas
93 Richdale Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140

--

Danforth Nicholas
dan4th@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: James Zall <james@jameszall.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 11:47 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Zoning, Ordinance Committee, 11-19-2024

To the members of the City Council,

Below is an email I sent to the Planning Board yesterday about the Multifamily Zoning proposal that the Ordinance Committee will be taking up today. I would like to add a brief comment for the Ordinance Committee.

The Council now has much more information about the housing shortage (including its causes and consequences) than was available at any point in the past several years of hearings and debate on this issue. CDD has now moved the discussion a big step forward with their economic analysis of this zoning proposal, lack of which which was a stumbling block for earlier zoning reform proposals.

A remaining problem is the fact that the zoning code has expanded its housing restrictions about six-fold over the past several decades. This longevity alone has convinced many Cambridge residents that blocking housing is their right, and is the right thing to do. Whether or not those rights were ever a good idea, it seems clear that they are now harmful to our city under current conditions.

The just-released survey of resident views indicates that a large majority are aware of this and are asking the Council for change. The minority, though, have become so accustomed to the status quo, that they are blocking change with more vigor, but with less factual information and consideration, than ever before. Wanting more trees and open space is not a problem, but insisting that the trees and space be mandated *on their neighbors' property*, under city ordinance, even to the extent that it forces some residents out of the city, is a wish that a city government that seeks justice and democracy should not grant. If we replace "trees and open space" with "free and convenient parking," the difficulty of the minority's request becomes even clearer.

I hope that the Council considers this issue judiciously, and steers Cambridge housing policy in a more fair direction.

Thank you,

James Zall
203 Pemberton Street

----- Original Message -----

From: James Zall <james@jameszall.com>
To: "planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov"
<planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov>
Date: 11/18/2024 5:30 PM EST
Subject: PB meeting on Multifamily Zoning, 11-19-2024

To the members of the Planning Board,

At your meeting last week, some residents claimed that the multi-family zoning proposal you're reviewing was developed in a "thoughtless" manner, without appropriate "data and analysis". They instead called for a proposal that draws on the expertise of unspecified "smart people" in our local area.

I hope that they will be pleased to learn that Jason Furman, a top economic official in the Obama administration and currently a professor of economics at Harvard, spoke to CDD and members of the City Council at a public hearing in May. In a recent [Globe article](#), he described the benefits of these zoning amendments, and concluded that "the greatest risk of displacing moderate-income families in Cambridge would be if the status quo is maintained."

The Boston Foundation and BU's Initiative on Cities have just released their [2024 Greater Boston Housing Report Card](#), the latest of a series of reports (including those from [Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies](#)) condemning policies that have led to the dismal and worsening housing crisis in Cambridge and all around us. They note that

- a chronic underproduction of housing still prevails,
- housing instability has worsened,
- and housing-based inequality continues to widen.

In Cambridge, our own zoning code is a key obstacle to recovery from the housing crisis. Layers of anti-housing restrictions, many [frankly adopted for the stated purpose of depressing](#) our housing supply, now complicate the City's efforts. Restrictions added over the decades now constitute a near impermeable barrier to building the housing we need. The barrier targets starter homes, townhouses, triple-deckers, 4-6 family multi-plexes, and apartment buildings. They stand in the way of *anyone* who wants to build housing here, whether for-profit, not-for-profit, our state-chartered Housing Authority, social-housing organizations... even, apparently, the City itself, if it were to tackle the housing shortage head-on.

Only about two-thirds of Cambridge residents (including my wife and I) own their own homes. About 80% of our current housing fails to meet current zoning restrictions. And yet, many of the zoning reform opponents I mentioned above declare that their streets, neighborhoods and maybe the entire city will be devastated unless they are allowed to maintain the status quo and use the power and authority of City government to exclude others.

I ask that you review the data and analysis linked above, as well as [CDD's estimates](#) of the growth in numbers of homes that this reform would allow. Sending a positive recommendation to the City Council would be an important step towards less inequality and more stability for Cambridge.

James Zall
203 Pemberton Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Totten <dantotten@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 11:01 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: multifamily housing

Hello,

A quick note ahead of this afternoon's hearing:

This presentation is excellent and thorough and helpful, presenting both a detailed summary as well as analysis of various options. I am pleased to see that the idea proposed by Councillor Wilson has been explored as Option 3.

I think the numbers strongly support Option 3 as the best way forward. Seems like it will address displacement by reducing the number of projects, while still resulting in a very similar net new units and even a slight increase in the number of affordable units over time. What's not to love? This is an appropriate compromise.

The presentation notes that Option 3 would leave single-family-only zoning intact within the base zoning, which I acknowledge is an issue. To rectify this, I would support making the entire city C-1 as it currently exists - that would address the issue in the base zoning - but i'd be curious to know whether CDD thinks this would impact their projection or not.

another question that might be worth asking on the floor: can CDD talk a bit about why they think Option 3 would make inclusionary developments tempting at 12 units, as opposed to 14 for their original proposal? That assertion really stands out to me as a positive of choosing Option 3, and I'd like to know more about how they arrived there.

All the best,

Dan Totten
54 Bishop Allen Drive #2

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 10:55 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily zoning

Dear Councillors -

I've written before several times. As stated by myself and every person who has given testimony, there is widespread support for ending zoning that allows *only* single family housing. End exclusionary zoning AND get growth "right."

The more I read and understand about the triggers in the current proposal for multifamily structures citywide with no/limited setbacks, the more convinced I am that developers will do what is only human. Displace residents and build market rate units stopping short of mandated inclusionary ones. It promises the worst of both worlds. Every inch of Cambridge will become more expensive...shooting in the foot the good intention of developing more affordable housing. We will suffer from lack of trees, open space, sunlight, etc.

The Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition has asked CDD to respond to their questions about the three versions of the proposal. Insist that data-driven answers be given and identify the assumptions that underlie their conclusions on these issues.

Respectfully,
Mary Jane Kornacki

--

Mary Jane Kornacki
103 Avon Hill St
Cambridge, MA 02140
617.354.7983 (h)
617.480.5778 (m)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Peter Glick <peterglick@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 10:06 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Zoning Proposals

Dear Councillors,

I am stunned by the zoning proposals to allow 6 stories of market rate housing and 13 stories of affordable housing on every house lot in Cambridge. Both seem designed to enrich developers, neither seems designed to benefit today's Cambridge residents.

The market rate housing plan is especially egregious. It would put a target on every naturally affordable triple decker rental in the city. Landlords will immediately have a huge incentive to remove tenants as their leases expire and sell to developers and/or private equity investors who would convert 3 units of middle class rentals into 1-8 units of luxury housing. The value of their land will double or more as their expected revenue climbs. Even worse, with new construction today priced in the neighborhood of \$1,500 per square foot or more, these homes will only be available to the very wealthy. Cambridge will become a richer, whiter, less diverse city. I suppose this is good for housing empty nesters from Wellesley or biotech VPs in Kendall Square, but it will displace those who call Cambridge home today, with no impact on improving affordability, or perhaps negative impact as neighborhoods gentrify.

Advocates of the market rate plan assert that enabling 13 stories of affordable housing on every lot will improve affordability hand in hand with the market based rule. But this introduces it's own set of issues. 13 stories in neighborhoods of 2-3 stories today is literally over the top. It will provide more affordable housing, but at a terrible price to the thousands of small homes that were purchased precisely because they were in neighborhoods of small homes. With so much space available on major corridors, it is hard to understand why we would not build there first. But even there, 13 stories seems like a number designed for grandstanding rather than a serious compromise along reasonable lines.

The strangeness of the 13 story plan is highlighted by recent excellent developments on New Street and at Rindge and Alewife. In both of these cases, affordable housing developers chose much lower structures (4 stories?) in neighborhoods that could have handled taller buildings. Yet when it is time for rules in neighborhoods where 4 stories or lower would be appropriate, we have demands for 13 stories. Apparently, 4 stories is the right mark for undeveloped or tall neighborhoods, yet we need 13 stories everywhere else.

In both of these cases, we are left to wonder about the motivations of Councillors who support these proposals. If the Council's constituents are today's Cambridge residents, we need plans that would improve affordability without sacrificing our neighborhoods to money interests.

Peter Glick
60 Raymond St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Richard Krushnic <rkrushnic@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 10:03 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Multifamily zoning

I am writing to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's (CHJC) position regarding the proposed multifamily zoning.

I am particularly concerned about the City's proposal allowing 6 stories everywhere in the city, because it would cause significant elimination of the lowest-rent market rate housing in the city. Three deckers in the dense areas of the city would be torn down and replaced with up to 9 units of expensive housing, with no affordable units.

CHJC's proposal to restrict the new zoning applicability to inclusionary-only projects would drastically reduce the displacement mentioned above. Since developers generally aren't interested in inclusionary projects unless they include at least 16 units, more development would be steered to Western Cambridge, where lots are larger.

At least the CHJC proposal guarantees that the zoning will generate 20% affordable units in anything the zoning generates. I do like the CHJC's inclusion of changing residential zoning in the current 1 and 2 family zones to C1, which makes C1 more of a citywide base zoning.

Sincerely,

Richard Krushnic, 20 Oak St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Candace Young <thegroundup@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 9:00 AM
To: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Ordinance committee

To the Ordinance Committee and Planning Committee,

What was once being referred to as affordable housing and the goal to increase affordable housing in the city is now being referred to as multifamily housing?

The wording below are the goals from the CDD website and make no reference to affordable housing requirements other than to “continue to encourage”.

So is the desire to create multifamily buildings everywhere in the city but not require any affordable housing as a requirement??

Based on the goals below, this appears to be the mission. Increase the population but not necessarily make the city more affordable?? Are we just eliminating zoning altogether?

From the project page on CDD:

The Cambridge City Council is discussing proposed changes to allow multifamily housing in all city neighborhoods. The proposal has these main goals:

- Allow multifamily housing (such as apartments and condos) in all neighborhoods of the city.
- Allow residential buildings of up to 6 stories in all neighborhoods and districts of the city.
- Remove other requirements that make it more difficult to build multifamily housing, such as minimum lot sizes, limits on the number of housing units and amount of floor area.
- Continue to encourage the creation of permanently affordable housing through the inclusionary housing requirements and Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO).

Perhaps I am missing something??

Candace Young, 15 1/2 Shepard Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 8:13 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Yes to multifamily housing

Dear city councilors, planning board members -

I just reviewed cdd's slides for today's presentation. It's heartening to know that all three of the "full with IZ" proposals (six stories base, four base with six IZ, existing base with six IZ") will produce basically the same amount of housing and affordable housing. It's clear that the vast majority of the housing and affordable housing we need in residential neighborhoods will come from six story IZ buildings, if we allow them.

I support the "six base" or the "four base with six IZ" options, because I think we shouldn't miss an opportunity to clean up the zoning code, and I think that leaving a bad zoning base in place is a bad idea. But mostly, I strongly urge you to support whichever of the three "full with IZ" options you can agree on.

I also noticed how the projected housing growth in squares and corridors IF we properly rezone those corridors is potentially twice as much as from this initiative in neighborhoods... but that even if we do both we will *still* not be meeting our needs. What this tells me is that we need momentum. We need to pass a strong multifamily zoning in neighborhoods soon so that we can set a strong baseline for effective squares and corridors zoning next.

It's also a matter of fairness; it's not right that neighborhoods should be reserved for the rich and incumbent while renters and the middle class get forced into the squares and corridors. We need as many options as we can get, everywhere.

As I write this, I'm hearing jackhammers; the unit above mine is getting reno'ed. Construction will happen with or without rezoning. But only with rezoning will that construction make it easier for people to live in Cambridge. Please help me and my friends have a future in this city.

Thanks,
Allan Sadun
237 elm St #1

Erwin, Nicole

From: Alison Field-Juma <fieldjuma@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 8:00 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Citywide residential upzoning: First address ongoing loss of housing units

Dear City Council Ordinance Committee,

Regarding the Citywide residential upzoning: First address ongoing loss of housing units

In my neighborhood (Neighborhood 9), within just two blocks, 3 two-family houses are right now being converted into 3 single-family houses. So we are losing 6 units of housing each probably valued below \$1m (which are often rentals too) in exchange for 3 units of over \$4m value (based on recent listings).

Before we allow very large market rate structures in our neighborhoods—with no setbacks, hence no room for trees and exacerbating the heat island effect—the city should study and report back ways to reduce down-conversions like these. They are happening all around us and I suspect are having a significant impact on loss of housing, but are invisible unless you notice two front doors turning into one front door.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alison Field-Juma
363 Concord Ave.
Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sergey Petrov <yukpun60@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 5:17 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning proposal

I strongly object to Upzoning proposal for the following reasons:

1. The proposal doesn't address needs of current Cambridge population though satisfying these needs is the ultimate purpose of the City government existence
2. Proposed changes will increase the load on current infrastructure, the increase will require expensive changes/additions to the infrastructure but the proposal doesn't guarantee that developers will pay for the infrastructure modification. Therefore, the modifications will be paid for by current Cambridge taxpayers.
3. Proposes zoning changes do not guarantee appearance of subsidized units ("affordable housing").
4. Simplification of approval process has no purpose except helping developers to make Cambridge uglier.

In my opinion, proposed zoning changes constitute developer's lobby attack.
If accepted, a small group will benefit in expense of all Cambridge residents.

City government exist to serve Cambridge resident needs.
The idea that the government can/must change our lives according to any political agenda is really stupid.
Especially when the agenda in question is absolutely selfish and crazy.

Sergey Petrov
10 Dana St., 508, Cambridge MA

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cynthia W Smith <cynthiasmithasla@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 10:04 PM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk; City Council
Cc: steven imrich
Subject: 28-30 Wendell Street

To the Members of the City of Cambridge Planning Board,

Thank you for serving on the Planning Board for the city of Cambridge. I do not envy your position in having to weigh in on a precedent setting project related to Affordable Housing within the new blanket overlay district (the entire city) where there are few design, density, or setback restrictions provided by either the City Council or the City.

I come to you as both a long time (42 years) resident of Crescent Street and as a design professional who has been involved in the design of many urban open spaces, streets, and development projects in the city.

I would like to highlight two relevant multi-layered projects that involved public-private partnerships between the city and developer with housing and open space components and special project status (i.e. Large Project Review). Although they were not subject to this recent rezoning overlay, both projects involved inter-departmental design review, approvals by the Cambridge Planning Board, and a sufficient public design process to make the projects work in their respective neighborhoods.

The first project with Harvard University and the city (CDD & PWD) along the Charles River included a multi-story graduate student dorm along Memorial drive, 4 story in-fill married student housing, a new park with underground parking on the former Mahoney's Garden site and infill dormitory residences within a historic neighborhood at Banks and Cowperthwaite Streets.

The second project was in the Baldwin neighborhood (Harvard Law School NW Corner project) and involved both a new large campus law school building, open space and circulation considerations, and the moving and historic preservation of a historic building. These are just two dense mixed-use projects which I highlight because they 1) had a big impact on their respective neighborhoods 2) resulted in high quality design, 3) included a robust public process, and 4) resulted in a win-win for the city, the developer and the neighborhoods.

In contrast, the proposed 28-30 Wendell Street project is being rushed through much too quickly without sufficient time to develop a good design and in its current configuration does not have the community's support.

Issues for consideration:

1. Impacts to Traffic: Oxford Street is already a congested arterial with insufficient multi-modal accommodation and morning congestion from school bus and school traffic, Harvard employee commuter traffic, and lots of non-through streets with few outlets. Wendell Street is backed up for a whole block from Mass Ave in the am. Mellon Street is closed to through traffic which further exacerbates neighborhood circulation. The street impacts need further review and design enhancements to resolve the current and proposed conflicts that will make the traffic worse.

2. Site considerations:

Lesley campus currently has a porosity to its campus edge along this part of Wendell and Oxford Street. With the elimination of the tennis courts and landscape here, there is further restriction of pedestrian circulation and visibility to and through the campus. More robust street tree and sidewalk enhancements proposed for the site and Wendell Street have not been shared. Loading and service for the site will be challenging and pedestrian networks have not been developed or shared.

3. Architectural design and massing: The building, as currently designed is extremely large and clunky—out of scale with the neighborhood—an eight story building mass whose footprint looks more like an office building than appropriately scaled infill residential development.

If the site is to have this much density, it requires a more creative approach to the architectural massing. Scaling down the project would also greatly improve the design, and provide more options for appropriate solutions.

A more sensitive solution such as several smaller footprint building masses at different heights connected together could result in a more dynamic and neighborhood-scaled solution. There are multiple massing solutions and massing reductions that could result in a better fit for the residents, the neighborhood, and the city.

28-30 Wendell is an important precedent setting project and is not ready to be approved by the Planning Board. We urge you to postpone a decision and continue the discussion until these issues can be resolved.

Sincerely,

CYNTHIA SMITH FASLA

Principal (Ret)

Halvorson Design Partnership

Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

(Current Member of the City of Cambridge Public Planting Commission)

STEVE IMRICH, FAIA

Principal (Ret)

Cambridge Seven Associates

Architecture, Planning, Exhibit Design

(Former member CHA designer selection committee)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Pamela Pecchio <ppecchio@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 8:05 PM
To: Planning Board Comment
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multi housing Zoning Proposal

Hello,

I want to add my voice to the list of those concerned about this proposal. Let me be clear, I am for increasing affordable housing, but this proposal is too extreme, lacks analysis, and could really be a detriment.

Why not a more moderate plan, with stages, benchmarks and analysis?

Why not build big/bigger buildings in main corridors, and not in small, tight neighborhoods?

Have you stood next to a 3-story, 2-family house and visualized it surrounded by 6-story buildings?

As an example, our house in N Cambridge is surrounded by five others, we abut the back of their properties that encircle us like a fan. Our lot is not very large. With no rear setback requirement, we could be surrounded by 75' buildings.

Last year, we invested in solar panels. We cut the gas line to our house entirely. We rely on the renewable resource of the sun, as encouraged by the city.

Would the city pay us back for the lost solar investment? I know plenty of other families in a similar situation.

Have you considered setting a limit to the number of large buildings in a certain area, to avoid possible drowning of existing houses? Keeping some sort of setback requirement for sun, air and vegetation?

What is the rush? Does it have to do with meeting a deadline for Envision Cambridge?

The right thing to do would be to put off the deadline and allow time for analysis, and not rush to meet a goal, just because it had been set.

Is this going to plow ahead, despite what appears to be a majority opposition in the community?

Thank you,
Pam Pecchio
4 Hollis Park

Erwin, Nicole

From: Erin Shackelford <shackelford.erin@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 7:51 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: New Zoning Should Require Inclusionary Units

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

I respectfully request that you amend the current zoning proposal that would allow 6 floors of market-rate housing with no requirement for inclusionary housing. Cambridge needs more affordable housing, not less, and the current proposal does not support Charter Right #2 "having viable housing for everyone, especially lower-income residents." I support Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's proposal that the new zoning only apply to buildings larger than 10,000 square feet or more than 9 units to ensure that any new building would be required to have at least two inclusionary units.

Please provide findings from the CDD on the proposed zoning's impact on households earning below 50% AMI and respond to CHJC's list of questions about the zoning.

Sincerely,

Erin Shackelford
16 Alberta Terrace #2, Cambridge, MA 02140

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marilee Meyer <mbm0044@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 7:17 PM
To: City Council; Zusy, Catherine; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Roberts, Jeffrey; Farooq, Iram; citymanager@cambridge.gov; City Clerk
Subject: ORDINANCE : please consider more multi-family analysis
Attachments: COPY ORDINANCE Dear Ordinance Committee.docx

A hard copy is attached.

Dear Ordinance Committee,

After listening to comments at the Planning Board, Economic and Neighborhood Long-Term Planning committees, I am impressed with how informed our residents are- their depth of analysis, realistic goals, and unintended consequences identified. Given the staunch proponents of this multifamily up-zoning are in charge of both the initiating Housing Committee and Ordinance, any hope of compromise on key points is an uphill battle given their dogged pursuit. It is also disheartening how much of the original Affordable Housing Overlay guidelines have been diminished “for stream-lining”. Thoughtful details, nuance, transitions, context, have been struck for easier implementation. The need for Housing is a given, but HOW, WHERE, WHY and for WHOM it is for **needs analysis and clear parameters**. The community, many of whom support IDUs, infill, some height including corridors- is feeling resentful and marginalized as 6 stories are plopped across the city without discretion.

This is very different than when we debate the AHO, where we are at least focused on how to help disadvantaged people and how much impact on current residents is appropriate and fair. With the general upzoning, we are imposing costs on current residents for a group that is already more advantaged and wealthy—those who can afford new condos in Cambridge. “*Conforming residential additions are allowed as of right without limits on area or volume*” cater to the wealthy and possible expansions of single-family homes. With no design review or oversight, it is a gift to investors and developers. Total elimination of zoning A and B is unrealistic and will NEVER become C because of its expense. They should have been rezoned for multi-family and inclusionary zoning separately.

And the unit numbers gleaned from ENVISION used as the basis for housing goals should be revisited. My understanding is the tally was based not on inclusionary but SUPER-INCLUSIONARY which was later eliminated skewing your numbers.

Housing is not like corn, the more you grow the cheaper it is. Each class of housing is a different “commodity”. Increasing the supply of luxury housing doesn’t decrease the cost of naturally affordable housing. As a substitute for Luxury, the affordable unit price rises as people are pushed to buy. Free market policies do not always make housing cheaper, and **in high- demand cities like Cambridge, supply and demand doesn’t work according to several studies- pushing costs higher.** We also hear inclusionary units are “free” because developers pay for them, but they are not. The Housing Committee goal includes “.. *having viable housing for everyone, especially lower-income residents*”. Ironically, this policy order caters to the larger Market-rate residents. What zoning impacts are there on households earning below 50% AMI?

To meet that goal for more low-income develop zoning that helps and does not harm lower-income residents, I support Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition in asking the proposed **zoning to be amended so that it only applies to buildings larger than 10,000 square feet or more than 9 units. This ensures that any new building would be required to have at least 2 Inclusionary units.** This amendment would reduce the acceleration of displacement because completely market-rate projects would not get more incentives and opportunities to destroy naturally occurring affordable housing and displace residents. It would assure that the city would gain inclusionary housing in buildings built under the new zoning. This amendment would strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute to Inclusionary Housing units.

Existing dense neighborhoods with small lots provide limited opportunities for larger viable projects, encouraging the purchase of older affordable buildings only to tear them down at great cost, and to consolidate property lots for market-rate units—**Gentrification is enhanced and demographic disparities force diversity out for a whiter and richer population.** This was born out with a recent analysis in New York neighborhoods where high levels of new housing construction overwhelmingly saw a rise in the White population and drops in Black and Hispanic portions.

We have no sense whether new units are actually just replacing the same old unit count. It is the single largest ideological rezoning city-wide **without analysis** for consequences, infrastructure, support services, transportation, traffic with no end-game in sight. **We also see more corporate, foreign or non-resident investors buying up rentals to park money or find profit for portfolios.** Public meetings are just a formality. Check.

From the beginning, statements from Councilors and CDD made the direction clear. The lead co-chair of the Housing quipped, “*Ordinance is the shortest path to implementation*”. Behind the scenes, that language became almost iron-clad- removing regulations “*wholesale, if they interfered with the agenda*”. Sending the proposal to CDD to simplify zoning language “*to make it easier to read*” solidified the “draft” with developer thumb prints but little original citizen input. When asked if CDD will be having more meetings, its director stated “**no, I don’t want to give the public the impression that with more input the language will change**”. No indication of compromise. Serious and thoughtful comments questioning practicality, sustainability, gentrification, displacement, infrastructure, sense of place and environmental justice, unit count have been dismissed by its dogged myopic sponsors indicating a done deal. “*Some public meetings may not be required*”. **This does nothing for affordable housing.**

It is really irritating that Cambridge issues get tried in the Press before residents grasp them. The Boston Globe editorial on Cambridge Housing (Nov 11th) written by the Housing Committee’s pet economist (not a city planner), stated the very real scenario where “**would-be residents will outbid moderate income locals for existing properties, upgrade them, increasing costs in the neighboring areas and lead to more gentrification and displacement**”, something more units won’t alleviate. We see that now. He also said “**Higher density doesn’t overcome financial barriers and only reflects one point in time**”.

A vote against this particular draft doesn’t eliminate the effort to get rid of exclusionary housing or to allow multifamily housing, both valid goals. **Even Councilor McGovern has stated several times that it could expire and be re-filed- like the original AHO.**

We need an analysis like other progressive cities have done to maintain some guard rails. What sort of properties would be demolished? What analysis has been done on whether this proposal would cause displacement of currently housed residents and if not- why not? What analysis has been done on the impact of existing naturally occurring affordable housing under current zoning? **What contributing alternative housing initiatives have been identified?** Zoning is necessary. **Nowhere do other municipalities allow “as-of-right” everywhere without public input or “discretionary review”**, a core discipline in city planning monitoring context and shoddy building materials -especially on small lots.

Cambridge doesn't have to be the guinea pig, the biggest and best “leader” in everything. What if we are wrong? This new Policy Order- supposedly addressing exclusionary and multi-family zoning- is a dog whistle for bigger, taller, more expensive market-rate housing and will continue to contribute to diversity displacement and of current residents for new ones. **At what age do long-time residents expire and become obsolete?**

CDD's “language” was not about word-smithing, it was cementing a new one-size-fits-all zoning which is easier to implement - contributing to diminished Cambridge character and identity. It kills the golden goose and will never catch up to the affordable housing we need. To quote another Councilor, urgency needs to be balanced with thoughtfulness, patience and practicality. All the more reason for a deep dive and responsible deliberation. Do it once, do it right.

Regards,

Marilee Meyer

10 Dana St

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE RE: MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING 11-18-24

Dear Ordinance Committee,

After listening to comments at the Planning Board, Economic and Neighborhood Long-Term Planning committees, I am impressed with how informed our residents are- their depth of analysis, realistic goals, and unintended consequences identified. Given the staunch proponents of this multifamily up-zoning are in charge of both the initiating Housing Committee and Ordinance, any hope of compromise on key points is an uphill battle given their dogged pursuit. It is also disheartening how much of the original Affordable Housing Overlay guidelines have been diminished "for stream-lining". Thoughtful details, nuance, transitions, context, have been struck for easier implementation. The need for Housing is a given, but HOW, WHERE, WHY and for WHOM it is for **needs analysis and clear parameters**. The community, many of whom support IDUs, infill, some height including corridors- is feeling resentful and marginalized as 6 stories are plopped across the city without discretion.

This is very different than when we debate the AHO, where we are at least focused on how to help disadvantaged people and how much impact on current residents is appropriate and fair.

With the general upzoning, we are imposing costs on current residents for a group that is already more advantaged and wealthy—those who can afford new condos in Cambridge. *"Conforming residential additions are allowed as of right without limits on area or volume"* cater to the wealthy and possible expansions of single-family homes. With no design review or oversight, it is a gift to investors and developers. Total elimination of zoning A and B is unrealistic and will NEVER become C because of its expense. They should have been rezoned for multi-family and inclusionary zoning separately.

And the unit numbers gleaned from ENVISION used as the basis for housing goals should be revisited. My understanding is the tally was based not on inclusionary but SUPER-INCLUSIONARY which was later eliminated skewing your numbers.

Housing is not like corn, the more you grow the cheaper it is. Each class of housing is a different "commodity". Increasing the supply of luxury housing doesn't decrease the cost of naturally affordable housing. As a substitute for Luxury, the affordable unit price rises as people are pushed to buy. Free market policies do not always make housing cheaper, and **in high-demand cities like Cambridge, supply and demand doesn't work according to several studies- pushing costs higher.** We also hear inclusionary units are "free" because developers pay for them, but they are not. The Housing Committee goal includes *".. having viable housing for everyone, especially lower-income residents"*. Ironically, this policy order caters to the larger

Market-rate residents. What zoning impacts are there on households earning below 50% AMI?

To meet that goal for more low-income develop zoning that helps and does not harm lower-income residents, I support Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition in asking the proposed **zoning to be amended so that it only applies to buildings larger than 10,000 square feet or more than 9 units. This ensures that any new building would be required to have at least 2 Inclusionary units.** This amendment would reduce the acceleration of displacement because completely market-rate projects would not get more incentives and opportunities to destroy naturally occurring affordable housing and displace residents. It would assure that the city would gain inclusionary housing in buildings built under the new zoning. This amendment would strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute to Inclusionary Housing units.

Existing dense neighborhoods with small lots provide limited opportunities for larger viable projects, encouraging the purchase of older affordable buildings only to tear them down at great cost, and to consolidate property lots for market-rate units—**Gentrification is enhanced and demographic disparities force diversity out for a whiter and richer population.** This was born out with a recent analysis in New York neighborhoods where high levels of new housing construction overwhelmingly saw a rise in the White population and drops in Black and Hispanic portions.

We have no sense whether new units are actually just replacing the same old unit count. It is the single largest ideological rezoning city-wide **without analysis** for consequences, infrastructure, support services, transportation, traffic with no end-game in sight. **We also see more corporate, foreign or non-resident investors buying up rentals to park money or find profit for portfolios.** Public meetings are just a formality. Check.

From the beginning, statements from Councilors and CDD made the direction clear. The lead co-chair of the Housing quipped, *“Ordinance is the shortest path to implementation”*. Behind the scenes, that language became almost iron-clad- removing regulations *“wholesale, if they interfered with the agenda”*. Sending the proposal to CDD to simplify zoning language *“to make it easier to read”* solidified the “draft” with developer thumb prints but little original citizen input. When asked if CDD will be having more meetings, its director stated **“no, I don’t want to give the public the impression that with more input the language will change”**. No indication of compromise. Serious and thoughtful comments questioning practicality, sustainability, gentrification, displacement, infrastructure, sense of place and environmental justice, unit count have been dismissed by its dogged myopic sponsors indicating a done deal. *“Some public meetings may not be required”*. **This does nothing for affordable housing.**

It is really irritating that Cambridge issues get tried in the Press before residents grasp them. The Boston Globe editorial on Cambridge Housing (Nov 11th) written by the Housing Committee's pet economist (not a city planner), stated the very real scenario where ***"would-be residents will outbid moderate income locals for existing properties, upgrade them, increasing costs in the neighboring areas and lead to more gentrification and displacement"***, something more units won't alleviate. We see that now. He also said ***"Higher density doesn't overcome financial barriers and only reflects one point in time"***.

A vote against this particular draft doesn't eliminate the effort to get rid of exclusionary housing or to allow multifamily housing, both valid goals. **Even Councilor McGovern has stated several times that it could expire and be re-filed- like the original AHO.**

We need an analysis like other progressive cities have done to maintain some guard rails. What sort of properties would be demolished? What analysis has been done on whether this proposal would cause displacement of currently housed residents and if not- why not? What analysis has been done on the impact of existing naturally occurring affordable housing under current zoning? **What contributing alternative housing initiatives have been identified?** Zoning is necessary. **Nowhere do other municipalities allow "as-of-right" everywhere without public input or "discretionary review"**, a core discipline in city planning monitoring context and shoddy building materials - especially on small lots.

Cambridge doesn't have to be the guinea pig, the biggest and best "leader" in everything. What if we are wrong? This new Policy Order- supposedly addressing exclusionary and multi-family zoning- is a dog whistle for bigger, taller, more expensive market-rate housing and will continue to contribute to diversity displacement and of current residents for new ones. **At what age do long-time residents expire and become obsolete?**

CDD's "language" was not about word-smithing, it was cementing a new one-size-fits-all zoning which is easier to implement - contributing to diminished Cambridge character and identity. It kills the golden goose and will never catch up to the affordable housing we need. To quote another Councilor, urgency needs to be balanced with thoughtfulness, patience and practicality. All the more reason for a deep dive and responsible deliberation. Do it once, do it right.

Regards,

Marilee Meyer
10 Dana St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Judi Neu <judineu@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 5:00 PM
To: City Manager; City Clerk; paulftoner@gmail.com; Nolan, Patricia
Subject: Proposed up zoning concerns

Dear City Council,

I hope that you remain open to the thoughts of a long-time (50 years!) Cambridge resident who loves this city and worries that the many unintended consequences of the proposed upzoning are going unheeded. Overall I am very concerned about building heights, impact on our green Cambridge goals (old growth trees and heat islands), and destruction of neighborhoods that make Cambridge the liveable city it is and why so many people want to live here.

Here are my suggestions/concerns:

- 1. Design Review and Oversight.** No design is so good that it doesn't benefit by review. All projects 4 stories and higher must retain design review and oversight by professionals and neighbors.
- 2. Limit up-zoning rules and benefits ONLY to projects involving more new housing--specifically only those projects including three or more new units.** Beware that using the upzoning to enable investors to create larger, single family homes decreases the number of people that can live on a property and arbitrarily increases property values and taxes for their neighbors. It also increases the costs of housing city wide.
- 3. Limits on neighborhood district heights** are essential to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods: limit heights to 3 stories and add extra 2 stories for projects with 20% inclusionary or 20% secured affordable rentals or 20% publicly-funded home acquisitions that return to the city when owner leaves. Require a minimum of 5' from the sides, 10' at the rear and front setbacks to match those nearby. Require that open space be permeable -- i.e., green space. The 3 story limit encourages more inclusionary or secured affordable rentals.
- 4. Require a Public Benefit or Betterment Fee.** Funds by the investor or developer should go toward the public good, for example a public transit system.
- 5. Add a Preservation Waiver.** Provide a waiver in the Public Benefit Fee for projects that preserve, renovate and reuse historic "character building" rather than demolish buildings. This conserves neighborhood character and keeps materials out of landfill. Use current CHC historic valuation designations in evaluating such homes.
- 6. Add a Minimum Six Stories Height Requirement** in commercial or mixed-use zones. Add this height requirement with added adjacent rear or side neighborhood step downs to complement nearby homes and prevent loss of daylight to adjacent homes. This addresses the underutilization of property in commercial or mixed-use zones especially adjacent to major public transit lines.

7. Require Regular and Ongoing Reviews. Require two 3-year reviews followed by regular 10-year reviews to address the results of the upzoning and the impacts of these changes, paying particular attention to new housing costs, number of new units created, gentrification, renters, environmental and infrastructure concerns, demolitions, and impacts on residents.

These points are significant and require time and planning to implement. They recognize the tremendous importance of this upzoning decision on the climate, neighborhood integrity and livability while addressing housing needs and concerns. They have long term impact and thus require careful review alongside review of what other cities have learned in their upzoning initiatives.

Thank you,
Judi and Carlos Neu
14 Longfellow Road

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kelly Dolan <kelly.dolan.kd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 4:52 PM
To: Toner, Paul; Patricia Nolan; Zusy, Catherine; Wilson, Ayesha; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Cambridge Has Already Reached Its 2030 Housing Goals.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional planning agency for the state, estimated Cambridge, as an inner core community, would need to get to 50,379 to 53,448 housing units by 2030 to contribute to the region's housing shortage.

The 2014 report is linked below.

According to CDD we are already at 57,894 housing units as of this year. Link below.

Why is CDD continuing to use a totally bogus, made up housing goal from Envision Cambridge? The MAPC report is very clear how they calculated their goals. Either CDD is incompetent or they are intentionally lying that the 12,500 unit Envision goal came from MAPC. The Envision Housing Goal was never voted on nor accepted by anyone on City Council or this would have been vetted and discussed.

Maybe a better question is why the city is asking its residents to do so much more than the State of Massachusetts in contributing to the regional housing shortage.

Or why certain Councilors are asking residents to up-zone their long established neighborhoods with a Multi Family Zoning Petition that uses this completely made up housing number. Not to mention highly questionable forecasts on the impacts of the plan.

Cambridge has done more than its fair share for housing, and the state agrees.

MAPC report .

<https://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cambridge.pdf>

CDD website here

"Using information compiled from the Cambridge Assessing database, Inspectional Services Department building permits, Planning Board submittals, and university housing sources, the Community Development Department tallies 57,894 housing units, current as of July 1, 2023. This figure includes development completed since 2020 and units currently under construction."

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/factsandmaps/demographicfaq>

Kelly Dolan
Upland Road

Sent from Gmail Mobile

--

Erwin, Nicole

From: John R. Frank <jrf.ttst@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 11:45 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Please prevent 28-30 Wendell Megastructure and Delay the Zoning Vote -- Protect Our Neighborhood

Dear City Clerk,

I'm writing with a heavy heart and deep frustration about the proposed high-rise developments in our Baldwin neighborhood. I've lived here for sixteen years. This place is special because of the smaller, unique homes, trees, and the sense of community that comes from a neighborhood scaled for people, not towering buildings.

While I am in favor of accessible housing, you should not allow the proposed **megastructure at 28-30 Wendell**. Also, the proposed rezoning of Cambridge will destroy the very neighborhoods that you seek to make accessible. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. That building should not be built. That land should have a balance of trees and affordable housing.

The proposed building at 28-30 Wendell and the possibility of more high-rises with more than three stories feels like a threat to everything I hold dear about this community. It's hard not to feel upset and unheard when decisions of this magnitude are being considered without fully understanding the impact they will have on the people who already live here.

The Character of Our Neighborhood

High-rises would irrevocably alter the scale and feel of our area. The shadows they cast, the density they bring, and the impersonal architecture are completely out of step with the homes and streets we cherish. It's not just a change—it's a destruction of the charm and character that attracted many of us to live here in the first place.

I have **raised my children here with the hope** that they will continue to call Cambridge home. Megastructures will destroy my dreams for my family. Greedy developers are the only people who would benefit from these megabuildings (>3 stories).

The Strain on Traffic and Infrastructure

Our streets are already overburdened, and the idea of adding significantly more cars and residents terrifies me. Traffic is bad enough as it is, and the pollution from more vehicles would make this area less safe and healthy, especially for children and older residents. The infrastructure—schools, utilities, and transit—simply isn't equipped to handle this kind of density.

Trees: A Vital Part of Our Community

One of the things I'm most passionate about is planting trees. Our neighborhood has been a place where large, mature trees thrive, providing shade, clean air, and a connection to nature that is invaluable in an urban setting. Developments like this often come at the expense of green space, cutting down trees to make room for parking lots and structures. I have planted three new trees on my property, and hope to plant more in our neighborhood.

Cambridge currently has an estimated 28% tree canopy coverage, according to studies conducted in 2012 and 2017 using LiDAR data. With a land area of approximately 6.4 square miles and a population of about 118,000, this translates to roughly one tree for every 17 residents, based on conservative estimates of tree density in urban areas. While this number is far from ideal, it offers an opportunity: we could aspire to a future where Cambridge has one tree for every resident. This would help to further improve our neighborhoods into greener, healthier, and more beautiful places to live.

The “trees-to-resident” ratio is a simple but powerful metric that city planners can use to prioritize environmental health and livability. Every tree we plant contributes to cleaner air, cooler streets, and the mental and physical well-being of our community. Instead of projects like this that would cut down trees and pave over green spaces, we should be working to plant more trees and preserve the ones we have.

A Vision of Hope for Our Neighborhood

This is why I am so upset about the proposed high-rise developments—they go against everything we should be striving for as a city. If we make thoughtful, community-driven decisions, we can create a future where neighborhoods like ours remain places where families thrive, children play under the shade of trees, and residents enjoy the health and environmental benefits of urban greenery.

A Need for Real Listening

I understand the city’s desire to address housing needs. This plan feels rushed and out of touch with the realities on the ground. I want to believe that my voice and the voices of others in this community matter. But when a proposal like this moves forward so quickly, it’s hard not to feel powerless and ignored.

I’m asking you—please take a step back. Delay this decision, listen to the people who live here, and carefully weigh the long-term consequences of such a drastic change. We deserve a thoughtful process that respects the residents who have built their lives in this neighborhood and the trees that make it livable.

With care and foresight, we can protect the character of our neighborhood and ensure a greener, healthier Cambridge for generations to come. I hope you’ll choose to stand with us and make the right decision for our community.

Sincerely,

John R. Frank (he/him)
15 Crescent Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
jrf.ttst@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rebecca Pries <rebeccakpries@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 10:51 AM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Cc: Suzanne Blier
Subject: Proposed upzoning concerns

Dear City Council,

I hope that you remain open to the thoughts of a long-time (50 years!) Cambridge resident who loves this city and worries that the many unintended consequences of the proposed upzoning are going unheeded. Overall I am very concerned about building heights, impact on our green Cambridge goals (old growth trees and heat islands), and destruction of neighborhoods that make Cambridge the liveable city it is and why so many people want to live here.

Here are my suggestions/concerns:

- 1. Design Review and Oversight.** No design is so good that it doesn't benefit by review. All projects 4 stories and higher must retain design review and oversight by professionals and neighbors.
- 2. Limit up-zoning rules and benefits ONLY to projects involving more new housing--specifically only those projects including three or more new units.** Beware that using the upzoning to enable investors to create larger, single family homes decreases the number of people that can live on a property and arbitrarily increases property values and taxes for their neighbors. It also increases the costs of housing city wide.
- 3. Limits on neighborhood district heights** are essential to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods: limit heights to 3 stories and add extra 2 stories for projects with 20% inclusionary or 20% secured affordable rentals or 20% publicly-funded home acquisitions that return to the city when owner leaves. Require a minimum of 5' from the sides, 10' at the rear and front setbacks to match those nearby. Require that open space be permeable -- i.e., green space. The 3 story limit encourages more inclusionary or secured affordable rentals.
- 4. Require a Public Benefit or Betterment Fee.** Funds by the investor or developer should go toward the public good, for example a public transit system.
- 5. Add a Preservation Waiver.** Provide a waiver in the Public Benefit Fee for projects that preserve, renovate and reuse historic "character building" rather than demolish buildings. This conserves neighborhood character and keeps materials out of landfill. Use current CHC historic valuation designations in evaluating such homes.
- 6. Add a Minimum Six Stories Height Requirement** in commercial or mixed-use zones. Add this height requirement with added adjacent rear or side neighborhood step downs to complement nearby homes and prevent loss of daylight to adjacent homes. This addresses the underutilization of property in commercial or mixed-use zones especially adjacent to major public transit lines.

7. Require Regular and Ongoing Reviews. Require two 3-year reviews followed by regular 10-year reviews to address the results of the upzoning and the impacts of these changes, paying particular attention to new housing costs, number of new units created, gentrification, renters, environmental and infrastructure concerns, demolitions, and impacts on residents.

These points are significant and require time and planning to implement. They recognize the tremendous importance of this upzoning decision on the climate, neighborhood integrity and livability while addressing housing needs and concerns. They have long term impact and thus require careful review alongside review of what other cities have learned in their upzoning initiatives.

Thank you,
Rebecca Pries
10 Longfellow Road

Erwin, Nicole

From: Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 7:46 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Huang, Yi-An; Cotter, Chris; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Housing Math & Upzoning

Honorable Members of Cambridge City Council.

The data below on residents and housing is from analysis of the current most advanced AI using census and other city data around issues of housing. I am happy to share the detailed analysis math with you.

Average Ages of City Residents

- **c.42-46 years** old is the **Average Age** (and 40-46 years old is the Median age) of Cambridge residents once we remove college students, graduate students, post docs, and interns. This is considerably higher than the *30.6 average age number* that is now being used for the average age of regular residents here. The reason this latter number is problematic to use is not only because it includes our large, short term student populations (many of whom are here for 1-4 years only, but also because it is often used in an agist and disparaging manner to negate the views of older residents who attend meetings.

City Homeowner numbers

- **c.40-45%** is the home ownership rate in Cambridge, and approximately 55-60% of the housing units are owner occupied. The large majority of these are condo owners. The remaining housing is rental units.
- **c. 208 and 550** Cambridge homes are likely owned by students, doctoral students, and interns: This represents c.1.0% to 2.5% of the total owner-occupied homes
- **2-3 years** is the average length of time that students, grad students, and interns in Cambridge own their homes with some variation depending on individual circumstances.
- **520 to 1,300 homes** in Cambridge may be vacant for more than 9 months each year.
- **200-825 homes** is the number of vacant city homes (or 10%-30%) is likely due to speculation.

City Renters/Rental Units

- **c.31,200 to 38,500 is the number of rental units in Cambridge. A large # of these units are occupied by students, postdocs, and interns.**
- **c.16,900 to 23,600** rental units are occupied by the student/post doc groups.
- **c.7,600 to 14,000** rental units, are likely occupied by long-term residents, which include families, professionals, and non-student adults.
- **c.54% to 63%** of our rental units are occupied by student affiliated renters.
- **c.37% to 46%** of our rental units are occupied by long-term residents.
- **1.2 years.** Average rental stay of **students, postdocs, and interns**, depending on their specific academic or professional circumstances. Note: Every time a rental property turns over (lease is changed) it is likely that the rental rates will rise.
- **7-10 years.** Average rental stay of long-term residents,
- **Conclusions:** What we really need are rental units in Cambridge (and this is precisely what Vancouver and some other cities are adding, rather than fueling the investor market with more luxury condos. San Francisco and other cities with large university students have more effectively advocated for increased housing by local universities and bio-tech and info-tech industries.
- We also need to step back and look at likely impacts of the election on soft money staffing and housing needs of area universities and hospitals. Doing a massive upzoning that will only fuel more land speculation will likely do serious harm.

Possible Evictions due to upzoning (if the 6 story properties in residential properties citywide is Ordained.

- **1,000-2,000** demolished residential properties are expected over the first decade of redevelopment.
- **2,000-6,000 displaced tenants.** Assuming each building is occupied by an average of 2-3 tenants per unit, this could result in 2,000-6,000 tenants being displaced in the early stages of redevelopment.

Housing Needs and Election Outcomes. In the aftermath of the recent election, I did an analysis of likely impacts of this event on Cambridge Housing Needs, and found that in all likelihood, the demand for new housing (outside investor interests) will likely decline substantially. I take into account the likely impacts on local universities, hospitals, biotech, and other fields. [Read HERE](#)

Since housing needs are likely to significantly decline, I urge you hold off on a massive upzoning until we know the fuller election impacts. I know that universities are already meeting on the impacts of the election on related numbers and programs internally. I also strongly urge you to read my analysis what specifically other progressive cities have done re-upzoning. It is NOT what some on council and elsewhere have said: Read: [Zoning Lessons From other Cities: Will We Heed Them?](#)

The current upzoning proposal is way off base as far as these far more detailed other proposals are concerned.

I urge you to read my other housing linked blog posts (<https://www.suzanneprestonblier.com/civic-blogs>)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 3:04 AM
To: City Council
Subject: 5,984 Cambridge units for rent Nov. 18! Construction causes climate change! Six-story buildings need Oversight not Zoning Rights!

Dear City Council Members,

While nearly everyone in the community seems okay with rezoning for up to three-story or four-story multi-family dwellings; many strongly object to allowing six-story buildings by Zoning Rights. Six-story, 75' buildings should require oversight regarding where they are built; not zoning rights guaranteed to the highest investor/developer's bid! The goal is more affordable housing; Not skyrocketing land values. The climate and environmental impacts of demolition/construction due to this zoning will be overwhelming at a critical time when we are already cooking our oceans and causing die-outs of many species.

- In a quick search for Cambridge housing, [apartments.com](https://www.apartments.com) claims 5,984 vacancies on Nov. 18th! Perhaps this entire plan requires a more nuanced approach to **primarily address affordability, rather than availability**; as these often have separate sets of remedies. A plan which encourages a wide range of housing options and solutions might including co-op living, rooming house, creating additional units in existing buildings (subdivision, attic, basement, garage, addition), apartments, senior living, condos, ADUs, building conversions, and vouchers could all better impact affordability and immediate availability of units. Home-ownership, and low climate impacts should be prioritized!
- Zoning confers building Rights, eliminating crucial city planning oversight! If 6 story buildings are desired in neighborhoods, it is essential to have an organization accountable to the community to proactively approve of best sites and confer on designs for development with veto authority included somewhere in the planning process.
- Subjecting every Cambridge property to a potential developer bid at time of sale would likely **skyrocket property prices** for perhaps a decade. Multi-millionaires may become the only competitive property bid against developers. Property purchases may actually result in expanding the footprint of single family homes for the wealthiest, which is counter to the city's goals of more affordable housing and mitigating climate impacts. Two units within a block of my house had this result.
- Six-story buildings do not need to be 75'! Luxury apartments towering over neighboring homes half their height was not likely what citizens had in mind! Six story buildings are typically closer to 60', and variances could be obtained for special interests.
- Standard setbacks should apply to all buildings; but the proposed zoning has no setbacks on the sides or back of properties. Again, a variance could be required in the rare cases where no setbacks are desired.
- There are tremendous environmental concerns with redevelopment, as current housing is demolished and sent to landfills and huge new buildings are constructed in their place. The greenhouse gas emissions in this process are measured as 'embodied carbon' including climate impacts of demolition &

construction, manufacturing of all materials, transport, and assembly... This involves heavy duty trucks / machinery, and significant pollution, and disruptive impacts in our communities. There are many ways to reduce climate impacts ie. avoiding demolitions, reuse of foundations, sustainable materials, low emission concrete, low impact construction methods... but regulation is essential.

It is estimated that over a ten year period **embodied carbon from our buildings will increase from 11% of buildings environmental impact to 74%**, as opposed to operational emissions!* This is an astonishing increase that will have immediate & irreversible planet warming effects. Another estimate says it can take up to 80 years for increased building efficiencies to make up for the environmental effects of constructing a building.** Cambridge has No regulations that address pollution and climate impacts from construction. Embodied carbon has a tremendous immediate impact that may outweigh Cambridge's recent hard won gains in regulating/reducing operational emissions in some buildings. The impacts of diminished green space, tree loss, greater flooding with reduction of permeable surfaces, heat islands, and sewerage overflow to waterways also add to concerns that have not been addressed by the city.

These impacts require expert consideration and regulation prior to major city-wide zoning changes; as it will be incredibly difficult to implement them after residential zoning is changed.

Some advocates argue that the proposed zoning will eliminate commuter traffic or urban sprawl. Unfortunately, there is no simple equivalence, but rather a variety of solutions. Increasing our housing to accommodate everyone who desires to live here would overwhelm our infrastructure and be a drain on surrounding communities. We need to define our housing goals & transit with surrounding communities in mind.

Zoning and regulations protect the interests of the community - we can change them, but we should do so wisely with widespread, informed, community consent, that takes into account climate & environmental impacts! Unbridled investor and developer interests are not reliably aligned with community interests and they often lead to high priced housing.

It is terrifying that our nation may soon see what chaos ensues when regulations meant to protect citizens are dismantled in favor of big money interests. Especially in this turbulent time, Cambridge needs to seek solutions which unify residents in the face of challenges. This requires listening to and addressing concerns, often with compromise; rather than pushing through an unproven concept in a divisive manner. This rezoning, is prone to devastating unintended consequences.

The city has Not done the prerequisite work to mitigate harms of the proposed extreme zoning changes.

Advocates impatiently want us to think this city plan has been under discussion for a long time, but this is a New proposal, with very little research or data justifying a major change that will affect every resident and property in Cambridge. There has been minimal community outreach, and little if any responsiveness to community feedback. I believe the entire plan was only a vague concept in March this year, with a surprising 75' height added around August.

Advancing Housing Affordability / Donovan Petition*** is more reflective of concepts that actually have been under consideration, and it is met with enthusiastic approval! This plan ends exclusive zoning, is environmentally friendly, and avoids nearly all the pitfalls of the current proposal. It could easily be implemented now as a stop-gap measure to meet the urgency being expressed. Then we could figure out how to mitigate societal/financial and environmental/climate harms if something more robust if needed. The Ronayne Petition was also a reasonable option that could be considered, and built upon if

needed - though it lacks environmental protections and embodied carbon regulation, which are crucial with construction-heavy approaches.

Our main streets and squares were zoned for 13-15 story housing, and Alewife already has plenty of new housing. ADUs are now permitted state wide, and Commuter areas are being built up as well. We need to evaluate these housing developments, as apparently there are already nearly 6,000 vacant units in Cambridge! Zoning for 75' buildings city-wide in residential neighborhoods is inappropriate at this time.

Six story buildings need oversight, not zoning rights.

Sincerely, and urgently,
Amy Waltz
12 Blakeslee St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

* Embodied Carbon from demolition/construction is expected to increase from 11% to 74% within 10 years:
https://blueprintforbetter.org/articles/architectures-carbon-problem/?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwklCkBhA9EiwAka9QRqHMyygGvSyFL76lRkbfCkwlUssblyk_icumyB4oqqEDpVQRZ5DOBoCCzAQAvD_EwE

** It can take up to 80 years to recover from embodied carbon from construction; through reduced building operational emissions.
<https://restoreoregon.org/2021/04/12/understanding-the-carbon-cost-of-demolition/>

*** Advancing Housing Affordability (Donovan Petition) - Eliminates zoning density disparities, rapidly increases Cambridge housing options, considers regional approach, & protects our environment & climate! <http://rwinters.com/council/091321AP4-Donovan.pdf>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Phillips <danlphillips234@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2024 7:24 PM
To: Planning Board Comment
Cc: City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: In support of allowing up to 6 story apartments city-wide

Hello,

I'd like to express my strong support for the zoning petition allowing up to six story apartments in all Cambridge neighborhoods.

I believe CDD's analysis makes the tradeoffs clear. Under the status quo, we will continue to produce very little new housing, and practically no new inclusionary units. With this proposal, we will begin to build our way out of our housing shortage, including building new inclusionary units.

This proposal is an important step forward. Please issue a favorable recommendation.

Thanks,
Dan Phillips
Broadway St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cindy Hon <cindyshon@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 15, 2024 2:59 PM
To: PlanningBoardComment@cambridge.gov; City Clerk; Simmons, Denise; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Matt Dooley (mattjd211@gmail.com)
Subject: Comment to Amendment of Housing Zoning Petition Part 1 and 2

Dear Mayor Simmons, Members of Council and Planning Board,

We are asking the Members of Council and Planning Board to vote **NO** on the sweeping up-zoning petitions as it is written. We are asking the City Council and Planning Board to review and address some issues prior to making any changes.

1. Define the purpose (why) to ensure the goals (what) match the intentions.

The proposal lists the goals (what outcome to achieve) but do not list the purpose (why we need these changes). What is the motivation for the changes? Please address how the proposal benefits the city and more importantly, the tax-paying residents it serves.

2. Address how the city will ensure that Cambridge remains a historic and charming destination for residents and tourists.

Is the below image the future of Cambridge (but with more cars and a smaller sideway) because it is the first image that comes to mind after reading the proposal? Please ensure our charming and historical town (founded in 1630) does not become a concrete jungle. Many homes are near or over 100 years old. I enjoy walking through each neighborhood and taking in the character each home brings. How will the city ensure each neighborhood keeps its identity and vibrancy when developers are given the key to the city to do as they please? The height and setback requirements are not just for safety but to ensure the City's charm and character remain intact.



3. Address the impact on the city's infrastructure needs to accommodate the increase in population.

- It takes 45 minutes, on a good day, to travel 3 miles from one end of Cambridge to the other (Fresh Pond to Kendall Square). On a not so good day, it is over 1 hour. The same route without commute traffic takes 15 minutes. How will the city handle the **increased traffic** this proposal will cause when it has not dealt with the current traffic situation within Cambridge?

- On-street parking in all neighborhoods is at capacity. My driveway, that is on a 1-way street, is constantly blocked by cars on all sides to the point I am unable to leave my house at times and must solicit help from the police department. How will the city handle the increased **on-street parking** needs for these 6-story buildings especially when the proposal calls for eliminating off-street parking requirements?

- Over the 20 years I've lived in Cambridge, the water table continues to rise. In recent winters, my sump pump has run non-stop during the winter months. The proposed plan to reduce setback will further reduce the natural vegetation and **increase the water table**. How will the city handle the increase to the water table and therefore increased cost to current tax-paying residents to handle building damages due to the introduction of this proposal?

4. Address how removing restrictions for developers (who are not Cambridge residents and not Cambridge tax-payers) and proposing only to "encourage the creation of permanently affordable housing" addresses the concerns of the city and its residents

In recent years, the city has invested in resident "block parties". The introduction of 6-story high-rises (lets call it what it is) will negate the purpose of offering "block parties" to build a sense of community. How will the proposal focus on the residents of the city and not on benefiting developers? Who are they building these 6-story high rises for?? Is it for the wealthy part-time residents who have primary homes out of state or for the students with wealthy families who can afford the rent/home prices? During the summer months, when school is out, the population in Cambridge drops significantly. Is the proposal to

solve the lack of student housing and 2nd home housing? Please address how these changes will benefit full-time tax-paying residents.

We moved to the bay state 20 years ago and have been tax-paying Cambridge residents and have worked in Cambridge for the last 20 years. We are fully invested in Cambridge and believe it is all of our responsibility to ensure the unique and vibrant character and charm that is Cambridge continue for many more decades.

Cindy Hon
15 Field St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 15, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; Roberts, Jeffrey; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: Huang, Yi-An; O'Riordan, Owen; Farooq, Iram; Cotter, Chris; City Clerk; Joseph, Swaathi; Warren, Dominic
Subject: Re: Reject Multi Family Zoning Petition - Part 1 and Part 2
Attachments: Housing Projects in pipeline.pdf

With sincere apologies, here is the attachment.

Thank you,
Respectfully yours,
Young Kim

On Fri, Nov 15, 2024 at 8:10 AM Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com> wrote:

To the Honorable Planning Board, City Council Ordinance Committee, and Director of Zoning and Development,

Director Roberts' presentation at last week's Planning Board meeting, which was not included in the Agenda Packet, fails to justify the drastic Zoning Petition and should be rejected.

The proposal is moving too quickly, limiting robust community involvement, and scheduling overlapping meetings with the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board, preventing staff from fully engaging in both. Additionally, the Committee's public hearing will consist only of a staff presentation, Councillor questions, and discussion—without a public comment period. The absence of the Presentation in the Agenda Packet raises the question: Will the same Presentation be made to the Committee?

I focus here on the justification for such an overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO), particularly the background on slide 4 titled "Envision Cambridge set aggressive housing targets."

1. The claim of 3,000 units built is based on [data from June 2023](#), but why is 2024 data unavailable?
2. The projection of 7,350 units to meet the 12,500-unit goal is based on the current Zoning Ordinance, as 9,500 units are needed to meet the goal. What was the basis for this projection? Was the impact of the Covid-19 slowdown or amended Affordable Housing Overlay ZO considered?
3. The presentation projects 1,630 additional units by this Petition, barely achieving the 2030 goal (3,000 built + 7,350 units projected to be built with current zoning + 1,630 units projected by this Petition = 11,950). Is producing half the units built between 2019 – 2023 by gutting the ZO justify undoing a century of ZO amended by untold number of hours of careful debate and planning? Is it worth taking the risk of unintended negative impact which has not even been addressed by the Presentation? Where are the impact studies on infrastructure, schools, and the environment?

4. I've identified as shown in the attached 586 new affordable housing units completed or in various stages of planning for 2024; 56 market rate units for 2400 Mass Ave project; and an estimated 77 units from the 2042 Mass Ave project, totaling 719 units - 44% of the projected units in this petition—without considering other market-rate developments.
5. It's difficult to identify total new housing units that were not included in [the 2023 Update](#) as there are [84 completed projects](#) market-rate housing developments from the last three years. Again we need the need 2024 data to identify
6. The presentation should also include projections from the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), which was amended in 2023; options from the Planning Board Memo of April 2022 and other options CDD considered.

2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the Zoning Ordinance. Many pre-1924 homes are non-conforming yet historically valuable and worth protecting. A more gradual increase in density, particularly in Res A and Res B zones by carefully streamlining and updating formula driven zoning regulations, would be far better way of preserving the fabric of neighborhood

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

	2017 (1)	2018 (1)	6/30/2023 (2)	Completed	In pipeline	Total	2030 Goal (1)	Total Needed to meet Goal	To be buildt 2024-2030	% to be completed
All Housing Units		54,713	57,894	3,181			67,213	12,500	9,319	75%
Affordable Housing	8,117		8,591	474			11,292	3,175	2,701	85%
AHO										
40b										
Inclusionary										
Other AHO										
Grand Total										
Notes	Many details still need to be filled in with Housing Data as of 6/30/24									
1	Envision Cambridge Final Report									
2	Affordable Housing Distribution by Neighborhood (as of June 30, 2023)									

Project	Status	Process	Process Completion Date	Construction Start	Projected Completion	Reconfig		New		
						# units	Type	# units	Type	
116 Norfolk Street	Construction	AHO	Jan 2022	Jan 2023		38	studio	24	studio	
52 New Street	Construction	AHO	Oct 2023	Dec 2023	Dec 2025			22	1 bdrm	
Jefferson Park - Federal	Construction	AHO	Mar 2022	Phase 1 July 2024	Dec 2026	175	Various	103	Various	
				Phase 2 - Spring 2026						
4 Mellen Street / 1627 Mass Ave	In Process	AHO	Dec 2023	Spring 2025		2	1 bdrm	8	1 bdrm	
							0	2 bdrm	12	2 bdrm
							2	3 bdrm	5	3 bdrm
16-18 Wendell Street	In Process	Renovation - Purchased July 2024			Fall 2024	22	supportive Housing			
49 6th Street	In Process	AHO	July 2022	Assembling financing in order to begin		14	1 bdrm			
							20	2 bdrm		
							11	3 bdrm		
							1	4 bdrm		
87-101 Blanchard Road	In Process	AHO	June 2024					110	1 bdrm	
Walden Square II		AHO	July 2024					33	1 bdrm	
								33	2 bdrm	
								23	3 bdrm	
35 Cherry Street	In Planning	AHO	August 2024 - 3rd community meeting		December 2026			10		
										6

Project	Status	Process	Process Completion Date	Construction Start	Projected Completion	Reconfig	New
2400 Massachusetts Ave	In Planning	Barrett et. al. zoning amendment	July 2024 - PB Approved				56 Various
Subtotal							56
Total AHO & Market							719

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 15, 2024 8:10 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; Roberts, Jeffrey; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: Huang, Yi-An; O'Riordan, Owen; Farooq, Iram; Cotter, Chris; City Clerk; Joseph, Swaathi; Warren, Dominic
Subject: Reject Multi Family Zoning Petition - Part 1 and Part 2

To the Honorable Planning Board, City Council Ordinance Committee, and Director of Zoning and Development,

Director Roberts' presentation at last week's Planning Board meeting, which was not included in the Agenda Packet, fails to justify the drastic Zoning Petition and should be rejected.

The proposal is moving too quickly, limiting robust community involvement, and scheduling overlapping meetings with the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board, preventing staff from fully engaging in both. Additionally, the Committee's public hearing will consist only of a staff presentation, Councillor questions, and discussion—without a public comment period. The absence of the Presentation in the Agenda Packet raises the question: Will the same Presentation be made to the Committee?

I focus here on the justification for such an overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO), particularly the background on slide 4 titled "Envision Cambridge set aggressive housing targets."

1. The claim of 3,000 units built is based on [data from June 2023](#), but why is 2024 data unavailable?
2. The projection of 7,350 units to meet the 12,500-unit goal is based on the current Zoning Ordinance, as 9,500 units are needed to meet the goal. What was the basis for this projection? Was the impact of the Covid-19 slowdown or amended Affordable Housing Overlay ZO considered?
3. The presentation projects 1,630 additional units by this Petition, barely achieving the 2030 goal (3,000 built + 7,350 units projected to be built with current zoning + 1,630 units projected by this Petition = 11,950). Is producing half the units built between 2019 – 2023 by gutting the ZO justify undoing a century of ZO amended by untold number of hours of careful debate and planning? Is it worth taking the risk of unintended negative impact which has not even been addressed by the Presentation? Where are the impact studies on infrastructure, schools, and the environment?
4. I've identified as shown in the attached 586 new affordable housing units completed or in various stages of planning for 2024; 56 market rate units for 2400 Mass Ave project; and an estimated 77 units from the 2042 Mass Ave project, totaling 719 units - 44% of the projected units in this petition—without considering other market-rate developments.
5. It's difficult to identify total new housing units that were not included in [the 2023 Update](#) as there are [84 completed projects](#) market-rate housing developments from the last three years. Again we need the need 2024 data to identify

6. The presentation should also include projections from the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), which was amended in 2023; options from the Planning Board Memo of April 2022 and other options CDD considered.

2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the Zoning Ordinance. Many pre-1924 homes are non-conforming yet historically valuable and worth protecting. A more gradual increase in density, particularly in Res A and Res B zones by carefully streamlining and updating formula driven zoning regulations, would be far better way of preserving the fabric of neighborhood

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Chris McElroy <cmcelroy52@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2024 11:20 AM
To: City Manager; City Council; City Clerk; pattynolanz@gmail.com; Toner, Paul; Marc McGovern
Subject: Please Vote No on Upzoning

Hello,

Please say no on a "one size fits all" upzoning. We are already a super dense city. I have not read anything about what projected infrastructure needs and costs would be. How many more electricity generators, sewage, trash, parking, etc?

I favor allowing multi-family housing city-wide but say no to increased heights and/or decreased green spaces and trees except on major corridors indicated in the Envision Plan. This up-zoning proposal guts building design controls since it removes any further review or oversight by Cambridge boards or commissions. If this proposal passes it will likely increase housing costs for current residents by increasing property values and taxes and decreasing the current more naturally affordable older housing. This plan will exacerbate traffic and parking problems since no parking will be required. New larger market rate housing purchases will compete with "affordable housing" developers seeking to purchase the same properties. Any new residences above four stories (e.g. 5-6 stories) should be allowed only on the corridors.

Please support

1. Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) must be located on a corridor. The leap from 4 stories to higher is massive in many neighborhoods.
2. Green space and trees are critical for both climate, and health/environmental equity. Do not arbitrarily remove them citywide for out-of-scale buildings, resulting in larger expensive single-family housing.
3. Front setbacks must be maintained, back yards (private space) are critical for tree growth, shade, addressing heat island impacts and the climate crisis.
4. CDD must do an input-output analysis (criteria-likely impacts) first and a follow-up 5-year report. What is the purported aim for this zoning petition? If it is to bring down housing costs citywide, will it do this?
5. Require developer carbon offset report for demolitions and contribution to an offset fund to be shared with nearest active neighborhood advisory groups and city fund to establish new green spaces elsewhere.
6. Require CDD to speak with Cambridge specific individuals and groups for their perspectives on this. Few people even know about this city-wide up-zoning.
7. Require BZA-alternative neighborhood review platform -advisory committee (like HSAC, CSAC), neighborhood group, CHC, or other. Residents lose rights to be informed and to provide insight and expertise in this zoning proposal.

Thanks,
Chris McElroy
4 Morrison Ct
Cambridge, MA 02140

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marisa O'Boyle <marisa.oboyle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 9:58 PM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk; Mayor; SchoolCom@cpsd.us
Subject: Please help Cambridge 100 year old Nursery school!

Dear Cambridge City leaders,

A Cambridge landmark and educational home to many young children and families through the years is in financial trouble and the city is supporting the for-profit chain daycares rather than this local beloved landmark. As a life long Cambridge resident and one who has sent two of my children here, I am so sad to learn that the city is making it unsustainable. Please, please look more closely at what the CPP is doing! Cambridge Nursery School (CNS) just celebrated its 100 year anniversary and is a historical and well loved community school that supports the growth and development of the youngest learners in Cambridge and surrounding communities.

<https://www.cambridgenurseryschool.org>

The Cambridge Nursery School plan for the future was to join the city's CPP program for the fall of 2025. Last year when speaking with the city's early education office, they assured CNS that there would be no problem joining the CPP program this year. However, after meeting with them last month, that is no longer the case. Although we are advocates of every child getting a free education and thank the city for having this program, we found out that not only is CPP not accepting any new schools into the program but has accepted most of the for-profit schools in Cambridge. CNS not being able to join CPP affects the future of our school greatly. Beginning next fall, CPP is now opening their doors to all 3 year old children as well as continuing to serve 4 year olds in the community and that will be a hit that CNS will not be able to sustain.

CNS is a hundred year institution with teachers who have master degrees and years of experience. Our school is beautiful both inside and out. The heart of CNS is its students and families, us local Cambridge residents, and it is devastating to see the city support for-profit chains instead of this local non profit institution. Let's keep CNS open for another 100 years.

Thank you for your consideration,
All the best,
Marisa

Marisa O'Boyle, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellow

Erwin, Nicole

From: Paul E Fallon <fallonpaule@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 4:56 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please Support Proposed Zoning Changes

Councilors –

I was fortunate to attend the October 24, 2024 online session that the Community Development Department held about the proposed changes to the Cambridge Zoning Code. As an architect with extensive experience in dealing with zoning issues in many municipalities, I was impressed by how well City staff described the changes, as well as their clear, useful, accompanying graphics.

As a long-time Cambridge resident, property owner, and owner of three rental units that I rent within affordability guidelines to tenants that fall within the ‘missing middle,’ I urge you to support the zoning changes. ALL OF THEM!

These changes will motivate both for-profit and nonprofit developers to create more housing in Cambridge. They will also go a long way towards rectifying the baked-in privilege that current zoning has given residential property owners for the past 100 years.

Thank you for your contributions to Cambridge. Please reach out to me if there is any way my voice can help us create a more robust and equitable city.

Paul E. Fallon
618 Huron Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138
fallonpaule@gmail.com

--

Paul E. Fallon
618 Huron Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138-4531
617-661-9464
www.paulefallon.com
www.howwillwelivetomorrow.com
www.theawkwardpose.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Hallie Olivia Trial <h_trial@mit.edu>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 4:13 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: gsc-eab-state
Subject: MIT GSC in favor of Cambridge zoning changes
Attachments: 2024-10-17 Affordable Housing Cambridge Zoning Changes.pdf

Good afternoon, Cambridge City Council Members,

The MIT Graduate Student Council External Affairs Board prepared a statement to express MIT graduate student support for proposed Cambridge zoning changes that would help increase the availability of multifamily housing. We've attached the statement below. Thank you for your service in the Cambridge community, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about how the zoning changes would impact the graduate student community!

Best regards,
Hallie Trial and Sorin Srinivasa
State and Local Affairs Co-Chairs
MIT Graduate Student Council External Affairs Board



October 17, 2024

Dear Cambridge City Council Members,

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents over 7,000 graduate students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The GSC firmly supports access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all members of graduate student households.¹ This is crucial for all local graduate programs to attract and retain talented applicants, which will sustain Cambridge as a hub of innovation.

Unlike MIT undergraduate students, most of whom choose to live on campus, more than 70% of MIT graduate students live off campus.² Therefore, housing policy in Cambridge directly impacts our standard of living. On average, MIT doctoral students spend an estimated 40% of their stipends³ on rent, making us “rent burdened” as defined by federal standards.⁴ About 75% of MIT graduate students report feeling stressed about the cost of housing.⁵

High housing costs also aggravate other struggles like food insecurity and time management. The cost of housing in Cambridge drives many MIT graduate students to live in other parts of the greater Boston area, leading to long commutes that drain time and energy from this important research workforce. Among MIT graduate students who live off campus, 24.1% commute more than 30 minutes each way.² At MIT, more than 60% of graduate students reported that the cost of food was a minor or major barrier to having enough to eat in the past month.⁶ Indeed, students seeking higher education in Massachusetts as a whole have been found to suffer from high levels of food and housing insecurity, in large part due to the shortage of affordable multifamily housing. In a survey of students at Massachusetts public institutions of higher education, 37% of respondents reported experiencing food insecurity in the past month, while 43% reported experiencing housing insecurity.⁷

Greater availability of affordable multifamily housing in Cambridge would substantially alleviate these financial challenges for graduate students. **Therefore, we enthusiastically endorse the new zoning proposal by the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee⁸ to allow construction of more multifamily housing units throughout Cambridge**, particularly the following provisions:

¹ <https://gsc.mit.edu/governing-documents/policy-platform/>

² <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2023-commuting-to-mit-survey/>

³ <https://ovc.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AY2023-Stipends-FAQ.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/assessing-the-severity-of-rent-burden-on-low-income-families-20171222.html>

⁵ <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2019-graduate-enrolled-student-survey/>

⁶ <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2023-graduate-enrolled-student-survey/>

⁷ <https://www.mass.edu/strategic/documents/2019%20HOPE%20Center%20MA%20Report.pdf>

⁸ https://cambridgema.igm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=4577&MediaPosition=&ID=25588&CssClass=



1. The elimination of single-family-only zoning and construction of additional multifamily housing units of up to six stories in all districts. Cambridge urgently needs much more housing than is currently possible to build, and modification of zoning to eliminate single-family-only zoning would significantly improve the ability of area residents to find housing that meets their affordability needs. This increase in density is necessary to support the technological and academic output of local universities and to attract and retain talent.
2. The expansion of the current Affordable Housing Overlay to permit construction of additional permanently affordable housing units. Efforts to invest in affordable housing in the Cambridge area are likely to significantly benefit people who live or work in Cambridge, including graduate students, who mostly make less than 50% of area median income and often have difficulty finding housing at prices that do not result in severe rent burden. Building more housing in Cambridge will improve affordability for all residents, as the current housing availability is significantly less than necessary for the needs of area residents.

If you would like to learn more about the importance of graduate student quality of life to innovation in the Commonwealth or discuss additional methods of advancing graduate education and research, please reach out to us at gsc-eab-state@mit.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shiwei Wang".

Shiwei Wang
External Affairs Chair

On behalf of MIT Graduate Student Council

Prepared by:
Sorin Srinivasa and Hallie Trial
State and Local Affairs Co-Chairs

Erwin, Nicole

From: Phyllis Simpkins <phyllissimpkins52@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 1:37 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: City finances and upzoning proposal

I am writing regarding the above two topics.

Upzoning: there are many question related to this; to cite a few:

- the Envision goals (more green space, build higher on corridors, and preserve neighborhood homes) don't appear in any new plans
- what evidence is there that new units will cost less than existing ones?
- how do we stop investors from price gauging?
- will increased residential tax revenues compared to commercial rates make the city less affordable?
- has Cambridge seriously considered any of the alternate plans proposed at Councilor Zusy's 10/23 meeting?
- will there be a 5 and 10 year review of the impact? Historically the City "acts fast and later, after reviewing impact, it's too late."

Finances: I have been a Cambridge homeowner since 1994, and am grateful for the way the City's finances were managed in the past. However, we are in a new reality and some expenses are beyond our control. It's time to look at our budget as well. I ask just a few questions:

- at last spring's budget hearing in response to the question regarding costs of the bike lanes, the awkward non answer response was "the expenses are across several departments." What has it cost and what will it cost next year? Is there a count on the number of bikes using these bike lanes? I can say with certainty (giving my standing on garden street counting bikes) that the number if bike riders on that street are underwhelming.
- the cost of a parking ticket is too low. And in my neighborhood, there is almost no enforcement. Several years ago I suggested to TP&T that at approx. 13-15 tickets given per day times 5 days/week times 50/weeks a year (totals (\$101,400) would more than pay for hiring an additional enforcement officer (salary plus benefits). The response from the staffer: "not everyone agrees with you!" We are beyond the days of turning the other cheek.

Thank you for your consideration.

Phyllis Simpkins
249 Huron avenue

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andrew S. <ams125@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 9:49 AM
To: cddzoning; City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: support more multifamily housing

Dear Cambridge City Development Department and City Council,

As a long-time renter and active voter, I'm writing to express my strong support for zoning changes that would make it easier to build more multi-family housing. There are far too many requirements in place that make it onerous, expensive, and slow to build. I am not a landlord and do not own property in the city. But I can see as a renter that there is dramatically inadequate supply and not nearly enough construction to meet the demand of residents and potential residents. My rents have gone up considerably in the last few years, and it is no wonder, with vacancy rates at historic lows. We need more housing, period.

Opponents of change will cite lots of ways in which they would like to control the process, ensure historic preservation, provide for community review, protect shade, etc. These are all good things in principle, which is why opponents name them as the rationale for their attempts to block construction. No one is against any of these things in theory. But in reality, they are used as barriers to block reasonable and necessary building work. It has to stop somewhere.

I am optimistic that the city is finally turning a corner and will start encouraging much more significant building, including 6-story buildings in all neighborhoods and removal of other impediments that add to cost and timeline.

Thank you for your work in this area.

Sincerely,

Andrew Solomon
3 Linnaean Street #42
Cambridge, MA 02138

Hello, My name is Hannan and I am a proud resident of Mid-Cambridge.

I want everyone to go back in time with me to 4 years ago, a mcdonald's cheeseburger was one dollar at most locations in the US. Now, that price has risen to 3 dollars, a 300 percent increase in cost, and we have seen a similar increase in many food staples like eggs and milk. And I know everyone here is feeling the pain of increased grocery bills. Imagine if that McDonald's was your only option - no Tasty Burger, no Shake Shack, forced to pay whatever price was asked. That is the status of the current rental market in Cambridge.

Average rent prices have gone up 30% in the last 3 years making Cambridge one of the highest cost of living cities in the US, right behind New York and San Francisco, while salaries only increased by 13%. With majority of residents not being millionaire software engineers or finance people, but working class families mixed with bright intelligent students and researchers from around the world.

Our current restrictive zoning has backfired. By artificially limiting new housing, it's actually encouraging the very high-rises many residents fear, while preventing the mid-sized apartment homes we desperately need and what the free market demands. I strongly support the new zoning ordinance of ^{Position} amendment 1 to remove the limits and allow up to 6 story buildings with minimal setbacks to be allowed in Cambridge.

I know change can be scary, but what's scarier is losing the diverse community of families, students, and researchers that make Cambridge special. I personally know many hard working trades people that left due to being priced out. This amendment is our chance to preserve what makes our city wonderful and I hope our elected officials will make the right choice.

Thank you

City Council Ordinance Committee – Public Hearing on Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition, Wednesday, December 4, 2024 (1min 45 sec)

Members of the Ordinance Committee, my name is Cynthia Hibbard, 23 Ellsworth Avenue, #2. The City's Envision long-range planning process five years ago had a mantra: support growth, but do not kill the goose that lays the golden egg! What is the golden egg? Why do we love living in Cambridge? For me, it is the wonderful, diverse, interesting people; the great public transit (yes, even though we love to complain about it); and the culture, activities and services of a city, *with* ~~while having~~ a human walkable scale. I love this progressive ~~enclave~~ ^{city} where we can do away with exclusionary zoning, ~~but~~ ^I would like to see that accomplished while saving our variety in building scale, historic structures, neighborhoods, and green space. I ~~would prefer~~ ^{support} one of the 4-story alternatives, ~~and possibly~~ ^{especially} the one with the 2-story bonus for inclusionary housing. I am concerned that the 6-story plan would give away density without getting affordable housing. I am very pleased with the proposal to require that 30% of a residential lot be open space that has to meet a "green factor" score. What an improvement that would be for our more dense neighborhoods (Districts C-1A through C-3B) where only 10 – 15% open space is required. However, we could do even better. Our current multifamily C District requires 36% open space – why not keep that everywhere in exchange for the increased building height? That additional green space would not only help the livability of our neighborhoods, but it would help mitigate the expected flooding and stormwater impacts coming our way with climate change. Thank-you.

My name is Phyllis Bretholtz and I live at 65 Antrim Street.

My concerns echo those of Mary Jane Kornacki, who spoke of concern for "SOFT SCAPE" - addressing the social fabric of the city.

As a more than 60 year resident of mid-Cambridge, and a 29 year retired teacher at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, I have been witnessing the increasing cost of housing making it virtually impossible for my former students and their families to stay in Cambridge and the continuing erosion of diversity in my present and former neighborhoods. Therefore, I enthusiastically support and urge you to adopt the zoning amendments made by the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition - part of a long term solution to creating a Cambridge affordable to all.

In addition, I would like the City Council to address the following concerns/omissions from the current plans:

**** A large scale plan with goals that include:**

- *the impact on environment
- *infrastructure like the electrical grid, sewer system...
- *increased plans for more buses - specially electric buses,
- *plans to address increased parking problems since, as an example, on my street, it is increasingly difficult to find parking places even near our homes
- *set backs from the street curb and next door

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kitty Ascrizzi <kascrizzi@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 5, 2024 9:40 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please end exclusionary zoning

City Council,

I am a renter in Cambridge and urge you to allow up to 6-story apartments in every neighborhood in Cambridge because more housing benefits everyone.

Current zoning laws make it impossible to build enough new apartments to meet the demand for housing. The city keeps adding more jobs but not adding housing to keep up with the demand.

I moved to Cambridge two years ago for a new job. I was lucky to find an apartment, but rent is high and getting higher every year. I plan to rent in Cambridge for many years. It's not feasible for me to buy a home with the current prices in Cambridge.

The current zoning was exclusionary from the beginning, designed to enforce segregation by class and race. Please change the zoning laws to enable more housing to be built for all people who want to call Cambridge home.

Thank you to the City Council and staff for doing this important work on housing to make Cambridge a more affordable and inclusive city.

Sincerely,
Kitty Ascrizzi
47 Inman St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: suzanne tamaryndesign.com <suzanne@tamaryndesign.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 5, 2024 9:03 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning- WAIT- too much is unclear, and more...please read...

Hello,

I was unable to attend the meeting yesterday- as I am working during the day.

Here are my views, quoting another- I am in agreement with the following... there is too many unknowns, as was obvious at the meeting on Tuesday evening. Many important items (eg building height) are unclear and/or ambiguous. Take your time- this is too important for the future of Cambridge residents.

Thank you,

Suzanne Watzman
25 Inman Place

I agree with the following:

- **I URGE Council to simply allow multi-family housing zoning in every district for now and hold off doing anything more, before a thorough study is done or risk making the situation worst.**
- **IF YOU DO GO FORWARD- only make the upzoning applicable for projects with inclusionary housing 10,000 SF or larger and make sure design oversight is included as well as 30% green space (for trees & plantings) not “open space” which applies to decks and roof tops.**

Erwin, Nicole

From: kate flaim <kateflaim@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 5, 2024 8:34 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please support restoring Garden Street to a two-way street

To the members of the Cambridge City Council-

As a resident of Raymond Street, I am thrilled that members of the City Council are attempting to solve the myriad problems caused by the 2022 change of Garden Street to one-way. I heartily encourage all the members of the Council to vote in favor of public safety, common sense, and TRULY safer streets for all, and approve the policy proposal to make Garden a two-way street again, while retaining protected bike lanes.

We moved to Raymond Street six months before the Garden Street change, and witnessed first hand the shocking shift of heavy outbound traffic—much of it apparently commuters trying to get to Fresh Pond/Route 2—using our residential street to cut through as they weave their way north. School buses and trucks roar up the street (at unsafe speeds when traffic allows); emergency vehicles scream by multiple times each day, none of them headed to surrounding side streets but rather turning onto Huron, Upland, or Walden streets to continue on their way.

For two years, we have been stymied by rush hour traffic backed up all the way down Raymond when we try to leave our driveway. We have developed careful walking routes with our children to avoid the treacherous crosswalk at Huron and Raymond, where the combination of poor visibility with heavy, frustrated through traffic trying to turn left onto Huron from Raymond while cars lurch forward across the crosswalk on Huron to turn onto Raymond makes every crossing feel risky. (We appreciate the rush hour "No Left Turn" at Walker and Linnaean that tries to reduce high-speed zig-zagging from Walker across Linnaean onto Raymond, but since most people don't adhere to it unless a police officer is stationed there, it can only do so much.)

We have talked to multiple police officers and firefighters who have said (unofficially) that they were blindsided by the change and that they hate it, as it makes it much harder for them to move efficiently from and around Harvard Square and North Cambridge, in addition to causing so much additional traffic that accidents and emergency response delays are inevitable.

Meanwhile, every time I cross Garden Street there is literally no traffic. One car every so often; the occasional bike, and the road that was supposed to be a major artery sits completely silent and empty while side streets like Walker and Robinson are catastrophically clogged and Raymond alternates between racetrack and parking lot.

As noted in the policy proposal put forward by Councillor Toner and Co., the city already needs to repaint Garden Street, since sewer work this fall disrupted the 2022 lane markings and bike stanchions: *Now is the time to fix what is broken!* I believe reverting to this original plan will better serve the safety and movement needs of bikers, pedestrians, and drivers alike (not to mention moving heavy bus/emergency vehicle and commuter traffic off the side streets and back onto the artery that was designed to carry them!).

Hurray for safe streets and a Cambridge that functions!

Thank you!

Kate Flaim

Erwin, Nicole

From: OMAR ETON <oncologist@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:03 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: letters to the City Council Zoning and Planning Boards

Cambridge residents are emerging all around now with compelling concerns - all rooted in plain common sense.

This city is in high demand for what was once created here. It won't be in high demand when history, it's underpinning, is erased. Being reduced further into urban sprawl won't outcompete so many emerging great cities, blessed with fresh urban planning ideas and more space. Cambridge is land-locked and old. Doubling down on sprawl is the wrong way to save it!

We need very smart people therefore to deliberately weave together a development plan addressing very specific competitive targets in very specific ways for our city. Sculpting a neighborhood thoughtfully trumps a willy-nilly prescription of just allowing developers to do what they want. All the energy needs to be redirected to elucidating a mindful strategy which yields very specific operational plans.

Omar Eton MD

34 Larchwood Dr

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 4, 2024, at 12:45 PM, Bursztajn, Harold J.
<harold_bursztajn@hms.harvard.edu> wrote:

Beautiful dear Karen, onward

Harold J. Bursztajn, MD
Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Part-Time
Co-founder, Program in Psychiatry and the Law @
BIDMC Psychiatry of Harvard Medical School
President of the American Unit of the International Chair in Bioethics &
American Bioethics & Culture Institute (ABCI)
telephone 617-492-8366
telefax 617-441-3195

email hbursztajn@hms.harvard.edu
web <http://www.forensic-psych.com>
<http://www.americanbioethics.org/>

The information in this communication may be confidential, private, or privileged. Unauthorized use of such information is prohibited by law.

Sent from my mobile phone; please forgive typos. Thank you.

From: Karen Falb <karenfalb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:36:48 PM
To: OMAR ETON <oncologist@aol.com>; Karen Eton <KARENLME@aol.com>; Russ Windman <rtw@windman.com>; Arthur Strang <arthurstrang@msn.com>; Susan Strang <susanstrang@msn.com>; Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>; plf245@aol.com <plf245@aol.com>; JULIE VARGAS <julie.vargas@bfskinner.org>; Ernest A. VARGAS <eavargas@mac.com>; Bursztajn, Harold J. <harold_bursztajn@hms.harvard.edu>
Subject: To a few friends - my letter to the City Council and Planning Board

Also an acknowledgement from Cathie Zusy.

Upzoning and Multifamily housing - doing it well

Inbox

Search for all messages with label Inbox

Remove label Inbox from this conversation



Karen Falb <karenfalb@gmail.com>

to citycouncil, cityclerk, planningboardcomment



Keep the Riverview condo building on Mt. Auburn in mind as to how decision making in the 1960s involved corruption, slippery developers, substandard concrete, and faulty inspection - which also brings to mind that there is right now the feeling amongst many in the city (I heard this from a city staff member) that the inspections department is understaffed. What the city does not need is poorly planned housing that is allowed to be built and to be built badly such as Riverview. And the cost and loss to its residents - put yourself in their shoes!

At meetings, residents remind the city that as of now there is no infrastructure planning. And there is no response of the city of plans to do so. We don't even know that the city knows how much housing is needed and if the housing will be for city workers. Don't rush!

In fact, so far, the meetings are just window dressing - people can vent but city staff and developers like Winn don't heed them. Remember people and voters aren't stupid.

Residents want to keep the historic character of neighborhoods. I have never seen the city planning board, CDD and councilors describe the neighborhoods and their design strengths and weaknesses. They should be able to if they have had the right education and experience. Each of you should know what they are for each neighborhood. Spotty 6 story buildings here and there built by whim of developers and allowed by the city shows a lack of city responsibility of doing things well.

The following two comments are from **John LaFreniere's architect. list of concerns - I hope you really study it.** I include them because there are many, many of us residents who share these concerns as ALL should - you too.

- While initial up-zoning may in the short term increase property values, it is likely to cause **values to plummet** of buildings in the shadows of 6-story 75' high buildings, and in neighborhoods where on-street parking is consumed by new residents where 60 units can replace 6 with no additional parking. The purpose of zoning is to provide predictability in construction and development, not to eliminate it.
- This zoning change is a gift to **developers hiding behind the illusion of providing socially needed** housing with no guarantee of results and the sure introduction of chaos into the city's urban form. Who should come first? Your city residents.

Sincerely, Karen Falb Peter Falb 245 Brattle Street



Zusy, Catherine <czusy@cambridgema.gov>

to me



Thanks for this, Karen!

C

Erwin, Nicole

From: Masato Kocberber <mkocberber@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 8:11 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for multi family zoning

Dear council,

I am a Cambridge resident and I am writing to show my strong support for zoning up to 6 stories within residential parts of Cambridge.

I want to share a story about who may live in these units. When my father retired, he wanted to move closer to his grand kids. He would have loved to move to Cambridge, but he has bad knees and elevator buildings are rare here. Luckily, he found a new construction elevator building near Coolidge Corner of the size that would be allowed with this zoning change.

Yes, the new construction units are expensive, but the residents are not the investor that the opponents of this zoning claim. Every other resident is a senior who moved from a Boston suburb, selling their single family to down size and move closer to their kids and grand kids who live in the city.

Allowing 6 story buildings is about allowing residents to remain in our neighborhoods even as they age and their needs grow, while also opening up more housing for the next generation to flourish here.

Thank you,
Masato Kocberber
Allston St, Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: raryals <raryals@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 6:59 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Cc: Toner, Paul; McGovern, Marc
Subject: Fwd: My written comments, part of which I spoke on, for the Ordinance Committee meeting on 12/3

Subject: My written comments, part of which I spoke on, for the **Ordinance Committee meeting on 12/3/24**

Dear Councillors, Mayor, City Officials,

We support multifamily housing (AND affordable housing, NOT in this proposal) in ALL of our neighborhoods.

We also support the preservation of historical neighborhoods and housing. This goal is not incompatible with higher buildings and more housing. It will take planning review, architectural/city planning oversight and consideration of context.

We support the much-needed simplification of our zoning code including the removal of minor requirements currently needing exemptions, which add costs and time for builders/homeowners..

We support the overview of larger developments starting at **10 k, not 25k**, by the Planning Board. Please think about it. At 25k, a development next to me would be 3+. times the size of my house!

We support a Planning Board with some real teeth.

We support Open Space that is real Green Space at 36% of the project, with 50% of that non-private. The renters, the neighbors, the city and the planet will thank you!

We can, and must, develop more market-rate AND affordable housing, but we need to do it with real planning (not in this proposal - which will not lower housing costs, and will not provide housing for those who need it: our city workers, our middle earners, our elder renters who live on fixed incomes, older homeowners who want to downsize, freeing up larger properties for other buyers, development).

Instead this proposal eliminates zoning, turns over much of what happens to developers, with little oversight and few rules.

This proposal throws a lot against the wall to see what happens, rather than planning to get us to our goals.

There is also much confusion over the data related to that goal, what is the goal, where we are toward our goal, how we estimate the effects of this or any proposal.

Please try again,

Ruth Ryals and James Cornie
115 Upland Rd

Proud owners, occupants (and redevelopers) of an historic 3-family house (1890), where most of our neighborhood (Buena Vista Pk/Richdale/Walden) is 3-4 family housing, the multifamily housing of the 1900s.

Across Upland, there are big houses which were boarding houses after the war, and though currently zoned single family, they usually have an apartment or two or rent a room or two to students, and/or house an office or two for the folks living there.

Life is complicated and costs are high for everyone, including the upkeep for these old houses. Most homeowners are NOT rich, and if their property values are high, or go higher, they cannot access that unless they move (where?). And they cannot eat it.

--

Ruth Ryals and James Cornie
raryals@gmail.com
115 Upland Rd.

--

Ruth Ryals
raryals@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: jl@l-architects.net
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 6:19 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: comments made at zoning ordinance meeting 12/4 for distribution and record
Attachments: John LaFreniere testimony Dec. 4 Ordinance committee meeting.docx; 18 and 20 White street at porter square shopping.pdf

Please make sure this gets in the record for 12/4 ordinance meeting.

John LaFreniere AIA
Principal
LaFreniere Architects

LaFreniere Architects
678 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

T: 617-661-4222
F: 617-661-4244
M: 781-330-9565
E: JL@L-Architects.net
www.L-Architects.net

Good afternoon:

My name is John LaFreniere,

I am an architect living at 172 Larch road,

With an office in Central Square.

I have been practicing architecture for more than 40 years

And have designed and built more than a 1000 housing units, most with affordable components

I would like to make 2 comments;

#1 I think the Council with this petition has already achieved a sea change in Cambridge regarding changing zoning to allow more housing throughout the residential districts.

I think you should take the win! But reduce the overall scope of change with this petition

Multifamily permitted in all zones

1. 3 stories by right in all zones
2. Maintain minimum 5' side yard setbacks
3. 4 stories allowed with design review based on design guidelines
4. 6 stories and 65' allowed by special permit

(65' because if more it will allow affordable housing to be 13 stories anywhere in the city, and this should be controlled.)

These changes will be accepted and welcomed by the vast majority of residents.

Further refinements can happen in the future.

Please take the win and work together with all residents to build a more inclusive city.

#2 There is a very important misunderstanding about the cost of housing:

The assumption that only a 6 story building will "pencil out".

At 22 white street next to Target in porter square there are two 55' tall 4-story project built under C-1 zoning. They are worth a site visit. Each lot is 50' wide and previously had a Victorian house on it.

#18 was built in 2014 and fills the entire lot on the ground floor, with 4 stories of housing above.

#20 is just being completed and is 4 stories of units with an elevator over a tunnel for parking.

There is one unit on each floor of #20, and it is just being completed so I assume it "pencils out",

And is profitable for the developer. A fifth or sixth story would be pure extra profit for a developer.

These buildings by current C-1 zoning are 55' high.

Attached is a photo-shopped image of how this might look at 75' High.

Another image attached is of a 75' building on a typical 2-family street.

If a developer can make money gutting and rehabbing a 2-family on a typical 50' lot, is there any reason why he could not make money on a 4-story building (which would not need an elevator or a second stair if the top 2-floors were duplexes). Why would a 6-story building with the extra costs of a \$250,000 elevator and a second stair be necessary to make a profit?

18-22 White Street Porter Square



55 ft High by Existing C1 Zoning



75 ft High by Proposed Residential Zoning

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kathy Watkins <kathywatkins@mac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 5:52 PM
To: Stephen, Naomie
Cc: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; City Clerk; McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul
Subject: Re: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation

Hi Naomi,
Thanks for your reply. I thought the email response that I forwarded indicated that I was signed up and that I was number 86 in the queue. Am I mistaken or did I sign up for the wrong meeting? I know these things happen especially when so many people want to speak so it's fine.
Thanks.
Kathy

On Dec 4, 2024, at 5:45 PM, Stephen, Naomie <nstephen@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Hi Kathy,

Apologies in advance for any confusion, you were not signed up to speak at today's meeting, as we went back and checked for any skips or late joiners. I did see your hand up, but you raised it after the vote had already been taken to close public comment, so we could not call on you then. Please email your comments to the Council and copy the Clerk so they make it into communications for the Monday agenda.

Thank you.

From: Kathy Watkins <kathywatkins@mac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 5:37 PM
To: Stephen, Naomie <nstephen@cambridgema.gov>; McGovern, Marc <mmcGovern@cambridgema.gov>; Toner, Paul <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>
Cc: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation

Hello. I wanted to let you know that I was not called on during today's Ordinance Committee meeting even though I signed up to speak. I raised my hand virtually but was not acknowledged.

Sincerely,
Kathy Watkins

Begin forwarded message:

From: noreply@cambridgema.gov
Date: December 4, 2024 at 2:50:34 PM EST

To: kathywatkins@mac.com

Subject: **Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation**

Thank you for registering for public comment at the Ordinance Committee Meeting. This meeting is hybrid and allows for remote and in-person participation.

You are currently number 86 in line to speak. Public comment is heard at the start of the meeting (after roll is called), followed by discussion by the Council and City Staff of items on the agenda.

Per City Council Rules, each speaker is granted 3 minutes to speak on any items on the meeting agenda, with the exclusion of items under the "Communications" and "Awaiting Reports" sections of the agenda.

In the event there are 20 or more speakers signed up for public comment, each speaker's time will be reduced to two minutes. If there are more than 75 speakers, the speaking time is reduced to one minute. Individuals are not permitted to allocate the remainder of their time to other speakers

To speak during public comment, speakers **must** be present in-person or logged into the meeting via Zoom. Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device by following the link below.

<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/97895847144>

Public Comment

1. Speakers are called from the list in the order they were signed up.
2. Speakers will hear their name called, then will come to the podium (in-person), or be able to unmute (Zoom) and speak.
3. A timer will run onscreen to indicate the remaining speaking time.
4. Speakers should begin by stating their name, address, and the item they are speaking about.
5. Please address all comments to the meeting chair.
6. Council members cannot respond directly to public commenters live during the meeting.

Please send your comments in writing to the City Clerk at: clerk@cambridgema.gov. Comments received by midnight of the day of the meeting will be included in the public record of that meeting.

If you are unable to join the Zoom via the internet, you can join by phone by dialing one of the numbers below. You will be prompted to enter the meeting **ID (978-9584-7144)**. To unmute yourself via phone for public comment, dial ***6** on your phone keypad.

- +1 253 215 8782
- +1 301 715 8592
- +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: **978-9584-7144**

Zoom will remain on for the duration of the meeting. You can also watch the meeting via livestream on the City website ([Public Meeting Video Stream](#)), or watch on television via the City's Cable channel 22 (Comcast/Xfinity).

Questions? Email Naomie Stephen nstephen@cambridgema.gov

Erwin, Nicole

From: btantony (null) <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:49 PM
To: City Council; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; Catherine Zusy
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning to 6 stories proposal

Dear Councilors Simmons, McGovern, Nolan, Siddiqui, Azeem, Sobrinho-Wheeler, Toner, Wilson and Zusy,

I write to urge you NOT to pass the current proposal that would permit six story buildings to be erected anywhere, anytime in Cambridge streets and neighborhoods.

I have written numerous times to point out that this is the most radical upzoning proposal in the country and it is for a city that is already the 3rd densest in MA and among the top ten densest small cities in the US.

Other municipalities right here in MA upzone to 3 or 4 or family dwellings or even larger apartment or condo buildings BUT the upzoning sensibly applies to commercial areas where there is space or properties adjacent to public transit systems. None of these municipalities have anywhere near the density of Cambridge.

This radical proposal is destined to become a bonanza for market rate housing developers. I know that some councilors believe that over a long period of time this proposal will produce a certain amount of affordable housing. This is not city planning, it is simply allowing rich developers to sink capital into a high housing cost city in the "hope" that sometime decades into the future there will be some crumbs for affordable housing.

In the process, many neighborhood streets throughout the city will become lucrative targets for more luxury and market rate housing. Because there are no setbacks required, no parking required, no consideration of environmental impacts, no consideration of impacts on school systems, we can expect 75 foot tall concrete edifices plunked down in the middle of residential family dwellings of all sizes - single, 2, 3, 4 story homes of wood or brick. And such new construction would be cheek to jowl with adjacent homes because no one has the right to object to any aspect of the new construction.

This outcome is destructive to our city. We already have AHO housing tower ordinances that allow up to 15 stories of housing on major roadways. There are two such developments slotted for the Porter Square area. In addition there two large projects slotted for the Baldwin neighborhood, one is 9 stories and one is five stories. Nearby there will be another tall AHO development on Walden St.

So what is the immediate need for this reckless 6 story proposal that gives a developer the right to build on any small plot on any side street anywhere in the city. I am sure you have heard from many others, that Cambridge alone cannot solve the housing supply problem. This proposal many of us fear will result in the destruction of Cambridge neighborhoods across the city - for no sound reason.

This proposal reflects a vision of Cambridge that continues to cater to young higher income technology and other professionals who will pay a premium for an overcrowded urban lifestyle that suits their needs. It is not family friendly and it disrespects the side street neighborhoods that have taken generations to build.

I urge you to take a stand against this radical upzoning to six stories.

Sincerely,

Barbara Anthony

Sent from my iPhone's

Barbara Anthony, Esq.

Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government,
Harvard Kennedy School Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

Cell: 857-998-0273

Email: btantony@aol.com;

Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

Erwin, Nicole

From: btantony (null) <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:49 PM
To: City Council; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; Catherine Zusy
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning to 6 stories proposal

Dear Councilors Simmons, McGovern, Nolan, Siddiqui, Azeem, Sobrinho-Wheeler, Toner, Wilson and Zusy,

I write to urge you NOT to pass the current proposal that would permit six story buildings to be erected anywhere, anytime in Cambridge streets and neighborhoods.

I have written numerous times to point out that this is the most radical upzoning proposal in the country and it is for a city that is already the 3rd densest in MA and among the top ten densest small cities in the US.

Other municipalities right here in MA upzone to 3 or 4 or family dwellings or even larger apartment or condo buildings BUT the upzoning sensibly applies to commercial areas where there is space or properties adjacent to public transit systems. None of these municipalities have anywhere near the density of Cambridge.

This radical proposal is destined to become a bonanza for market rate housing developers. I know that some councilors believe that over a long period of time this proposal will produce a certain amount of affordable housing. This is not city planning, it is simply allowing rich developers to sink capital into a high housing cost city in the "hope" that sometime decades into the future there will be some crumbs for affordable housing.

In the process, many neighborhood streets throughout the city will become lucrative targets for more luxury and market rate housing. Because there are no setbacks required, no parking required, no consideration of environmental impacts, no consideration of impacts on school systems, we can expect 75 foot tall concrete edifices plunked down in the middle of residential family dwellings of all sizes - single, 2, 3, 4 story homes of wood or brick. And such new construction would be cheek to jowl with adjacent homes because no one has the right to object to any aspect of the new construction.

This outcome is destructive to our city. We already have AHO housing tower ordinances that allow up to 15 stories of housing on major roadways. There are two such developments slotted for the Porter Square area. In addition there two large projects slotted for the Baldwin neighborhood, one is 9 stories and one is five stories. Nearby there will be another tall AHO development on Walden St.

So what is the immediate need for this reckless 6 story proposal that gives a developer the right to build on any small plot on any side street anywhere in the city. I am sure you have heard from many others, that Cambridge alone cannot solve the housing supply problem. This proposal many of us fear will result in the destruction of Cambridge neighborhoods across the city - for no sound reason.

This proposal reflects a vision of Cambridge that continues to cater to young higher income technology and other professionals who will pay a premium for an overcrowded urban lifestyle that suits their needs. It is not family friendly and it disrespects the side street neighborhoods that have taken generations to build.

I urge you to take a stand against this radical upzoning to six stories.

Sincerely,

Barbara Anthony

Sent from my iPhone's

Barbara Anthony, Esq.

Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government,
Harvard Kennedy School Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

Cell: 857-998-0273

Email: btantony@aol.com;

Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jeffrey Peterson <jpeterson@peterson-architects.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:30 PM
To: Zusy, Catherine; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Planning Board Comment; City Clerk
Subject: Cambridge Zoning
Attachments: Zoning letter-Peterson.pdf

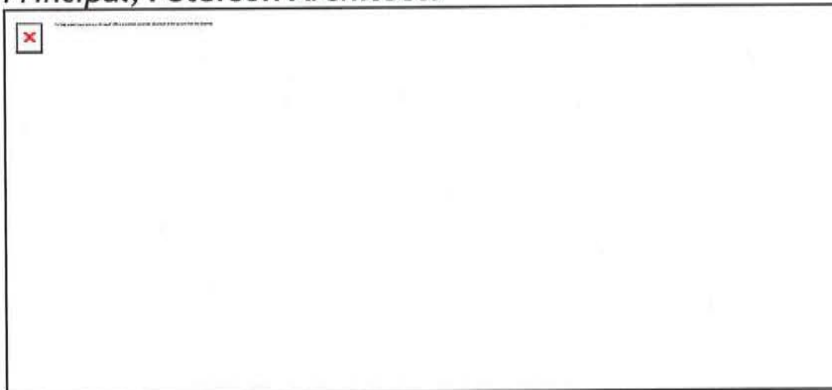
To Cambridge City Councilors, Planning Board, and the Ordinance Committee,

Attached please find my letter regarding changes to the zoning regulations.

Please reconsider changes that will negatively impact the scale of the city. Once the scale of the city is damaged, it is virtually impossible to repair. I have some suggestions that may facilitate construction of more moderate "infill" projects that will help address housing needs by making them more affordable.

Best regards,

Jeffrey D. Peterson FAIA, LEED AP
Principal, Peterson Architects



Jeffrey Peterson FAIA
28 Prentiss Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

December 3, 2024

Cambridge City Councilors:

czusy@cambridgema.gov

dsimmons@cambridgema.gov

mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov

pnoan@cambridgema.gov

ssiddiqui@cambridgema.gov

bazeem@cambridgema.gov

jsobrinhowheeler@cambridgema.gov

ptoner@cambridgema.gov

amwilson@cambridgema.gov

Planning Board: planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov

Ordinance Committee: CityClerk@cambridgema.gov

Re: City Zoning Changes

To the Cambridge City Councilors, Planning Board, and Ordinance Committee,

As do most of the residents I have heard at several meetings in the city, I support the building of more dwelling units in Cambridge. I do not, however, want them at any cost.

Zoning laws were created to improve living conditions in the City, and they have largely succeeded. The state zoning act was enacted in 1975 with a number of worthy goals, among them:

- to lessen congestion in the streets;
- to conserve health;
- to secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other dangers;
- to provide adequate light and air;
- to prevent overcrowding of land;
- to avoid undue concentration of population;
- to encourage housing for persons of all income levels;
- to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, water supply, drainage, sewerage, schools, parks, open space, and other public requirements;
- to conserve the value of land and building, including the conservation of natural resources and the prevention of blight and pollution of the environment;
- to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the city, including consideration of the recommendations of the master plan, if any, adopted by the planning board and the comprehensive plan, if any, of the regional planning agency;

and to preserve and increase amenities by the promulgation of regulations to fulfill said objectives. (taken from the Introduction to the Zoning Act)

Moderate changes to current zoning can address all the desirable goals outlined above. Such modifications could include: allowing multifamily housing anywhere, increasing height limits to 3 stories in most areas, and up to 5 stories on major corridors.

Zoning changes such as the AHO, the abolition of residential zoning, and the allowance of 6-story units with zero lot-lines are focused on one issue at all costs, ignoring the city planning goals that define a vision for the city. The proposed changes will cause irreparable changes to the consistency of the city's built fabric, and will negatively impact the other laudable goals described above.

The purpose of zoning is to provide predictability in construction and development, but eliminating these regulations will remove that ability. If developers can build buildings "of right," either 6-story residence units in residential areas, or 12-15-story buildings, and there is no need for developers of these structures to enter into planning with the city, how can infrastructure be planned for?

The problem is not that there are no sites on which to build moderate-sized structures; Mass Ave has many, many single-story structures. The city needs to find ways to make new moderate structures feasible. I would support a small tax on residential sales on properties over \$1 million, or a very small increase in the real estate assessment of houses over a certain value. The city would use this as a way to bolster the funds the city uses to facilitate moderate development.

As an architect, I love Cambridge in large part due to the consistency and scale of the city. Many of the people who live or want to live in Cambridge cite these reasons as well. These huge modifications to zoning regulations in Cambridge will eventually destroy the very thing that many people love about the city.

I urge you not to dive blindly into these radical changes that may forever harm our beautiful city.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JPeterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Peterson, FAIA

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:18 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Residents Alliance's Multifamily zoning position

12-4-24

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Manager,

The Cambridge Residents Alliance* Board supports allowing multifamily zoning citywide. The specifics of that change are very important. We do have proposed changes to the Multifamily zoning.

1. Increasing affordable housing has always been our top priority. In considering the proposed Multifamily upzoning, affordable housing is a major factor for us. That's why we agree with the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC) that **any new zoning for multifamily housing should only apply to projects that have Inclusionary housing**, which means the building is larger than 10,000 square feet or has more than 9 units.

*Without that change to the proposed zoning, many more smaller buildings will be demolished, and tenants will be displaced, without any provision of new affordable housing. CDD estimates that over 40% of the new projects will **not** have Inclusionary housing.* Many of those older buildings have what is referred to as Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing, meaning they are less expensive than new market housing. With lower land costs in the eastern part of the city, we are concerned that this loss of NOAH may happen more there. We want to make sure that zoning changes that are intended to increase access to housing in Cambridge do not unintentionally decrease housing affordability. This approach would also **limit an increase in land costs for smaller lots in the denser parts of the city, where there is already lots of multifamily housing.**

Of note, *CDD's projections do not include land costs or construction costs, nor do they estimate the effect of the zoning on land costs.* Without including those variables, the CDD projections are less reliable. Please ask CDD to discuss which variables are included in their model, and why key variables are not included.

We note that the CDD presentation on 11-19-24 projects that the original city proposal (Option 1) would yield 90 projects, 1630 net new units, and 310 inclusionary units by 2030. The CHJC proposal (Option 3) would yield 70 projects, 1540 net new units, and 320 inclusionary units by 2030. That means *the CHJC proposal would reduce the number of projects, which reduces displacement, and would actually increase the number of inclusionary units, which reduces gentrification.*

I note that the [Envision Housing Dashboard](#) says Cambridge is "falling behind" on the portions of residents who earn 50% or less of AMI or earn 50-100% of AMI. This means Cambridge is gentrifying. It seems likely that this zoning will accelerate that problem, and we need to reduce that as much as possible.

In addition to applying the new zoning only to buildings that have Inclusionary housing, there are other aspects of the proposed zoning that the Residents Alliance would like to change.

2. We think that there should be **no reduction in project review requirements**. We believe the current project review requirements are not the reason for the slowdown in new housing construction in Cambridge. Instead, this slowdown has happened across the country and is caused largely by external economic factors such as high interest rates. The review process is working well in Cambridge, and results in better buildings for the new residents and for existing neighbors. The project review process proposed in the draft zoning would omit the opportunity for input for many buildings.

In contrast with AHO buildings, which have only advisory review because of a) the complexity and slowness of public financing, and b) the high need for affordable homes, market-rate buildings do not need less review in order to be built, as shown by the project for 227 units at 745 Concord Ave. The proposed zoning also decreases review for AHO buildings, which we do not support, as it is clear that the current review process is working well.

We are concerned that land prices will rise due to the zoning, making it harder for AHO buildings to compete, and fewer AHO units being built. Will more costly land mean they can compete less well for state funds? Even with allowing 13 floors, will as many AHO units result compared with current zoning, given that AH developers have not wanted to build that high?

3. We think that meaningful open space is important, both for humans and the environment. Therefore, we think that **in residential areas, at least 75% (not 50%) of the open space requirement should be met by permeable surfaces**, which will allow trees and shrubs. For mixed use areas where there is no front setback on the street, such as along Mass. Ave., impermeable surfaces such as rooftops could count as open space.

4. Similarly, we think **side and rear setbacks of at least 5 feet should be required***, which will enable windows and light on all sides of the new building, will enable trees and shrubs, and will reduce impacts on existing buildings. *If both the old and new buildings are built to the property line, no side setback would be required, enabling row houses.

5. We think that the maximum 6 floor height in residential areas should be 70,' not 75'. We note that the 2022 Planning Board report, titled *Update on Discussions of Allowing Multifamily Housing Citywide*, said new zoning should "Allow a broader range of uses but with limitations on building size. This would allow for additional unit types while keeping building sizes consistent with the prevailing neighborhood patterns." The current zoning proposal does not follow this Planning Board recommendation. Our proposal is closer to that recommendation.

With these changes, housing development is incentivized in a way that reduces displacement, and is more livable.

We ask that Councilors consider these proposals seriously and adopt as many as possible. We think adoption of these proposals will increase support for the Multifamily zoning across the city.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President

Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*

<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

* The Cambridge Residents Alliance was formed in 2012. It works for a livable, affordable, and diverse Cambridge. It is citywide and run by volunteers.

Erwin, Nicole

From: ann stewart <ahstewart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:15 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: citywide multifamily rezoning comment

To: Members of the Ordinance Committee

From: Ann Stewart, 25-31 Wheeler Street

Re: Citywide Multifamily Rezoning comment

Date: December 4, 2024

Last night Councilor Toner moderated a well-attended meeting at which CDD staff presented your city-wide rezoning and answered at least 50 questions and addressed concerns.

We saw six estimates comparing multifamily scenarios of total projects, net new units, and affordable units and learned that Cambridge “can gain between 900-1600 new housing units by 2030.” When questioned about their estimates, CDD said they are “our best guess” and that “our stats are based on past housing starts under current zoning.”

What are the consequences of relying on market-rate luxury with a handful of affordable units thrown in? What incentive does a developer have to follow the Planning Board’s advisory opinion?

Should, could, and might are guess words. When we don’t even know the full effects of the Affordable Housing Overlay and Amendment, it’s time for a reset. This is what I heard last night:

1: Begin with *some* corridors and squares. What are the appropriate heights and densities? What are the possible sites? Get neighborhood associations and retail businesses involved.

2: Leave residential streets alone for now. How many six-story buildings can be constructed on our narrow, wider, shorter, longer streets, dead-ends, and cul-de-sacs? What other challenges are out there? Be honest.

It may have escaped notice, but we're in this *together*. And we-the-people, future generations, and you have to live with the consequences. Please make good neighborhoods and a good city.

Thank you.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kit Wu <kit@laminarcollective.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:05 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: December 4th Hearing - Public Comment In Support of Multifamily Housing & Repeal of Zoning Restrictions

Good afternoon,

My name is Kit Wu, and I live on Salem Street, right off of Auburn next to Central Square. I live here in a 3-unit building with a family, and I've been in Cambridge more generally for more than 10 years.

In my time here, I have gone to college, worked for a company, and have started a business myself serving the Boston Metro Area. And I love it here.

I'd like to submit a public comment **in favor** of the multifamily ordinance, and ending exclusionary zoning restrictions.

I grew up in the Bay Area, in California. Earlier this year, my best high school friend came by for a visit, and I took her on a walk in Cambridge and around Boston. She was shocked; the streets were actually *bustling*. She loved that; she straight up told me

*This is what a **real** city looks like.*

This is the thing I love most about Cambridge. It's vibrant. It's lively. It's bustling. It's nothing like Alameda.

The thing about the Bay Area is that it's one gigantic suburb. Single family, one-story homes and zoning restrictions as far as the eye can see. Walk into downtown, and the streets are *empty*. Where did that get us? The nation's **most intractable housing affordability crisis**.

And you know what? The *only* city in the Bay Area that has actually *lowered* housing costs is Emeryville, which has counteracted the nonstop rising housing costs by building more housing, specifically condos.

Here's the exact quote:

The decline in Emeryville's home values appears to be driven by its condominiums, which make up most of the city's for-sale housing market, according to a city housing [report](#). The typical value of an Emeryville condo dropped from about \$568,000 in 2019 to \$479,000 in 2024, a 15.6% decrease.

Building more housing **works**. Having the 20% affordability limit works. I grew up with a Section 8 voucher in the family, and I understand how long it takes to get off that waitlist.

And I believe that we need **more** of what's happening in Emeryville if you want to help residents of all incomes. It is 2024. I am thinking about my future, and those of people like me. Please, please, please turn the page on exclusionary zoning, and **pass the multifamily ordinance**.

Thank you,
Kit Wu

Erwin, Nicole

From: Patrick Ledwith <pledw15@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:01 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: End exclusionary zoning, create abundant affordable housing

Dear city council,

I want to express my strong support for ending single family zoning. I also want to emphasize my support for the proposal that enables six stories city wide.

Given the magnitude of our current housing crisis and rapid increase in rents, it is reckless to allow dense housing to remain illegal. Without significant rapid action, Cambridge will only be accessible to the wealthiest in our society, as well as a small percentage of people who are lucky enough to win the lottery for an affordable unit.

I want to emphasize my support for a meaningful end to exclusionary zoning that addresses the magnitude of our housing crisis. I do not support amendments such as large setbacks that limit the number of units likely to be constructed.

I am also disappointed by the timing of public comment today. It is not accessible to working people, who are precisely those who are struggling to afford rent in this city.

Best,
Patrick, Cambridge resident of 9 years

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lynne Reiss <lreiss82@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 3:18 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk

I urge you to simply allow multi-family housing zoning in every district for now and hold off doing anything more, before a thorough study is done or risk making the situation worse. If you do go forward, only make the upzoning applicable for projects with inclusionary housing 10,000 SF or larger and make sure design oversight is included as well as 30% green space (for trees & plantings) not “open space” which applies to decks and roof tops.

Sincerely,

**Lynne Reiss
76 Oxford St.**

Erwin, Nicole

From: Maria F <flanagan.maria@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 3:13 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Cmmtee: Zoning comments

Please accept my comments against the densest proposals -- do not allow 6 stories/0 setbacks by right. Please amend the plan and do not select the proposal for the maximum units estimated by the zoning staff. Be more nuanced.

A. The side/rear setbacks of 0 feet in new C-1 are blunt and ill-considered. I specifically request this be reviewed for amendment to a non-zero minimum width that doesn't push buildings together with no gaps.

B. Unknown or untransparent discussion of 0 rear/side setback impacts. I attended Dec 3 meeting. The city zoning staff offered little about the impacts of these 0 setbacks. The images used in the 'Other Requirements' slide is misleading as it portrays a CORNER lot. The side of that building would be a temporary visual, *until* the adjoining lot also builds to the lot line. NONE of the city's visuals actually portray units of development to-the-lot-line side by side, 6 stories high.

C. Overreliance on developer's good will. A vague city response was offered that developers would have the instincts to build some appropriate distance from the lot line, and that fire regulations would be invoked. This is completely unrealistic that developers will privilege design over profit. If design review does not kick in until 25,000 square feet, then a 6,000 square foot lot in Cambridge, using 4,200 buildable footprint with front setback, and built to 6 stories, is exactly 25,200 feet. Shave off 200 feet, and suddenly a <25,000 project has an of-right, no restrictions or review. It's wackily out of scope for many small oneway streets. Please produce some visuals how this will look, for example, on Dudley Street.

D. Neighbors put in conflict. The Community Planning Board seems to have abdicated its need to be a fair arbitrator of development, and has now left citizens to battle their neighbors and to be the agitators without any city advocating for the residents. Developers who are long gone will leave neighbors in hardship and spark conflict.

E. Public sentiment advising a better, thoughtful approach are NOT anchored against multi-family, nor dwelling on parking. People who are advising against Proposal 1 want a better match of scope allowed to neighborhoods. Highrise buildings for the Alewife Quad is a perfect example, and the new plethora of rental housing at Alewife is another. Those large swaths of land are suitable for large-scale development. Little streets cannot support the current proposal!

F. How exactly will it work when a 6-story goes edge to edge and completely shadows neighboring solar panels? I'd like to understand how that factors in, and haven't seen it mentioned.

Multifamily is a fine idea but do not abdicate all review and use absurd unfettered density in any neighborhood.

--

Maria Flanagan

flanagan.maria@gmail.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: nonie valentine <nonie.valentine1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 3:13 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Public comment on multi-housing proposal

Nonie Valentine at 4 Washington Ave.

Thank you, you have a lot to take in. And, since being heard is an issue now, I'm hoping at you can maybe summarize at the end what you've heard from people.

I'll speak to just one essential aspect and that's scale. I lived an equivalent to this proposal 6-13 stories, and more, with almost no setbacks: In former *communist* housing in C. Europe. I saw what it did. When buildings so out of scale were ideologically imposed on communities that had evolved over time - not harmonizing with what was already there so that the new relates to the old - it was in effect a hostile takeover not lost on anyone. Curtailed setbacks meant obliterating the place of nature and trees.

This de-sensitized people to each other, themselves, and nature in such an unnerving way that many tried to bribe their way out of there. I learned the hard way that when you don't fully regard *existing* neighborhoods as well, you actually set up mutual resentment, competition, and disinvestment in community.

Please do not buy that scale is the concern of nimbys and elites who don't care about affordable housing. That is a cliché designed to dismantle the understanding that new housing needs to relate well to what's around it. And to nature. Scale *matters* and affects behavior. Writing it off it undermines that delicate balance in neighborhoods and I've seen how hard it is to recover from. Others know better how taking this on board would affect our developer community.

Review matters, even if it takes time. Time could be used to gather imaginative thinkers to plan better scale. We are lucky to have lots of such people around who can do this.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Xilian Sansoucy <xsansoucy5@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 2:55 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support for Cambridge's Multifamily Housing Ordinance

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Xilian Sansoucy, and I've lived in Cambridge since 2019. I work at HubSpot, right here in Cambridge, and I deeply value being part of this community. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance.

This ordinance is a critical step toward addressing Cambridge's housing shortage and ending exclusionary zoning policies that have historically limited housing opportunities. By legalizing six-story multifamily housing across the city and reducing restrictions on zoning, we can create much-needed housing inventory, which will help stabilize the market and make living in Cambridge more accessible.

As someone who loves this city, I've seen friends and neighbors displaced because they can no longer afford to stay here. Cambridge is a vibrant, thriving place, and we need to ensure that it remains open to people of all backgrounds. Building more housing and eliminating exclusionary practices is essential to achieving this.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. This is a crucial opportunity to shape a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable future for Cambridge.

Thank you for your attention and leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Xilian Sansoucy

Resident of Cambridge since 2019

Erwin, Nicole

From: Steven Zhang <steven@climatetechlist.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 2:28 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Cambridge's Multi-Family Housing Ordinance - Create More Housing Options

Dear Cambridge City Council,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance.

As a Cambridge resident of two years, I've witnessed firsthand how limited housing supply has displaced many of my friends from our community.

The ordinance's provisions to end exclusionary zoning and allow six-story developments citywide are crucial steps toward addressing our housing crisis. By increasing density and housing inventory across Cambridge, we can create more opportunities for people to remain in our vibrant city.

I urge you to adopt this ordinance as written and pass it into law. Legalizing six-story buildings while reducing zoning restrictions will help create the diverse, accessible community Cambridge should be.

Best regards,
Steven

[LinkedIn](#) | creator of [ClimateTechList.com](#) - the web's most comprehensive climate tech jobs site, [Interconnection.fyi](#) - Electricity grid analytics

Erwin, Nicole

From: Abra Berkowitz <abraberkowitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:46 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Conditional upzoning for affordable units + Decreasing diversity and increasing property values post-upzoning
Attachments: Davis upzoning and gentrification 2021.pdf; Freemark upzoning property value impacts 2019.pdf

Dear Honorable Mayor Simmons and City Councillors,

I am writing as a PhD student in Public Policy, with a focus on housing policy. I applaud the Councilors and the City for putting the affordability of our housing and providing shelter to new arrivals as primary issues this term. However, *as a scholar who has researched the impact of upzoning elsewhere, including on affordability, neighborhood diversity, and the conversion of rentals to condos, I believe the current proposal needs to be evaluated more carefully through an affordability and social justice lens.* And, it is essential that we consult a proposal put forward by former Councillor Zondervan on conditional upzoning for affordability as well as the academic literature on the topic. *We can take this opportunity to create more affordable units on smaller parcels without relying on inclusionary zoning, so let's do it through smart policymaking!*

Upzoning's Impacts in Chicago: Elevated Land and Property Values

The impacts of upzoning in Chicago along its light rail system tell a cautionary tale for Cambridge. Yonah Freemark at the Urban Institute (formerly of MIT) recently published a paper which evaluates the changes in land and property values after residential upzoning (attached here). In 2013, the Chicago City Council voted to increase FARs, abolish setbacks, and reduce parking. The immediate results were increases in property values and sale prices in the affected areas, including those already developed with housing and thus prime for redevelopment. Residential property sales accelerated during the time period. In some areas, condos increased over 10% in value over 2 years; land values increased by 18.5%. This provides initial evidence that, despite arguments to the contrary, *the current proposal that sits before you could increase the value of residential parcels, including those large enough to house an AHO development. This may make AHO less adequate for affordable housing developers to compete with market-rate housing developers on the open market.*

Upzoning's Impacts on Neighborhood Diversity in Manhattan: Whitening

In Manhattan, upzoning was implemented citywide under Mayor Bloomberg. Columbia University researcher Jenna Davis found, in 2021, that *"upzoning activity is positively*

and significantly associated with the odds of a census tract becoming whiter, suggesting that neighborhood upzonings might accelerate, rather than temper, gentrification pressures in the short term" (2021, 1). Davis' article is attached to this email as well. What does this mean for Cambridge? Our more diverse and denser neighborhoods, such as Wellington-Harrington and the Port, could be more aggressively targeted for redevelopment under the zoning because the land and property values are lower. Moreover, there may be a smaller percentage of existing housing in those neighborhoods which are condos and a higher percentage of which are rentals; thus, the land and buildings may be less complicated to acquire than in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of condos.

Because new projects will not be required to produce affordable units, future inhabitants are more likely to be richer and whiter. Moreover, the conversion from rentals to condos may displace our city's voucher holders when their units are converted to condos or "upgraded." Voucher holders' payment standards are unlikely to be sufficient to close the gaps between the high price of new housing and what they can afford; moreover, homeseekers of color are less likely to have the savings to put forward the hefty downpayment or to even be shown the property even when they can afford it. For more on voucher holders discrimination, see: <https://lawyersforcivilrights.org/our-impact/housing/20-landlords-and-brokers-sued-for-housing-discrimination-in-boston/> and *The Color of Wealth in Boston* about the massive racial inequalities in household savings: <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/one-time-pubs/color-of-wealth.aspx>).

A Proposal for Conditional Zoning with the Inclusion of Affordable Homeownership Units

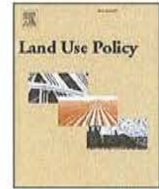
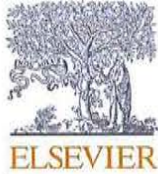
Last term, former City Councillor Quinton Zondervan introduced a proposal to provide conditional zoning to real estate developers seeking to go beyond residential zoning by agreeing to grant the city Right of First Refusal on units in order to make them affordable. As Policy Order 2023 #157 reads:

"The current low-rise residential height and density limitations in our zoning code perpetuate historically racist housing policies, but simply removing them would produce additional luxury housing that remains largely unaffordable to economically disenfranchised community members; and WHEREAS: The opportunity exists to conditionally allow for more height and density if a portion of the additional units produced by private market rate developers are made available for purchase through our income restricted affordable homeownership programs" (linked here: [POR 2023 #157 That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant departments including the Affordable Housing Trust, Community Development Department and Law Department to review the attached zoning proposal and report back to the City Council with an initial assessment regarding the feasibility and efficacy of such an approach no later than October 31, 2023. CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR TONER IN COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 - Cambridge City, MA](#))

This is all to say, yes to considering all options in our housing affordability toolkit. However, let's be smart about it! (We're good at that).

Many thanks as always for your consideration and advocacy,

Abra Berkowitz
16 Walden St. #2R
Cambridge, MA 02140



How do upzonings impact neighborhood demographic change? Examining the link between land use policy and gentrification in New York City

Jenna Davis

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University, 1172 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10027, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Upzoning
Gentrification
Land use
Zoning
Density
Beta regression

ABSTRACT

As cities across the country face mounting pressures to address the housing affordability crisis, planners and policymakers have increasingly eyed upzonings as an instrument to alleviate rising housing costs. Yet, upzonings have emerged as a site of deep conflict, driving a wedge between groups advocating for supply-side solutions and those calling for added tenant protections and affordable housing preservation. Upzoning advocates—many affiliated with the yes-in-my-backyard (YIMBY) movement—have argued that in allowing for denser development, upzonings will help to lift artificial restrictions on supply and lower housing prices in the long run. Opponents, often representing tenant interests, have countered that upzonings will accelerate gentrification and displacement pressures. Despite these cleavages about the effects of upzonings on gentrification and displacement, minimal empirical research to date has examined the link between upzonings and neighborhood demographic change. To help fill this gap in the literature, this paper examines how upzoning activity is associated with subsequent change in the non-Hispanic white population in New York City between 2000 and 2010. Using New York as a case study, this paper finds that upzoning activity is positively and significantly associated with the odds of a census tract becoming whiter, suggesting that neighborhood upzonings might accelerate, rather than temper, gentrification pressures in the short term.

1. Introduction

In recent years, planners and policymakers have championed proposals to upzone neighborhoods to address the nation's housing affordability crisis. Upzonings increase allowable residential densities often by relaxing the zoning code's height and bulk requirements or increasing floor area ratios (FARs) dictating the total size of a development. The core logic behind upzoning is that in allowing municipalities to build denser housing, upzonings will help to increase the housing supply and thus alleviate housing costs in high-demand real estate markets. Upzonings also strive to reduce residential segregation, as land use regulations that constrain multifamily housing development have been associated with elevated levels of segregation (Rothwell, 2011).

Yet, upzonings have emerged as a flashpoint in cities across the country, driving a wedge between those fighting for supply-side solutions (e.g. YIMBYs) and tenant rights groups. For example, California's embattled Senate Bill 50, which would have upzoned all parcels of land near transit stops for mid-rise apartments and condominiums throughout the state, serves as an illustrative example of current tensions that have pitted the two coalitions against one another. For pro-

housing groups such as California YIMBY, SB 50 would stimulate housing production, lower housing costs, and mitigate gentrification and displacement pressures (Dougherty, 2020). Tenant advocates have countered that the bill would further fuel gentrification pressures and real estate speculation, as landlords of upzoned buildings would be incentivized to sell their properties at inflated prices reflecting their added development potential (Matthew, 2019). For example, Moms 4 Housing, a group of homeless and marginally housed mothers who called attention to rampant real estate speculation in the Bay Area by occupying a vacant Oakland home, opposed upzonings on the grounds that it would entice developers to build luxury developments in transit-rich areas and further fuel real estate speculation and gentrification (Holder and Mock, 2020). Phillips (2020, p. 6) has succinctly summarized this division between the two coalitions, writing: "If the core question of YIMBYs is 'Who benefits?,' for tenant advocates, it's 'Who is harmed?'".

Although neighborhood upzonings have emerged as a site of deep conflict, minimal research has examined how upzonings in fact impact neighborhood change (Budde, 2020; Capps, 2020; Whittemore, 2020). This gap in the literature is surprising, given both the increased usage of

E-mail address: jmd2218@columbia.edu.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105347>

Received 17 August 2020; Received in revised form 25 December 2020; Accepted 7 February 2021

Available online 13 February 2021

0264-8377/© 2021 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

upzonings to address the housing affordability crisis in major metropolitan areas in the United States and the ongoing debate about how upzonings impact the hot-button issue of gentrification. Aiming to fill this gap in the literature, this paper examines upzoning activity in New York City as a case study into how upzonings interact with neighborhood change, using the non-Hispanic white population as a proxy for gentrification. Although private landowners can initiate rezonings through variances, this analysis focuses instead on “proactive upzonings,” or upzonings that municipal entities, such as the city’s planning or economic development departments, spearheaded (Denoon-Stevens and Nel, 2020). In so doing, this paper answers calls elsewhere in the literature to better understand how different forms of public investment shape gentrification pressures and illuminate the potentially unintended consequences of cities’ land use actions (Zuk et al., 2018).

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature on upzonings, land prices, and housing affordability. Section 3 provides a brief background on upzoning activity in New York City in the early 2000. Section 4 describes the data sources and methods used in the analysis. Section 5 presents the results of the regression analysis. Section 6 provides a discussion and outlines avenues for future research. Section 7 is the conclusion.

2. Literature review

An extensive body of research has examined how land use regulations affect housing production and land values in various metropolitan areas across the United States (Glaeser and Ward, 2009; Kok et al., 2014; Quigley and Rosenthal, 2005). According to this body of scholarship, a host of restrictions and land use regulations, such as excessive permitting fees, independent reviews to obtain building permits, and protracted environmental reviews, all play a hand in placing artificial restrictions on supply and raising housing prices. For example, Glaeser and Ward (2009) examine land use controls in cities in Greater Boston and find that cities with minimum lot size requirements and other land use controls are associated with higher land values, although the effects disappear after including a number of controls. Kok et al. (2014) examine the determinants of urban land prices in the San Francisco Bay Area and likewise find that the restrictiveness of a municipality’s regulatory environment (measured through the number of independent reviews to secure building permits or zoning changes) is positively correlated with higher land prices. In a comprehensive survey of the literature, Glaeser and Gyourko (2003) examine the relationship between land use regulations and housing affordability and conclude that “in the places where housing is quite expensive, building restrictions appear to have created these high prices” (p. 23). Taken together, the literature has offered a solid body of evidence that land use regulations tend to raise land values and impede housing production, particularly in cities with restrictive land use regulatory practices, such as San Francisco or New York.

This scholarship has thus renewed calls to relax municipal zoning restrictions that hamper housing production and raise housing prices. In this context, planners and policymakers across the country have started to turn towards upzonings, or zoning changes that allow for increases in residential development capacity (often through floor area ratio, height, and bulk increases or reductions in minimum parking requirements), as a way to unlock added housing density and alleviate housing affordability challenges (Gabbe, 2018). Indeed, this increased uptake of upzoning makes sense; upzoning is one of the few tools that built-out cities, such as New York and San Francisco, can leverage to increase their housing supplies. Although several major metropolitan areas including Arlington County (VA), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), New York City (NY), and Seattle (WA) have enacted upzoning policies, the majority of these policies started in the mid- to-late 2000 s, and thus the literature on upzonings is relatively nascent (Hickey, 2014). Scholarship that has touched on upzonings tends to focus on three primary themes including 1) investigating the determinants of upzonings, including city

officials’ calculus for deciding which areas of the city to upzone; 2) examining the impact of upzonings on subsequent housing production and land values; and 3) examining upzonings as a tool for value capture.

Weighing in on the first theme, Gabbe (2018) examines how a series of neighborhood- and parcel-level characteristics influenced the probability that lots in Los Angeles were upzoned between 2002 and 2014. Gabbe (2018) conducts a logistic regression model that identifies the determinants of upzonings as a function of a series of parcel, regulatory, and neighborhood characteristics. The author finds evidence that lots zoned for low-intensity, nonresidential uses in areas with lower political resistance were associated with a higher probability of being upzoned. In comparison, lots located in neighborhoods with a high concentration of homeowners and high-performing schools had lower probabilities of being upzoned, consistent with the “homevoter” hypothesis that homeowners tend to be in favor of land use regulations that minimize development projects that could adversely affect their property values (Fischel, 2004).

In a related study, Gabbe (2019) examines the prevalence of rezoning activity in three Silicon Valley cities—San Jose, Sunnyvale, and Santa Clara—and identifies factors that influenced the likelihood that specific areas were upzoned or downzoned. He finds that rezoning activity was not widespread overall, and that most rezonings tended to be initiated by property owners rather than through municipal action. After constructing a multinomial logistic regression model comparing the relative risk of a parcel being upzoned or downzoned compared with no zoning change, Gabbe also finds that parcels located in transit-rich areas near desirable amenities experienced a higher risk of being upzoned, suggesting that areas with prime development potential were more likely to experience increases in allowable residential densities.

Examining a series of upzoning activity in New York City in the early-to-mid 2000 s, Been et al. (2014) test whether “growth machine” politics (in which city officials defer to elite coalitions, e.g. landlords and developers) or the “homevoter theory” (in which city officials cower to homeowners’ preferences) figured more prominently into land use decision making under the Bloomberg administration. In order to test this relationship, the authors leverage a dataset of all tax lots that the New York City Planning Commission rezoned between 2002 and 2009 and construct multinomial logit regressions examining how several tax lot and neighborhood-level variables influence rezoning activity. The authors hypothesize that “if zoning officials are motivated by homevoter preferences, relatively high levels of neighborhood construction activity, population growth, and price appreciation will increase the probability that a lot will be downzoned,” as homeowners tend to oppose development that could adversely impact property values (Been et al., 2014, p. 256). Indeed, Been et al. find that tax lots had a higher probability of being downzoned if they were located in neighborhoods with high population growth and construction activity. The authors interpret these findings as evidence that the homevoter theory of urban growth plays a more direct role in rezoning decision-making in New York City.

Addressing the second theme, other upzoning scholarship has instead focused on examining the impact of upzonings on subsequent housing production and land values. Freemark (2019) investigates how a series of upzonings in Chicago between 2013 and 2015 impacted changes in residential transaction values and short-term housing production levels. In his paper, Freemark constructs a hedonic regression model to examine how increasing residential density impacts both of these outcome variables and controls for various parcel- and neighborhood-level characteristics. Freemark finds that transaction values are significantly higher among properties located on upzoned land, providing evidence that upzoning is positively associated with property value increases. If it is true that short-term increases in housing prices are a precursor to gentrification, Freemark’s study provides some evidence that upzonings could accelerate gentrification pressures. The author, however, does not find statistically significant evidence that upzoned parcels are associated with higher housing unit construction activity within five years of the zoning change, casting doubt on

upzoning advocates' claims that these zoning changes will improve housing affordability through increased supply in the short term.

Rodriguez-Pose and Storper (2020) call into question the idea that density-increasing zoning changes will reduce housing affordability pressures. In their paper, the authors review a dominant argument in housing policy circles: that cities should relax their zoning codes because they tend to place artificial constraints on supply, raise housing costs, limit the inter-regional migration of lower-income households to more prosperous cities, and therefore exacerbate regional spatial inequalities. The authors debunk this theory, arguing that job availability plays a much greater role in a low-income household's calculus to migrate to a city than housing costs do. The authors conclude that "blanket upzoning policies are unlikely to increase domestic migration or to improve affordability for lower-income households in prosperous areas" (p. 223).

A final strand of upzoning research examines how city officials leverage upzonings as a tool to capture public benefits. According to this scholarship, upzonings are one of the most powerful tools that municipalities have at their disposal to derive public benefits when landowners or developers enjoy financial windfalls from land use changes initiated by the public sector. For example, Kim (2020) investigates how city officials leveraged their land use regulation powers to extract public benefits in the twenty largest development projects of five major metropolitan areas in the U.S. including Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Seattle. Kim finds that all of the cities used one or more land use regulation measures (e.g. inclusionary zoning or impact fees) to obtain public benefits for all projects involving upzonings. Despite these benefits, Kim argues that cities lacked "analytical frameworks for evaluating the proportionality of the value created by upzonings and what is being asked for in return," suggesting that cities that rely on discretionary review for public benefit agreements might be leaving some benefits left on the table (p. 9). Elmendorf and Shanske (2020) likewise point to some of the limitations of leveraging upzonings as a value capture tool. Taking up the case of California's Senate Bill 827 (later, Senate Bill 50), Elmendorf and Shanske argue that the bill does not adequately account for non-compliance with state-mandates; although the state could impose penalties on growth-adverse localities, this gesture would be politically unpalatable given that localities tend to prize local control of land use. Instead, the authors argue that "states should confer on local governments the right to auction development rights created by upzoning pursuant to state policy."

Despite these valuable contributions to the literature, minimal research has examined the link between residential upzonings and neighborhood demographic change. Whittemore (2017) explores the racial and income characteristics of neighborhoods that local officials upzoned in Durham, North Carolina between 1945 and 2014, finding evidence that upzonings were more likely to occur in neighborhoods with a lower white population, but that these neighborhoods were not lower income compared to the citywide average. Since Whittemore is interested in exploring the role of race in local officials' decisions to rezone minority neighborhoods for industrial uses, he operationalizes upzoning as "changes from less intensive uses to more intensive heavy commercial and industrial uses" (p. 235). Thus, his analysis does not explore the kind of residential upzonings that constitute the focus of this analysis—that is, upzonings involving a change of use from a less intense residential category to a more intense residential category.

The few qualitative studies that do examine upzonings of this nature, however, provide rich insights into how neighborhoods change following city-initiated upzonings. For example, Angotti and Morse (2016) performed an in-depth case study of three New York City neighborhoods that were upzoned (Williamsburg, Chinatown, and Harlem) and found that the upzonings ushered in a wave of upscale residences and retailers. The authors argue that all three upzoned neighborhoods experienced an influx of high-end residential development and white households, lending support to the theory that upzonings induce white population growth and gentrification pressures. In a case study of two industrial neighborhoods in New York City

(Greenpoint-Williamsburg in Brooklyn and Long Island City in Queens) that were upzoned to accommodate high-density residential and commercial development, Wolf-Powers (2005) finds that the upzonings "contributed to property speculation and the displacement of firms in what had been healthy light industrial districts, contributing to a shift in the city's economy away from industrial employment and toward an even more marked dominance of white-collar and service functions" (p. 380). While Wolf-Powers does not focus explicitly on shifting neighborhood racial demographics, her finding that the two neighborhoods became increasingly upscale suggests that some level of gentrification pressures might have ensued. With these case studies providing some qualitative evidence that upzonings accelerate gentrification pressures, this paper will test this relationship in a case study of upzoning activity in New York City.

3. Upzoning New York City

This paper examines a series of city-initiated upzonings in New York City between 2002 and 2009 under Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration. The early- to mid-2000 s was a particularly active period of rezoning activity in New York City, in which city officials rezoned approximately one-third of the city's land area (Stein, 2018). While other cities have experienced minimal upzoning activity (Gabbe, 2019), New York City's rezoning activity is remarkable in that a considerable percentage of the city's land area was upzoned, allowing for greater residential development capacity and serving as a rich site for inquiry into neighborhood demographic change.

Although upzonings occurred in all five boroughs, individual upzonings came in several shapes and sizes. Some upzonings applied to a few blocks, while others covered tens of blocks, dramatically remaking the height profile of certain neighborhoods (Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, 2010). In some instances, upzonings involved changes from one residential land use to another residential land use allowing greater development intensity, while others involved changes from a non-residential to a residential land use (e.g. manufacturing to residential). Although New York City's zoning code regulates density through several mechanisms (e.g. height limits, lot coverage requirements, setbacks, side-yard requirements, and minimum parking requirements), I follow previous analyses by considering tax lots to be upzoned if they experienced at least a 10% increase in their maximum residential development capacity (*maximum floor area ratio * lot size*) between 2002 and 2009, given that FARs are the "most significant single constraint on building bulk in New York's zoning code" (Been et al., 2014, p. 248).

4. Data and methods

In order to examine the relationship between upzoning and neighborhood demographic change, I employ a beta regression model. The dependent variable in a beta regression assumes values in the standard unit interval (0, 1). Ferrari and Cribari-Neto (2004) recommend using the beta regression for modeling continuous variates, such as rates and proportions, since proportional data tend to exhibit abnormal skewness and heteroskedasticity at the extremes of the distribution (i.e. near 0 and 1), violating one of the core assumptions of linear regression that the error term is normal and has constant variance (Davis and Lopez-Carr, 2014). The main advantage of using a beta distribution is that the beta density can take on a number of different shapes such as left- or right-skewed, uniform, bell-shaped, or bimodal distributions, making it ideal to use for heteroskedastic proportion data. Similar to generalized linear models, the beta regression uses a link function (e.g. logit, complementary log-log, or log-log link) to "convert between the linear predictor model and the conditional mean on the scale of observations" (Douma and Weedon, 2019, p. 1416).

While it is a common technique to use transformation-based solutions (e.g. taking the natural log) when working with proportion data to

meet linear regression assumptions, this technique can lead to biased estimates and difficulties with interpretation (Douma and Weedon, 2019). Given the unique strengths of the beta regression for handling proportion data, I employ a beta regression using the logit link to model the dependent variable in this analysis—the proportion of white residents per census tract in 2010. I model the proportion of white residents in 2010 per neighborhood as a function of the proportion of a given census tract's total tax lot area that was upzoned between 2002 and 2009 in addition to various controls. Consistent with other studies of gentrification, I define a “neighborhood” as a census tract and measure all variables at this geographic level (Freeman, 2005). Last, I use the Longitudinal Tract Database to account for census tract boundary changes between 2000 and 2010 (Logan et al., 2014).

4.1. Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the proportion of non-Hispanic whites in 2010 per census tract. I examine this metric since previous studies have identified that in-migrants to gentrifying neighborhoods tend to be young, college-educated white households (Freeman and Braconi, 2004; Freeman, 2005; McKinnish et al., 2010; Wylie and Hammel, 2004).

4.2. Independent variables

4.2.1. Upzoning activity

The independent variable of primary interest is the proportion of the total tax lot area in a census tract that was upzoned between 2002 and 2009.^a As other scholars have noted, upzonings implemented under the Bloomberg administration tended to usher in a wave of luxury real estate development, raising surrounding rents and stimulating an influx of white residents to upzoned neighborhoods (Angotti and Morse, 2016). I hypothesize that neighborhoods with a higher proportion of upzoned tax lot area will be positively associated with a higher proportion of white residents.

In order to measure upzoning activity per neighborhood, I first examined zoning applications between 2002 and 2009 from the NYC Department of City Planning and identified rezonings where the lead applicant on the rezoning application was either the New York City Department of City Planning or the New York City Economic Development Corporation; this method helped to identify rezonings that were initiated through municipal, rather than private, action. Next, using the NYC Department of City Planning's Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output database, I identified upzoned tax lots as those that experienced at least a 10% increase in their maximum residential development capacity between 2002 and 2009.^b The maximum residential development capacity is calculated by multiplying the tax lot's maximum residential FAR by the lot's size to obtain its maximum buildable area in 2002 (Furman Center 2010). The same calculation is then performed among lots in 2009 to obtain the maximum buildable area in 2009. Lots that experienced 1) at least a 10% increase in residential development capacity during these two time periods, 2) were located within city-initiated rezoning boundaries, and 3) underwent a land use code change were considered upzoned. Following Been, Madar and

McDonnell's methodology, I use the ten percent threshold in order to differentiate between upzonings and “form- and contextual-based zoning changes that incidentally alter a lot's residential development capacity,” but whose main objective is not to increase allowable residential density (2014, p. 248). Although this definition of upzoning does not account for other zoning constraints (e.g. height limits or side yard requirements) that in practice could limit how much could realistically be built on some tax lots, examining change in maximum buildable capacity is a widely accepted measure of upzoning in the literature (Been et al., 2014). Last, since different neighborhoods were upzoned at different time periods between 2002 and 2009, the model also includes a variable capturing the average number of years that the upzoning had been in effect per neighborhood. One might expect that the effects of upzoning, including on gentrification, would be more advanced in neighborhoods that had experienced upzonings for longer periods of time.

4.2.2. Neighborhood amenities

The model includes several independent variables to control for other factors that might induce an influx in the white population apart from upzoning activity. The first set of independent variables addresses neighborhood amenities. Previous studies in the literature have found that gentrifying neighborhoods tend to offer urban amenities such as convenient public transit access, close proximity to job centers, and are home to an older housing stock “with character” (Helms, 2003). White residents, often the first in-migrants to gentrifying neighborhoods, thus might be more likely to move into neighborhoods where these amenities are present. In order to capture these amenities, the model includes a dummy variable indicating whether the census tract is within a 0.5-mile walking distance of a subway station (a proxy for public transit access) and the distance from the center of each census tract to midtown Manhattan in miles (a proxy for central city job accessibility). The model also includes a dummy variable indicating whether at least 75% of the land area of the tract is zoned for residential uses and its average building age is pre-war (i.e. pre-1940) (a proxy for a housing stock with “character”) (Been et al., 2014). I hypothesize that neighborhoods that are within walking distance of a subway station, are closer to the central business district, and are located in a neighborhood with “character” will be positively associated with growth in the white population.

4.2.3. Neighborhood demographics and life cycle factors

The model also includes a series of controls that capture the neighborhood's racial composition. Following Freeman and Cai (2015), the model includes variables capturing the proportion of Asian, Black, and Hispanic residents in 2000, as the “buffering” hypothesis predicts that white households are more likely to move into a majority Black neighborhood if other minorities are present. Additionally, since white households might be more likely to move to areas with a high concentration of other white residents, the model includes a variable examining distance to the closest majority-white neighborhood (Freeman and Cai, 2015). Majority-white neighborhoods might be more likely to offer the kinds of urban amenities attractive to white in-migrants and therefore be positively associated with growth in the white population.

Last, previous studies on residential mobility have found that life cycle factors, such as getting married or becoming a parent, figure prominently in a household's decision to move (Freeman, 2005). Following previous studies of residential mobility, the model includes the following controls as proxies for a neighborhood's life cycle: age, marital status, and presence of children.

4.2.4. Neighborhood housing characteristics

The final set of independent variables captures various characteristics of the neighborhood's existing housing stock. First, using a dataset from the NYU Furman Center, the model includes a variable capturing the total number of residential units receiving housing subsidies per neighborhood. Previous studies of residential mobility have accounted

^a The NYC Department of Finance's Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output (PLUTO) dataset starts in 2002, precluding an analysis of upzoning activity that started in 2000. Since the vast majority of upzoning activity occurred under the Bloomberg administration, which began in 2002, only a minority of pre-2002 upzoning activity is not captured in the model.

^b In a small minority of tax lots located in high-density residential and commercial areas, the Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output database reports the maximum allowable commercial FAR, rather than residential FAR. Including these tax lots in the analysis understates the capacity for new development. However, following Been et al. (2014), I also included these tax lots in the analysis since they represented only 4% of total lots.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Regression Variables (N = 2143).

Statistic	Mean	Std. Dev.
Non-Hispanic white proportion, 2010	0.33	0.31
Tax lot area upzoned proportion, 2002–2010	0.06	0.15
Average number of years since upzoning	1.47	2.20
Transit access dummy	0.65	0.48
Distance to CBD (miles)	7.61	3.51
Asian proportion, 2000	0.10	0.13
Black proportion, 2000	0.27	0.32
Hispanic proportion, 2000	0.25	0.22
Distance to closest majority-white neighborhood (miles)	0.62	0.70
Married proportion, 2000	0.44	0.12
Children proportion, 2000	0.24	0.08
Gross rent, 2000	984	867

Source: NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Finance, NYC Department of Transportation, U.S. Census Bureau.

for the housing subsidy status of a unit under the logic that a household in a gentrifying neighborhood might “think twice” about moving out of a subsidized unit given the scarcity of affordable housing options available in the private market (Freeman and Braconi, 2004, p. 45). Scaling this logic up to the neighborhood level, one might expect that neighborhoods with a higher concentration of subsidized housing, which tend to house lower-income, minority households, might be more willing to hold onto their units, resulting in lower rates of housing turnover and thus staunching an influx of white households into newly available units. Second, the model also includes the average gross rent per neighborhood under the logic that white households might be more attracted to neighborhoods with more upscale housing. Last, the model includes a variable capturing the proportion of renter-occupied housing units.

4.2.5. Analysis and descriptive statistics

After defining these variables of interest, I first fit a global beta regression model using the logit link that includes all of the above-mentioned variables (results in Table A1 of Appendix A). Then, employing a stepwise backwards selection approach, I iteratively removed the least significant variables one after another, to identify the most parsimonious model (Table 2). At each step, I compared the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) between the original model and each simpler model, which is used to compare models with a different number of predictors (lower AIC values are indicative of a better fit model) (Corbelle-Rico and Crecente-Maseda, 2014). I repeated this process until all variables included in the model were significant, arriving at a final model with a substantially improved AIC over the initial global model (Volante et al., 2016).

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the variables included in the final model. In the average neighborhood in 2010, about one-third of residents identified as non-Hispanic white. There was considerable variation in the data, however, suggesting that some neighborhoods contained a considerably higher proportion of non-Hispanic white residents than others. On average, roughly 6% of a census tract’s total tax lot area was upzoned between 2002 and 2009, reflecting the marked period of rezoning activity during this time period. An upzoning had been in effect for approximately one and a half years in the average neighborhood. In terms of the neighborhood amenities variables included in the analysis, about 65% of neighborhoods were within a 0.5-mile distance of a subway stop. The average neighborhood was about 7.6 miles from the central business district.

Table 1 also presents summary statistics for the neighborhood demographic variables and life cycle factors included in the analysis. In the average neighborhood in 2000, about ten percent of neighborhood residents identified as Asian, while roughly a fourth of residents identified as Black or as Hispanic (27% and 25%, respectively). The proportion of Black and Hispanic residents per neighborhood exhibited higher variation, indicative of the fact that some neighborhoods in NYC

Table 2
Regression Results.

Statistic	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	Pr (> z)
Intercept	0.83	2.29	0.10	0.00 ***
Tax lot area upzoned proportion, 2002–2009	0.25	1.28	0.10	0.02 *
Average number of years since upzoning	0.02	1.02	0.01	0.00 **
Transit access dummy	0.19	1.21	0.03	0.00 ***
Distance to CBD (miles)	−0.03	0.97	0.01	0.00 ***
Asian proportion, 2000	−4.81	0.01	0.14	0.00 ***
Black proportion, 2000	−3.90	0.02	0.10	0.00 ***
Hispanic proportion, 2000	−3.92	0.02	0.11	0.00 ***
Distance to closest majority-white neighborhood (miles)	−0.58	0.56	0.04	0.00 ***
Married proportion, 2000	1.58	4.83	0.18	0.00 ***
Children proportion, 2000	0.73	2.07	0.27	0.01 **
Gross rent, 2000	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00 ***

Number of Obs: 2143

Type of estimator: ML (maximum likelihood)

Log-likelihood: 2648 on 13 Df

AIC: −5269

* Signif. codes: p < 0.05;

** p < 0.01;

*** p < 0.001

Source: NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Finance, NYC Department of Transportation, U.S. Census Bureau.

are home to a high concentration of Black or Hispanic residents. The average neighborhood was located about 0.6 miles away from the closest majority-white neighborhood. Controls capturing life cycle factors in the neighborhood indicate that roughly 44% of the population aged 16 years or older is married and about one-fourth of households have children. Last, in terms of the housing characteristics variables included in the final model, the average gross rent was roughly \$984, although this variable contained high dispersion.

5. Results

Table 2 presents the results from the beta regression model, presenting coefficients as log odds ratios and odds ratios. When the logit link is employed in a beta regression, the odds ratios take on a similar interpretation as those found in logistic regression. Instead of the odds referring to a ratio of two probabilities, the odds refer in the present analysis to the ratio of non-Hispanic white residents to total residents, which can be understood as the relative likelihood of a census tract becoming whiter (Conigliani et al., 2018, p. 656). With a lower AIC value, the final model presented in Table 2 offers a substantially improved fit over the global model (Table A1 in Appendix A).

The core finding from the model is that upzoning activity is positively and significantly associated ($p < 0.05$) with the odds that the census tract becomes whiter. When other variables are held constant, a one unit increase in the proportion of total tax lot area that is upzoned is associated with a 28% increase in the odds of a census tract becoming whiter. This result aligns with findings from previous case studies, which have found that upzonings tend to raise land values, accelerating gentrification pressures and spurring growth in the white population in New York (Angotti and Morse, 2016). One potential explanation of this result is that as land values in upzoned areas rise, developers will be inclined to pass increased costs onto renters in the form of higher rents, which in turn serves as a financial barrier to lower-income households from moving into the neighborhood (Stein, 2019). Another explanation of this finding relates to the fact that upzonings under the Bloomberg administration did not trigger mandatory inclusionary housing, which in offering more subsidized units to lower-income, minority households, might have mitigated gentrification pressures. In addition, the model provides support for the hypothesis that a census tract will become

whiter in areas that have experienced upzonings for longer periods of time. All else equal, a one unit increase in the number of years since an upzoning occurred is associated with a 2% increase in the likelihood of a census tract becoming whiter. The magnitude of this relationship is relatively low, however, so future research would benefit from examining whether these effects become more pronounced over time.

Variables capturing neighborhood amenities proved to be strong predictors of the odds of a census tract becoming whiter, consistent with the research hypothesis. When other variables are held constant, the odds of a census tract within walking distance of a subway stop becoming whiter is 1.21 times as great as a census tract that is not within walking distance of a subway stop. This finding is consistent with previous research that gentrifying neighborhoods with high transit accessibility tend to experience an influx of white residents (Helms, 2003). The relationship between a given census tract's distance from the central business district (CBD) and the odds of the census tract becoming whiter also moved in the hypothesized direction. For each extra mile that a given census tract is from the CBD, the odds of a census tract becoming whiter are reduced by 3%, indicative of the premium for convenient access to public transit among white residents.

The next set of independent variables capturing neighborhood racial composition did not provide strong evidence for the "buffering hypothesis," or the theory that white households will be more likely to move into gentrifying neighborhoods if other minorities already live there (Freeman and Cai, 2015). For each one unit increase in the proportion of Asian, Black, or Hispanic residents, the relative likelihood of a census tract becoming whiter is reduced, suggesting that white residents are more inclined to move into neighborhoods with a high concentration of white people. Net of other factors, for each one unit increase in the number of miles from the closest majority-white census tract, the odds of the census tract becoming whiter are reduced by 44%.

The final set of variables capturing neighborhood lifecycle factors also proved to be strong predictors of a census tract becoming whiter. All else equal, the odds of a census tract becoming whiter are multiplied by 4.83 for each one unit increase in the proportion of married households and multiplied by 2.07 for each one unit increase in the proportion of households with children.

6. Discussion and future research

Using the non-Hispanic white population as one metric of gentrification, this case study found evidence that neighborhood upzonings are positively and significantly associated with the odds of a census tract becoming whiter. These findings are consistent with previous qualitative studies of upzoned neighborhoods in New York City, which have found that upzonings tend to raise property values, induce real estate speculation, usher in a wave of upscale residential development and retailers, and become less in reach of low-income and minority households (Angotti and Morse, 2016; Freemark, 2019; Stein, 2018; Wolf-Powers, 2005).

This study opens up several avenues for future research to better understand how neighborhood upzonings interact with gentrification. One of the main limitations of this study is that it only focuses on the short-term effects of upzonings on gentrification. Although previous research has found that the first whisper of an upzoning can spark a flurry of real estate speculation long before an upzoning officially goes into effect, future research should examine how upzonings impact long-term demographic change—a rich site for future inquiry given the often long lag time needed for new-build construction (Savitch-Lew, 2016). Indeed, this study found evidence of a positive association between the odds of a census tract becoming whiter and the number of years that an upzoning had been in effect. Although the magnitude of the relationship was marginal, future studies should investigate the extent to which this relationship becomes more pronounced over time. Additional scholarship might also examine how upzonings effect other variants of gentrification, such as commercial gentrification, since previous studies have

found that upzoned areas are associated with an influx of high-end retailers (Angotti and Morse, 2016).

Second, scholars should examine how upzonings that incorporate mandatory inclusionary housing or that are more targeted to wealthier neighborhoods interact with subsequent gentrification and displacement pressures. In recent years, it has become more common for cities to condition upzonings on the basis that a certain percentage of units will be set aside for lower- to moderate-income households. Although the upzonings considered in this analysis did not automatically trigger mandatory inclusionary housing (MIH) at the time, it is possible that the inclusion of additional low-income units provided through MIH would mitigate gentrification as additional units are provided to low-income, minority households. In order to combat gentrification pressures, some scholars have proposed targeting upzoning in high-opportunity neighborhoods (Phillips 2020) or have even pushed for raising the minimum allowable density across an entire region or state as a way to divert development away from "gentrification hot spots" (Wegmann, 2020, p. 116). Future research should examine whether these kinds of proposals, which are designed to minimize adverse impacts on low-income communities, lead to more equitable outcomes.

Last, more research is needed to better understand how neighborhood upzonings impact residential displacement. In cities across the country, tenant advocates have criticized upzoning policies, arguing that upzonings will induce displacement pressures and evictions (Matthew, 2019). Those advocating for supply-side solutions should not dismiss this perspective, especially given that public land use interventions have a long history of accelerating racialized dispossession and class-based violence in Black communities (Rabin, 1989). However, additional research is needed to better ground truth these concerns, investigating the extent to which upzonings—particularly those that include mandatory inclusionary housing or robust anti-displacement protections—in fact induce household displacement. If it is the case that upzonings instigate minimal displacement pressures, this research could help to better build trust between tenant advocates and YIMBYs, who arguably share a common enemy—unaffordable housing—but that have remained deeply divided on the best policy approach to solve the nation's housing affordability crisis.

7. Conclusion

In recent years, cities across the United States have eyed upzonings as a tool to address a host of urban challenges, from improving housing affordability to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through more compact urban development. In response, some tenant advocates have argued that upzoning policies spur gentrification and displacement pressures, arguing that landlords often sell upzoned policies at inflated prices, reflecting their added development potential (Stein, 2018). While previous research has found that land use regulations constraining supply elevates segregation by limiting how much multifamily housing can be built, minimal empirical evidence to date has examined the relationship between upzoning and neighborhood demographic change (Rothwell, 2011).

Although this paper provides some evidence that upzonings are positively associated with gentrification (as measured through the odds of a census tract becoming whiter), upzoning policies are far from one shape and size. Future research is needed to better understand the extent to which upzoning policies that include stronger tenant protection mechanisms (such as mandatory inclusionary housing or anti-displacement protections) induce gentrification and displacement pressures. If implemented with an eye towards minimizing adverse impacts on housing-insecure communities, upzonings hold promise to increase the supply of much-needed housing in strong-market cities, encourage more inclusive forms of urban development, and push back on the long history of public land use interventions advancing racialized dispossession in low-income communities of color.

Table A1
Global Model Regression Results.

Statistic	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	Pr (> z)	
Intercept	0.94	2.55	0.21	0.00	***
Tax lot area upzoned proportion, 2002–2010	0.24	1.27	0.10	0.02	*
Average number of years since upzoning	0.02	1.02	0.01	0.00	***
Transit access dummy	0.17	1.19	0.04	0.00	***
Distance to CBD (miles)	-0.03	0.97	0.01	0.00	***
Neighborhood character dummy	-0.04	0.96	0.03	0.21	
Asian proportion, 2000	-4.84	0.01	0.14	0.00	***
Black proportion, 2000	-3.90	0.02	0.10	0.00	***
Hispanic proportion, 2000	-3.95	0.02	0.11	0.00	***
Married proportion, 2000	1.64	5.16	0.19	0.00	***
Children proportion, 2000	0.53	1.69	0.34	0.12	
Median age, 2000	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.32	
Distance to closest majority-white neighborhood (miles)	-0.58	0.56	0.04	0.00	***
Renter proportion, 2000	0.11	1.12	0.10	0.28	
Average rent, 2000	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	***
Number subsidized units	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.36	

Number of Obs: 2,143

Type of estimator: ML (maximum likelihood)

Log-likelihood: 2,650 on 17 Df

AIC: -5,266

Signif. codes: *p < 0.05

**p < 0.01

***p < .001.

Source: NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Finance, NYC Department of Transportation, U.S. Census Bureau.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Julie Davis, Lance Freeman, Tyler Hauptert, Brian Paul, Shuyuan Wang, Jeffrey Yuen, and Wei Yin, as well as three anonymous reviewers, for their thoughtful feedback on this research, which resulted in material improvements to the paper.

Appendix A

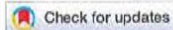
Table A1.

Appendix B. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105347.

References

- Angotti, T., Morse, S., 2016. Zoned Out! Race, Displacement and City Planning in New York City. *Terreform*.
- Been, V., Madar, J., McDonnell, S., 2014. Urban land-use regulation: are homevoters overtaking the growth machine? *J. Empir. Leg. Stud.* 11 (2), 227–265.
- Budds, D., 2020. Will upzoning neighborhoods make homes more affordable? *Curbed New York*. <https://www.curbed.com/2020/1/30/21115351/upzoning-definition-affordable-housing-gentrification>.
- Capps, K., 2020. Nebraska's battle over single-family homes is not much of a battle. *City Lab*. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2020/02/nebraska-affordable-housing-reform-single-family-home-zoning/605176/>.
- Conigliani, C., Cuffaro, N., D'Agostino, G., 2018. Large-scale land investments and forests in Africa. *Land Use Policy* 75, 651–660.
- Corbelle-Rico, E., Crecente-Maseda, R., 2014. Evaluating IRENA indicator "Risk of Farmland Abandonment" on a low spatial scale level: the case of Galicia (Spain). *Land Use Policy* 38, 9–15.
- Davis, J., Lopez-Carr, D., 2014. Migration, remittances and smallholder decision-making: implications for land use and livelihood change in Central America. *Land Use Policy* 36, 319–329.
- Denoon-Stevens, S.P., Nel, V., 2020. Towards an understanding of proactive upzoning globally and in South Africa. *Land Use Policy* 97, 104708.
- Dougherty, C., 2020. California, Mired in a Housing Crisis, Rejects an Effort to Ease It. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/business/economy/sb50-california-housing.html>.
- Douma, J.C., Weedon, J.T., 2019. Analysing continuous proportions in ecology and evolution: a practical introduction to beta and Dirichlet regression. *Methods Ecol. Evol.* 10 (9), 1412–1430.
- Elmendorf, C.S., Shanske, D., 2020. Auctioning the upzone. *Case West. Reserve Law Rev.* 69.
- Ferrari, S., Cribari-Neto, F., 2004. Beta regression for modelling rates and proportions. *J. Appl. Stat.* 31 (7), 799–815.
- Fischel, W.A., 2004. An economic history of zoning and a cure for its exclusionary effects. *Urban Stud.* 41 (2), 317–340.
- Freeman, L., 2005. Displacement or succession? Residential mobility in gentrifying neighborhoods. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 40 (4), 463–491.
- Freeman, L., Braconi, F., 2004. Gentrification and displacement in New York City in the 1990s. *J. Am. Plan. Assoc.* 70 (1), 39–52.
- Freeman, L., Cai, T., 2015. White entry into Black neighborhoods: advent of a new era? *Ann. Am. Acad. Political Soc. Sci.* 660 (1), 302–318.
- Freemark, Y., 2019. Upzoning Chicago: impacts of a zoning reform on property values and housing construction. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 56, 758–789.
- Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, 2010. How have recent rezonings affected the city's ability to grow? https://furmancenter.org/files/publications/Rezonings_Furman_Center_Policy_Brief_March_2010.pdf.
- Gabbe, C.J., 2018. Why are regulations changed? A parcel analysis of upzoning in Los Angeles. *J. Plan. Educ. Res.* 38 (3), 289–300.
- Gabbe, C.J., 2019. Local regulatory responses during a regional housing shortage: an analysis of rezonings in Silicon Valley. *Land Use Policy* 80, 79–87.
- Glaeser, E.L., Gyourko, J., 2003. The impact of building restrictions on housing affordability. *Econ. Policy Rev.* 9, 2.
- Glaeser, Edward L., Ward, Bryce A., 2009. The causes and consequences of land use regulation: evidence from Greater Boston. *J. Urban Econ.* 265–278.
- Helm, A.C., 2003. Understanding gentrification: an empirical analysis of the determinants of urban housing renovation. *J. Urban Econ.* 54 (3), 474–498.
- Hickey, R., 2014. Inclusionary Upzoning: Tying Growth to Affordability. *Inclusionary Housing: A Series of Research and Policy Briefs*.
- Holder, S. and Mock, B., 2020. A Group of Mothers, a Vacant Home, and a Win for Fair Housing. *City Lab*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-01-28/the-okland-moms-who-launched-a-housing-movement>.
- Kim, M., 2020. Upzoning and value capture: How US local governments use land use regulation power to create and capture value from real estate developments. *Land Use Policy* 95, 104624.
- Kok, N., Monkkonen, P., Quigley, J.M., 2014. Land use regulations and the value of land and housing: an intra-metropolitan analysis. *J. Urban Econ.* 81, 136–148.
- Logan, J.R., Xu, Z., Stults, B.J., 2014. Interpolating US decennial census tract data from as early as 1970 to 2010: a longitudinal tract database. *Prof. Geogr.* 66 (3), 412–420.
- Matthew, Z., 2019. Here's What You Need To Know About Controversial Housing Bill SB 50 (Updated). *Los Angeles Magazine*. <https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/sb-50-explainer/>.
- McKinnish, T., Walsh, R., White, T.K., 2010. Who gentrifies low-income neighborhoods? *J. Urban Econ.* 67 (2), 180–193.
- Quigley, J.M., Rosenthal, L.A., 2005. The effects of land use regulation on the price of housing: what do we know? What can we learn? *Cityscape* 69–137.
- Rabin, Y., 1989. Expulsive zoning: the inequitable legacy of Euclid. In: Haar, C.M., Kayden, J.S. (Eds.), *Zoning and the American Dream: Promises Still to Keep*. American Planning Association, Chicago, IL, pp. 101–121.
- Rodriguez-Pose, A., Storper, M., 2020. Housing, urban growth and inequalities: the limits to deregulation and upzoning in reducing economic and spatial inequality. *Urban Stud.* 57 (2), 223–248.
- Rothwell, J.T., 2011. Racial enclaves and density zoning: the institutionalized segregation of racial minorities in the United States. *Am. Law Econ. Rev.* 13 (1), 290–358.
- Savitch-Lew, A., 2016. Some suspect East New York rezoning has triggered speculation. *City Limits*. <https://citylimits.org/2016/03/10/some-suspect-east-new-york-rezoning-has-triggered-speculation/>.
- Stein, S., 2019. *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State*. Verso, Brooklyn, NY.
- Stein, S., 2018. Progress for whom, toward what? Progressive politics and New York City's mandatory inclusionary housing. *J. Urban Aff.* 40 (6), 770–781.
- Volante, J.N., Mosciaro, M.J., Gavier-Pizarro, G.L., Paruelo, J.M., 2016. Agricultural expansion in the Semiarid Chaco: poorly selective contagious advance. *Land Use Policy* 55, 154–165.
- Wegmann, J., 2020. Death to single-family zoning... and New Life to the Missing Middle. *J. Am. Plan. Assoc.* 86 (1), 113–119.
- Whitemore, A.H., 2017. Racial and class bias in zoning: rezonings involving heavy commercial and industrial land use in Durham (NC), 1945–2014. *J. Am. Plan. Assoc.* 83 (3), 235–248.
- Whitemore, A.H., 2020. Exclusionary zoning: origins, open suburbs, and contemporary debates. *J. Am. Plan. Assoc.* 1–14.
- Wolf-Powers, L., 2005. Up-zoning New York City's mixed-use neighborhoods: property-led economic development and the anatomy of a planning dilemma. *J. Plan. Educ. Res.* 24 (4), 379–393.
- Wyly, E.K., Hammel, D.J., 2004. Gentrification, segregation, and discrimination in the American urban system. *Environ. Plan. A* 36 (7), 1215–1241.
- Zuk, M., Bierbaum, A.H., Chapple, K., Gorska, K., Loukaitou-Sideris, A., 2018. Gentrification, displacement, and the role of public investment. *J. Plan. Lit.* 33 (1), 31–44.



Article

Upzoning Chicago: Impacts of a Zoning Reform on Property Values and Housing Construction

Urban Affairs Review
2020, Vol. 56(3) 758–789
© The Author(s) 2019
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1078087418824672
journals.sagepub.com/home/uar



Yonah Freemark¹ 

Abstract

What are the local-level impacts of zoning change? I study recent Chicago upzonings that increased allowed densities and reduced parking requirements in a manner exogenous of development plans and neighborhood characteristics. To evaluate outcomes, I use difference-in-differences tests on property transaction prices and housing-unit construction permits. I detect significant, robust increases in values for transactions on parcels that received a boost in allowed building size. I also identify value increases for residential condominiums, indicating that upzoning increased prices of existing housing units. I find no impacts of the reforms, however, on the number of newly permitted dwellings over five years. As such, I demonstrate that the short-term, local-level impacts of upzoning are higher property prices but no additional new housing construction.

Keywords

zoning, land use, regulations, construction, affordability

¹Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA

Corresponding Author:

Yonah Freemark, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

Email: freemark@mit.edu

Introduction

American cities define how property can be developed through land-use regulations. Municipal governments typically implement zoning codes that determine what types of projects can be built where, set limits on building size, and establish minimum parking provisions. For policy makers interested in encouraging additional development, one prominent tool in their arsenal is upzoning, a regulatory move that increases allowed construction levels. In this article, I evaluate the localized, short-term impacts of a series of illustrative upzonings in Chicago.

Scholars and decision makers who are considering an upzoning's likely effects face competing expectations. On the one hand, much of the literature, in comparing different metropolitan areas or municipalities, finds that regions with stricter zoning controls overall feature lower housing affordability and less new construction. While such studies do not address the effects of specific zoning *changes*, policy makers often treat them as a motivation to upzone, inferring from them that upzoning will improve affordability and accelerate construction. On the other hand, some voice an opposing assumption: that by increasing speculation, upzoning may encourage rising local prices, if not ultimately gentrification and displacement. Yet this assumption has yet to be adequately demonstrated empirically. Clarifying and measuring how changes in zoning affect property values and new construction, particularly for housing, is important to determine appropriate land-use policy.

To identify these effects, this article studies a natural experiment involving upzoning in Chicago. In both 2013 and 2015, the city upzoned a large cohort of parcels uniformly, allowing higher housing unit density, increased floor-area ratios (FAR), and reduced parking requirements. I examine parcel-level transaction values and construction permit levels. My conclusions are twofold. First, I find statistically significant, robust evidence that a byproduct of upzoning is growth in property values on affected parcels. I specifically find some evidence for an increase in transaction prices of already-existing individual residential units affected by the change, offering evidence for higher housing prices in the short term on the properties where zoning is executed. These impacts occurred within two years of the zoning changes, suggesting a relatively rapid capitalization by landowners and developers. Second, I find no evidence for short- or medium-term increases in housing-unit construction, potentially a product of the relatively slow financing and approvals processes for new projects, but indicating that upzoning does not produce a supply response within five years after policy implementation.

I identify this causal relationship thanks to the application of treatment in a manner that was exogenous of potential confounders such as previously

proposed plans and community economic characteristics, and that allowed for the identification of a reasonable control group. I undertake a series of difference-in-differences tests, combined with a hedonic model that controls for property- and neighborhood-level characteristics. The study's primary contribution is thus offering new insight into what happens in communities soon after rezoning.

Impacts of Zoning in the United States

First introduced in New York City in 1916 and validated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1926's *Euclid v. Ambler*, local zoning has extended to virtually every American municipality. Zoning has had a major impact on the built environment (Shertzer, Twinam, and Walsh 2016). It is used as a key tool for local governments to govern land use so as to reflect the demands of constituents, maintain property values, build tax bases, support economic development, and, in some cases, counter the perceived nuisances of multi-family homes, industrial land uses, or low-income families (Fischel 2001, 2015; Freemark 2018; Hirt 2014; Molotch 1976; Peterson 1981; Rothwell and Massey 2009; Schleicher 2013).

Zoning changes over time. In response to constituent pressure or development proposals, political officials alter zoning policies. Many American cities steadily reduced allowed construction levels throughout the twentieth century, though since the 1980s, that trend has reversed to some degree (Been, Madar, and McDonnell 2014; Gabbe 2017; Morrow 2013). In Chicago, as is often true elsewhere, zoning frequently takes on an individualized character; councilors (known as aldermen) take advantage of spot zoning (changes on single parcels) rather than follow a comprehensive plan (Schwieterman and Caspall 2006). In some cases, councilors reduce allowed density in advance of developer proposals to maximize their leverage (Nadig 2017).

Existing examinations of zoning policy have largely focused on the relationships between the average allowed built density at the municipal or metropolitan scale and outcomes in terms of average single-family home prices and aggregate construction. These comparisons are mostly synchronic, meaning that they compare policies at the same point in time, rather than examining how changes in zoning affect outcomes over time. These studies suggest that, in general, places with regulations that limit building size or dwelling unit density feature less construction and higher housing costs, compared with places that are more generous in density allowances.

Indeed, Chakraborty et al. (2010) find that stricter zoning regulations limit housing construction below that desired in the market, and Mayer and Somerville (2000) show that metropolitan areas with regulations mandating

lower density levels feature lower rates of new construction. Glaeser and Gyourko (2002) suggest that strict land-use regulations block new construction, restricting supply and increasing costs. Each study relies only on single-family home data, not considering rental, multifamily apartment buildings that are more common in larger cities, nor examining nonresidential uses. The latter two studies' metrics of zoning restrictions are also limited to data from the Wharton Residential Land Use Regulatory Index (Gyourko, Saiz, and Summers 2008), a measure that asks local practitioners to offer insight into typical permitting and approval times for projects and that does not directly address the question of *specific* zoning regulations (which differ greatly within and between municipalities) that limit—or encourage—certain uses and building scales.¹ Zoning restrictions have also been associated with higher rates of regional income segregation (Lens and Monkkonen 2016), exclusion of Black and Hispanic residents (Pendall 2000), and reduced economic growth (Glaeser 2012).

Prior research identifies a link between regulations that limit housing density and increased housing costs (Ihlanfeldt 2007), as well as higher land costs (Kok, Monkkonen, and Quigley 2014). Quigley and Raphael (2005) and Pollakowski and Wachter (1990) suggest that housing costs are higher in places with these stricter regulations. That said, as Quigley and Rosenthal (2005) emphasize, there is some ambiguity in these results. In comparing municipal regulations, for example, Glaeser and Ward (2009) show that stricter land-use controls are not correlated with differences in property prices when controlled for demographics and density, since there are sufficiently close substitutes available nearby. Moreover, since market demand is the “primary determinant of housing prices,” it is worth emphasizing that restrictions on construction—whether in the form of zoning or growth controls—are only influential on prices to a limited extent (Nelson et al. 2002, p. vi). We should expect different outcomes from changes in those restrictions depending on *where* they are implemented, meaning impacts from a similar policy are likely to vary between blocks, neighborhoods, cities, or metropolitan areas.

Despite some uncertainty with regard to these findings, governments and think tanks argue for altering zoning laws and for allowing increased building through upzoning (City of Los Angeles 2015; City of New York 2014; McKinsey Global Institute 2014; White House 2016). The presumption is that developers would build more if they were simply allowed to do so (Gabbe 2017). The former chair of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers, for example, recently argued that “relaxing zoning constraints could bring house prices more in line with construction costs and reduce the economic rents accruing to landowners,” thus improving affordability (Furman 2015, p. 4).

Yet an expectation that competes with the previous perspective is that by increasing the potential for development, upzoning may increase values in affected areas. In theory, when it becomes legal to build more on a parcel, its value grows due to additional potential development. High levels of allowed construction produced property speculation on land in cities like Los Angeles in the early twentieth century (Weiss 1987). As Malpezzi and Wachter (2005, p. 160) argue, property value increases occur because of “lagged supply response”—a signaling of interest from developers buying property but who wait for the optimal moment to invest in new construction, which takes years to move forward. Angotti (2016) suggests that upzoning in New York was associated with higher property values, pricing out existing residents.

This finding, however, requires additional confirmation. Because much of the quantitative, causal scholarship focuses on synchronic, cross-regional comparative analyses, it does not examine the effects of specific zoning changes on the parcels where they are applied. We know more about the differences in development and cost between metropolitan areas than we do about what happens within neighborhoods when regulations about allowed density are altered. But changes in zoning occur on specific lots in specific cities; they are not generalized across regions.

Schill noted in 2005 that there has been insufficient study of the impacts of land-use reforms on housing supply and values, and that remains true today. Indeed, the impact of zoning changes has been underexplored in the literature, with two major exceptions: Thorson (1997) finds that a suburban downzoning reduced the long-term volume of housing permits, and Atkinson-Palombo (2010) finds that overlay zoning (linked to the creation of a new rail line) produced a value premium for existing residential condominiums in neighborhoods where the promise of new nearby amenities increased demand. One explanation for this insufficient research is endogeneity (Quigley and Rosenthal 2005), an inability to “sort out whether the supply effect or the amenity effect predominates” (Schill 2005, p. 11). We do not know the causal directionality of zoning’s impacts. Say that restrictive zoning is correlated with higher values: Are these values due to a low housing supply in the context of high demand, or inversely are wealthier people who can afford to live in such places using their political power to enforce such restrictions? After all, high-income areas may regulate zoning more strictly to preserve the environment they desire (Fischel 2001). Besides endogeneity, we do not adequately understand how quickly zoning changes affect property markets, nor whether such changes affect just developable land or also existing housing and other building types.

An additional reason for this insufficient attention to studying change is that large-scale zoning reform is rare; there are few opportunities to examine

its impact (Freeman and Schuetz 2017). Of the changes that occur, many happen in response to a city's effort to, for example, promote economic development (Wolf-Powers 2005) or preserve historic characteristics (Fein 1985) in a single neighborhood, rather than citywide. Municipal zoning policy often targets lots or neighborhoods already primed for redevelopment—These are the communities Angotti studies. As such, the upzonings he reviews may be validating development trends or alterations in housing demand already underway, rather than inducing them.

This study takes advantage of a Chicago-wide upzoning applied uniformly to affected parcels, affecting neighborhoods with diverging economic conditions without specifically targeting areas planned for redevelopment. This rare, large-scale regulatory move allows me to disentangle the impacts of regulatory change from those of preexisting market interest, and to quantify the impact of zoning change on affected neighborhoods.

Evaluating Zoning Reform Through an Analysis of Chicago's 2013 and 2015 Upzonings

In mid-2013, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel proposed a zoning change designed to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) around the city's long-established rail-system stations (City of Chicago 2013).² The city council passed the ordinance in September. In part due to the perceived success of the legislation in encouraging construction (Podmolik 2014), the mayor pursued additional zoning changes (Emanuel 2015; Spula 2016). The council passed a new version of the law in 2015 that expanded the upzoned area and somewhat increased incentives (including for the properties affected in 2013), for properties with the same underlying zoning classes. Key to this study is a comparison of the areas initially affected by the 2013 reform with those additional areas rezoned in 2015, which allows me to estimate reaction to the zoning change; I also make comparisons with areas just outside of the 2015 area, as I describe in the following. Although these laws pertained to TOD areas, this study's conclusions should be interpreted more broadly. The question at hand is not the impact of being close to transit—this study does not examine the location sorting Atkinson-Palombo (2010) describes, for example, in connection with a new light rail line—but rather how upzoning affects development.

The ordinances, summarized in Table 1 (see Online Appendix A for additional details), operated as overlay districts on top of existing zoning, providing as-of-right benefits to potential developers. The 2013 reform applied to areas within 600 to 1,200 feet of stations (the latter along Pedestrian Streets³), and the 2015 reform expanded the area of applicability to between

Table I. Summary of Provisions of 2013 and 2015 Chicago TOD Ordinances.

Zoning Change	Affected Parcels	Distance from Rail Station Entrances	Density Benefits	Parking Benefits
Reduced parking	Parcels zoned for FAR levels less or greater than 3 in Business (B), Commercial (C), Downtown (D), or Industrial (M) zones.	(Applies to both changes) 2013: Parcels located within 600 feet of rail station entrances, or 1,200 feet if situated along city-designated pedestrian street. 2015: Parcels located within ¼ mile of rail station entrances, or ½ mile if situated along pedestrian street.	n/a	(Applies to both changes) 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No required parking for commercial uses. 50% reduction in required parking for residential uses. 2015: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No required parking for any uses
Density boost (includes reduced parking)	Parcels zoned for FAR of 3 in B, C, or D zones		2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in allowed FAR up to 3.5 (17% increase). 33% to 50% increase in allowed dwelling units (e.g. MLA for a regular housing unit reduced from 400 to 300 sq.ft.). Up to 17% increase in allowed building heights. 2015: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in allowed FAR up to 4 (33% increase), with on-site affordable housing units. 33% to 50% increase in allowed dwelling units. Up to 25% increase in allowed building heights. 	

Source. City of Chicago (2013, 2015).

Note. 2015 ordinance replaced 2013 ordinance, thus its provisions supplanted those in the former ordinance. MLA is the lot area required for each dwelling unit. A 6,000 sq. ft. lot with an MLA of 400 could be developed into 15 housing units, versus 20 units with an MLA of 300. TOD = transit-oriented development; FAR = floor area ratio; MLA = minimum lot area.

a quarter- and half-mile of stations. These changes enabled developers to avoid the often-lengthy rezoning process. Projects in zones receiving increased construction allowances (which I refer to as *density classes*) were allowed, but not required, to have a higher density of housing units, include taller buildings, incorporate more built area (through a higher FAR), and have reduced parking requirements, compared with preexisting rules. Developments in zones receiving just reduced parking requirements (which I refer to as *parking classes*) could provide fewer parking spaces no matter the scale of new construction. Although parking requirement reductions

could simply allow a smaller footprint (developers no longer having to build a garage or leave space for surface spaces), in some cases, they indirectly also increased allowances for inhabitable space, though to a lesser degree than received by the density classes.⁴ The reforms, thus, allowed bigger buildings of many potential uses with more square footage and units.

The ordinances applied to parcels located around almost all Chicago rail stations, including those in neighborhoods downtown, and on the North, South, and West Sides. Some neighborhoods were in high demand while others suffered from high vacancy, and they varied in terms of income and ethnicity. Communities affected, thus, embodied a cross-section of the city; the upzonings did not specifically focus on strong-market neighborhoods likely to attract construction (though it is worth noting, of course, that the study does not examine areas of the city far from rail stations).

The cutoff for receipt of benefits, both in 2013 and 2015, was an arbitrary administrative decision unrelated to underlying neighborhood patterns or preexisting plans, allowing this natural experiment. Aldermen had no localized impact on the boundaries of the upzoning, as the cutoff was the same throughout the city. The lots affected by the two ordinances collectively accounted for only about 6% of the city's land area, since only those close to stations and with specific underlying existing zoning were affected.

Hypotheses

To analyze the impacts of the zoning reforms, and given what the scholarship has addressed thus far, I develop a series of hypotheses related to property values (H1), building permits (H2), and both (H3). I will return to these hypotheses throughout the analysis of findings.

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): The upzonings were rapidly capitalized into property values. Transaction prices for parcels affected by the 2013 and 2015 reforms increased soon after passage. This corresponds to the expectation that allowing more building on a parcel increases its value.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): The upzonings affected property types differently. Readily developable sites (e.g., vacant land) increased in value more than those with existing uses. Existing residential units did not increase in value, given the difficulty required to redevelop them and the expectation that housing costs decline in the context of relaxed regulation (Ihlanfeldt 2007).

Hypothesis 1c (H1c): The boost in allowed construction (density classes) produced a larger increase in value than the reduction in required parking (parking classes), reflecting the greater expansion in development capacity provided by the former change.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The upzonings produced an increase in building permit activity. Because of the lagged supply response (Malpezzi and Wachter 2005), this took a longer time to occur than the increase in property values.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The upzonings affected neighborhoods disparately, reflecting the underlying influence of the real-estate market (Nelson et al. 2002). Properties in higher-demand areas increased in value and attracted more permits than those in low-demand areas.

Method

Data Collection and Key Variables

The study integrates several data sources collected by public agencies using geographic information system software. The data used include the full (recorded) population of zoning classifications, transactions, and permits.

- *Zoning classifications.* I used City of Chicago zoning classifications from November 2012⁵ to determine which parcels were affected by the 2013 and 2015 zoning changes, and whether they were upzoned for increased construction allowances and parking minimum reductions (density classes) or just received reduced parking requirements (parking classes).
- *Property transactions.* I collected all property transactions in Chicago between 2010 and mid-2018 from the Illinois Department of Revenue. Data include location, transaction values, and property sales type for each transaction, incorporating properties such as land, apartment buildings, and residential condominiums. Reliable, more detailed information, such as unit size or building square footage, was unavailable. I associated data with parcels and station areas. I used transaction values as a measure of property values.⁶
- *Building permits.* I dated and geocoded City of Chicago new-construction permits from 2010 to mid-2018. I eliminated duplicate projects and extracted the number of new residential units per project, excluding renovations and additions, from open-ended field notes. I associated permits with parcels and station areas and used them as a measure of housing unit construction.⁷ Because of a lack of information about the scale of nonresidential construction (no square footage data are available, and estimated construction costs included in permits are notoriously unreliable), I did not use this dataset to analyze the zoning change's impact on other types of construction.

The study primarily analyzes these values in the period ranging from 1,000 days before the 2013 zoning change (December 16, 2010, at the bottom of the Great Recession) to 744 days after (September 24, 2015, when the city council passed the 2015 zoning revision). This period is designed to assess the short-term impact of the 2013 reform. However, I also consider longer-term impacts—up to mid-2018, about 1,000 days after the 2015 ordinance passed—in several instances so as to also consider the impacts of the 2015 upzoning.

The parcels I examine fit one of six conditions: the density classes affected by (A) the 2013 reform and (B) later by the 2015 reform; the parking classes affected by the (C) 2013 and (D) 2015 reforms; and outside comparison areas that, if the reforms had been expanded further to encompass all relevant parcels within a half-mile of stations (not just on Pedestrian Streets), would have received (E) density boosts or (F) parking reductions. The areas later affected by the 2015 reform make for a strong comparison with those affected in 2013 because they share the same underlying zoning classes and were only slightly further from station entrances, allowing me to identify the short-term effects of the 2013 law. The outside comparison areas were not affected by either reform and make for a somewhat less compelling control, as I note in the following. To account for the potential effects of the fact that parcels affected in 2013 are mostly closer to stations than those affected in 2015, which are, in turn, closer than those in the outside comparison areas, I control for distance from stations (though this control produced no statistically significant effect on outcomes). In many models, I also include controls for differences between neighborhoods through measures of demographics and built density to limit possible omitted variable bias.

I illustrate the distribution of these parcels in a prototypical Chicago neighborhood in Figure 1. I document the distribution of analyzed parcels around the city at the planning district level (a sort of larger neighborhood⁸) in Table 2. The land area of parcels affected by the 2013 and 2015 reforms (in terms of density and parking classes) is quite similar both citywide and within neighborhoods. The area of parcels analyzed in the outside comparison area group is larger, but the distribution through the city is similar. I do not analyze lots with underlying zoning incompatible with the zoning laws—such as lots zoned *only* for residential uses—as their characteristics (and potential for future development) make them poor comparisons with the rezoned lots. As Figure 1 illustrates, these nonanalyzed parcels account for the majority of land within a half-mile of most stations.

To conduct the property value analysis, I collected data on each property's distance to the nearest train station; its land square footage; its county-assessor-defined property type (e.g., apartment building or retail store); its

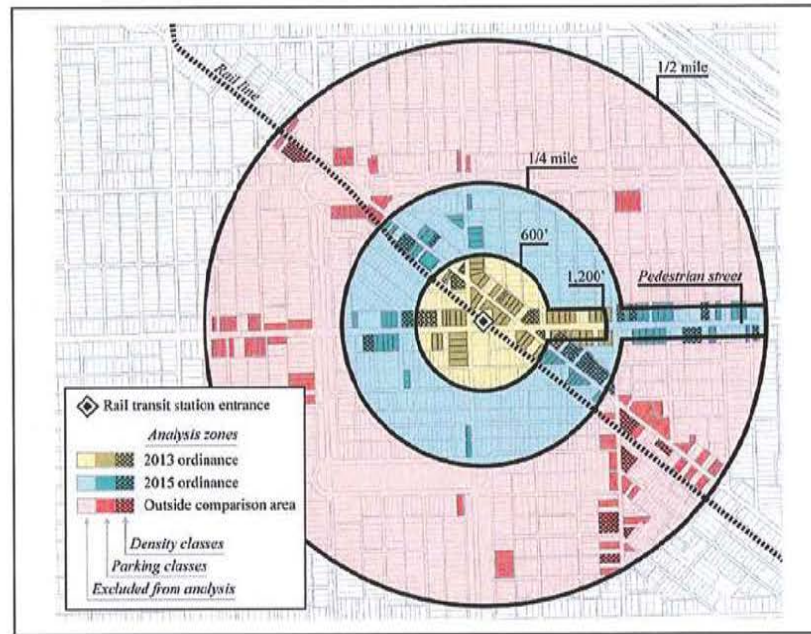


Figure 1. Prototypical rail-station-adjacent Chicago neighborhood, indicating illustrative distribution of analyzed parcels.

Source. The author.

underlying zonal density and type; the share of neighborhood land occupied by buildings (representing the area's built density); and several characteristics collected at the Census Tract level, including population density, ethnic composition, transit use, education level, household income, and house values. A summary of these covariates (Online Appendix B) demonstrates the strong similarities in composition of the properties affected by the 2013 and 2015 reforms, excluding transaction values and whether they were affected by the zoning change. As such, the areas affected by the 2015 reform are an effective control group to consider the short-term effects of the 2013 reform, the question I focus on in this article. It would be inappropriate to compare the parcels affected by the two reforms after the 2015 law was passed, since at that point, they became undifferentiated from a legal perspective. The outside comparison area, also in Online Appendix B, has characteristics similar to those of the other two, though it is less inhabited by renters. I take advantage of this outside area in the analysis that follows as a control group to consider the effects of the 2015 reform.

Table 2. Distribution of Studied Parcel Square Miles by Planning District.

Planning District	Density Classes				Parking Classes				Total
	Impacted by 2013 Law	Impacted by 2015 Law	Outside Comparison Area	Impacted by 2013 Law	Impacted by 2015 Law	Outside Comparison Area	Impacted by 2015 Law	Outside Comparison Area	
	0.53 sq. mi.	0.53 sq. mi.	0.61 sq. mi.	4.51 sq. mi.	4.75 sq. mi.	8.20 sq. mi.	8.20 sq. mi.	177.57 sq. mi.	
Citywide	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.36	0.85	0.36	0.85	8.55
Bronzeville-South Lakefront	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.20	0.37	1.03	0.37	1.03	26.18
Calumet	0.04	0.04	0.04	1.55	0.58	0.47	0.58	0.47	6.99
Central Area	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.09	6.32
Far Southwest Side	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.15	0.21	0.19	0.21	0.19	6.60
Lincoln Park-Lakeview	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.18	0.23	0.55	0.23	0.55	15.99
Midway	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.20	0.31	0.44	0.31	0.44	6.59
Milwaukee Avenue	0.05	0.15	0.18	0.13	0.14	0.24	0.14	0.24	3.99
Near West Side	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.18	0.19	0.26	0.19	0.26	12.45
North Central	0.14	0.06	0.01	0.11	0.19	0.17	0.19	0.17	4.39
North Lakefront	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.30	0.34	0.59	0.34	0.59	28.39
Northwest Side	0.01	0.00	0.04	0.10	0.19	0.25	0.19	0.25	5.46
Pilsen-Little Village	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.13	0.38	0.13	0.38	8.19
Stockyards	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.47	0.54	0.68	0.54	0.68	12.81
Stony Island	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.28	0.30	0.82	0.30	0.82	12.80
South Side	0.03	0.04	0.08	0.30	0.59	1.13	0.59	1.13	11.87
West Side									

Source: Author's calculations.
 Note: Areas affected by 2013 law were also affected by 2015 law, but not included in the latter's area calculation.

Analytical Approach

I deploy a method similar to that created by Been et al. (2016) on the impacts of historic preservation in New York City; it uses a hedonic property model combined with a difference-in-differences specification to evaluate how the creation of historic districts affected building construction and property values. The difference-in-differences analysis relies on a parallel trends assumption, for which I offer supporting evidence in the “Findings” section. I assume property values and housing unit permits on analyzed parcels affected and unaffected by zoning reforms would have had similar trends throughout the analysis period *if no zoning change had occurred*, thus accounting for underlying changes such as increases in property values or construction over the period analyzed stemming from adjacency to rail stations or location in Chicago in general. Results presented are the differences on top of those changes. Intuitively, this model describes average differences between changes in the areas compared, thus providing insight into the net impact of the upzonings. I implement this model using two general tests seeking to explore the impact of the ordinances: (1) an analysis of outcomes on density classes and (2) a similar analysis of outcomes on parking classes.

To measure the impact of the zoning reform on property prices, I develop a hedonic regression model that incorporates the property and neighborhood characteristics described earlier to allow for a standardized, “fitted” property value across community and property types. This includes both residential and nonresidential uses and allows comparisons across many types of properties. The following equation is the generalized version of this model, though I alter it several times to examine different characteristics of the property transactions dataset, as described in the findings section.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Property transaction values} = \ln(N_{aeit}) = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_e + \beta_2 B_i \\ & + \beta_3 Z_e B_i + \gamma X_a + \theta Q_t + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{aeit}, \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where $\ln(N_{aeit})$ measures the log of the sales price per property a in treatment area e (such as affected by 2013 or 2015 reforms), planning district i , and quarter t . Z_e is a dummy variable representing whether the treatment area was upzoned and B_i is a dummy variable representing whether the transaction occurred after the zoning change. β_3 is the key variable in this analysis; it represents the interaction of treatment and time and thus the difference-in-differences. X_a is a vector of property-level covariates; Q_t is a series of fixed-effect variables for the quarter of the transaction (as a measure of time during the year); and α_i is a fixed-effect variable for each district. In some models presented in the following, I include the neighborhood-level covariates noted

earlier and district-level linear time trends.⁹ To evaluate the robustness of the regression models, I undertake sensitivity analyses to account for potential geographical variation based on distance to train stations; concerns that the impact of the zoning change may have reflected some other policy change at a different time; and the potential for information leakage about the zoning law in advance of the zoning change. These tests confirm my findings and are described in the following.

For the housing unit permits analysis, I estimate the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{New construction counts} = U_{eit} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_e + \beta_2 B_t + \beta_3 Z_e B_t \\ & + \alpha_i + \theta Y_t + \varepsilon_{eit}, \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where U_{eit} measures the sum of new residential dwelling unit permits in treatment type e , planning district i , and year t . Z_e , B_t , and $Z_e B_t$ are the same difference-in-differences variables as in the previous equation. α_i is a fixed-effect variable for each district, and Y_t is a fixed-effect variable for each year.

Findings

Property Transaction Values

To assess H1, I examine impacts of the upzonings on the price of transactions across various property classes. I find that both 2013 and 2015 reforms were associated with statistically significant increases in property values among parcels upzoned for increased construction. Those that received just parking requirement reductions—a less dramatic change—had heterogeneous impacts that varied by property class and neighborhood.

Table 3 summarizes the results of several hedonic regression models of the density classes over the period concluding with the passage of the 2015 law, evaluating properties affected by the 2013 versus 2015 rezonings, using the date of the 2013 law passage as the threshold for treatment application. The key variable is the difference-in-differences estimate; because these models log property costs, its values represent the percentage change in values attributable to the zoning change. Models 1 to 4 document the impact of the reform across all transaction types after adjustment using the hedonic model. Using varying combinations of covariates, district and time fixed effects, and district-level time trends, I find consistently significant positive impacts of the reform of between 15% and 23.3%. This is of a similar order of magnitude as the increase in allowed density provided by the ordinance. These results confirm H1a, indicating rapid capitalization of the 2013 upzoning into property values.

Table 3. Regressions of Logged Property Transaction Values Citywide: Density Classes Affected by 2013 Versus 2015 Laws (December 2010 to September 2015).

	All Transaction Types				Residential Condos		Nonresidential
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Z_t Treatment	-0.369** (0.165)	-0.078 (0.099)	-0.129 (0.081)	-0.018 (0.085)	-0.194* (0.099)	-0.262*** (0.098)	0.462 (0.339)
B_t Time period	0.098 (0.064)	0.114** (0.050)	-0.119 (0.190)	-0.878** (0.345)	0.009 (0.140)	-0.303 (0.359)	-3.098*** (0.916)
$Z_t B_t$ Difference-in-differences: Impact of 2013 ordinance	0.233*** (0.101)	0.158** (0.073)	0.150** (0.070)	0.163** (0.080)	0.132* (0.072)	0.122* (0.067)	0.497 (0.322)
Constant	13.030*** (0.608)	11.420*** (0.564)	12.089*** (0.338)	11.665*** (0.547)	10.428*** (0.234)	10.511*** (0.753)	13.259*** (1.325)
Observations	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,110	1,110	400
District and time fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
District time trends	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Property types	All	All	All	All	Residential condo	Residential condo	Nonresidential transactions
R^2	.371	.564	.560	.601	.565	.631	.684
Adjusted R^2	.353	.548	.540	.577	.553	.613	.580

Note. Robust standard errors clustered at Census tract in parentheses. "All transaction types" indicates all transactions, but all models are adjusted for each sale's property classification (i.e., they are controlled based on what type of property class they are, such as residential condo, vacant land, commercial building, etc.). When included, covariates are property distance from station, property zone density, property zone type, neighborhood building density, station type, and neighborhood Census data.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

To what degree did property values vary depending on property type? An examination of residential condos (which account for more than half of total transactions) in models 5 to 6 (with and without covariates and district time trends) identifies a 12.2% to 13.2% increase in property transaction values attributable to the upzoning, as opposed to the lack of increase I hypothesized in H1b (though in line with what Atkinson-Palombo [2010] found).

This finding was at a 90% confidence level, in part likely a reflection of the limited sample size; as I note in the following, I found much more significant but similar-magnitude changes for the larger cohort of condos affected by just the parking requirement reduction. I do not find a statistically significant impact of the reform on the nonresidential transactions examined alone in model 7, but the power of that analysis was limited by the few density class transactions during this study period and a wide array of property types.

Figure 2, loess graphs of density class property values, offers graphical evidence for the results of the difference-in-difference tests presented in Table 3. (A) illustrates hedonically fitted logged transaction values for the properties affected by the 2013 reform versus those affected by the 2015 reform between December 2010 and December 2016. (B) aligns the two groups at their values on the day of the 2013 ordinance's passage; this chart shows that these had very similar trends in the 1,000 days leading up to the law passage. (C) aligns the two groups at their values on the day of the 2015 ordinance's passage, documenting that they experienced similar trends *after* the 2015 change, when the 2015 parcels were upzoned, making them legally equivalent to the 2013 parcels.

These graphs offer compelling evidence that this comparison fulfills the parallel trends assumption of a difference-in-differences analysis; it supports the argument that the 2013 and 2015 groups acted similarly in terms of property price trends *before* the zoning change and, therefore, are comparable.¹⁰ Moreover, they offer a graphical demonstration that the period *between* the two zoning changes was associated with a large increase in the values of the 2013 upzoned parcels, as contrasted with the 2015 parcels. The increase among the 2013 parcels was delayed by about six months after ordinance passage, as shown in (Figure 2, B); nevertheless, landowners and developers incorporated the reform into sales prices within two years.

The impact of the 2013 zoning change on parcels that received *just* a reduction in parking requirements in the period leading to the passage of the 2015 law was heterogeneous. Table 4's models 1 to 2 (with and without covariates and district linear time trends) show no significant change in property values citywide between the parcels affected by the 2013 and 2015 reforms. When I examine reform among varying property types and geographies (a more feasible analysis here because of a far larger number of parking

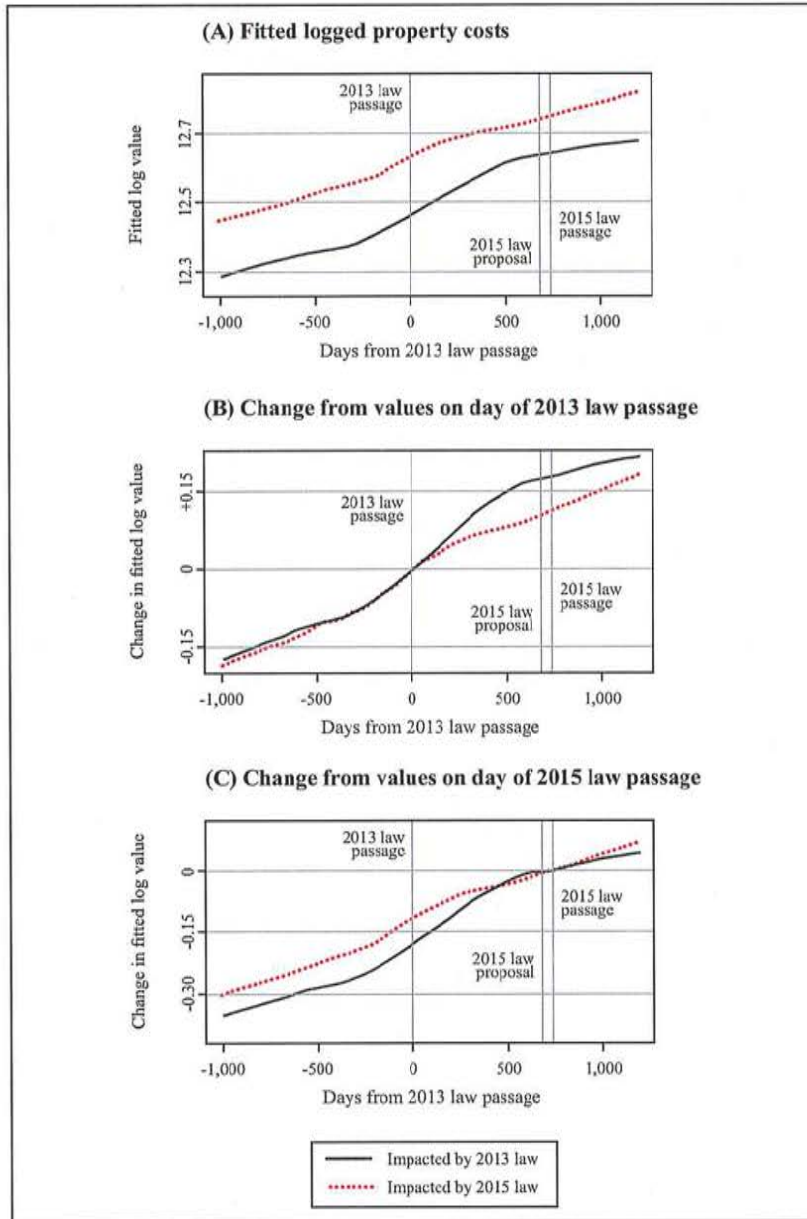


Figure 2. Property values between 2010 and 2016, by analysis area, density classes. Source. The author.

Table 4. Regressions of Logged Property Transaction Values Citywide: Parking Classes Affected by 2013 Versus 2015 laws (December 2010 to September 2015).

	All Transaction Types							
	Citywide		Downtown	High-Income Districts	Low-Income Districts	Residential Condos		Vacant Land
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Z_{it} Treatment	-0.108*	-0.067	-0.263	0.117*	-0.031	-0.183	-0.188	-1.133
	(0.057)	(0.081)	(0.165)	(0.062)	(0.139)	(0.122)	(0.121)	(0.884)
β_1 Time period	0.358***	-1.290**	0.238*	-0.406	-1.295	0.255***	-2.913***	-0.994
	(0.096)	(0.536)	(0.133)	(0.788)	(0.533)	(0.081)	(0.434)	(2.977)
Z_{it} Difference-in-differences:	0.047	0.068	0.185***	-0.031	-0.042	0.095**	0.101***	1.833*
Impact of 2013 ordinance	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.124)	(0.040)	(0.037)	(1.021)
Constant	11.852 ***	12.136 ***	12.746***	10.435***	12.224***	10.407***	13.254***	12.283**
	(0.390)	(0.566)	(0.755)	(0.666)	(0.776)	(0.290)	(0.591)	(5.058)
Observations	10,764	10,764	5,655	3,463	1,420	6,465	6,465	79
District and time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Time only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Covariates	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District time trends	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Property types	All	All	All	All	All	Residential condo	Residential condo	Vacant land
R^2	.499	.520	.585	.486	.527	.249	.253	.866
Adjusted R^2	.494	.514	.579	.470	.489	.244	.246	.625

Note. Robust standard errors clustered at Census tract in parentheses. All models include adjustment for property classification. When included, covariates are property distance from station, property zone density, property zone type, neighborhood building density, station type, and neighborhood Census data. High-income districts are Far Southwest Side, Lincoln Park-Lakeview, Near West Side, Milwaukee Avenue, North Central, and Northwest Side; their residents had median household incomes of more than \$50,000 in 2015. Low-income districts are Bronzeville-South Lakefront, Calumet, Midway, North Lakefront, Pilsen-Little Village, South Side, Stockyards, Stony Island, and West Side; their residents had median household incomes of less than \$50,000.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

transactions than density ones), however, I discern differences. Table 4's models 6 to 7 (with and without district linear time trends) show a 9.5% to 10.1% increase in property values of residential condominiums attributable to the upzoning (at 95% or higher confidence levels). Again, this is opposed to what I expected in H1b, and raises questions for consideration. Perhaps the possibility of a reduction in parking in future developments increases the amenity value of existing residential units *with* parking, which become relatively rarer. Or the prospect of nearby new construction increases the amenity value of the neighborhoods around stations (Atkinson-Palombo 2010), though this is opposed to most scholarship on the desires of incumbent homeowners (Fischel 2001). On the other hand, parking requirement reductions could make redevelopment of existing residential buildings more feasible, thereby attracting investment—though the potential to do so is limited for condominiums.

Examining vacant land alone (model 8) shows a very large increase in transaction values for the parking classes that received the 2013 zoning change. The limited number of observations, and the 90% significance level, suggests that this figure should be assessed with caution, but it does confirm the intuition expressed in H1b that an upzoning is most likely to encourage investment on easily redeveloped land, and given the reductions in parking requirements, this upzoning may have made development feasible on land that was previously too small, or too oddly shaped, for new construction. An evaluation of the reform's impacts on several other property types for which I found little effect (though it is worth noting that the small sample size limited the power of these comparisons) is documented in Online Appendix C.

To examine H3, which hypothesized that neighborhoods would respond differently to the upzonings, I considered effects in different parts of the city. Models 3 to 5 suggest that the parking minimum reductions were associated with a large increase in values downtown (18.5%, at a 99% confidence level) but had no significant impact outside of downtown, including in high-income districts where I expected a demand-induced uptake. These findings could indicate that a reduction in parking mandates is most readily absorbed in neighborhoods able to easily accommodate people living without a car—the dense, mixed-use city center—but not in more auto-dependent neighborhoods. Or they might suggest that the amenity effect of parking associated with existing buildings is stronger downtown than elsewhere because of the limited number of spaces available.

One point worth emphasizing is that, in comparing the impact of the density upzoning (Table 3) and the impact of just parking minimum reductions (Table 4), the effect was stronger among the former groups, confirming H1c. This provides additional support for this article's causal claim, demonstrating that a more expansive upzoning produces larger property value increases.

The aforementioned analyses test the short-term impacts of the 2013 law by using the parcels affected by the 2015 law as a control. I could not consider the longer-term impacts on property values of the parcels affected by the 2013 law because the 2015 law essentially eliminated the control group. I thus now consider the impacts of the 2015 law by using parcels in the outside comparison areas as a control. Because these areas are, in general, further from station entrances, they may not be as easily comparable to the 2015 parcels as the 2013 versus 2015 examination was. Moreover, I do not find the same clarity of pre-treatment parallel trends between the outside comparison areas and the 2015 parcels as I was able to document in Figure 2 for the first analysis. Nevertheless, I examine them here as a sort of sensitivity analysis; were the effects of the 2013 reform a fluke, or do they appear to have been replicated after the 2015 reform passed?

Online Appendix D documents a series of difference-in-differences models with controls and linear time trends. Models 1 and 2 are similar to Table 3, model 4 and Table 4, model 2, respectively, in examining the upzoning's impact on density and parking classes (now using the date of the 2015 law passage as the treatment threshold). Model 1 reaffirms the previous finding, demonstrating a significant 16.8% increase in property values for parcels in density classes affected by the 2015 reform versus those in the outside comparison area. Model 2, unlike in the previous comparison, identifies a significant impact (+13.3%) of parking reductions alone on property values. Model 4 shows no significant impact of the 2015 reform on single residences, in accord with H1b, but opposed to the earlier findings of the 2013 reform's impacts.

The 2015 zoning reform's impact depended on the neighborhood, as hypothesized in H3; though it produced significant increases in high-income districts (models 5–6), it had no significant effect in low-income areas (models 7–8). This reaffirms H3, suggesting that upzoning's impacts are limited to areas where market demand is present. For all models, the density upzoning produced a stronger effect than just the parking reductions, as hypothesized in H1c. Again, this analysis should be taken with a grain of salt; they are less robust in meeting the difference-in-differences specifications than the 2013 versus 2015 analysis. Nevertheless, they suggest that the 2013 reform's short-term impacts on property values were replicated for the 2015 reform, as hypothesized in H1a.

Building Permits

To evaluate whether the zoning changes affected short-term housing construction and assess H2, I examine changes in permitting for new residential units. As noted earlier, I was unable to examine permits for other types of uses, such as retail or offices, because of poor data quality. Figure 3 illustrates the cumulative housing units permitted on parcels affected by the 2013 and

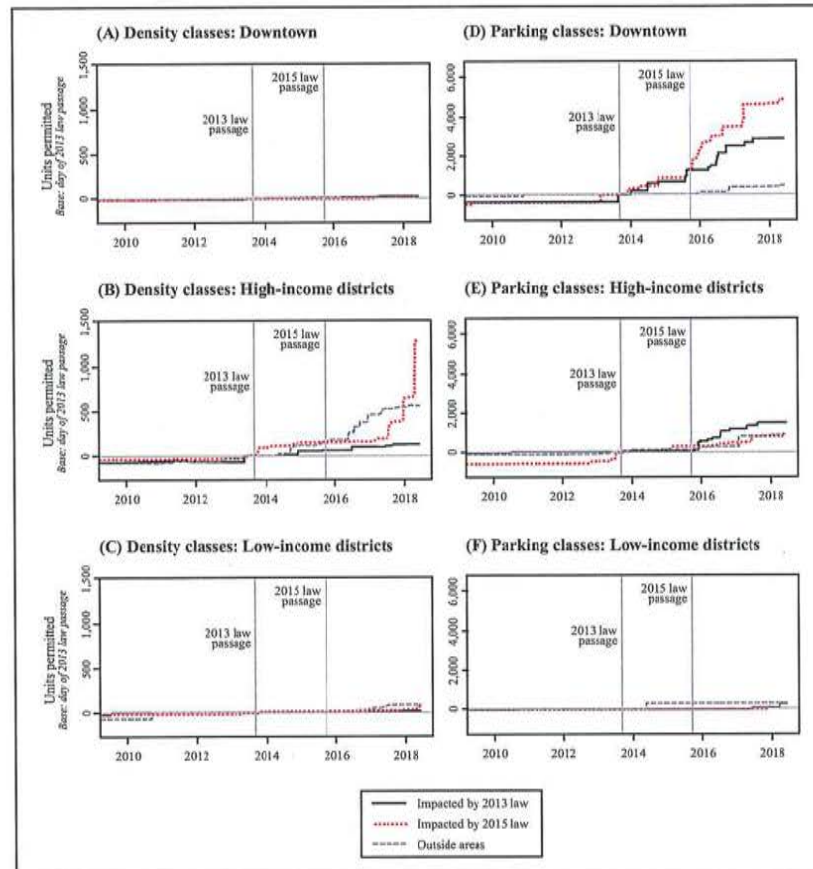


Figure 3. Cumulative residential units permitted by analysis areas.

Source. The author.

Note. High-income districts are Far Southwest Side, Lincoln Park–Lakeview, Near West Side, Milwaukee Avenue, North Central, and Northwest Side; their residents had median household incomes of more than \$50,000 in 2015. Low-income districts are Bronzeville–South Lakefront, Calumet, Midway, North Lakefront, Pilsen–Little Village, South Side, Stockyards, Stony Island, and West Side; their residents had median household incomes of less than \$50,000. Y-axis scales of (A)(B)(C) are different from those of (D)(E)(F).

2015 laws, as well as in the outside comparison area, from 2010 to 2018 (this is not the *net* number of housing units, as reliable demolitions data were not available). All charts show change from the date of the 2013 law passage. Charts represent trends in different parts of the city to examine H3; (A) and (D) show conditions downtown; (B) and (E) in other high-income districts; and (C) and (F) in low-income districts.

Several features stand out. First, housing-unit permits were minimal in all of the analysis zones pre-2013. This is not much of a surprise given that the city was still recovering from the Great Recession until that point. Second, levels of housing-unit permitting varied considerably across the city; whereas there were major investments in new construction downtown and in high-income districts, close to zero residential units were permitted in the analysis areas in low-income districts (C) and (F) between 2010 and 2018. This was despite the fact that these areas encompassed a considerable portion of the upzoned area—64% of the density-class land and 42% of the parking-class land in 2013, according to Table 2. This is a rather clear illustration that the zoning changes did not induce movement toward investment in new housing construction in neighborhoods with preexisting low demand, confirming H3.

Third, there is minimal evidence that residential construction on parcels affected by the 2013 reform increased relative to other areas in the almost five years after the law was passed, and certainly not in the immediate term (in the two years before the 2015 law passage). Among density classes even in high-income districts (B), these parcels saw little uptick in permitting (there were few affected parcels in density classes downtown). Among parking classes, trends were similar as those in zones affected by the 2015 reform pre-2015 law passage in (D) and (E), indicating no relationship with the upzoning treatment. That said, construction in parking classes did appear to pick up in areas affected by the 2013 reform in high-income districts outside downtown more quickly than elsewhere beginning two years after law passage (E).

Fourth, it is true that permitting on parcels in density classes affected by the 2015 law accelerated quickly roughly three years after passage in high-income districts (B). Yet it is worth emphasizing that the city of Chicago expanded the area that qualified for increased density in May 2016, beyond the TOD ordinances (City of Chicago 2016). As such, the trends seen in this case may be a conflation of two separate policies. The 2015 areas also saw the highest rate of growth among parking classes downtown (D), particularly compared with the outside comparison areas. However, the latter finding, especially when combined with similar growth trends among the parcels affected by the 2013 reform, suggests that what might be represented here is simply the effect of new interest in construction in downtown, not the impact of the rezoning.

Table 5 illustrates the results of difference-in-differences tests that examine changes in housing unit permits at the planning district level. Models 1 and 2 explore the change in units permitted among density and parking classes combined, comparing the areas affected by the 2013 and 2015 reforms, with and without district linear time trends. Models 3 and 4, respectively, examine changes among density and parking classes independently.

Table 5. Regressions of New Housing Units Permitted Citywide, Using Data at the District Level.

	Parcels Affected by 2015 Laws December 2010–September 2015 Treatment Threshold: September 2013				Parcels Affected by 2015 Law vs. Outside Area December 2010–June 2018 Treatment Threshold: September 2015			
	Density and Parking Classes		Density Classes		Density and Parking Classes		Density Classes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Z_t Treatment	-3.301 (4.794)	-3.301 (3.377)	0.159 (0.400)	-3.460 (3.317)	7.945* (4.403)	8.875** (4.167)	-0.145 (0.625)	9.020** (4.139)
B_t Time period	-5.821 (8.089)	-5.821 (8.912)	0.102 (1.610)	-5.923 (8.694)	5.115 (11.152)	6.058 (11.557)	-1.788 (2.447)	7.846 (11.339)
$Z_t B_t$ Difference-in-differences estimate	0.329 (7.146)	0.329 (6.803)	-0.923 (0.819)	1.252 (6.747)	27.719* (14.163)	24.894* (13.622)	6.460 (5.546)	18.434 (12.569)
Constant	-4.726 (10.786)	1.651 (2.053)	-0.079 (0.208)	1.730 (2.061)	-8.593 (7.317)	-4.437 (3.767)	0.072 (0.317)	-4.510 (3.802)
Observations	616	541	541	541	774	669	669	669
District and time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District linear time trends	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Analysis areas	Density and parking	Density and parking	Density only	Parking only	Density and parking	Density and parking	Density only	Parking only
R^2	.184	.294	.156	.292	.178	.279	.212	.274
Adjusted R^2	.153	.167	.003	.164	.152	.139	.059	.133

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

This evaluation produces no statistically significant results for any of the difference-in-differences estimates, indicating no impact of the upzoning on new construction in the roughly two years following its passage. Similar analyses of the 2015 reform versus the outside comparison area show no significant impacts of the law on construction among the classes individually (models 7–8) and weak impacts ($p < 0.1$) among the classes together (models 5–6). This analysis does not evaluate changes in housing characteristics, such as floor area per unit or building heights (which may have increased due to the reform). Nor does the analysis provide any information about nonresidential construction or the possibility that the zoning changes reduced the number of parking spaces attached to new developments, one of the key other goals of the reforms. Nevertheless, these findings do not support H2; there is little reason to believe that either of the zoning reforms produced a significant increase in housing permits in the time period analyzed.

Additional Sensitivity Analyses

I conduct a series of sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of the property transaction results for the key question of the impacts of the 2013 reform. First, I examine only transactions occurring in two buffer zones constituted of parcels with centroids located either between 500 and 1,200 feet, or 300 and 1,350 feet, from station entrances. These tests encompass only the area at the edge between the areas affected by the 2013 versus 2015 laws, and account for about one-half and two-thirds, respectively, of the transactions used in the full-scale analysis above. This analysis eliminates properties either “too close” or “too far” from stations. In so doing, it addresses the potential bias represented by Pedestrian Street areas and doubles-down on the elimination of potential unmeasured, appreciative effects that may be caused by adjacency to transit.¹¹ Online Appendix E summarizes regressions on these buffer properties and demonstrates continued significance at similar levels for the density classes overall (compare with Table 3, models 1–2) and the residential condo parking classes (compare with Table 4, models 6–7).

I undertake a placebo time test to examine whether the 2013 zoning change impacts were a product of the upzoning, or whether they coincided with some other confounder. This test simulated results of the change “occurring” on every day between 1,000 days before the 2013 legislation passed and 744 days after, when the 2015 change passed. Online Appendix F (A) illustrates p values of difference-in-differences variables for density classes for placebo law change day; it shows an increase into insignificance for that value soon after the day of the actual zoning change, supporting the claim that the law was the source of the effect. Results of this test for residential condominiums

in parking classes are less robust (B), suggesting that we should be less confident in the reform's causal influence on changes in these property values.

Finally, I explore whether the 2013 zoning reform may have had different impacts depending on the period studied in Online Appendix G. Developers may have adjusted their strategy with regard to comparison properties when the 2015 law was proposed, not just when it was passed (models 1 and 4), or may have reacted to the change in law beginning when the 2013 reform was proposed (almost two months before it passed) (models 2 and 5), or may have reacted to both (models 3 and 6). The results are robust and, if anything, suggest that the findings presented in Tables 3 and 4 are conservative.¹²

Discussion

Many policy makers hope that increasing allowed built density will spur construction and expand housing affordability. But municipal- and metropolitan-scale, synchronic comparative evaluations, which account for the bulk of current research, do not assess the impacts of zoning changes. This study's key contribution is evaluating how the property market responds on the specific parcels where upzoning occurs. It takes advantage of two unique Chicago zoning changes that allow it to circumvent the potentially endogenous relationship between the decision to rezone and the changes in prices and construction that follow. It shows that one effect of upzoning is a short-term increase in property transaction prices. First, the upzone for increased construction (density classes) quickly increased transaction values. This is a sign that land prices adjusted to the expanded ability to build, providing a one-time boost to incumbent landholders and suggesting interest in future redevelopment at higher densities. Second, the finding that the reduction in parking requirements (parking classes) had a greater impact on the value of vacant land suggests that upzoning's largest impact will be on land ripe for building. These results indicate that by upping the future potential for building, upzoning increases land value. This occurs quickly, in advance of development.

Third, the study identifies growth in prices among already-existing residential condominiums in some of the models I undertake (likely because of the larger number of observations, the parking-class models produced higher levels of significance but similar coefficients as the density-class models). It is worth emphasizing that this study does not address the affordability of rental properties directly, but it seems reasonable to extrapolate that whatever forces changing the prices of owned units would also affect rented ones. An increase in housing unit-level values may suggest that affordability for potential new owners on affected parcels declined with upzoning, at least in the short term. On the *specific parcels where upzoning occurs*, costs appear to go

up for individual housing units. The reason why this change occurs is worthy of debate and further analysis. Does an increase in allowed construction make redevelopment more feasible and thus inflate sales prices? Does it increase the perceived amenity value of the neighborhood, since more shops and the like may come in? Does the reduction in required parking also make new construction to replace current building simpler, or does it make the parking spaces attached to existing units more valuable?

The real-estate development process is arduous, encompassing negotiation between developers, funders, communities, councilors, and city staff, and requiring site acquisition, design, financing, and public review—all before a permit is issued. This might explain this study's finding of no short-term impact on permit volume for new housing units. But I also find no medium-term effect—over five years—on construction permitting, a surprising result given commonly held expectations about how upzonings work. Developer reactions to an unexpected zoning change may be limited given the riskiness of adapting to new density allowances.

This article investigates the impacts of one city's rezoning during a rocky period in the real-estate market, thus its findings are not universally generalizable. But by offering causal findings, it adds to our knowledge of how upzoning affects the market, and adds granularity to our understanding of land-use regulations. Further research should examine long-term impacts of such reforms. More analysis is needed to sort out whether property values increased primarily due to increased construction capacity on site, or due to added amenity value derived from potential adjacent uses. Similarly, future qualitative evaluations must examine how developers perceive such zoning changes.¹³

If the product of upzoning is no change in construction levels but increases in property transaction values, including for some existing housing units, this policy may have some negative consequences in upzoned neighborhoods that rapidly become more expensive. For a scholarly community generally focused on improving affordability in the *regional* housing market through additional housing supply, this poses a challenge that requires further consideration of the varying, and potentially contradictory, impacts of upzoning. For municipal planners hoping to encourage new construction, these results suggest they will have to wait until the cranes arrive. For those hoping to address affordability, they may need to look for other solutions. Promising approaches being pursued by cities like New York include requiring affordable housing in market-rate buildings constructed in rezoned areas; setting aside municipal land and providing direct funding for fully affordable projects; and slimming the regulatory burden to reduce construction costs (City of New York 2014). Upzoning's potentially adverse local consequences necessitate a nuanced and varied approach to planning.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Gabriella Carolini, F. Daniel Hidalgo, David Hsu, Daniel Nichanian, Prassanna Raman, Lisa Schweitzer, Justin Steil, Steven Vance, and the members of my PhD cohort at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning for their aid developing the methods used in this article and their thoughts on drafts. Thanks to three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments during the revision process.


Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Yonah Freemark  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3622-6354>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. Examining these characteristics regionally may not account for heterogeneous local environments. For example, center cities of high-regulation regions may feature lax regulations.
2. Disclosure: As a staff member at the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council, I advocated for the zoning change in 2013 and its successor in 2015. My advocacy included meetings with city council members and the mayor, analyzing the proposal, and attending public events where I testified in favor of the ordinance.
3. Pedestrian Streets are approved by city council. Most are located in higher-income areas, potentially biasing outcomes. However, I control for distance to stations in all models. I also conducted a sensitivity analysis excluding parcels far from stations; this showed no indication that pedestrian-street parcels experienced different outcomes.
4. For a hypothetical building on a small lot with a 60-foot height limit (roughly five stories), reducing the number of parking spaces from twenty to ten could enable a developer to install parking on just one level, not two, thereby making room for four, not three, apartment levels, increasing unit count and leasable square footage.
5. A small share of parcels in each of the analysis zones underwent zoning changes between 2012 and 2018, but I did not identify any noticeable trend suggesting

that these changes confounded study findings. This suggests little reason to be concerned about spot zoning affecting the analysis.

6. Property transaction prices are not directly a measure of housing affordability for renters, since they do not measure what they are paying. Nevertheless, they represent the cost of home purchasing, and higher property values ultimately get passed down to renters. I limited transactions to those worth \$500 or more to eliminate zero- or extremely-low-value sales; I also considered other, higher cutoff levels but found similar difference-in-differences coefficients in regression models.
7. It should be noted that these data do not directly represent construction, as they are permits. However, this is the most comprehensive construction dataset available, permits require a significant fee, and I could identify no evidence that it is biased in any direction based on location or date of permit awarded.
8. Sixteen districts were defined by the city's Department of Planning and Development; they represent general neighborhood characteristics, such as income, property values, density, and general population demographics. Most districts contain several stations within, and were used instead of stations to increase the analysis' statistical power.
9. The hedonic model incorporated the following variables. For parcels, distance from rail station entrance; zone type (B, C, D, or M); built density of the surrounding neighborhood; square footage of the parcel; a dummy for whether the nearby station was a CTA "L" station or Metra commuter rail stop; and information about the current use of properties, as defined by the transactions data file (such as single residence, apartment building, land only, industrial building, office building, etc.). For the district encompassing the parcel, population density; share of residents by ethnicity; share of commuters using transit; share of adults with college degrees; median household incomes; share of residents who are renters; median housing unit value. I included fixed effects for the districts and the quarter in time. For models that analyzed differences in impact between 2013 and 2015 parcels, I included more detailed information about each property provided by the county assessor, which was more specific than the current use information noted earlier. This information was not readily available for the outside comparison area parcels and, thus, I did not include it in analyses including them. I also considered several other covariates, including the aldermanic ward and the type of transit station (elevated, subway, at grade, or along a highway). These evaluations offered no significantly different results from those presented.
10. This assumption was tested by conducting a difference-in-differences test with only transactions before the reform. An evaluation of the density upzoning over two periods (-1000 to -500 days vs. -500 to 0 days from the change) showed no significant impact between the two, suggesting parallel trends in the pre-treatment period. For residential condos alone in the density areas, this test also produced no significance and a very low coefficient.
11. The potential impact of station adjacency was also incorporated into the regression models presented throughout the article by controlling for distance of each property to station entrances.

12. I conducted several tests examining shorter periods before and after reform. Results showed lower coefficients for the difference-in-differences estimate and, in some case, weaker (or no) statistical significance. This further supports the contention that the reaction to the zoning change in terms of property prices took time (illustrated in Figure 2).
13. In my time working in Chicago, I frequently encountered developers who, years after the first zoning change, still were unaware of its potential to alter their mode of constructing buildings.

References

- Angotti, Tom. 2016. "Land Use and Zoning Matter." In *Zoned Out!* edited by Tom Angotti and Sylvia Morse, 18–44. New York: Terreform.
- Atkinson-Palombo, Carol. 2010. "Comparing the Capitalisation Benefits of Light-Rail Transit and Overlay Zoning for Single-Family Houses and Condos by Neighborhood Type in Metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona." *Urban Studies* 47 (11): 2409–26. doi:10.1177/0042098009357963.
- Been, Vicki, Ingrid Gould Ellen, Michael Gedal, Edward Glaeser, and Brian McCabe. 2016. "Preserving History or Restricting Development? The Heterogeneous Effects of Historic Districts on Local Housing Markets in New York City." *Journal of Urban Economics* 92:16–30. doi:10.1016/j.jue.2015.12.002.
- Been, Vicki, Josiah Madar, and Simon McDonnell. 2014. "Urban Land-Use Regulation: Are Homevoters Overtaking the Growth Machine?" *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 11 (2): 227–65. doi:10.1111/jels.12040.
- Chakraborty, Arnab, Gerrit-Jan Knaap, Doan Nguyen, and Jung Ho Shin. 2010. "The Effects of High-Density Zoning on Multifamily Housing Construction in the Suburbs of Six US Metropolitan Areas." *Urban Studies* 47 (2): 437–51. doi:10.1177/0042098009348325.
- City of Chicago. 2013. "2013 Transit-Served Location Ordinance, Pub. L. No. SO2013-5995." <https://chicago.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=2622760&GUID=28AF7E4A-C824-41BB-AD7E-79C50EBBDC8A>
- City of Chicago. 2015. "2015 Transit-Served Location Ordinance, Pub. L. No. SO2015-5334." <https://chicago.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4047819&GUID=AAD79D61-FD90-418D-8182-BADEAF8B0DC5>
- City of Chicago. 2016. "Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus: Leveraging Downtown Zoning to Foster Neighborhood Development and Central Area Growth." Accessed December 31, 2018. https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/realigning-zoning-with-neighborhood-growth.html.
- City of Los Angeles. 2015. "pLAN: Transforming Los Angeles." <http://plan.lamayor.org/>
- City of New York. 2014. "Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan." http://www.nyc.gov/html/housing/assets/downloads/pdf/housing_plan.pdf
- Emanuel, Rahm. 2015. *Emanuel Administration Second Term Priorities Committee: Recommendations for the Next Four Years*. Chicago: City of Chicago.
- Fein, David. 1985. "Historic Districts: Preserving City Neighborhoods for the Privileged." *New York University Law Review* 60:64–103.

- Fischel, William A. 2001. *The Homevoter Hypothesis: How Home Values Influence Local Government Taxation, School Finance, and Land-Use Policies*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Fischel, William A. 2015. *Zoning Rules! The Economics of Land Use Regulation*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- Freeman, Lance, and Jenny Schuetz. 2017. "Producing Affordable Housing in Rising Markets: What Works?" *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 19 (1): 217–36.
- Freemark, Yonah. 2018. "Challenges in the Creation of Mixed-Use Affordable Housing: Measuring and Explaining Its Limited Prevalence." *Housing Policy Debate* 28 (6): 1004–21. doi:10.1080/10511482.2018.1506813.
- Furman, Jason. 2015. "Barriers to Shared Growth: The Case of Land Use Regulation and Economic Rents." The Urban Institute, Washington, DC.
- Gabbe, C. J. 2017. "How Do Developers Respond to Land Use Regulation? An Analysis of New Housing in Los Angeles." *Housing Policy Debate* 28 (3): 411–27. doi:10.1080/10511482.2017.1368031.
- Glaeser, Edward. 2012. *Triumph of the City*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Glaeser, Edward, and Joseph Gyourko. 2002. "The Impact of Zoning on Housing Affordability." Working Paper No. 8835, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge. doi:10.3386/w8835.
- Glaeser, Edward, and Bryce A. Ward. 2009. "The Causes and Consequences of Land Use Regulation: Evidence from Greater Boston." *Journal of Urban Economics* 65 (3): 265–78. doi:10.1016/j.jue.2008.06.003.
- Gyourko, Joseph, Albert Saiz, and Anita A. Summers. 2008. "A New Measure of the Local Regulatory Environment for Housing Markets: The Wharton Residential Land Use Regulatory Index." *Urban Studies* 45 (3): 693–729. doi:10.1177/0042098007087341.
- Hirt, Sonia A. 2014. *Zoned in the USA: The Origins and Implications of American Land-Use Regulation*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Ihlanfeldt, Keith R. 2007. "The Effect of Land Use Regulation on Housing and Land Prices." *Journal of Urban Economics* 61:420–35. doi:10.1016/j.jue.2006.09.003.
- Kok, Nils, Paavo Monkkonen, and John M. Quigley. 2014. "Land Use Regulations and the Value of Land and Housing: An Intra-metropolitan Analysis." *Journal of Urban Economics* 81:136–48. doi:10.1016/j.jue.2014.03.004.
- Lens, Michael C., and Paavo Monkkonen. 2016. "Do Strict Land Use Regulations Make Metropolitan Areas More Segregated by Income?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82 (1): 6–21. doi:10.1080/01944363.2015.1111163.
- Malpezzi, Stephen, and Susan M. Wachter. 2005. "The Role of Speculation in Real Estate Cycles." *Journal of Real Estate Literature* 13 (2): 141–64.
- Mayer, Christopher J., and C. Tsuriel Somerville. 2000. "Land Use Regulation and New Construction." *Regional and Urban Economics* 30 (6): 639–62. doi:10.1016/s0166-0462(00)00055-7.
- McKinsey Global Institute. 2014. "A Blueprint for Addressing the Global Affordable Housing Shortage." New York.

- Molotch, Harvey. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place." *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (2): 309–32. doi:10.1086/226311.
- Morrow, Gregory. 2013. "The Homeowner Revolution: Democracy, Land Use and the Los Angeles Slow-Growth Movement, 1965-1992." Doctoral dissertation. Univ. of California, Los Angeles.
- Nadig, Brian. 2017. "7-Story Affordable Housing Project Planned for Jeff Park at Milwaukee & Northwest Hwy." *Nadig Newspapers*, January 26. Accessed December 31, 2018. <http://nadignewspapers.com/2017/01/26/7-story-affordable-housing-project-planned-for-jeff-park-at-milwaukee-northwest-hwy/>.
- Nelson, Arthur C., Rolf Pendall, Casey J. Dawkins, and Gerrit J. Knapp. 2002. "The Link Between Growth Management and Housing Affordability: The Academic Evidence." Discussion Paper for the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. Washington: Brookings.
- Pendall, Rolf. 2000. "Local Land Use Regulation and the Chain of Exclusion." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66 (2): 125–42. doi:10.1080/01944360008976094.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press. doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226922645.001.0001.
- Podmolik, Mary Ellen. 2014. "New Parking Policies Driving Transit-Oriented Development." *Chicago Tribune*, September 20. Accessed December 31, 2018. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/ct-mre-0921-podmolik-homefront-20140920-column.html>.
- Pollakowski, Henry O., and Susan M. Wachter. 1990. "The Effects of Land-Use Constraints on Housing Prices." *Land Economics* 66 (3): 315–24. doi:10.2307/3146732.
- Quigley, John M., and Steven Raphael S. 2005. "Regulation and the High Cost of Housing in California." *American Economic Review* 95 (2): 323–28. doi:10.1257/000282805774670293.
- Quigley, John M., and Larry A. Rosenthal. 2005. "The Effects of Land Use Regulation on the Price of Housing: What Do We Know? What Can We Learn?" *Citiescape* 8 (1): 69–137.
- Rothwell, Jonathan, and Douglas S. Massey. 2009. "The Effect of Density Zoning on Racial Segregation in U.S. Urban Areas." *Urban Affairs Review* 44 (6): 779–806. doi:10.1177/1078087409334163.
- Schill, Michael H. 2005. "Regulations and Housing Development: What We Know." *Citiescape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 8 (1): 5–20.
- Schleicher, David. 2013. "City Unplanning." *Yale Law Journal* 122 (7): 1670–1737.
- Schwieterman, Joseph P., and Dana M. Caspall. 2006. *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago*. Edited by Jane Heron. Chicago: Lake Claremont Press.
- Shertzer, Allison, Tate Twinam, and Randall Walsh. 2016. "Zoning and the Economic Geography of Cities." Working Paper No. 22658, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge. doi:10.3386/w22658.

- Spula, Ian. 2016. "Chicago's Proliferating Transit Oriented Developments Spark Controversy." *The Architect's Newspaper*, July 18. Accessed December 31, 2018. <https://archpaper.com/2016/07/transit-oriented-development-in-chicago/>.
- Thorson, James A. 1997. "The Effect of Zoning on Housing Construction." *Journal of Housing Economics* 6 (1): 81–91. doi:10.1006/jhec.1997.0205.
- Weiss, Marc Allan. 1987. *The Rise of the Community Builders*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- White House. 2016. *Housing Development Toolkit*. Washington, DC: White House.
- Wolf-Powers, Laura. 2005. "Up-Zoning New York City's Mixed-Use Neighborhoods." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24 (4): 379–93. doi:10.1177/0739456x04270125.

Author Biography

Yonah Freemark is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cathleen Higgins <cahigg@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:41 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Strong support for legalizing multifamily housing citywide

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for getting the discussion around ending single family only zoning in Cambridge to this point of a comprehensive, well thought-out set of proposals that if enacted would incentivize multifamily home creation—helping us meet the city goals of increased housing production overall and particularly affordable housing through the inclusionary program.

I'm thinking about all the reasons to support ending exclusionary zoning and making changes so that multifamily housing actually gets built, and there are many, but one of the ideas that is resonating with me at this time is the power of status quo bias. The undoing of an historical wrong which the unequal and complex zoning rules we have now represent, can feel more threatening than in reality they are, due to the human reflex to stay in the comfort zone whenever possible. The harm and trauma associated with the status quo (no affordable housing options, increase in unhoused residents, cost-burdened renters, evictions when buildings are sold and then turned into McMansions, sons and daughters who cannot remain to care for elders, new parents who cannot stay to continue their contributions to the community and many more) go largely unnoticed except to those who are affected or by those who work with those experiencing these problems. So, all the things opponents fear will happen are exactly what are happening under current rules! These displacements happen in silence mostly. As one of the 2/3 of people who rent in Cambridge (and who has rented for over 40 years here), I ask that you think about what maintaining the status quo means to the Cambridge residents trying to live their lives fully but who far too often are constrained by unstable, absent, substandard homes—and who are also welcoming of higher density, greater height and the presence of multi-family housing in all neighborhoods of the city. Please support these zoning changes. Thank you.

Cathy Higgins
345 Norfolk St, #3F
Cambridge, MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Hallie Trial <h_trial@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:32 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: MIT Graduate Student Council in Favor of Zoning Changes
Attachments: 2024-10-17 Affordable Housing Cambridge Zoning Changes.pdf

To whom it may concern:

The MIT Graduate Student Council prepared a statement in support of proposed zoning changes that would encourage construction of more multifamily housing. We wanted to share the statement again ahead of the meeting this afternoon to reiterate our enthusiastic support.

Thank you for your service to the Cambridge community!

Best regards,
Hallie Trial and Sorin Srinivasa
State and Local Affairs Co-Chairs
External Affairs Board
MIT Graduate Student Council



October 17, 2024

Dear Cambridge City Council Members,

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents over 7,000 graduate students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The GSC firmly supports access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all members of graduate student households.¹ This is crucial for all local graduate programs to attract and retain talented applicants, which will sustain Cambridge as a hub of innovation.

Unlike MIT undergraduate students, most of whom choose to live on campus, more than 70% of MIT graduate students live off campus.² Therefore, housing policy in Cambridge directly impacts our standard of living. On average, MIT doctoral students spend an estimated 40% of their stipends³ on rent, making us “rent burdened” as defined by federal standards.⁴ About 75% of MIT graduate students report feeling stressed about the cost of housing.⁵

High housing costs also aggravate other struggles like food insecurity and time management. The cost of housing in Cambridge drives many MIT graduate students to live in other parts of the greater Boston area, leading to long commutes that drain time and energy from this important research workforce. Among MIT graduate students who live off campus, 24.1% commute more than 30 minutes each way.² At MIT, more than 60% of graduate students reported that the cost of food was a minor or major barrier to having enough to eat in the past month.⁶ Indeed, students seeking higher education in Massachusetts as a whole have been found to suffer from high levels of food and housing insecurity, in large part due to the shortage of affordable multifamily housing. In a survey of students at Massachusetts public institutions of higher education, 37% of respondents reported experiencing food insecurity in the past month, while 43% reported experiencing housing insecurity.⁷

Greater availability of affordable multifamily housing in Cambridge would substantially alleviate these financial challenges for graduate students. **Therefore, we enthusiastically endorse the new zoning proposal by the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee⁸ to allow construction of more multifamily housing units throughout Cambridge**, particularly the following provisions:

¹ <https://gsc.mit.edu/governing-documents/policy-platform/>

² <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2023-commuting-to-mit-survey/>

³ <https://ovc.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AY2023-Stipends-FAQ.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/assessing-the-severity-of-rent-burden-on-low-income-families-20171222.html>

⁵ <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2019-graduate-enrolled-student-survey/>

⁶ <https://ir.mit.edu/projects/2023-graduate-enrolled-student-survey/>

⁷ <https://www.mass.edu/strategic/documents/2019%20HOPE%20Center%20MA%20Report.pdf>

⁸ https://cambridgema.igm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=4577&MediaPosition=&ID=25588&CssClass=



1. The elimination of single-family-only zoning and construction of additional multifamily housing units of up to six stories in all districts. Cambridge urgently needs much more housing than is currently possible to build, and modification of zoning to eliminate single-family-only zoning would significantly improve the ability of area residents to find housing that meets their affordability needs. This increase in density is necessary to support the technological and academic output of local universities and to attract and retain talent.
2. The expansion of the current Affordable Housing Overlay to permit construction of additional permanently affordable housing units. Efforts to invest in affordable housing in the Cambridge area are likely to significantly benefit people who live or work in Cambridge, including graduate students, who mostly make less than 50% of area median income and often have difficulty finding housing at prices that do not result in severe rent burden. Building more housing in Cambridge will improve affordability for all residents, as the current housing availability is significantly less than necessary for the needs of area residents.

If you would like to learn more about the importance of graduate student quality of life to innovation in the Commonwealth or discuss additional methods of advancing graduate education and research, please reach out to us at gsc-eab-state@mit.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shiwei Wang".

Shiwei Wang
External Affairs Chair

On behalf of MIT Graduate Student Council

Prepared by:
Sorin Srinivasa and Hallie Trial
State and Local Affairs Co-Chairs

Erwin, Nicole

From: Chen, William <william_chen@g.harvard.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:24 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Increase Cambridge housing and end exclusionary zoning

Dear Cambridge City Council,

My name is William and I am a young professional working in Cambridge for the last three years. I am writing to express my support for the six-story multifamily housing bill, ending exclusionary zoning, and building more housing across Cambridge. I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. As young professionals looking to start families are increasingly entering the market in Cambridge, affordable housing is a dire need.

The cost-of-living index for housing puts Cambridge at more than 200% above the national average, and is consequently one of the most expensive cities in the US. Rent is double the national average! As someone who works in Cambridge, I would love to be able to afford to live here. My friends have all left Cambridge because of the cost of housing and adding more housing supply will lower rent prices. The housing crisis has become one of the largest issues influencing recent elections, with Blue states losing electoral votes because the population is decreasing as living costs skyrocket, exacerbated by the housing crisis. Cambridge has one of the lowest vacancy apartment rates in the area, and 85-90% of Cambridge does not conform to the current zoning code. There is a clear unmet need for more housing.

I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge, and to pass this bill without delay.

Best,
William

Erwin, Nicole

From: Shelley Rieman <shelleyrieman@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:20 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Today's ordinance hearing

My name is Shelley Rieman, and I am a Cambridge resident at 201 Franklin St. I write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at today's Ordinance Committee hearing.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's [petition](#) and its amendment to this zoning. I particularly support the creation of a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing. These policies will contribute to the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge which is affordable to all, long-term residents and new-comers as well.

I support amending the multifamily zoning so that zoning changes are limited to projects that cross the "inclusionary threshold." In other words, these changes would only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. This amendment would both significantly reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in **even more affordable units** than CDD has projected for the existing proposal, and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single family and two family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Sincerely,

Shelley Rieman

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Phillips <danlphillips234@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:17 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Nearly 400 people signed a petition in support of allowing apartments city-wide

Cambridge city council,

I want to express my continued, strong support for zoning changes to allow 6-story apartments in every Cambridge neighborhood.

I also want to share, on behalf of A Better Cambridge, the results of a [petition](#) in support of this proposal. At the time of this email, **392 unique individuals have signed, over 80% of who live in Cambridge, with many others working or studying here.** This includes mostly people who have signed online, along with physical signers at Cambridge festivals.

We often hear from the same, unrepresentative voices at public comment. But other signals tell us Cambridge wants more housing. Housing affordability is consistently the number 1 concern of Cambridge residents. Last election, voters elected six councillors endorsed by A Better Cambridge. Last night, around 100 people attended a pro-housing social in support of this event. And nearly 400 people have signed this petition.

Cambridge needs more housing, and people want more housing. Please support strong versions of this proposal.

Thanks,
Dan Phillips
234 Broadway

Erwin, Nicole

From: Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:10 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Up-Zoning Proposal, Disaster Capitalism & Our "Housing Crisis"

Dear Cambridge City Council Councilors, City Staff, and Members of the Planning Board,

I write to urge you to think seriously about the proposed upzoning and to urge a far more fact based and responsible solution, one that does not seek to promote the demolition of existing functional housing and the displacement of our tenants in lower income neighborhoods, filling the pockets of outside investors.

I urge you to read the Boston Foundation Boston Area 2024 Housing Year Report, which advocates that city's purchase existing housing to keep it affordable, an avenue that Boston itself is taking. I also urge you to read the excellent article in Boston Magazine about a woman who works at MIT as the nighttime cleaner of MIT Department offices, who was recently evicted from her home.

If you must vote on something, simply support an upzoning to allow single family housing in every neighborhood, and then limit the new zoning to properties of 10,000 SF or more with requisite design oversight and at least 1/3 green space for trees and bushes (to meet environmental equity needs and others) rather than "open space" (which can include porches and roof tops. Any further up-zoning efforts must be based on actual data-based study of impacts and risk of further fueling housing cost increases in Cambridge and the area.

NEW: Last night, drawing on these and other sources addressing Disaster Capitalism in Housing, I realized that this is a key factor in the current discussion, and took the time to finish a blog post on the subject – as well as potential new avenues for addressing local, area, and national housing concerns based in part on a recent study of Construction by an MIT faculty member in urban planning. You can read my blog post titled "Disaster Capitalism & Our "Housing Crisis" at this link: <https://www.suzanneprestonblier.com/civic-blogs/disaster-capitalism-our-housing-crisis>

And for your benefit I have also copied the text below:

Cordially,
Suzanne Blier
5 Fuller Place

"Over time, Housing in Boston has transformed from basic shelter and local business into a lucrative investment commodity." (Boston Magazine "Home Sweet Home" by Catherine Elton Dec/Jan 2024 p.83).

By now we are familiar with Naomi Klein's well-known study of how individuals and companies are profiting from crises, titled *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Klein coined the term, *di*sas*ter cap*i*tal*ism*, specifically to mean the "exploitation of a sudden crisis for private profit," an event that serves as a "... catalyst to shower aid on the wealthiest interests in society, including those most responsible for our current vulnerabilities" ("[A Primer on Disaster Capitalism, Our New Normal](#)" – *In These Times*, April 16, 2020). Klein The framing comes from war or natural disasters, when crises in play enable one to engage "pseudo- solutions" that would never be allowed in normal contexts. Jacqui Germain's September 2021 article, "What is Disaster Capitalism?" in [Teen Vogue](#) points to the broader ramifications.

“Disaster capitalism is all about privatization efforts like this, says Klein, and the exploitative practice also includes moving to deregulate the financial sphere....”

Disaster Capitalism on the Charles

While not specifically framing the Boston area situation in terms of by now the well-known Disaster Capitalism theory, *Boston Magazine* author, Catherine Elton begins her important and very timely article this way. "Greater Boston's eviction crisis extends far beyond those facing hard times - it's displacing people who staff our hospitals, making our universities run, and keep our favorite restaurants open." The article features individuals caught up in this mess, including Noreli Vasquez who lives in East Boston. "Tired after another nightshift cleaning MIT's math department building, dragged herself down the hall to her apartment. And that is when she saw it, an envelope taped to her front door. The notice inside made her heart stop - she had 15 days to leave for unpaid rent." With little money since her husband's recent death, the Colombian emigree, Betty Lewis, "burst into tears as her mind spiraled 'Where will i go? What will become of me? Am I going to wind up sleeping on a park bench?'" She is one of the "...51% of greater Boston renters who qualify as rent-burdened" with a yearly salary of less than \$105,000 according to The Boston Foundation's [Greater Boston Housing Report Card -2024 Housing Report Card](#).

Ms. Lewis' eviction is not unique in the Boston area, this timely article notes, and some 11,000 households in 2023 faced similar tragic circumstances, since these numbers increasing significantly since the Covid pandemic crisis, and likely to be even higher this year. Evictions now are hitting people who are fully employed like Betty Lewis, whose salary, like that of most here, has not risen to keep pace, and local coordinator of City Life, Steve Meacham, notes that "Boston-area tenants are facing a current barrage of no-fault evictions, the most he has seen during his 25 years at the organization." Solutions offered range from a return to rent control to a means for tenants to purchase their own apartments, called TOPA (Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act) which failed to find MA state legislation support. Happily, Betty Lewis did find housing through City Life but many others have not. The article which finishes on p.129 is followed on pp. 130-131 by a two-page color spread featuring six elegant recently renovated Cambridge condo and and other home interiors ranging from \$2,450,000 to \$16,495,000 along with the greeting "Warmest wishes this holiday season."

**We need to explore more closely at the root causes of this largely local, area, national and global largely manufactured housing crisis that has led to the kind of Disaster Capitalism responses we are seeing in Cambridge now. Here too rental and other home purchases are being gobbled up by an ever hungrier housing investment market. In June 21, 2021 issue of [Bisnow](#) reported that immediately in the aftermath of Covid, Blackstone, one of the world's largest housing investors, spent \$325,000,000 to acquire several apartment complexes in East Cambridge. Apartments here today are now the priceiest in the city. Unfortunately Cambridge is not alone in this situation, and what other cities have found is that we can't simply "build our way out of this" human created tragedy
Oh Canada (China, and Cambridge)!**

One place to look is Manitoba Canada. Here we read in an October 2023 article in [The Manitoban](#) that "Canada's Housing Crisis [is the] Culmination of Capitalism." The author, Jessie Krahn, writes that "The news hits harder as the so-called 'housing crisis' looms over most young people's futures in Canada. Housing in Toronto is ranked among the most overvalued housing markets in the world, surpassing cities like New York, Los Angeles and Paris." She goes on to ask "Won't the private sector simply fill in the vacuum left by social housing, offering cheap rental units to meet demand? Unfortunately, no. As much as people love to gesture to a god-like figure of "the market" that keeps society well-oiled and running, the market will only make this problem worse."

The article author proceeds to cite sociologist and policy analyst, Karl Beitel who "...argues that not only will the market never supply housing affordable to most people who need it in urban centres, efforts to make housing cheaper — like densification and increasing supply — will not reduce prices "within the current

capitalist context.” To Krahn “What is being called a housing crisis is a crisis of capitalism. The public’s allergy to addressing the issue directly is permitting governments’ limpidly passive approaches to alleviating a disaster. Well-intentioned critics of the housing crisis argue it’s a result of insufficient stock. Increased demand supposedly leads to shorter supply, and therefore prices increase when supply is scarcer. Offering more supply to meet demand theoretically ought to ease the currently burdensome cost of housing. Even luxury units are often vacant in urban centres.” Moreover, as Beitel makes clear “many luxury rental units are kept that way purely for the comfort of rich people who may use them when they come into town.

An October 3, 2024 article in [Better Dwelling](#) notes that "Ontario's Big Cities Saw Investors Buy Up to 85% of Condos, Fueled by Government Incentives." The article goes on to note that the Canadian Housing Statistics Program shows that this high investor purchase number is hitting the ten largest metropolitan areas hardest, with investors now owning 2 in 5 Ontario condos, buying up "most of the new supply" and "Ontario real estate investors are consuming an even bigger share of the condo market." What results is far higher housing costs. What was once a crisis, has now been made an even bigger one thanks largely to the disastrous impacts of Housing Disaster Capitalism. The country of China is facing much the same problem and impacts on the nation's economy are hitting very hard. A September 2024 article in the [The Diplomat](#) explains the "boom and bust" housing construction drive impacts on this country's economy.

Cambridge Market-Push Memes

We find some of the same thing in play in Cambridge today. In Cambridge, the disaster capitalism meme has a certain “fit” not only with the housing “crisis” but also the proposed solution (free up the regulations and allow investors and profiteers to benefit even more. The proposed upzoning’s larger focus on enhanced “market-based solutions” (with the strong urging that they be largely deregulated) what we see the world again through the largely dysfunctional Neo-Liberal lens. Since the markets and investors win, we know all too well who those are who lose the most, the poor, working, and renter classes.

The current Cambridge City Council proposal’s push for more and larger luxury housing with no core safeguards invites investors and developers to demolish existing homes in order profit as they see fit with few if any guardrails regardless of likely impacts . Here too a “crisis” was developed and expanded in proportion to meet set aims and benefits, This began with the buildup to the 2020 “affordable housing overlay” (allowing 4 story buildings in residential areas citywide) in order to make a dent in the purported 20,000+ on the waiting list (now admitted to be c.3300 local residents and workers), the new homes costing tax payers upwards of \$1,000,000 a unit, even without land costs (which is provided to developers at no fee) – far beyond what market housing would cost. The “crisis” call continued with AHO 2.0 (now allowing FAR taller, larger and denser buildings on corridors and squares, of a size befitting dorm zoning scale. And on schedule for the November 2024 election comes a new market rate (“luxury”) housing upzoning proposal, that makes it more difficult for developers to compete for properties suitable for 4 story affordable AHO units since the luxury housing can be 6 stories in height and would also be without parking minimums. Will this address the “crisis” of housing affordability in Cambridge? No. Indeed this is likely to cause not only evictions and lease terminations, but also homes that will cost renters and owners alike far more than they are costing now.

Pushing Back on Disaster Capitalism in Housing

Some U.S. cities are addressing Disaster Capitalism impacts on housing in their communities. An October 19, 2023 article in Yes! Magazine, titled "[Pushing Back Against Disaster Capitalism in Florida](#)" notes that a coalition of local churches has had some impact in “...resisting and mitigating against rent gouging and displacement...” following a recent hurricane. We would do well to observe that here as well, by asking the Cambridge City Council to acquire properties (not developers) to keep them affordable to those that need them. This is what Boston is doing, and this is solution is the one being showcased in the 2024 Greater

Boston Housing Report Card, put out by [The Boston Foundation](#). They note that Cambridge has produced way more housing than most other cities in the state, and this despite our small size, and existing density.

Teamwork – bringing together planners and investors to work together has been proposed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, in their October 2020 report on [Preserving Affordable Housing After a Disaster](#). Here they note in an article by Olivia Nielsen, that “As crises become more frequent, planners and investors should work together to avoid gentrification....” Citing examples in Lebanon and elsewhere, she notes that “...savvy [investors](#) seek opportunities to buy up the damaged housing stock. These investors are sometimes referred to as ‘vultures’ as they seek to profit off the loss of others. By buying homes at a discount, these investors can choose to undertake the needed repairs or simply demolish the structure and replace it with a more luxurious one, which will yield a greater price.” Here “Neighborhoods are putting up signs saying that ‘[Beirut is not for sale!](#)’ as they seek to defend themselves against [predatory investors](#).” She notes that the city is trying to “...preserve the city’s damaged historical heritage buildings, by forbidding sales without the first approval of the Ministry of Culture.”

Let’s turn now to another source: *Strategic Actions for a Just Economy* (SAJE) and its thoughtful piece on the nature of “[Disaster Capitalism: Money from Misery](#)”. Here we are told that “While a disaster could be an opportunity to address existing stresses and inequities, it’s also an opportunity to exploit them.” In Los Angeles, they note, “Following the 2008 housing finance crisis, when tenants lost their homes, thousands of houses were foreclosed. Corporate landlords swept in and bought up the land just to re-rent at exorbitant rates.” They note in turn that “This is disaster capitalism at work. It uses the moment of crisis to change cities in a way that benefits private capital and investor profits at the expense of the poor, working and renting class.” The only viable response is one that “...will require a dramatic shift in priorities for policy makers. A home should be seen as a home, not as an investment and profit-making opportunity. We need policies organized around community-centered development, that result in healthy and affordable housing because nobody should make money from the misery of our communities.”

If market-based, neo-liberal “build baby build” solutions are not the answer that will bring the benefits we want, what should we do instead. For one thing, since we are already on the road to effectively meeting if not surpassing our 2030 housing we should stay the course with this solution, and follow our Envision Goals to build higher on the corridors, add more green areas to our denser neighborhoods, and safeguard our neighborhoods and historic homes.

Re-INVENTING the Construction Industry

We also need to take a hard look at what is actually causing the relative lack of new housing here and around the country. Zoning per se is not the problem. If it were City Council would have voted to allow multi-family housing in every neighborhood long ago as many of us have asked them to do. Instead, the problem is both deeper and more widespread. We need go no further than a October 31, 2024 [Technology Review](#) article titled “The Surprising Barrier that Keeps us from Building All the Housing we Need” by Albert Saiz, an urban economics and real estate professor at MIT. He has observed that “...construction costs account for more than two-thirds of the price of a new house in much of the country, including the Southwest and West, where much of the building is happening.

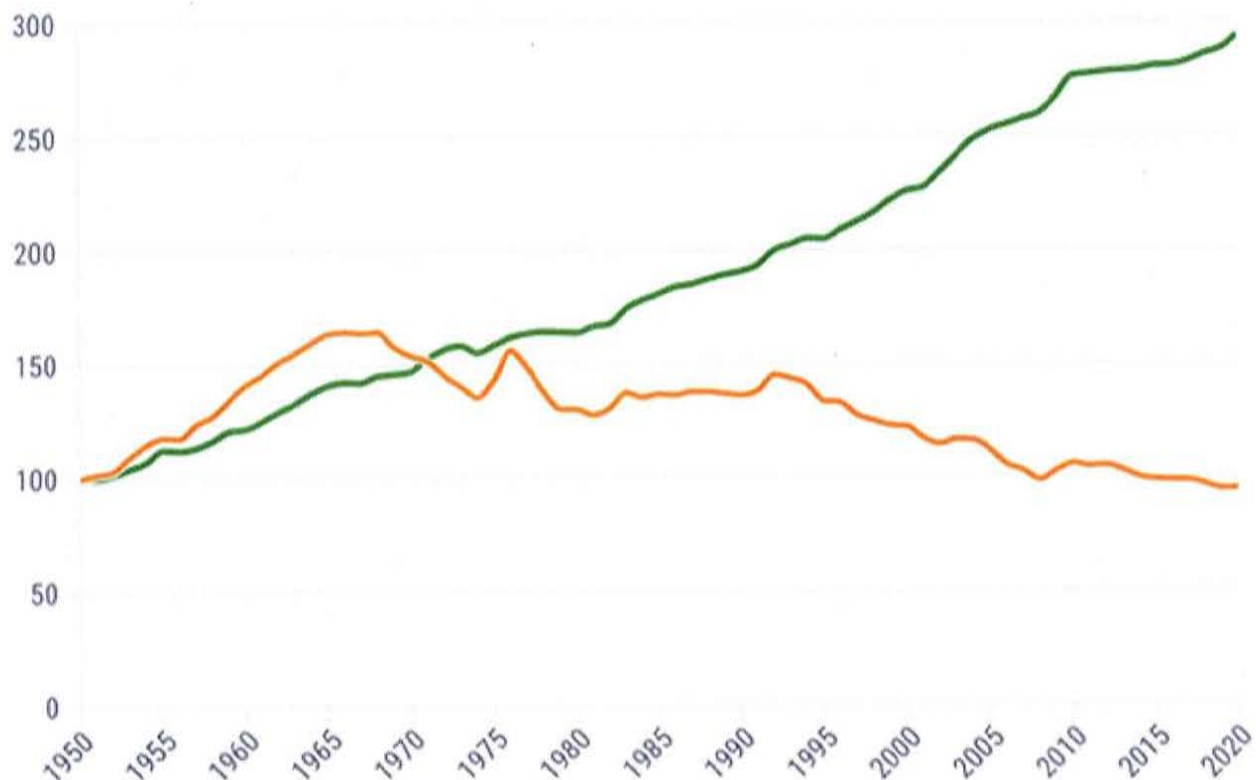
Even in places like California and New England, where land is extremely expensive, construction accounts for 40% to 60% of value of a new home....” He turns to a recent paper by University of Chicago economists titled “[The Strange and Awful Path of Productivity in the US Construction Sector](#),” who point out “...that productivity growth in US construction came to a halt beginning around 1970.” They “...calculated it in one of the key parts of the construction business: housing. They found that the number of houses or total square footage (houses are getting bigger) built per employee each year was flat or even falling over the last 50 years.” The lack of progress in terms of output pales in comparison to many other industries such as car manufacturing. In construction, it was largely cost overruns, work quality concerns, and messy production

factors that were core ongoing problems. Among other things in play are “...the ‘misaligned incentives’ of the various players, who often make more money the longer a project takes.” Far better results come with the use of new digital technologies, more standardized processing procedures, and better more efficient business practices.”

Productivity in the US construction industry has been a disaster since the 1970s.

Index (1950=100)*

■ Overall labor productivity ■ Construction sector labor productivity

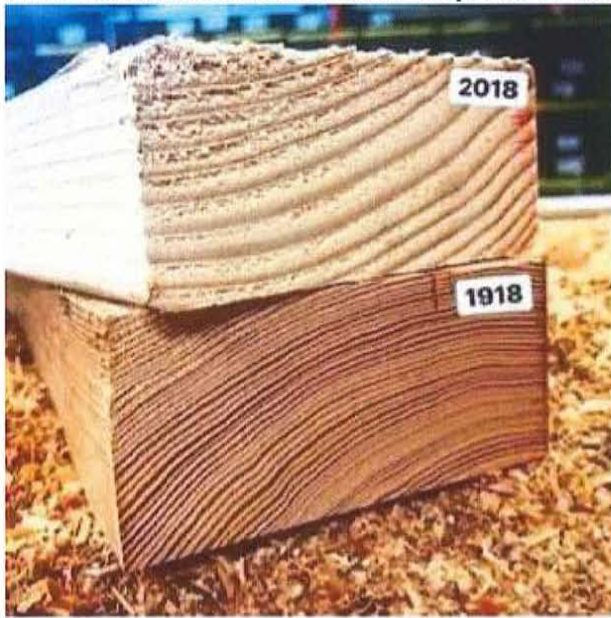


*Value added per full-time equivalent worker
Source: Goolsbee and Syverson, 2023

In a place such as Cambridge where land costs contribute most significantly to the cost of new housing, and construction costs add another 40-60% to costs, it is clear where the problems lie. In addition to the acquisition of critically needed housing by venture capitalists and others (jacking up housing costs beyond the means of most residents), it is also clear that inefficiencies in building processes themselves that add to the time. Good design via design review and oversight are not the problem, nor is zoning per se. The problem for housing in Cambridge is misstated priorities, and the politicization of the process itself for political and financial gain. The “housing crisis” here as with disaster capitalism is largely an issue of how some individuals and groups has sought to take advantage of the situation while offering nothing that will maintain or improve the situation for many who are seeking help. If cities like Minneapolis are the model, let’s follow that route, allow several units on the same property, and build higher on the main avenues.

And let’s not overlook that fact that our still sustainable existing homes are not only providing some of the

best naturally occurring affordable housing in the city but also built to last. And the timbers and many other materials used in them are FAR superior to those used often used in recent wood frame construction.



Source <https://brenthull.com/article/old-growth-wood>

The above photo reveals the difference that 100 years makes. We should set a policy to preserve our existing homes except in very rare contexts by special permit. These homes will likely last longer than new homes, and will remain more affordable.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, falling into the trauma of Disaster Capitalism in Housing is NOT a given, nor should we let it be. Some cities like Vienna Austria has addressed the problem through a greatly expanded program of nationally supported public housing. The Boston Foundation Report proposes that area cities themselves purchase properties to keep the housing more affordable. Tearing down existing buildings, and evicting more tenants, as Cambridge's current "Build Baby Build" plan promotes will make a bad situation even worse. We are better than this, and if recent studies are any indicator, new construction technologies to make this critical industry more productive will help a lot as well. In the meantime, and for the long term, it is imperative that we keep our existing sustainable homes. They were built to last and will serve the next generation of Cambridge tenants and homeowners well.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rupali Bhati <rupali.bhati4@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 1:05 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Cambridge six-story multi family housing bill

Hi,

My name is Rupali Bhati and I have lived in Cambridge for 3 months. I am reaching out to you to express my support for the six-story multifamily housing bill. It was a huge challenge for me to find housing in Cambridge. I support ending exclusionary zoning. I support building more housing across Cambridge. I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. This will enable more inventory on the market and allow people to live in the great city and not be displaced like many of my friends. I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge while lessening restrictions on zoning.

Best,
Rupali Bhati

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carol Lynn Alpert <cal10@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:49 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning

Dear City Council

I chose to live and invest in a two-family building in Strawberry Hill *because* of its B zoning characteristics and diversity, with 35 foot height limitations, and yard setbacks on all sides. I put down roots here, raised my child here, and planned to retire here, gardening on my remaining patch of green. I have participated in two Special Permit hearings regarding infilling of large 2.5 story cubic single-family houses behind existing houses near me, and at least had an opportunity to contribute views regarding the impacts on neighboring properties. Those hearings led to some small accommodations that helped to partly ameliorate the impact on tree canopy, green space, privacy, and outdoor lighting. Our community is very diverse, economically, culturally, and generationally, and it is located next to the large redevelopment project at Corcoran Park, which is going to be supplying I think a hundred extra units of low-cost housing. That development too has height restrictions and open space and thus maintains some of the character of the overall Strawberry Hill community. I am dismayed by the new zoning proposal's abandonment of almost all distinctions between neighborhoods. Some of the zoning guidelines helped this historic city grow more thoughtfully and cohesively, as an assortment of neighborhoods with different characteristics and some historic preservation, but to avoid the kind of random mixed-use unrestrained development that has plagued many other nearby towns and cities. Six-story above-grade buildings with no setbacks and no design review, placed randomly here in this community will drastically reduce its family neighborhood feeling, its open space, sunlight, environmental health, tree canopy, privacy, and availability of parking for those of us growing older. I agree with those who recommend restricting the taller buildings to the major corridors, where there is public transportation and infrastructure to accommodate them, and those larger ones should accommodate inclusionary housing. I am okay with allowing multifamily buildings in all zones, but please keep height and setback restrictions in the residential districts. I am aware of the need for new housing, but from all that I've read, this zoning change will not necessarily lead to new affordable housing, but will result in a developer's free-for-all, serving non-resident speculators and those looking for alternative private equity investments. Imagine what a gold mine this will be for those looking to monetize the limited patch of dirt beneath our community's feet. Please help Cambridge contribute thoughtfully to the housing issue, but not by all at once throwing out the proverbial baby with the bath water.

Please preserve some residential zone restrictions, such as height, setbacks, and greenspace. Go gradually. Let's not homogenize all of Cambridge into a developer's free-for-all.

Thank you for your consideration.
Carol Lynn Alpert
99 Cushing Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elena Britos <ebritos@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:36 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In support of policy order #150: Broker fees

Good afternoon,

I am a Cambridge resident writing in support of the policy order to prohibit broker fees falling to renters.

Since there is no rent control in this city, I, like many renters, have experienced exorbitant rent hikes year to year. In an effort to find a more affordable place to live, in the past I have considered moving apartments—only to find that, despite other landlords offering cheaper rents, the required broker fee ends up making the cost of moving more expensive than staying put. This is extremely discouraging and puts renters between a rock and a hard place financially.

Please consider my story in your evaluation of this policy.

All best,

Elena Britos
of 3 Linnaean St., Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Madeline Lee <lee.madeline.g@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:31 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee 12/4: Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition

Dear City Council,

I am a Cambridge community member and 5+ year resident of Neighborhood Nine. I am writing to share my comments on the Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition being discussed at today's Ordinance Committee meeting.

I share concern with many housing advocates in the city that the zoning proposal to allow 6-story multifamily housing in all parts of the city with limited requirements for Inclusionary housing does not address the issues of housing affordability and equitable anti-displacement protections for Cambridge residents, particularly those who are low-income. While housing needs are high, the proposed zoning changes would open the gates for market-rate developers to view existing naturally-occurring affordable housing as sites as ripe for redevelopment as higher cost market-rate housing across the city. This scenario could be easily true of my own home, where I am have been fortunate to live without general fear of displacement as a renter in a 2-story townhouse building, paying below what is currently considered market-rate rent, while living in proximity to public open space, public transportation, and my work. The pure addition of more housing units does not protect low-income residents, renters, or residents at risk of displacement. There should be requirements for Inclusionary housing units on any parcel where the multifamily housing zoning is proposed, and concerted anti displacement measures taken by the City.

The proposed changes also significantly diminish the benefits of having a 100% Affordable Housing Overlay. The AHO has been a tool to incentivize permanently affordable housing and support affordable/nonprofit/community developers in delivering permanently affordable housing units more easily and efficiently than before in a high-cost market-driven environment. Discussion of the proposal needs to continue to weigh its impacts on the positive effects of the AHO, so that market-rate development does not rapidly outpace the development of 100% permanently affordable housing across the city. Thank you for your careful consideration of comments from the community.

Sincerely,
Madeline

238 Garden Street
Neighborhood Nine

--

Madeline Lee
(440) 785-7054
lee.madeline.g@gmail.com
madelineleeart.com
pronouns: she/her/hers

Erwin, Nicole

From: Laura B. Roberts <laurabroberts@gmail.com> on behalf of Laura Roberts <laura@lauraroberts.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:28 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: upzoning

To the City Council

I cannot attend tonight's Council meeting but would like to register my opposition to the proposed change to Cambridge's zoning ordinances to allow for high rise, dense housing throughout the city, without allowances for parking or setbacks. I live across the street from an apartment building of reasonable size, set back from the street, with parking in the rear of the building. It is a reasonable presence on a busy street. But that's not what this ordinance would be encouraging.

Much of the new development around the city has been boxy three and four story condos with four to six units, at the market rate of 1 to 2 million dollars. With this change, we would see those piles of boxes grow larger and larger, accommodating nine units, at the same price. That would not increase affordable housing but it would exacerbate parking problems.

Yes, Cambridge could be more dense and the idea of once again permitting multi family houses like three deckers and row houses is an excellent solution. This ordinance, however goes too far. It is a gift to developers at the expense of neighborhoods. And regardless, we still need adequate review by appropriate city boards.

I find it ironic that year after year, citizens vote to plant more trees under the Participatory Budgeting process and yet you are considering an ordinance that would reduce tree cover and permeability around housing.

Laura B. Roberts
1715 Cambridge Street
Cambridge MA 02138
617.640.0015

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carolyn Fuller <carolyn.fuller2018@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:25 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Ending Exclusionary Zoning - Increasing Homes - Reducing Rents

Mayor Simmons, Vice Mayor McGovern and City Councilors,

Resending this with my full address included in my signature.

I'm hoping these attachments will come through. If not, you can view the first one on [Blue Sky](#). This first picture illustrates how we can reduce the cost of housing dramatically in our fair city.

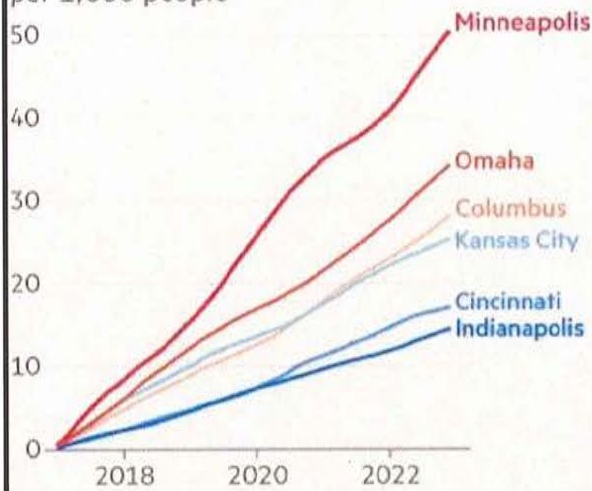
And if our housing crisis is not enough to persuade you to support this petition, how about the second attachment, [car dependency](#) (aka [climate change](#)).

Please support Multifamily Housing throughout the city of Cambridge. It is a no-brainer if we care about either of these issues!

Carolyn Fuller
12 Douglass St
Cambridge, MA 02139
carolyn.fuller2018@gmail.com

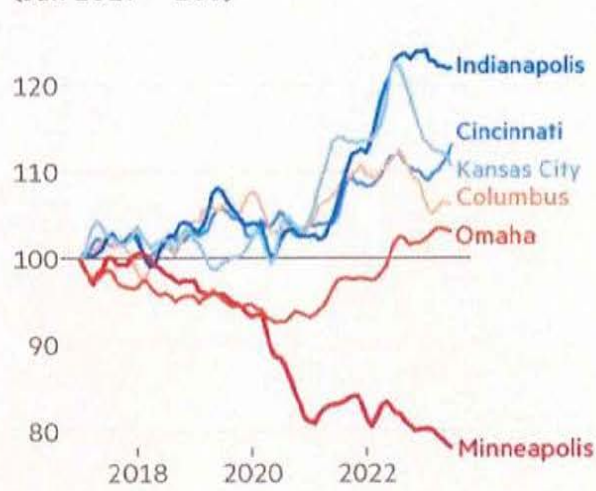
Minneapolis has built more housing than other Midwestern cities...

Cumulative new dwelling approvals per 1,000 people



...and is reaping the rewards as rents fall relative to inflation

Real-terms change in median rent (Jan 2017 = 100)



*Rents deflated by average incomes

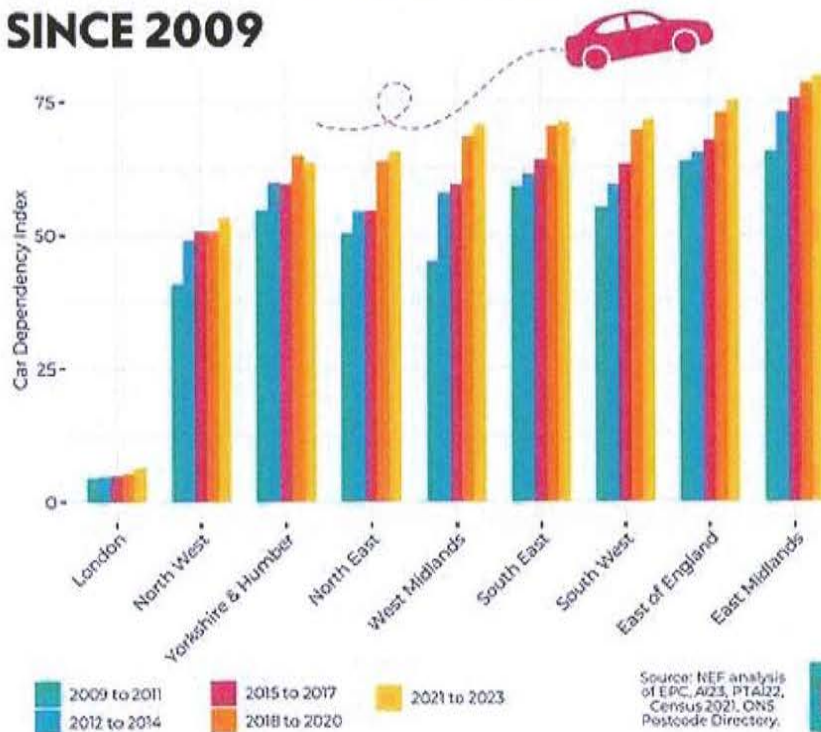
Sources: FT analysis of data from State of the Cities Data Systems, Apartment List, BLS, Census Bureau

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

© FT

Screenshot

CAR DEPENDENCY OF NEW HOMES HAS INCREASED IN EVERY REGION OF ENGLAND OUTSIDE OF LONDON SINCE 2009



Source: NEF analysis of EPC, A23, PTA22, Census 2021, ONS Postcode Directory.



Erwin, Nicole

From: Zack Goldberg <zackgo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:23 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Comment regarding today's ordinance meeting

Please simply allow multifamily housing zoning in every district for now. Hold off on doing anything more before a thorough study is done. Otherwise this could make the overall situation even worse. Additionally, design oversight should be included, as well as 30% green space. Lastly, the upzoning should only apply to projects with inclusionary housing above 10,000 square feet.

As a final point, I would say the elimination of setbacks is particularly troubling.

Zack Goldberg

118 Aberdeen Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Merced Stratton <mercedstratton@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:23 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for Affordable Housing in Cambridge

Dear City Council,

My name is Merced Stratton, and I am a Cambridge resident at 84 Auburn Park. I write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at today's Ordinance Committee hearing. As a recent student and young professional living in Cambridge, I believe it is vital to invest further in increasing accessible and affordable housing to support members of our community from diverse backgrounds and situations.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's petition and its amendment to this zoning. **I particularly support the creation of a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing.** These policies are part of the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge affordable to all.

I support amending the multifamily zoning so that zoning changes are limited to projects that cross the "inclusionary threshold." In other words, these changes would only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. **We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing.** This amendment would both significantly reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in even more affordable units than CDD has projected for the existing proposal, and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single family and two family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Thank you,
Merced Stratton

Erwin, Nicole

From: Michael Hoff <hoffmichaelao@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:16 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: In Support of More Housing

Dear City Council

My name is Michael Hoff, and I've lived in Cambridge my whole life. I live in a big but not crazy big building on Fawcett St, and feel lucky to do so so I can stay in Cambridge. I am writing in support of the proposed multi-family housing ordinance for six stories in Cambridge because I want more of these kinds of buildings so more of my friends can stay here! Most of them are leaving as they start families because it's just not an attainable dream to stay in our beloved hometown. We can't fix everything but we can try new things to help the issue, and this would be a great start.

Sincerely,
Michael Hoff
80 Fawcett St 163

Erwin, Nicole

From: Nikasha Patel <nikashap@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:59 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

My name is Nikasha, and I am a graduate student at MIT. I've been living off-campus in Cambridge for the past three years, and I am writing to express my strong support for ending exclusionary zoning and building more affordable housing across Cambridge. Unlike undergraduate students, over 70% of MIT graduate students live off campus, and we spend on average 40% of our stipends on rent, making us "rent burdened" according to federal standards. Greater availability of affordable multifamily housing in Cambridge would substantially alleviate these financial challenges for graduate students, and help us afford to live in the city where we work.

I personally spend a little over 40% of my stipend on rent, and my quality of life has decreased because I can't afford to visit my family over the holidays without their financial support. Coupled with inflation increasing food costs, I find it difficult to save money for the future.

Therefore, I strongly urge City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance and pass it into law.

Sincerely,
Nikasha

--

Nikasha Patel
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Brain and Cognitive Sciences
nikashap@mit.edu | (480) 768-7475

Erwin, Nicole

From: Phillip Rothman <phillip.mayer.rothman@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:52 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily zoning

My name is Phillip, and I am a Cambridge resident at 22 CPL. I am writing you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal, which will be discussed at today's Ordinance Committee hearing.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's [petition](#) and its amendment to this zoning. I mainly support creating a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing. These policies are part of the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge that is affordable to all.

I support amending the multifamily zoning to include zoning changes that would only apply to buildings larger than 10,000 square feet and/or containing more than nine housing units. We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing. This amendment would significantly reduce displacement and strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute to inclusionary housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in **even more affordable units** than CDD has projected for the existing proposal and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single-family and two-family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

--

-- Phillip Rothman

New Jersey Life & Casualty
www.NJLC.com
Email: PRothman@NJLC.com

Office: 973.535.0955
Cell: 917.912.0999

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ed Abrams <abrams.ed@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:48 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Objections to the proposed up zoning proposal

Dear Council,

I attended the Community Development meeting last night at 2254 Massachusetts Avenue. I have **MANY** objections to the upping plan that was presented.

Building Height

Allowing building heights of six stories in all neighborhoods will have a very negative impact on the quality of life of existing residents. The loss of sunlight and views of the sky and trees will reduce the mental (seasonal affective disorder for example) health of people living next to these huge buildings. Imagine waking up one day to be facing a brick wall instead of the sky. The existing affordable housing overlay will be a double whammy for many residents since the AHO allows even taller building by right. My street, Wendell Street will be negatively impacted by the 8 story, 95 unit proposed project at 28-30 Wendell Street.

Zero Side and Rear Setbacks

Allowing no side and rear setbacks will worsen the negative impact of allowing six story buildings everywhere.

Reduction of Open Space

The up zoning proposes to reduced the open space requirement in several zoning districts from 40-50% to 30%. Many neighborhood such as Baldwin have flooding problems. The loss of open space will worsen flooding, especially as rain storms increase in intensity due to climate change.

Heat Island Impacts

The reduction of open space combined with additional structures and other hard surfaces will worsen the heat island effect.

Loss of Historic Character

Up zoning will make it easier to demolish existing building, many which have been standing for 100+ years. The historic character of many neighborhoods will be lost forever due to the imposition of over-sized building that are out of context.

Parking and Traffic

A lot of parking has already been loss due to the CSO. More will be lost due to future bike lanes. Traffic is currently at near gridlock on many street such as Mass. Ave in North Cambridge, Cambridge Street, Hampshire Street, and Kirkland Street (due to the reduction in traffic lanes by the City of Somerville on Washington Street).The increased number of dwelling units (especially without off street parking) will exacerbate the parking and traffic problems and will increase air pollution.

Reduction in Property Values

The value of existing properties that abut new six story buildings with no setbacks will be greatly reduced. For most Cambridge property owners their real estate is the majority of their wealth. Up zoning will have a devastating impact on the wealth of property owners. These owners should also be able to get a reduction in their assessed value, thus reducing their tax bill.

For these reason I urge the City Council to reject the current up-zoning proposal. There are other better ways to increase the supply of housing without the negative impact of universal up zoning. The square and avenues are the place for tall, dense buildings. This proposal reminds of the mistakes made during the urban renewal era in the mid-twentieth century. We lost the West End of Boston and nearly lost mid-Cambridge due to the proposed Inner Belt. In addition, there is a lot of vacant office and lab space that can be converted to housing with much less negative impact.

Sincerely,
Ed Abrams

Ed Abrams
80 Wendell Street
Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lenore G. Martin <lenoregmartin67@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:34 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Zoning

Dear Council Members,

I am truly distressed that you all keep considering tall buildings with no requirements for Green space and no requirements for inclusionary housing of 10,000SF or larger.

We are already on our way to meeting our 20230 new housing goals.

Let's not give in to greedy developers. We should beyond that. We need to know what we are doing in Cambridge. Other studies show increased costs of housing resulting from plans such as the one you are considering.

Lenore Martin

Cambridge Resident for over 25 years

Erwin, Nicole

From: tara greco <taragreco@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:09 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; tara greco
Subject: No upzoning

Council,

I urge the City Council simply allow multi-family housing zoning in every district for now and hold off doing anything more, before a thorough study is done or risk making the situation worst.

Cambridge seems too eager to change all aspects of city life without doing the due diligence of researching and securing approval of a comprehensive city plan.

Important considerations:

<https://www.cccoalition.org/blogs/urban-history-matters-here-there-in-film>

Thank you for listening to citizens of Cambridge.

**Tara R Greco
617-417-1353**

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: patrick@mcneal.cc
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:03 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing and Ending Exclusionary Zoning

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Patrick McNeal, and I live at 112 Spring Street, Unit 2, Cambridge. I strongly support the proposed zoning changes, allowing up to six-story apartments in every neighborhood. These changes would make Cambridge more affordable and inclusive.

Like many residents, I've observed how exclusionary zoning has contributed to skyrocketing rents and impeded homeownership, especially for new families. The current zoning restrictions perpetuate economic and, historically, racial divides within our community. The high cost of housing is forcing many, including young families, seniors, lifelong residents, and even myself, to consider leaving Cambridge.

Allowing more multifamily housing would benefit every segment of our community. It would provide much-needed options for renters, first-time homebuyers, and those on waitlists for subsidized housing. It would also support middle-income families who struggle to afford rent and seniors seeking accessible units to age in place. Moreover, research indicates that increasing the housing supply can help stabilize or reduce rents universally.

By supporting these zoning changes, we are addressing immediate housing needs and fostering a diverse and vibrant Cambridge where everyone can thrive. I'm grateful for the City Council and city staff's efforts to tackle these vital issues.

Thank you for considering my perspective and your continued work towards a more equitable Cambridge.

Sincerely,

—Patrick (112 Spring Street, Unit 2, Cambridge, MA, 02141)

Erwin, Nicole

From: OMAR ETON <oncologist@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 11:00 AM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: New Vulnerability: Upzoning and Multifamily Housing - radical proposals vs. good urban building: GROCERIES & GAS

Dear City Council Members:

I want to bring to your attention these 2 pervasive vulnerabilities:

- a. Quality produce at decent prices,
- b. Price of gasoline for our cars.

I've been in NY the past 3 weeks; fruits and vegetables are plentiful and sold cheaper in larger quantities. More importantly, the fruits(eg strawberries) are fresher and larger and have a shelf life way over 3 weeks, and counting. This is in stark contrast to smaller costlier fruits that just last 1-2 weeks in Cambridge. I am sure the durability is all about transit time from the point of origin and probably some endemic price gouging. I am seriously concerned about how this limp reality will deteriorate and scarcity will increase after the population explodes further.

Separately, in many parts of NY, gas is only \$2.39 a gallon! That is a dollar less than in Cambridge! I do wonder what will happen when demand goes up? I predict higher prices and lines at the gas stations.

While we root for the Red Sox to beat the Yankees, a pervasive problem is that New Yorkers get much better produce and gas prices than we get in Cambridge and Boston.

Admittedly, these comparative problems with New York have been true for as long as I've been alive. I was born and raised in New York and my family first noticed the differential when we moved to Boston in 1974 when my twin brother and I started at MIT and at Harvard. I had forgotten how we'd become accustomed to mediocre food selection and prices. You would think that these might have improved in our more populated and dynamic cities, but they have not. People who just grew up in Boston wouldn't know the difference.

What would happen if our population expanded? Would we get better contracts to get better produce or will there be even more scarcity and higher prices and further degradation in quality?

Omar Eton, MD
34 Larchwood Drive
Cambridge MA 02138

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 12, 2024, at 9:22 AM, Karen Falb - via thelarches <thelarches@emaildodo.com> wrote:

Larches Neighborhood Email



After last week's emotional journey that continues with daily news - frankly, it's hard to return to the reality of the upcoming City Council meetings.

But they continue tonight **Nov. 12 (6:30 PM)** with the **Planning Board Meeting** to discuss two zoning petitions, neither of which address neighborhood concerns of missing appropriate planning (defined goal/ research on outcomes/ city infrastructure needs/ liveability factors of light and green space). Neither petition is really for good urban planning but promotes developers', not residents' interests. * **See below [Remote via Zoom](#)** Sign up to listen and/or speak. Concerns can be written to the Planning Board and to City Councillors and to specific City Councillors. (Of interest is that cochair Bunhan Azeem who is pushing for this radical upzoning has as a supporter and good friend the Harvard Professor Jason Furman author of the *Boston Globe* article Saturday on Cambridge and housing.)

Other meetings ahead are Tuesday Nov. 19 (2 PM) Ordinance Committee discusses the proposed multifamily zoning - no public comment). Wednesday Dec. 4 (7 PM) Second Ordinance Committee meeting - with public comment. Karen

* **Below is Robert Winter's Cambridge Civic Journal concise writeup of the two petitions of tonight's meeting.**

The first Petition (Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition Part One) would amend the Cambridge Zoning Map and Ordinance in Articles 2.000, 3.000, 4.000, 5.000, 6.000, 7.000, 8.000, 10.000, 11.000, 13.000, 14.000, 16.000, 17.000, 20.000, and 21.000 with the intent of:

- (1) removing zoning districts that are intended to permit single-family or two-family but not multifamily residences;
- (2) permitting multifamily and townhouse residences as-of-right in all zoning districts except Open Space and removing special requirements applicable to multifamily and townhouse residences;
- (3) removing dimensional requirements including minimum lot width and area and minimum lot area per dwelling unit, removing floor area ratio (FAR) limitations for residences, reducing minimum yard requirements for residences, and increasing height limitations for residences to permit at least six stories above grade in all districts except Open Space to allow for additional housing units beyond what is permitted under current zoning;
- (4) removing remaining references to minimum parking requirements; and
- (5) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency.

The second petition (Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition Part Two) would amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Articles 5.000, 11.000, 15.000, 17.000, 19.000, and 20.000 with the intent of:

- (1) revising open space standards to provide greater flexibility by allowing all types of open space to contribute to meeting requirements;
- (2) revising certain standards of the Affordable Housing Overlay so they are not more restrictive than comparable standards for residences in base zoning;
- (3) making project review special permit requirements applicable in all zoning districts and applicable to residential development of 75,000 square feet or more;

- (4) updating advisory development review procedures and introducing a new Planning Board Advisory Consultation for some larger development not subject to a special permit, similar to what is currently required in the Affordable Housing Overlay; and
- (5) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sarah Stone <stonesarah1120@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 10:55 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Support for six stories across Cambridge

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing with whole-hearted support for the proposed zoning reform to allow 6-story buildings by right city-wide. To quote something that Councillor Wilson said at a gathering last night: “We need affordable housing tomorrow, now, yesterday.” I am proud to live in a city that has put forth such a bold, well-thought-out solution to a desperate crisis.

Of course, I recognize that change of any kind is uncomfortable -- but we must be clear-eyed about the fact that change will occur no matter what. As Councillor McGovern said last night: cities are a living, breathing, changing thing. We can implement smart policies that will permit a diverse population to flourish here, or we can do nothing and watch as Cambridge becomes monolithic and (bio)tech-washed like San Francisco. I believe we must act to preserve and promote diversity in the types of professions that are represented in our population, to diversity in the kinds of businesses that can survive here, to, of course, cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.

I currently live in a 2-bedroom apartment with my partner, for which we pay \$3,000 per month. I have seen my rents increase every year for the last 4 years, including by 40% one year. I have friends who grew up in Cambridge and can no longer afford to live here. I have friends who, like City Manager Huang, came to college here, fell in love, and want to stay, but are struggling to see how that could be possible if they have children. I also understand that a member of the city's Planning Board is going to have to resign because he and his partner have been priced out of Cambridge.

I urge you to pass this bill without delay. We cannot simply wait to see if the problem of too-little housing will get better on its own (there is no reason to believe that it will do so) or if broader forces like state-level policy will come through the pipeline. We must use the tools at our disposal to take decisive action on our housing crisis and empower the number one factor that makes Cambridge great: its people, our neighbors.

Warmly,
Sarah

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kelsey Harris <kelsey.m.k.harris@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 10:42 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Meeting about Zoning Petition

Hello,

I will likely not be able to attend today's meeting because of my job, so I wanted to drop a quick line in support of re-legalizing multi-family homes throughout the entirety of Cambridge.

Please remember that voting to maintain the status quo is not actually voting against change - it is a vote for continuing the change we already see daily, of rising rents, renovations that add marble countertops but not homes, displacement and distress. Change is inevitable, but we have the power over what kind.

-Kelsey Harris
(now on Cameron Ave)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ethan Frank <ethandf2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 10:21 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing

To the Ordinance Committee,

When I look at who the next president of the united states is, I am grateful to live in the beautiful and diverse city of Cambridge. I would like everyone to experience this wonderful city. Instead, people are forced out because they can't afford it, and our shelters for people experience homelessness are at capacity. This affects everyone, but I am especially moved by the stories of younger people, who've lost their childhood friends as they were forced to move, and who see the city they grew up in and love increasingly out of reach.

Thus, I would like to build as many homes as we can, either via the original up-to-six-stories-by-right proposal or the four-stories+six-for-iz. I prefer the former, because 1) it is easy to compare two numbers on a graph, but much harder to look 100 families in the eye and tell them "you can't live in our city. There aren't enough homes". and 2) This will be our zoning for the next long while, I believe it's important to go big or go home (no pun intended).

Sincerely,
Ethan Frank
632 Mass Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Bill McAvinney <bmcavinney@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 9:59 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; bmcavinney@earthlink.net
Subject: In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Honorable Mayor and Councilors,

One of our Congresswomen recently said: "...when you actually talk to our neighbors, from all walks of life we want the same things." and she listed 4 things. The 2nd one was: "We want the option to buy a home in the community that raised us." Our current zoning laws prevent the vast majority of our children from having that option, our son included.

This isn't caused by something beyond our control. You have the power to change this by approving these proposed zoning law changes. It's not uncharted territory. We have examples of cities like Minneapolis Minnesota where a similar removal of zoning restrictions increased the housing supply and reduced median real rents by 20% between 2017 and 2023.

We have a choice between preserving our mix of people and preserving our density. We can't do both. We see what is happening with our current laws. When we don't build new housing, the rich don't magically go elsewhere, at least not in a place as desirable as Cambridge. They still move here, displacing middle income folks including most of our children.

One other thing I find really odd is that some of my neighbors advocate preserving our current zoning to preserve the "neighborhood character". Current zoning doesn't do that. The vast majority of our existing housing can't be built under current zoning. Instead what it produces is isolated, single family, million dollar plus boxes. For example the buildings that replaced Pearl Street market. So even if you believe "neighborhood character" is the built structures, not the people who live in them, why advocate for preserving those laws?

Councilors: The giant real estate holding companies like JLL are hoping you'll do right by them and preserve their windfall profits. I'm hoping you'll do right by our children and make Cambridge affordable for them.

Please do so now by moving this proposal forward.

Thank you,
Bill McAvinney
12 Douglass St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Judy Townley <judy.townley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 8:29 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk

As a long-time tax-paying citizen of Cambridge, I strongly oppose the Upzoning Project.

As usual, no research has been done to produce hard data from similar cities showing that this huge transformative and irreversible zoning change will have the claimed result. Instead, this is clearly just a gift to developers. City staff appear to be providing only information in support of the changes. Is it their job to sell or to inform? They appear to be ideologues selling a cultural change, rather than city planners describing a vision for the city.

The proposed change will produce lasting very detrimental changes to one of the most liveable and prosperous cities in the country.

Judy Townley

--

Judy G. Townley
8 Shady Hill Square
Cambridge, MA 02138
4-2 Talcott Farm Road
Old Lyme, CT 06371
C: 617.354.8355

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rvaca@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 7:33 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Jaime Zarlenga-Siegler; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: Rod Vaca
Subject: Zoning Change

Hi,

I am writing to emphasize my opposition to the proposed zoning change that allows hi-rises and multi-family housing with the elimination of setbacks and corresponding parking for the habitat of the dwelling.

It is **completely irresponsible** to allow such zoning changes since it would create collateral problems such as parking, already a problem in Cambridge and aggravated by bike lanes, change the historical feel of this old city, aggravating the transportation infrastructure such as increased traffic and overwhelm the public transportation.

I urge you not to approve such proposal.

Regards

Rodrigo Vaca
120 Larch Road
Cambridge, MA 02138
rvaca@comcast.net

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joshua Benedict <joshuacrbenedict@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 7:27 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Public Comment

Hello,

Unfortunately, I'm not able to make it to the ordinance committee today to make my actual voice heard, so instead I'm sending this email in support of 6-story zoning by right throughout the city of Cambridge.

I'm a renter in Riverside, and while I'm lucky enough to be able to pay my bills with my relatively low income, someone with even just a few more expenses than me (or God forbid a child) would find it nearly impossible. Rent is more than 50% of my monthly income. I hope we can all agree that the cost of living crisis is one that MUST be addressed.

Building the thousands of new units that the city estimates would come from this upcoming would go a long way to lowering this burden on people. The evidence is clear and even intuitive - building more housing reduces costs. 350 units over the next 15 years is simply not enough to make a reasonable dent in our mismatch between supply and demand.

I fully believe that modernizing our zoning is one of the best things we can do for our city, and look forward to seeing construction of new units in every neighborhood.

Best,
Joshua Benedict

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lynne Hall <lynnehall43@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 6:59 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multi-Family Zoning Proposal

My name is Lynne Hall, and I am a Cambridge resident at 154 Auburn Street. I write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at today's Ordinance Committee hearing.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's [petition](#) and its amendment to this zoning. I particularly support the creation of a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing. These policies are part of the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge affordable to all.

I support amending the multifamily zoning so that zoning changes are limited to projects that cross the "inclusionary threshold." In other words, these changes would only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing. This amendment would both significantly reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in **even more affordable units** than CDD has projected for the existing proposal, and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single family and two family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Thank you,

Lynne Hall

154 Auburn St.

Cambridge MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Helen Kang <helenk@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:56 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

My name is Helen Kang. I am a second year PhD student at MIT and have lived in Cambridge for over a year. I am writing to express my strong support for ending exclusionary zoning and building more affordable housing across Cambridge. Unlike undergraduate students, over 70% of MIT graduate students live off campus, and we spend on average 40% of our stipends on rent, making us rent burdened according to federal standards. Greater availability of affordable multifamily housing in Cambridge would substantially alleviate these financial challenges for graduate students and help us afford to live in the city where we work.

The rent price in Cambridge is much higher than anywhere else in the United States. This is partially due to limited housing options to accommodate the increasing student population and new residents working in fast-expanding companies. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance and pass it into law to help alleviate burden on graduate students at MIT and at other universities in the area.

I would really appreciate your consideration!

Sincerely,
Helen Kang

Erwin, Nicole

From: Daniel Mascoop <leinad112@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:35 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In Support of the Multi-Family Zoning Petition

To City Council,

As a Cambridge resident and renter of 12 years, I add my voice in support of the multi-family housing zoning petition. In this precarious time, we must demonstrate that our values promote a truly inclusive and just society both in rhetoric and in action. Passing this zoning petition is a reasonable action for Cambridge to help address the regional housing crisis, welcome more neighbors to a thriving and supportive city, and mitigate the global climate crisis.

I would like to note that relying on emails and public comment to gauge general public sentiment is undemocratic and ineffective compared to the most inclusive and democratic processes (i.e, the biennial City Council elections) and other planning processes, including Envision Cambridge. (Public comment is a perfectly reasonable way to learn about new ideas or issues that have not been expressed or recognized previously.) Please listen to the residents and voters, who consider housing to be the city's most pressing issue and overwhelmingly support pro-housing candidates in the hope of addressing this crisis. Please do not put undue credence in communications like this regardless of their position on this petition.

I also would like to repeat what I wrote the Planning Board: I encourage you to consider why the current zoning status quo should be defended at all when it is obvious that it restricts housing to such an extent that rents and costs are unbearably high and it's impossible to build multi-family housing that can accommodate inclusionary units. The status quo zoning code was designed to suburbanize and gentrify Cambridge. We can see its success in the skyrocketing housing costs and current single-family development in my Cambridgeport neighborhood. I remind you of the statements made by former associate Planning Board member Niko Bowie discussing the current zoning code in 2021 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx8Ht3KAPKc>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3eEJZqCDu0>)

Many residents call for analyses and predictions of the impacts of the zoning proposal that go beyond what has been applied to the status quo zoning or even beyond what is feasible; therefore, I propose the following: Adopt the new zoning proposal and then apply any analyses or criteria to a downzoning petition that matches the current zoning code.

The zoning proposal is much more in line with existing Cambridge architecture and aesthetics. It is designed to meet city goals supported by City Council and established through the Envision Cambridge process, which does include growth and building housing--two things that are completely reasonable for an economic powerhouse city. The city is planning for this growth and its infrastructure will be able to accommodate it.

If we developed a zoning code from scratch that prioritized our professed values--supporting immigrants and migrants, housing affordability, flexibility to move, car-free lifestyle, plentiful and shared community amenities, and environmental efficiency and protection--I believe it would look much closer to the proposal than the status quo zoning. Given the history and impacts of the current zoning code, we should be starting from scratch. This proposal is a fantastic start.

Sincerely,

Daniel Mascoop

37 Speridakis Terrace, Cambridgeport

Erwin, Nicole

From: cambucks@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:19 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Comment for December 4 Ordinance Committee meeting

I write this evening to add my voice to the chorus speaking out against this proposal to allow the building of multi (6!) story housing buildings in all neighborhoods of our city.

I see this as being overwhelmingly detrimental to the quality of life for those of us who have chosen to make these neighborhoods our home.

The parking issues alone will be life changing.

As you surely know, most of us are not fortunate enough to have off street parking associated with our homes. It's already a challenge to find spaces nearby. Adding scores of new units, without mandating appropriate parking as part of the development, is unconscionable in my opinion, and a dereliction of the responsibility we've entrusted with you all. Obviously more housing is a desirable and laudable goal, but at what cost to our community? And when and how does this ever end? When the future residents, inhabiting all this new development have children, what of their housing needs as they grow and leave the nest? More and more and more? This is not good public policy.

Thank you.
Michael Buck
Antrim St.

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: hwalker434@rcn.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:02 PM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Citywide Multifamily Zoning

Dear Mayor Simmons, Members of the City Council, and City Manager Huang,

CDD has given us **alternative** residential rezoning scenarios. Happily, Scenario 3 **or** 6 would create almost as many new units as the base proposal, while reserving height incentives only for projects with inclusionary units. **Please back 3 or 6.** I particularly recommend Scenario 3 **combined with the Ronayne petition.** Scenario 3 would encourage inclusionary units. The Ronayne petition would foster a bonanza of multifamily infill units while keeping the general scale and height of each neighborhood. **Together,** the two could yield **more units** than the base proposal. Here is a chance to please many constituencies.

Cambridge housing data show over 3100 new units created between 2019 and 2023, and another 3950 permitted by April 2024*. At over 7000 new units, let us recognize that **we are on course** to fulfill the 12,500-unit goal for 2030.

Planning Board asked about remaining incentives for **affordable housing projects.** Chris Cotter listed: changes in permit process; height; and **city funding** to acquire sites. City funding is often overlooked by those who want 13 story towers on any residential lot. City funding was key to Just A Start acquiring the Leslie lots. Please recognize this and stay with AHO 1.0 (tiered) heights in neighborhoods and AHO 2.0 heights at corridors and squares. Central Square Rezoning recommends that heights of buildings relate to width of streets; 150 feet/ 13 stories does not relate to width of streets in neighborhoods and is inappropriate.

With many thanks for your consideration,

Helen Walker
43 Linnaean Street

* References:

<https://cambridgecf.org/housing-crisis-grips-cambridge/> 54,713 units as of 2/20/19
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/News/2023/10/affordablehousingstockdata%E2%80%932023update> 57,894 units as of 10/12/23
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/digital/Stories/2024/cityviewspring2024/housingdatafacts#:~:text=As%20of%20June%202030%2C%202023%2C%20the%20Cambridge%20housing,or%20under%20construction%2C%20including%208%2C591%20affordable%20housing%20units.> 3950 units permitted as of 4/18/24

Erwin, Nicole

From: Casey Goldstein <caseygoldstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:44 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support for Multifamily Rezoning in Cambridge

Dear Cambridge City Council,

My name is Casey and I have lived in Boston for 1 year. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance.

I firmly believe this ordinance is a necessary step to end exclusionary zoning and build a more inclusive and equitable Cambridge. By legalizing six-story multifamily housing across the city, we can increase the housing inventory and address the urgent demand for more homes. This change will enable more people to live in this great city without the fear of being displaced—a fate that has sadly affected many of my friends.

Adopting the multifamily housing ordinance as written will help us create a city where more individuals and families can thrive, contribute to the community, and enjoy the opportunities Cambridge has to offer. I urge the council to move forward with this proposal and remove restrictive zoning policies that perpetuate inequality and hinder progress.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue. I hope to see the City Council take bold action to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for Cambridge.

Sincerely,
Casey Goldstein

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ariana Olson <arianaolson419@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing

Dear City Councilors,

I'm writing to urge City Council to adopt and pass into law the multifamily housing ordinance.

I have lived and worked in Cambridge for over 5 years. I've been a renter that entire time. I currently live in a small 2 bedroom apartment in Cambridgeport. Although I love living in Cambridge, I'm very concerned about the rising cost of housing in the city. My fiance and I would love to eventually raise a family here, but we worry about being able to afford a suitable space that doesn't require two high-paying jobs to comfortably afford. We are privileged to be able to afford an apartment in Cambridge at all, and I'm saddened whenever I hear about friends that are priced out of their places or anxious every year about another large rent hike.

I support doing everything possible to encourage building more housing, including allowing six-story multifamily units. Please pass this bill without delay

Sincerely,
Ariana Olson
94 Pleasant St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Timothy Van Slyke <tvanslyke2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:00 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multi-Family Housing Support

Hello,

My name is Tim and I've lived in Cambridge for 5 years, and in the Boston area for even longer. I've lived in East Cambridge, Inman Square, and now Cambridgeport over those 5 years, and I've also worked in Cambridge the entire time that I've lived here. I am strongly in favor of building more multi-family housing in this city and I support the multifamily housing zoning petitions being discussed tomorrow at the city council meeting. I strongly believe that building multifamily housing is a *crucial* component of addressing the housing crisis in this city. In fact, this competes for my top issue when I vote in city council elections, and I vote every single election cycle. I take care to be a fairly informed voter, so I will be watching to see what actions each city councilor takes on this issue. Please take action to accelerate the construction of multifamily housing in Cambridge. Thank you.

Tim V

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jessie Wenning <jesswenn@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:58 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multi-family Zoning Proposal

Dear Councillors,

I strongly support zoning changes to allow multi-family housing in every neighborhood of our city. And, I want that housing to be AFFORDABLE HOUSING. What is the point otherwise?

I am extremely concerned about the zoning proposal to be discussed today in the Ordinance Committee. It seems clear to me that this proposal, as is, would promote more market rate development, more destruction of existing affordable housing, and would result in more families being pushed out of Cambridge. We have already seen way too much of this. To make zoning changes in the name of "justice" and "equity" that, in fact, displace more people from our city would be a very ugly irony.

To avoid the worst of this harm, I urge you to consider the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC) [petition](#) and to adopt their amendment to this zoning proposal. Making the proposed zoning changes apply only to projects that are larger than 10,000 square feet or contain more than nine units would provide strong incentive for developers to create projects with inclusionary housing. Changing the base zoning citywide to C-1 would allow all types of multifamily housing in all areas of the city.

But much more is needed for true affordability. To achieve that goal, Cambridge must invest in policies that directly create affordable housing. I join the CHJC in urging the city to create a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and to make a substantial investment in social housing. Other cities are doing this. Why not Cambridge?

Thank you,
Jessie Wenning
106 Kinnaird Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Willie Boag <william.george.boag@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:47 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for multifamily housing

Hello,

I'm writing in support of multifamily housing. When I heard that Cambridge might legalize 6-story apartments in every neighborhood, it actually made me imagine I could continue to live here even when I start a family. I would love that & I'd always assumed I wouldn't be able to. But with more housing units, I can actually envision being able to afford it.

I've been in Cambridge since 2016 and I would love to stay. Please help allow for more houses.

Thanks,
Willie

Erwin, Nicole

From: andrea simpson <asimps224@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 8:46 PM
To: citycouncil@cambridgema.gov; City Clerk
Cc: jschindelheim
Subject: Proposed Multi-Family Housing Ordinance

Dear Cambridge City Council,

While we are in favor of increasing the amount of affordable housing in Cambridge, we oppose the current proposed multi-family housing ordinance for the following reasons:

- 1) It allows by right buildings up to six stories in all neighborhoods with no side and back setbacks. This would allow buildings to be built that are more than twice the size of existing buildings in many neighborhoods. These buildings would be completely out of proportion to existing buildings in most neighborhoods. The elimination of side and back setbacks would reduce tree coverage and increase summer temperatures in Cambridge.
- 2) It decreases the amount of open space on some building lots. The proposal requires 30% of open space which does not have to be permeable whereas currently, some lots require 50% open space.
- 3) It does not significantly increase the amount of affordable housing because no inclusionary housing is required unless a building has at least 10 units or 10,000 square feet of floor space, and then only 20% of the units must be set aside for affordable housing.

If everyone works together, we can find a better solution to the housing crisis. This proposal is unacceptable.

Thank you.

Andrea Simpson and Jody Schindelheim
2 Hutchinson Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Fred Watts <fred_watts@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 7:46 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: End Exclusionary Zoning!

Dear City Council, Clerk, and City Manager,

I am a Cambridge resident, and I've lived in Kendall Square for two happy years. I implore the city council to pass the multifamily housing ordinance as written.

I have no doubt you are well aware of the dire state of the housing, and the plain injustice of the city prospering from many stakeholders who have no chance of living here. It is fine to prefer living in a low-density town if it's a bedroom community with little industry. It is blind arrogance to insist that a low-density town support labor-intensive fields like academia or research, yet I don't hear the critics of this ordinance attempt to banish Harvard or IBM.

Many critics of this bill use subjective arguments about a town's character. This is a question of preference, which has its place in law, but should stand behind ethics and practicality. A few critics do try practical arguments, that new construction will doom this or that public resource. I am confident you are well-informed by actual experts that their attacks are at best alarmist, often dubious, and at worst selfish lies. I hope you have the confidence to stand behind these facts when it comes time to vote.

Finally, remember that housing pairs delightfully with the urbanist's other great fixation: transit. Due to this council's bravery and foresight, Cambridge has one of the best bus, rail, pedestrian, and cycling environments in the country. So use it! Increased traffic is one of the few valid reasons to be skeptical of more housing, but transit alternatives minimize that harm. And again, ours are some of the best. Meanwhile, more residents make new transit systems more valuable, both justifying and funding future investment in them. It's a happy feedback loop.

Sincerely,
Fred Watts

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dave Halperin <halperin.dr@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 6:57 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support six stories across Cambridge

Dear Council,

I moved to Boston in 2004 for college. After graduating, I found my first job in Cambridge and moved across the river the following year. I've fallen in love with the city in the more than a decade I've been able to call it my home. I have been fortunate to have good pay and to have been able to afford to stay but have seen so many of my generation struggle with housing. Friends priced out of Cambridge or the Boston area entirely. The statistics back this up, showing the region with outflows of people in their prime working years. People who grew up here who want to should be able to stay as well as many more people should be able to have the same opportunity I did. Housing should not be a zero sum fight between the people already here and people coming for work or school. It should not be a game of musical chairs that people at the bottom of the income scale are bound to lose.

We are in a housing crisis because as a city and a region we have created many more high paying jobs than new housing units. Politicians are very happy to brag about bringing in jobs but every job corresponds to a bedroom and politicians have been too timid about telling people the built environment of the neighborhood they live in might need to change. Cambridge has created 3 times as many jobs as added housing units. The economic prosperity brought by Cambridge's ascendance as a high tech sector has been a good thing and gives the city resources such as to fund affordable housing. We have done an admirable job with affordable housing through the AHO and funding the affordable housing trust. Yet many people who cannot afford rising rents in Cambridge but won't qualify for affordable housing are being pushed out. Additionally, developments through this new zoning will bring new affordable units through IZ at no cost to the city.

Density brings many benefits, better economies of scale for multimodal transit, more and more diverse local retail, a more vibrant city. I appreciate this is a bold proposal and many are apprehensive about it. But we have let the housing crisis come to a boil through lack of any adequate action to the scale of the problem for years. Let's not allow fear to get the better of us and have a positive vision for the future of the city. I believe this proposal is an exciting way to do that, to be a national model on zoning reform. Please move forward with this zoning petition.

Thank you,
David Halperin
14 Valentine St. Unit 3

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ned Codd <ned@coddsquad.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 6:03 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Multifamily Housing Zoning Proposal

Dear City Councilors-

I support the Multifamily Zoning Proposal because I am very concerned about the housing shorting and affordability crisis that is facing the entire country. This crisis is particularly acute in Massachusetts, which is losing population, especially young people. The evidence clearly demonstrates that upzoning and increased housing supply are effective in ameliorating these problems.

Cambridge cannot solve the housing supply and affordability crisis on its own, but it definitely has a part to play, as expressed through the City-endorsed Envision Cambridge plan. As an older Cambridge resident who has owned a home here for over 20 years, I have benefited from all the advantages that living in Cambridge offers, as well as from a significant increase in home values resulting from exclusionary zoning and the housing shortage. As such, I feel it is important to consider a wide range of voices and concerns, including those of younger people, renters, and low and middle income people who work in Cambridge but struggle to afford housing here.

Nevertheless, I respect the concerns of those who are opposed to the Multifamily Zoning Proposal, and I think that their concerns should be taken seriously in the ordinance process. I am especially interested in Scenario #6, Four Story + Two Story Bonus Only for Inclusionary Zoning Projects, which is projected to produce as many affordable units, and nearly as many units overall, as the current proposal. At the same time, it would address some of the concerns that have been raised about height and affordability. However, I am strongly opposed to any proposal that would preserve exclusionary single-family zoning in any form, in any parts of Cambridge.

Furthermore, fear of change should absolutely not be an excuse to delay action, or conduct further study or analysis. I have seen lots of arguments that this process is being rushed, or we don't understand the effects well enough, or we need to start all over with a new process. This is nonsense. Cambridge has been talking about rezoning for years. The City's Envision Master Plan clearly endorses upzoning and increased housing supply. The City government undertook a thorough analysis of the projected impacts of several different zoning scenarios.

It is imperative that the City Council take action on this proposal, and pass a bold rezoning plan immediately. We don't know all the exact results of this change, but we do know the effects of doing nothing. We will continue to suffer from a housing shortage and out of control home prices. We will continue to see our friends priced out of Cambridge, like a member of the city's Planning Board. We will continue to see housing prices rise, and population and school enrollment drop.

Please approve a citywide multifamily housing proposal immediately. Thank you.

Ned Codd

301 Brookline Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: maddie.ayn@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 6:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support Multifamily Housing in Cambridge

Dear City Council,

My name is Maddie and I've been a resident of Cambridge for the past 3 years. I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily ordinance as written and pass it into law.

In my current residence, I live in a single bedroom apartment with one roommate and our rent is \$3,150 and is set to increase further. As I look to the end of my current lease, I am increasingly worried about my ability to afford to live in Cambridge. Many of my friends have left the city of Cambridge because the cost of housing is too high.

Please vote to pass six-story multifamily housing with no amendments.

Sincerely,
Maddie

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jennifer Wang <jwang17@mit.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 4:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for multifamily housing

Hello,

I'm an MIT grad student and have lived in Cambridge for more than 4 years. I support building more housing across Cambridge. Many grad students struggle with the cost of living in Cambridge, and ever-increasing rent prices as well as limited housing availability only add to the burden. Please vote to pass six-story multifamily housing with no amendments.

Best,

--

Jennifer Wang
Graduate Student
Research Laboratory of Electronics
EECS, MIT
jwang17@mit.edu | (832) 382-2436

Erwin, Nicole

From: Karen Falb <karenfalb@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 4:38 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Upzoning and Multifamily housing - doing it well

Keep the Riverview condo building on Mt. Auburn in mind as to how decision making in the 1960s involved corruption, slippery developers, substandard concrete, and faulty inspection - which also brings to mind that there is right now the feeling amongst many in the city (I heard this from a city staff member) that the inspections department is understaffed. What the city does not need is poorly planned housing that is allowed to be built and to be built badly such as Riverview. And the cost and loss to its residents - put yourself in their shoes!

At meetings, residents remind the city that as of now there is no infrastructure planning. And there is no response of the city of plans to do so. We don't even know that the city knows how much housing is needed and if the housing will be for city workers. Don't rush!

In fact, so far, the meetings are just window dressing - people can vent but city staff and developers like Winn don't heed them. Remember people and voters aren't stupid.

Residents want to keep the historic character of neighborhoods. I have never seen the city planning board, CDD and councilors describe the neighborhoods and their design strengths and weaknesses. They should be able to if they have had the right education and experience. Each of you should know what they are for each neighborhood. Spotty 6 story buildings here and there built by whim of developers and allowed by the city shows a lack of city responsibility of doing things well.

The following two comments are from **John LaFreniere's architect. list of concerns - I hope you really study it.** I include them because there are many, many of us residents who share these concerns as ALL should - you too.

- While initial up-zoning may in the short term increase property values, it is likely to cause **values to plummet** of buildings in the shadows of 6-story 75' high buildings, and in neighborhoods where on-street parking is consumed by new residents where 60 units can replace 6 with no additional parking. The purpose of zoning is to provide predictability in construction and development, not to eliminate it.
- This zoning change is a gift to **developers hiding behind the illusion of providing socially needed** housing with no guarantee of results and the sure introduction of chaos into the city's urban form. Who should come first? Your city residents.

Sincerely, Karen Falb Peter Falb 245 Brattle Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kathleen Moore <kathleensmoore@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:59 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: End exclusionary zoning

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to strongly urge you to adopt the proposed zoning change allowing six-story multifamily housing in Cambridge. This ordinance is a vital step toward addressing the housing crisis and ensuring our city remains inclusive, equitable, and vibrant.

As Jerusalem Demsas, a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, and a housing crisis expert has recently written (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/11/democrat-states-population-stagnation/680641/>) local democracies have too often become "co conspirators in the anti-development aspirations of the very few, at the hefty expense of the many." Anti-growth policies, like exclusionary zoning, not only perpetuate housing shortages and inequities but also pose a significant threat to our national and local political landscape, and should deeply worry us as we contemplate the failures of democrats evidenced in the presidential election outcome.

Your action on multi-family housing is not just about housing policy—it's about the future of our democracy. For years, Democrats have assumed dominance in growing, economically vibrant regions without implementing the bold, effective policies needed to sustain that growth. As Demsas notes, this complacency has contributed to stagnation, driving people to vote with their feet by leaving expensive, exclusionary areas. The ripple effects of these failures are already being felt, with the biggest declines in Democrats' vote share from 2020 to 2024 occurring in the most populous and expensive counties. This threatens our party's viability and the electoral votes that states like Massachusetts contribute to national elections.

By adopting this ordinance, Cambridge can stand as a leader in reversing these trends. Expanding housing options signals that we are serious about tackling the cost-of-living crisis and retaining the people who make our communities dynamic and diverse.

Please vote to pass six-story multifamily housing with no amendments. The stakes are too high to delay action.

Thank you for your leadership on this crucial issue.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Moore

Erwin, Nicole

From: Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:41 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council; City Manager
Subject: A zoning change this extreme and consequential should never be rushed! There has been No Climate consideration & woefully inadequate public input or general study.

Dear City Councilors & Zoning Ordinance Committee,

While nearly everyone in the community seems okay with rezoning for up to three-story or four-story multi-family dwellings; many strongly object to allowing six-story buildings by Zoning Rights. Six-story, 75' buildings should require oversight regarding where they are built; not zoning rights guaranteed to the highest investor/developer's bid! The goal is more affordable housing; Not skyrocketing land values. The climate and environmental impacts of demolition/construction due to this zoning will be overwhelming at this critical time when we are already cooking our oceans and causing die-outs of many species.

- In a quick search for Cambridge housing, [apartments.com](https://www.apartments.com) claims there are 5,038 vacancies on Dec. 3rd (Zillow 2,016)! Perhaps this entire plan requires a more nuanced approach to **primarily address affordability, rather than availability**; as these often have separate sets of remedies, as well as vastly different climate impacts. Home-ownership would also have different strategies (Homes.com 165 avail.; Redfin 130). A plan which encourages a wide range of housing options and solutions might including co-op living, rooming house, creating additional units in existing buildings (subdivision, use of attic, basement, garage, addition), apartments, senior living, condos, ADUs, building conversions, and vouchers could all better impact affordability and immediate availability of units. Home-ownership, and low climate impacts should be prioritized! Rezoning encourages build, build, build without guardrails or parameters. It is the worst housing option for the climate, the budget, and the community.

- Zoning confers building Rights, eliminating crucial city planning oversight! If 6 story buildings are desired in neighborhoods, it is essential to have an organization accountable to the community to proactively approve of best sites and confer on designs for development with veto authority included in the planning process.

- Subjecting every Cambridge property to a potential developer bid at time of sale would likely **skyrocket property prices** for perhaps a decade. Multi-millionaires may become the only competitive property bid against developers. Property purchases may actually result in expanding the footprint of single family homes for the wealthiest, which is counter to the city's goals of more affordable housing and mitigating climate impacts. Two units within a block of my house had this result.

- Six-story buildings do not need to be 75'! Luxury apartments towering over neighboring homes half their height was not likely what citizens had in mind! Six story buildings are typically closer to 60', and variances could be obtained for special interests.

- Standard setbacks should apply to all buildings; but the proposed zoning has no setbacks on the sides or back of properties. Again, a variance could be required in the rare cases where no setbacks are desired.

- There are tremendous environmental concerns with redevelopment, as current housing is demolished and sent to landfills and huge new buildings are constructed in their place. The greenhouse gas emissions in this process are measured as 'embodied carbon' including climate impacts of demolition & construction, manufacturing of all materials, transport, and assembly... This involves heavy duty trucks / machinery, and significant pollution, and disruptive impacts in our communities. There are many ways to reduce climate impacts ie. avoiding demolitions, reuse of foundations, sustainable materials, low emission concrete, low impact construction methods... but regulation is essential.

It is estimated that over a ten year period **embodied carbon from our buildings will increase from 11% of buildings environmental impact to 74%**, as opposed to operational emissions!* This is an astonishing increase that will have immediate & irreversible planet warming effects. Another estimate says it can take up to 80 years for increased building efficiencies to make up for the environmental effects of constructing a building.** Cambridge has No regulations that address pollution and climate impacts from construction. Embodied carbon has a tremendous immediate impact that may outweigh Cambridge's recent hard won gains in regulating/reducing operational emissions in some buildings. The impacts of diminished green space, tree loss, greater flooding with reduction of permeable surfaces, heat islands, and sewerage overflow to waterways also add to concerns that have not been addressed by the city.

These impacts require expert consideration and regulation prior to major city-wide zoning changes; as it will be incredibly difficult to implement them after residential zoning is changed.

Some advocates argue that the proposed zoning will eliminate commuter traffic or urban sprawl. Unfortunately, there is no simple equivalence, but rather a variety of solutions. Increasing our housing to accommodate everyone who desires to live here would overwhelm our infrastructure and be a huge drain on surrounding communities. We need to define our housing goals & transit with surrounding communities in mind. A flexible system requires better transit, and could even include inexpensive sleep over options to avoid daily commutes. There are a wide variety of needs and our current system which already shows massive vacancies is not meeting the needs of the community.

Zoning and regulations protect the interests of the community - we can change them, but we should do so wisely with widespread, informed, community consent, that takes into account climate & environmental impacts! Unbridled investor and developer interests are not reliably aligned with community interests and they often lead to high priced housing.

It is terrifying that our nation may soon see what chaos ensues when regulations meant to protect citizens are dismantled in favor of big money interests. Especially in this turbulent time, Cambridge needs to seek solutions which unify residents in the face of challenges. This requires listening to and addressing concerns, often with compromise; rather than pushing through an unproven concept in a divisive manner. This rezoning is prone to devastating unintended consequences.

The city has Not done the prerequisite work to mitigate harms of the proposed extreme zoning changes.

Advocates impatiently want us to think this city plan has been under discussion for a long time, but this is a New proposal, with very little research or data justifying a major change that will affect every resident and property in Cambridge. There has been minimal community outreach, and little if any responsiveness to community feedback. I believe the entire plan was only a vague concept in March this year, with a surprising 75' height added around August.

Advancing Housing Affordability / Donovan Petition*** is more reflective of concepts that actually have been under consideration, and it is generally met with enthusiastic approval from the community! This plan ends exclusive zoning, is environmentally friendly, and avoids nearly all the pitfalls of the current proposal. It could easily be implemented now as a stop-gap measure to meet the urgency being expressed. Then we could figure out how to mitigate societal/financial and environmental/climate harms if something more robust is needed. The Ronayne Petition was also a reasonable option that could be considered, and built upon if needed - though it lacks environmental protections and embodied carbon regulation, which are crucial with construction-heavy approaches.

Our main streets and squares were zoned for 13-15 story housing, and Alewife already has plenty of new housing. ADUs are now permitted state wide, and Commuter areas are being built up as well. We need to evaluate these housing developments, as apparently there are already nearly 6,000 vacant units in Cambridge!
I cannot find any valid justification for zoning the entire city for 75' buildings; except, perhaps, investor/ developer profits.

Six story buildings need oversight, not zoning rights.

Sincerely, and urgently for the planet,
Amy Waltz
12 Blakeslee Street
Cambridge, MA
617-661-0077

* Embodied Carbon from demolition/construction is expected to increase from 11% to 74% within 10 years:
https://blueprintforbetter.org/articles/architectures-carbon-problem/?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwkLCkBhA9EiwAka9QRqHMyygGvSyFL76IRKbwfCkwfUssblyk_icumyB4oqqEDpVQRZ5DOBoCCzAQAvD_BwE

** It can take up to 80 years to recover from embodied carbon from construction; through reduced building operational emissions.
<https://restoreoregon.org/2021/04/12/understanding-the-carbon-cost-of-demolition/>

*** Advancing Housing Affordability (Donovan Petition) - Eliminates zoning density disparities, rapidly increases Cambridge housing options, considers regional approach, & protects our environment & climate! <http://rwinters.com/council/091321AP4-Donovan.pdf>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carolyn Fuller <carolyn.fuller2018@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:40 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Ending Exclusionary Zoning - Increasing Homes - Reducing Rents

Mayor Simmons, Vice Mayor McGovern and City Councilors,

I'm hoping these attachments will come through. If not, you can view the first one on [Blue Sky](#). This first picture illustrates how we can reduce the cost of housing dramatically in our fair city.

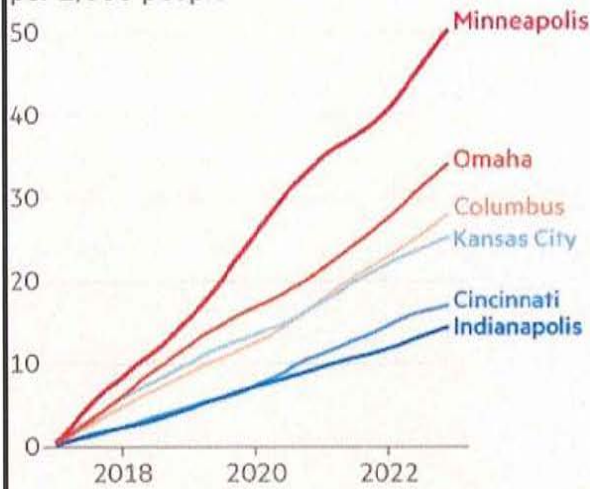
And if our housing crisis is not enough to persuade you to support this petition, how about the second attachment, [car dependency](#) (aka [climate change](#)).

Please support Multifamily Housing throughout the city of Cambridge. It is a no-brainer if we care about either of these issues!

Carolyn Fuller
carolyn.fuller2018@gmail.com

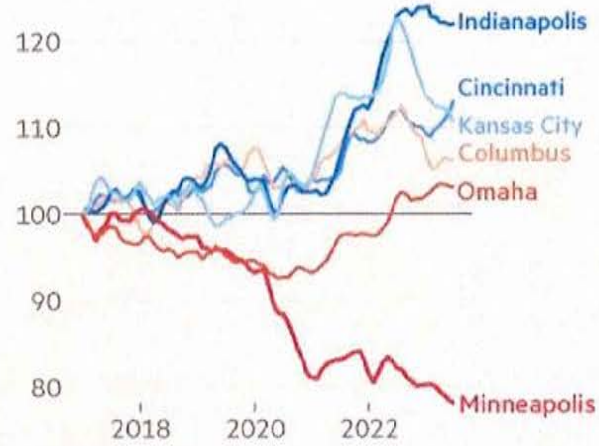
Minneapolis has built more housing than other Midwestern cities...

Cumulative new dwelling approvals per 1,000 people



...and is reaping the rewards as rents fall relative to inflation

Real-terms change in median rent (Jan 2017 = 100)



*Rents deflated by average incomes

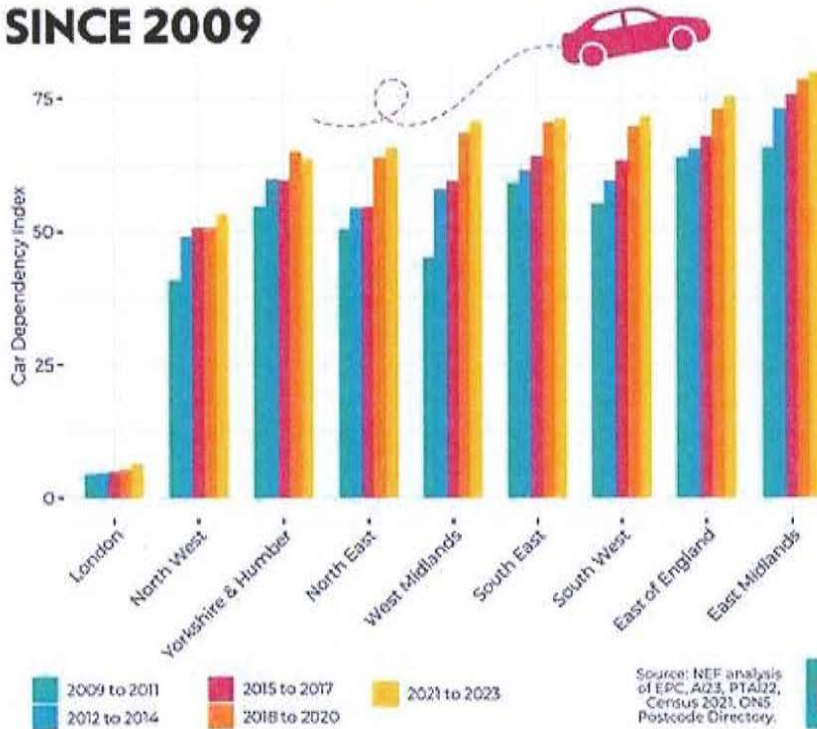
Sources: FT analysis of data from State of the Cities Data Systems, Apartment List, BLS, Census Bureau

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

© FT

Screenshot

CAR DEPENDENCY OF NEW HOMES HAS INCREASED IN EVERY REGION OF ENGLAND OUTSIDE OF LONDON SINCE 2009



Source: NEF analysis of EPC, AQS, PTA122, Census 2021, ONS Postcode Directory.



Erwin, Nicole

From: Erin Howell <erinhowell77@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:10 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: Jamie Howell
Subject: public comment for 12/4

Hi there,

I wasn't sure which policy number to put this down on, but this is a letter I would like officially submitted for public comment on 12/4 the meeting on housing. If I need to add anything please let me know.

Dear Member of the Council,

We are writing as a family in support of more housing being built in Cambridge, specifically the proposed changes on Multi Family Housing zoning. We live in a two family home that we are privileged to own in North Cambridge. We are exhausted with those opposing more housing in Cambridge and their weak attempts to justify their standpoints. We know that some who are most vocally opposing these changes are the very people who have converted two or three family homes into single family homes, so not only are they against more housing, they want to "maintain" a lifestyle and neighborhood feel that they quite literally have taken away from others. We live in Cambridge to SHARE community, not exclude others from it. Community is a real and ever changing feeling, it is not a stagnant fantasy of the past. Cities change and grow. We do not want to live in a city that is only housing a monolith of rich, white homeowners who have renovated their homes into small mansions and then slowly take over ownership of how they want this city to feel and look. We want a city that is welcome to all people. We wonder how many of those folks so loudly fighting against this have sat at tables with the very folks they are driving out of this city. Have they made connections with people outside of their own small bubble of community? If they believe they are speaking for all of us, we hope this council knows they are most certainly not speaking for our family. We love our home and neighborhood, but we are not the least bit threatened by it changing or by others who may not look or agree with us on all issues sharing our sidewalks. It's an open joke on folks in communities like ours that the very folks who have BLM and "all people welcome" signs on their lawns, are the same people who will put all their passion into making sure others do not matter when it comes to housing and that most certainly all people are not welcome. Let this city change, let it grow, let it house people and let those so threatened by those changes sit with themselves and wonder what they are truly threatened by.

Erin and Jamie Howell
30 Shea Road
Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: erin hayes <e.hayes.0913@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 2:30 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing

To whom it may concern,

My name is Erin Hayes and currently work in Cambridge and have friends living in Cambridge. I am writing to express my support of the six-story multifamily housing bill. I believe that it is very important to expand zoning for six-story buildings in Cambridge in order to lower rent prices and make more housing available. Cambridge has one of the lowest vacancy apartment rates in the area, more housing is needed to accommodate those living here and those trying to move here. I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge. Thank you!

Best,
Erin Hayes

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cynthia Liao <cyliao.hba2014@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 2:07 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support for six-story multi-family housing bill

Dear Cambridge City Council,

My name is Cynthia Liang Liao, and I have been a resident of Cambridge for two years. As a recent MIT graduate and someone now building my startup in this vibrant city, I am writing to express my strong support for the six-story multifamily housing bill.

I believe this ordinance is a critical step toward ending exclusionary zoning and addressing the severe housing shortage in our community. Building more housing across Cambridge is essential to increasing inventory and providing more opportunities for people to live here without fear of displacement, a reality many of my friends have faced.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. Legalizing six-story developments citywide while lessening restrictions on zoning will create a more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable future for Cambridge.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and I hope you will take this bold and necessary step. Please feel free to contact me with questions or updates.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Liao
17 Hardwick Street, Cambridge, MA

Erwin, Nicole

From: Yunwei Sun <yunweisun14@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:59 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing in Cambridge

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Yunwei and I've been a resident of Cambridge for over 10 years. I'm writing to voice my support for the six-story multifamily housing ordinance and urge the City Council to pass it without delay.

The housing crisis in Cambridge is undeniable. As someone who works/goes to school here, I would love to be able to afford to live closer to where I spend most of my time. Many of my friends have already left the city because of skyrocketing rents, which has fragmented our community. Increasing the housing supply is crucial for lowering rents and ensuring Cambridge remains a diverse, vibrant, and sustainable place to live.

With one of the lowest apartment vacancy rates in the region and a zoning code that over 85% of the city's current structures don't conform to, it's clear that we need real change. Passing this ordinance is a meaningful step toward addressing these issues and making Cambridge a more inclusive city.

Please act now to pass this bill and help address the urgent housing challenges we face.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Yunwei Sun

Erwin, Nicole

From: Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:50 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Proposed changes to zoning

Dear City Council et al,

- 1) Why is there such a big rush to make a final decision re the proposed zoning changes? We need better zoning changes, not the current extreme ones.
- 2) Where is the data proving that these huge, irreversible changes to Cambridge zoning would have a positive rather than negative effect on our city?
- 3) Any proposed changes should be deferred for more detailed study of a more comprehensive re-zoning of Cambridge, such as Somerville has already done.
- 4) Why the rush to help developers? It is the longtime residents of Cambridge who should be listened to, not the developers. Please don't destroy our beloved city!

Thanks,
Shelagh Hadley, longtime Cambridge resident owner and voter.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Christin M. Hong <christin.inbox1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:23 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Please support six-story multifamily housing

Dear Cambridge City Council,

My name is Christin Hong, and I want to express my full support for the six-story multifamily housing bill. I've lived around Cambridge for the past decade, and I recently completed my PhD in Immunology at Harvard University. I'm sure you are aware of the large number of students in the city. As a former graduate student, the rising cost of rent was a frequent conversation topic and source of stress among my peers. Grad school comes with its own challenges, including low pay. When rent alone eats up >50% of our income (and we have to decide between staying with a difficult housemate or paying over \$3000 to move - first month, last month, broker's fee), it makes it more and more difficult for us to feel it's worthwhile to pursue research.

And as support for education seems to be draining away from the country, I feel it's critical for cities such as Cambridge to keep its doors open to people who are seeking to learn and improve their lives, and ultimately our society. Cambridge is renowned for its expertise, and that goes beyond our student population. Our biotech and tech industries are deeply tied to our universities; our businesses are full of field experts; our reputation is competing with San Francisco for being on the cutting edge. Harvard's famous network only exists because of the people who were able to live here. As a city, we are uniquely curious, often knowledgeable across a broad range of interests, and wonderfully sharp critical thinkers. In his 2008 essay "[Cities and Ambition](#)," Paul Graham wrote, "What I like about Boston (or rather Cambridge) is that the message there is: you should be smarter."

Increasing housing directly allows more people to experience Cambridge - to experience living in a thoughtful society. The people who want to live here are the people who value education and progress. It is an investment in our future to create space for them.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge while lessening restrictions on zoning. I urge you to support the continued growth and advancement of our city.

Sincerely,
Christin Hong, PhD

Erwin, Nicole

From: Robert J Laubacher <rjl@mit.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:22 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Zoning change

To the members of the Cambridge Ordinance Committee (c/o City Clerk),

We are longtime Cambridge residents. Our two children are graduates of CRLS. We love this community dearly.

We are writing to protest vehemently the proposed zoning change that will allow six-story buildings of a height of up to 75 feet in all neighborhoods of Cambridge.

We understand that all cities and neighborhoods change over time. But watching what has happened in Kendall Square, which is virtually unrecognizable and now resembles the more developed areas of New York City, and in the Alewife area, in which every conceivable plot of land is now taken up by slick, expensive rental and condo units, we feel that developers have been allowed to enrich themselves enormously at the expense of average citizens. And now it is the citizens of Cambridge, who already live in highly dense neighborhoods, who are being asked to endure more congestion, more traffic, less sunlight, and more crowding.

We take issue with the idea that building more buildings in tightly-packed residential neighborhoods is the answer to the desire for more affordable housing. Would you require the lots of the mansions of Brattle Street to be rezoned to allow multi-unit dwellings in their vast back yards? No, because that neighborhood is considered "historic" and the needs of its wealthy citizens are always taken seriously. For example, after the citizens of Appleton Street who live between Brattle Street and Huron Avenue recently complained about too much traffic on their street, the city rerouted the traffic (but only for that, the "wealthiest" stretch of Appleton). Now, all that additional traffic is being borne by our neighborhood, which is also historic for having housed the working men and women of Cambridge.

Why were the developers of the Alewife area and the biotech titans of Kendall Square allowed to overtake entire neighborhoods of Cambridge for their own profit? And now that more housing is desired for people of modest income, that proposed housing is to be crammed into residential neighborhoods that are already extremely dense?

The character of Cambridge is at stake. The continued livability of our neighborhoods is at stake.

We park on the street, often with difficulty, as parking spaces were taken away by the city several years ago. Supposedly this was to discourage cars, but as the neighborhood has become "wealthier" there are now often two cars, rather than one (or none!) associated with every unit. Traffic is now lined up, bumper-to-bumper, outside our Walden Street windows in the late afternoon, just trying to get through a light blocks away, at Concord Avenue. We don't even try to get to Mass. Ave (0.9 mile away) after three in the afternoon. We know this is a transportation issue, but it is related to how the neighborhood has already become much more busy, crowded and less livable in the 35 years we have been here.

Our neighbors' dining room window is mere feet from ours. There is a single-family home/lot behind our three-condo triple decker that is likely to be sold in the next year or so, and if a six-story building were to be constructed there, life in our densely-packed neighborhood would be very adversely affected. If six-story buildings were allowed to be built on every lot that turns over, the historic scale and character of our neighborhood would be lost forever. And there is no guarantee that those units would be affordable for working class families. The people who have moved into our neighborhood (predominantly triple-deckers and two-family houses that have been turned into condos) in the past decade or so are overwhelmingly empty-nesters from wealthy suburbs. This zoning change will be an additional boon to developers and seriously compromise the quality of life for average homeowners and condo dwellers.

We understand the desire for affordable housing. And we understand Cambridge's appeal; it's why we chose to raise our family in a small apartment, so that we could live here. But people have to live where they can afford to live – everyone does. And people of modest means should be able to live in Cambridge. Many of our neighborhoods were built to house the working class. But city management has made other choices in recent years, favoring developers and corporate giants, allowing them to build massive complexes that are of no community benefit (apart from the tax revenues they generate). We simply don't believe that cramming huge new buildings into already packed neighborhoods is the answer.

Please do not allow this zoning change at this time. Please allow for time to explore other options and not vote in a permanent change without more citizen input and research.

Respectfully,

Maureen Foley
Robert Laubacher
47 Vassal Lane, #1
Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: bonnie@danoski.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:59 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning concerns and possible solutions

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current upzoning plan and to propose stronger affordability options that align with social justice principles. The current plan, as it stands, appears to be too lenient for developers, allowing them to bypass the creation of affordable housing. Rather than focus on private, for-profit companies, it could prioritize exploring more creative and inclusive options such as cooperatives, cohousing, and other innovative housing models.

Current Concerns:

- 1. Insufficient Affordable Housing:** The current proposal estimates the addition of only 300 affordable units out of 1600 total. This number is far too low. Requiring a higher percentage of affordable units, starting at 30%, could significantly increase the availability of affordable housing. For example, a two-unit building could include an affordable studio, benefiting low-income single residents.
- 2. Luxury Apartments:** The plan risks allowing developers to build only luxury apartments, which does not address the urgent need for affordable housing. We must anticipate and plan for human vices to ensure that developers do not exploit loopholes (like building 9 stories rather than 10) at the expense of residents.
- 3. Economic Segregation:** To prevent economic segregation, require developers to build a higher number of affordable units that are available for rent only. This could mean that half or one-third of all units in new or remodeled buildings would be affordable.

Proposed Solutions:

- 1. Higher Percentage of Affordable Units:** Require at least 30-50% of new units to be affordable, with an appropriate proportion being social rent. This approach ensures that affordable housing is not just an add-on or "have to" but a central component of new developments.
- 2. Diverse Housing Options:** Offer a mix of housing options, including simple, basic accommodations with shared kitchens and other communal spaces. This variety can serve a broader range of residents, not all of whom need a larger space.
- 3. Transit-Oriented Development:** Focus on transit-oriented development rather than spreading big developments to the outskirts like Alewife or residential neighborhoods further from the T. This approach can help integrate affordable housing more effectively into the urban fabric and make it easier for lower-income residents to find work close by.
- 4. Ladder of Housing Options:** Implement a ladder of housing options that includes smaller units and communal housing for very low-income households. This can increase the impact and broaden access to affordable housing.
- 5. Subsidies and Incentives:** Provide subsidies or incentives to encourage social housing projects. Non-profit cooperatives remove the possibility for developers to maximize profits, ensuring that the focus remains on providing affordable housing. Work with local banks to get lower mortgage rates for such projects.

6. Hybrid Building Projects: Encourage hybrid building projects that include gyms, cinema rooms, laundries, libraries, cooking services, and shared roof terraces. These projects can generate business through the operation of services and management of the building, while tenants pay a fair price for housing complemented by a monthly fee for community services.

7. Cohousing Models: Prioritize building permits for cohousing properties, which do not need to generate profits for owners/shareholders but only cover mortgage interest, taxes, and maintenance. This can result in rents that are up to one-third lower. The city could own a certain number of units in the coop to keep rents stable.

8. Reduce Airbnb Stock: Implement measures to reduce the number of apartments used for short-term rentals like Airbnb, ensuring more units are available for long-term rent.

Success Stories:

- Hong Kong: Improved housing conditions for all lower-income segments through a “stock and flow approach.”
- Barcelona: Housing cooperatives and pioneering development companies offer units designed for families, with community projects planning, building, and managing shared spaces. These models contribute to producing affordable housing units and building more integrated neighborhoods.
- Zurich: Required a higher number of affordable units.

For more information, please refer to the following resources, one of which was done by McKinsey & Co:

- [CIDOB Publication on Affordable Housing in Europe]([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/affordable-housing-europe-innovative-public-policies-can-effectively-address-housing__;!!GolgDdAAPFHvrrz0!YfXiS0Q8HPnXdumhevsSQqArqHDDRNM3Vlmsdf44WT3VEDM9B2IFi4_2RQckIGwgHER1QpcBZ9WAePv_efqLn!\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/affordable-housing-europe-innovative-public-policies-can-effectively-address-housing__;!!GolgDdAAPFHvrrz0!YfXiS0Q8HPnXdumhevsSQqArqHDDRNM3Vlmsdf44WT3VEDM9B2IFi4_2RQckIGwgHER1QpcBZ9WAePv_efqLn!$))
- [Affordable Housing Report]([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://binary.rts.ch/audio/2015/document/27488456.html/BINARY/Affordable*housing_1016-1430.pdf*page44__;KyM!!GolgDdAAPFHvrrz0!YfXiS0Q8HPnXdumhevsSQqArqHDDRNM3Vlmsdf44WT3VEDM9B2IFi4_2RQckIGwgHER1QpcBZ9WAePvPpRyQhg\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://binary.rts.ch/audio/2015/document/27488456.html/BINARY/Affordable*housing_1016-1430.pdf*page44__;KyM!!GolgDdAAPFHvrrz0!YfXiS0Q8HPnXdumhevsSQqArqHDDRNM3Vlmsdf44WT3VEDM9B2IFi4_2RQckIGwgHER1QpcBZ9WAePvPpRyQhg$))

In conclusion, I urge the City Council to hold off on the current upzoning plan to adopt stronger affordability measures that prioritize the needs of all residents. By doing so, we can ensure that Cambridge remains a livable and attractive city for everyone.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Mioduchoski
Long-time resident, homeowner, and landlord
15 Whitney Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

Sent from my iPad

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lucas Kasser <lkasser8@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:57 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition

To the Cambridge city council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Cambridge multifamily rezoning ordinance. I am not currently a Cambridge resident, despite loving your city - I feel I've been priced out of the housing market. I'll also say, this is my sentiment as a young (employed) professional who makes a 6-figure salary - I'm sure it's far worse for the less affluent, more diverse people who also enjoy Cambridge but cannot afford to live there.

I think the clear way to lower price pressure is to build more housing. This will make the city more diverse, will increase tax revenue, and will lead to long term flourishing. As I understand it, the main barrier to building housing is zoning, so I think this proposal makes a lot of sense.

Best,
Lucas Kasser

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sophia Openshaw <sophia.openshaw@tenderfood.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:50 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support Cambridge's Multifamily Housing Ordinance

Dear Cambridge City Council Members,

My name is Sophia Openshaw and I have lived in Cambridge for one and a half years.

I am writing to express my strong support for the six-story multifamily housing bill. I believe that this ordinance is a crucial step towards addressing the city's housing crisis and creating a more equitable and inclusive community.

I support ending exclusionary zoning and building more housing across Cambridge. By allowing for taller buildings, we can increase housing density and create more affordable housing options for residents. This will help to alleviate the pressure on the housing market and prevent displacement.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. This will enable more inventory on the market and allow people to live in the great city and not be displaced like many of my friends.

I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge while lessening restrictions on zoning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sophia Openshaw

Resident on Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, 02139

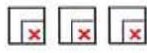


Sophia Openshaw
Operations Associate

sophia.openshaw@tenderfood.com

17 Properzi Way
Somerville, MA 02143

tenderfood.com



Erwin, Nicole

From: Sophia Openshaw <sophia.openshaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:49 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support Cambridge's Multifamily Housing Ordinance

Dear Cambridge City Council Members,

My name is Sophia Openshaw and I have lived in Cambridge for one and a half years.

I am writing to express my strong support for the six-story multifamily housing bill. I believe that this ordinance is a crucial step towards addressing the city's housing crisis and creating a more equitable and inclusive community.

I support ending exclusionary zoning and building more housing across Cambridge. By allowing for taller buildings, we can increase housing density and create more affordable housing options for residents. This will help to alleviate the pressure on the housing market and prevent displacement.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. This will enable more inventory on the market and allow people to live in the great city and not be displaced like many of my friends.

I urge you to move forward with legalizing six stories across Cambridge while lessening restrictions on zoning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sophia Openshaw

Resident on Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Michael Weymouth <michaelsweymouth@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:43 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for multifamily housing proposal

To the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Michael Weymouth and I live in East Cambridge and work in Kendall Square. I am writing today to express my strong support for the multifamily housing proposal before the Council for review. As everyone well knows, our city is an inordinately expensive place to live, and it's only becoming less affordable by the year. There's already a tremendous demand for housing, and as Cambridge continues to grow as a center of innovation and jobs, so too does that housing demand grow. Though our current zoning scheme may have been sufficient many years ago, times have changed; we need to build more homes, quickly.

This is a disease with many symptoms. Many of our city's apartments and houses are old and ill-equipped by modern standards. Renters are forced to navigate exploitative brokers and landlords, who often openly break tenants' rights laws because they know their tenants have no better options. What few good apartments do exist are rented quickly, and for exorbitant sums. People are forced to cram their homes with many roommates just to make ends meet. And when all else fails, many give up and leave our city entirely.

We have the tools to solve this problem, to build more homes and make Cambridge a more affordable and welcoming place to live, we just have to use them. This multifamily housing proposal is a tremendous step in the right direction, allowing us to meet the demand for housing while still preserving the character of the city that we all love so much. I urge you to pass it into law expeditiously.

Thank you,
Michael Weymouth
Cambridge Resident

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rollin Leavitt <rollinleavitt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:43 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Strong Support for Six-Story Multifamily Housing Ordinance

Dear City Council members,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Rollin, and I have lived in Cambridge for 1.5 years. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance currently before the City Council.

As a resident of Cambridge, I am deeply concerned about the affordability and availability of housing in our community. I believe it is essential to end exclusionary zoning practices and build more housing across the city to ensure that Cambridge remains a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds and income levels. The current housing shortage is pushing many residents, including friends of mine, out of the city due to rising costs. We must act to prevent further displacement and make room for more people who want to call Cambridge home.

By legalizing six-story buildings and reducing zoning restrictions, we can create much-needed housing inventory, helping to alleviate the pressure on our housing market. This ordinance is a crucial step toward a more inclusive and equitable future for our city.

I strongly urge you and the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law. This will ensure that Cambridge can continue to thrive while providing affordable housing options for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing this important policy move forward.

Sincerely,
Rollin Leavitt

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elizabeth Van Ranst <elizabeth.vanranst@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:42 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning for Six Story Buildings

Dear Councilors:

My purpose in writing is to express my dissatisfaction with the proposed zoning changes to increase housing. Yes, it is important to have more housing, and some of it could come from converting single family dwellings to multifamily ones. Yet constructing six story residences in neighborhoods where the norm is single family or duplex homes seems out of line. Neighborhood character is important; people moved into a neighborhood because they liked it, never expecting to have a six story "skyscraper" built next door. I would willingly accept four stories, even more of such buildings to make up the difference from not building to six stories.

One question I have is whether it is true that historical districts and neighborhood conservation districts would be exempt from these zoning changes as someone in government suggested. I would certainly appreciate an answer.

Thank you for reading my comments.

cc: City Clerk

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Van Ranst
120 Foster Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Guillermo Gomez <guillermogomez701@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:33 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk; City Council
Subject: In Support of Proposed Zoning Change

Dear City of Cambridge and related parties,

My name is Guillermo, and I have been a proud resident of Cambridge for the past three years. I am writing to express my strong support for the recently proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance.

I believe that ending exclusionary zoning practices and promoting the development of more housing across Cambridge is crucial for the city's future. By adopting this ordinance as written, the City Council can take a significant step towards increasing housing supply, making it more affordable, and ensuring that our community remains a vibrant and diverse place to live.

I urge you to move forward with legalizing six-story buildings across Cambridge and easing zoning restrictions. This will not only help alleviate the current housing crisis but also create opportunities for economic growth and community development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Guillermo

--

Best,

Guillermo Gomez

[LinkedIn](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kayla Springer <kayla.p.springer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:06 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for six stories across Cambridge

Hello,

My name is Kayla Springer, and I'm a student in Cambridge. I've lived in Cambridge for three years now and hope to continue living here when I am no longer a student. As such, I strongly urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as it is written and pass it into law. Ending exclusionary zoning in Cambridge is an important step toward making the city more affordable, more inclusive, and more sustainable. It will also help other young people like me afford to live in Cambridge and enjoy its incredible community and opportunities. Moreover, 85-90% of Cambridge does not conform to the current zoning code. Cambridge needs to update their zoning code to reflect the present and future of the city, and so again, I urge you to pass this bill without delay and without amendments.

Best,
Kayla

Erwin, Nicole

From: Arielle Lok <arielle.lok@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:58 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Support for Multifamily Housing Ordinance

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Arielle Lok, and I have been proud and lucky to call Cambridge my home for the last two years. I deeply value this community and want to continue living here for as long as I can.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance. This measure is a critical step toward ending exclusionary zoning and ensuring that Cambridge remains a welcoming and vibrant city for everyone.

By increasing housing inventory and reducing zoning restrictions, this ordinance will:

- Provide much-needed homes for current and future residents,
- Help mitigate displacement, which has already affected many of my friends,
- Support a more inclusive community by allowing more people to live and thrive in our great city.

I urge the City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law without delay. Cambridge must continue to move forward, embracing thoughtful policies that address the housing crisis and create a more equitable future for all.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Arielle Lok
Cambridge Resident

Erwin, Nicole

From: Peter Dunn <pndunn@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:44 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please pursue a methodical approach to new zoning - not 6-story

Dear Councillors,

Thank you all very much for your hard work in recent months on the envisioned zoning changes for our city.

Keeping Cambridge as accessible as possible is a very worthy goal, and like most residents, I would like to see an appropriate balance between encouraging new housing and maintaining the character of our neighborhoods.

With the zoning changes now further along in the process, and votes approaching, I wanted to reiterate my concerns about the six-story citywide approach, which seems to have substantial potential for unintended consequences and failure to achieve the overall goal of more affordable housing, and ask that you pursue a more methodical approach.

After some reading and discussion, I believe the optimal way forward would be to allow multifamily housing throughout the city, increase height limits to 3 stories (which seems to be a "sweet spot" in terms of construction cost and scale) and leave open the possibility of 4-story projects by special permit, and perhaps 6 stories by special permit along avenues.

This approach would represent a major change and significant step towards greater housing access and addressing the historical inequities of restrictive zoning, with far less possibility of problems. I very much hope you will pursue such a course.

Thank you very much for consideration, and for your service to our city!

Peter Dunn
77 Grozier Road

Erwin, Nicole

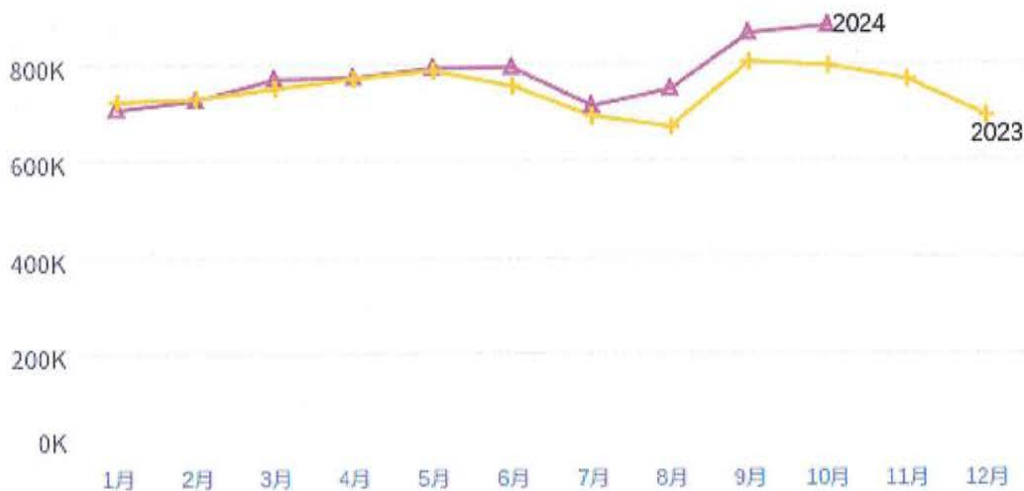
From: Ethan Frank <ethandf2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 9:40 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: CSO Compromise - Ordinance Committee

To the Ordinance Committee,

Thank you for coming to the compromise of 2026. Personally, I am excited for the Main street project, so that I will no longer need to lie to my grandmother when asked if I'm safe on my way to work. I would have preferred to had it installed this year though.

P.S. Now that the T has been fixed, almost 100,000 more trips were taken this October compared to last. That translates to many fewer cars on the road, and more available parking spots. This trend will continue as we continue to make alternative modes safer, faster, and more reliable.

Ridership by month (all modes)



Sincerely,
Ethan Frank
632 Mass Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Brennan Waters <brennan.waters34@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 8:41 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Stop building housing for only multi-millionaires

Dear Members of the City Council,

My name is Brennan Waters and I've lived and worked in Cambridge for the last 5 years. I live about 100 feet from a new development at 386 Harvard St. After so much construction noise, I was disappointed that this development didn't offer rentals for middle class or even high-income Cambridge residents, but instead has a listed rent of **almost \$10,000/month!** Something is very wrong if our zoning is encouraging these buildings that only multi-millionaires can afford. But it's a direct result of the density restrictions of the current code.

This isn't an isolated example. A new building went up next to Lamplighter brewing, which I walk by often, but instead of creating apartments for normal people it created only **two \$2.4 million** townhouses. What a sad use of space in our already expensive city. I'm sure you can think of a building in your own neighborhood that took up time and created construction noise and only generated one or two homes for the ultra-wealthy instead of many places for the middle class to live.

I urge the council to support 6 stories across Cambridge and allow developers to build housing that normal people can afford.

Thank you,
Brennan Waters
14 Remington St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Will Wang <williamwang5041@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 9:30 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; City Council
Subject: Multifamily Zoning Petition support

Hi all,

I'd like to register my support for the multifamily zoning petitions to be discussed on Wednesday. Preventing multifamily residences from being built is anti-market and increases the price of housing for everyone. I think we should let people decide the types of places they want to live in, without excessive restrictions from zoning laws.

Thanks,
Will

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cynthia W Smith <cynthiasmithasla@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 9:20 PM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk
Cc: Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; bazee@cambridgema.gov; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; amwilson@camridgema.ov; Zusy, Catherine
Subject: Proposed Modifications to Residential Zoning

Dear Planning Board, Ordinance Committee, and City Councillors,

While I am in support of the proposed new zoning to allow increased multi-family density in residential districts, the following modifications to the review and approval process are crucial:

1. Retain front, rear, and side setbacks in as of right projects (1,2 and 3 story residential) that are not being reviewed through a Planning Process.
2. Subject proposed 4, 5 and 6 story in-fill residential building developments and any modifications of setbacks associated, be subject to an expedited special permit review and approval process by the planning board and city departments.
(Increase staff support to keep this from being bogged down from a process standpoint.)
3. Finally, projects with 4, 5 and story developments must consider overall context, neighborhood appropriateness, and the quality of the architectural and landscape design in the design solution and Special Permit Review when increasing density.

Thank you for your consideration. If you do not incorporate design review for the higher density projects proposed, the result will be mediocrity in the built form and you will lose all credibility with a large percentage of the Cambridge Community many of whom have very busy lives and are just finding out about this rezoning initiative.

Respectfully yours,
Cynthia Smith, ASLA
37 Crescent St, Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Camilla Elvis <camillaelvis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 8:54 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Dear Councillors,

Please make Cambridge a leader in ending exclusionary zoning and address our housing shortage by allowing 6-story multi-family housing by right in residential zones.

Thank you,
Camilla Elvis
28 Linnaean St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kevin Cowles <kevincowles19@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 8:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Happy Cambridge resident sending support for multifamily housing

Hello,

My name is Kevin Cowles and I've been living in Cambridge since graduating from college in 2019 in another state. Cambridge has been a second home to me and I'm writing this email to express my support for the six-story multifamily housing bill.

I am fortunate that I am able to afford a 1 bedroom with my girlfriend in a triple decker, but it's been really sad to watch friends and neighbors leave Cambridge because of the huge rent increases and housing competition.

My rent is set at \$3150 for the single bedroom apartment in the East Cambridge area. I'm concerned that I will be priced out with an increase at the end of our lease in August.

I truly believe that an increase in the housing supply will lower rent prices, and that the multi-family housing bill is the first step in helping Cambridge support a healthy population of residents.

I urge you to please pass this bill without delay or amendments.

Sincerely,
Kevin Cowles

Erwin, Nicole

From: Daniel Traver <dftraver@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 8:34 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Six-Story Multifamily Housing in Cambridge

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Daniel Traver, and I moved to Cambridge in 2020. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed six-story multifamily housing ordinance.

This ordinance represents a crucial step toward ending exclusionary zoning and addressing Cambridge's ongoing housing crisis. By legalizing six-story multifamily housing across the city, we can take meaningful action to increase housing supply, improve affordability, and ensure Cambridge remains a vibrant, inclusive community. With one of the lowest apartment vacancy rates in the region, Cambridge cannot afford to delay in adopting policies that will provide relief for current and future residents.

Adding more housing supply is a proven way to help lower rents and stabilize housing markets. Furthermore, this ordinance aligns with the pressing need to address housing inequity, climate resilience, and population shifts that threaten Cambridge's growth and inclusivity.

I urge the City Council to pass this multifamily housing ordinance as written and move forward with legalizing six-story buildings across Cambridge without delay. This is a critical opportunity to prioritize housing for all and ensure that Cambridge remains a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds and income levels.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Daniel

Erwin, Nicole

From: Patricia Bull <pb47design@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 7:47 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: upzoning proposal

I am writing **in opposition to** the upzoning proposal that would allow 75' tall buildings, provide less than 20% affordable units, provide no open or green space and parking, and kill hundreds of trees. Such a horrendous proposal would forever change the character and history of the city we love, and also drive out low-income residents..

I have lived in Cambridge for almost 50 years.

Please vote **No**.

Patricia Bull
399 Broadway #31
Cambridge, MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jonathan Cohen <jonpcohen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 7:36 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Strong support for current multifamily zoning proposal

I am a resident of 22 Water St in East Cambridge. I have been a worker, student, or resident in Cambridge since 2015. I am unable to make Wednesday's meeting, so I am writing to strongly voice support for allowing multifamily housing in all Cambridge neighborhoods.

Watering down the current proposal risks further prolonging the housing shortage. When I tuned into the Cambridge Planning Board meeting and heard discussion of whether restricting heights could help foster more connections between neighbors, I couldn't help but think of all of my friends who have moved out of Cambridge due to the lack of housing options and the high cost of what little housing is available.

I deeply want to remain in Cambridge with my wife as we look to grow our family. Please be a part of the solution to make that possible for me and many others.

Best,
Jonathan Cohen

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jackson Moore-Otto <jmojmo@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 6:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please move quickly to support zoning for six stories across Cambridge

Esteemed Councilors,

I am writing to urge you to **move quickly** to pass the proposed zoning to end exclusionary zoning and allow up to six story developments citywide.

We urgently need more housing across Cambridge and across our Commonwealth. I'm proud to live in a city that does the right thing and leads the rest of the Commonwealth on so many issues. We've already taken some real steps to address our housing crisis, and know that I'm very appreciative of it. **But it isn't enough, and now is not the time for half-measures.** I understand that some of you may find this proposal to be a jarring break with the status quo, which severely restricts housing production across the city.

The fact is, we need a pronounced break from the status quo. I grew up in Cambridge, and I'd love to remain here long term. But, without significant change to our housing policy that simple won't be possible. Moving to six stories citywide is a concrete step in the right direction toward a city that I (and many others) can continue to afford, live in, and contribute to.

Many Thanks,
Jackson Moore-Otto

Erwin, Nicole

From: jl@l-architects.net
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 6:01 PM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk
Subject: FW: I think you and your colleagues can be heroes in the city if you settle for a little less.
Attachments: Possible 6-story replacement of a 2-family house by new zoning.pdf

Dear planning board members: (and ordinance committee) :

I know you have the best future for the city as a goal, but I am afraid the unchecked allowance of 6-story buildings everywhere will have some unforeseen consequences the staff studies have not thought about and have not addressed. This is a letter I have written to the city councilors, I think you as members of the planning committee should be giving them profession advice on this: the proposed zoning change (in particular the 6-story, 75-foot height by right) is a blunt tool that will do more damage than good, ultimately. It needs to be part of a much larger plan. Please read the concerns section below. Any two of these should give one pause before leaping into this change blindly. They have set their goals so high, that a half win is way more than anyone could have expected as a change a year ago.

PLEASE TAKE THE WIN!

You have successfully opened a constructive dialogue with the whole city, and have almost everyone on board with the following consensus:

1. Cambridge should provide more affordable housing
2. Cambridge needs more housing for workers in Cambridge
3. Multifamily housing should be allowed across Cambridge in all zones
4. 3 story buildings should be allowed everywhere (with design review that allows neighbor input, only for projects that add 2 or more units)
5. 4-story buildings should be allowed with some conditions and review (with design oversight, and with 20% inclusionary only)
6. 6 story buildings should be allowed by special permit (and allowable only with 20% inclusionary, and by priority only on main corridors)

This is a huge change from what is currently permitted and I am sure would get unanimous support in the Council.

I have attended a number of neighborhood and official governmental presentations and meetings, and while general acceptance of the above drastic changes to meet a demand there are **several real concerns**:

1. **Even with the original 6-story height and no setbacks, Cambridge will never be able to satisfy a demand** generated by the 75,000 biotech jobs in Kendall Square, and the three growing universities with new students cycling through every year.
2. **Cambridge, at 7 Square miles is a tiny part of a much larger market**, so increasing supply here by even 12,000 unit by 2030 will have virtually no effect on overall housing market in general and certainly not on lowering costs of housing in Cambridge. The target of 12,000 new housing units from 2018 was just aspirational
3. **The City Staff** has made an effort to quantify differences in potential growth with various zoning scenarios, but they **admit projected housing increases is just a "planning study"**, and there are too many variable to capture the reality created by the new zoning, because there is no precedent for this kind of zoning change, and "Cambridge is leading the way". This leads many to feel uncomfortable that the proposed extent of the change is a result of staff following directions not real data.
1. **Cambridge cannot solve Housing shortage and rising costs** which are regional and national problems which have been years in the making and will take decades and many social changes to resolve. The drastic proposed change is being rushed through as though a few months will make a difference when it typically takes 2 years for any housing project to be built.
2. **Removing design review is an unnecessary gift to developers and speculators.** Design review if properly responded to by the design team can often be accomplished in just a few meetings. Delays occur usually when developers do not take

the reviews seriously. Removing the required approval of planning reviews and making them advisory essentially makes them meaningless as proponents of projects can just ignore the advice.

3. **Setbacks at side and rear should be kept at 5' in residential zones except where reduced by special permit.** The fear of even a 45-foot blank wall on a property line is real, and would affect property values of adjacent homes significantly more than if the neighbor was set back a little. If properties are being combined this will not be much of a burden and would allow windows around corners of buildings. Special permits could allow no setback where by circumstances the impact will not be significant. Removing large mature trees should only be allowed by special permit. Open space must include at least 50% green space (permeable and directly on the earth where trees can be added).
4. **Why are we not following Somerville's form based zoning across the city?** It is working there. It is actually a product of serious urban design, It provides certainty for developers and land owners. It may take a few years, but it can result in a huge development potential for the city, with development responding to transportation and utility capacities, preserving historic and cultural buildings and supporting growth where it is needed and preserving scale and character patterns which have developed over a hundred years.
5. **Universities and large commercial entities should be pressured to do more** to unburden the city of their housing needs and lower demand on apartments. (it is known that many wealthy parents buy condos for their student children for when they are in school here rather than paying rent, and then often keep the condos as investments, adding more pressure on residents)
6. **Making multifamily housing possible in all districts** will end the most objectional aspect of the "exclusive zoning" that a number of people have `as anachronistic in today's world. This is a change generally supported by residents of all parts of the city.

Others:

7. 6 Stories must be delimited as no taller than 72' .
8. Provide a preservation "benefit" and allow a decrease to 10% inclusionary if the original home façade is maintained,
9. Provide a vacant lot "benefit" to allow a decrease to 10% inclusionary if one builds on an empty lot.
10. Provide a local owner "benefit" for condos with more than 75% local resident ownership (owner occupied) allow decrease to 10% inclusionary.
11. Require an infrastructure fee for all projects, scaled by size of project to help pay for new infrastrure and replace existing ones.

The City council should take this win now, and if in a few years if it is going well and more concessions are necessary it can be done then. It is much simpler to decrease controls over time than to make massive changes and then try to reverse them if things have unforeseen bad consequences.

A happy compromise everyone I believe would support is:

1. Multifamily housing permitted throughout the city
2. 3 stories (35' maximum) allowed by right throughout the city with some design review in response to guidelines
3. 4 stories (45' maximum) allowed by planning board design approval with certain larger set-backs.
4. 6 stories (70' maximum) allowed by special permit with design review, and permitted if affordable units are
5. 5 foot side-yard setbacks
6. Floors 4-6: 10' minimum side yard set-backs
7. FAR limit could be increased significantly.
8. Open Space: half of required 30% of lot area could be provided by above ground spaces like balconies and decks, rest by conventional definitions.
9. Parking: some parking on site should be encouraged for the convenience of the occupants, and to relieve some of the inevitable impacts on neighborhood on-street parking which will result from the added housing.
10. All these changes are the first step in a new form-based zoning of the entire city, which will target areas for future development, and open new possibilities for increased housing supply.

If any of these are particularly onerous to a developer of a project which is primarily housing, they should be allowed to get some additional relief by special permit, not just by variance, which has legal rstrictions.

This will be a huge and unprecedented up-zoning. It puts Cambridge at the forefront of progressive zoning in the country, and it provides the starting point for the proper urban design rezoning of the city through form-based zoning, which can occur in steps while still allowing significant development while that process is on-going.

This is a simple way to end the beginning of a huge and unhappy conflict in the city.

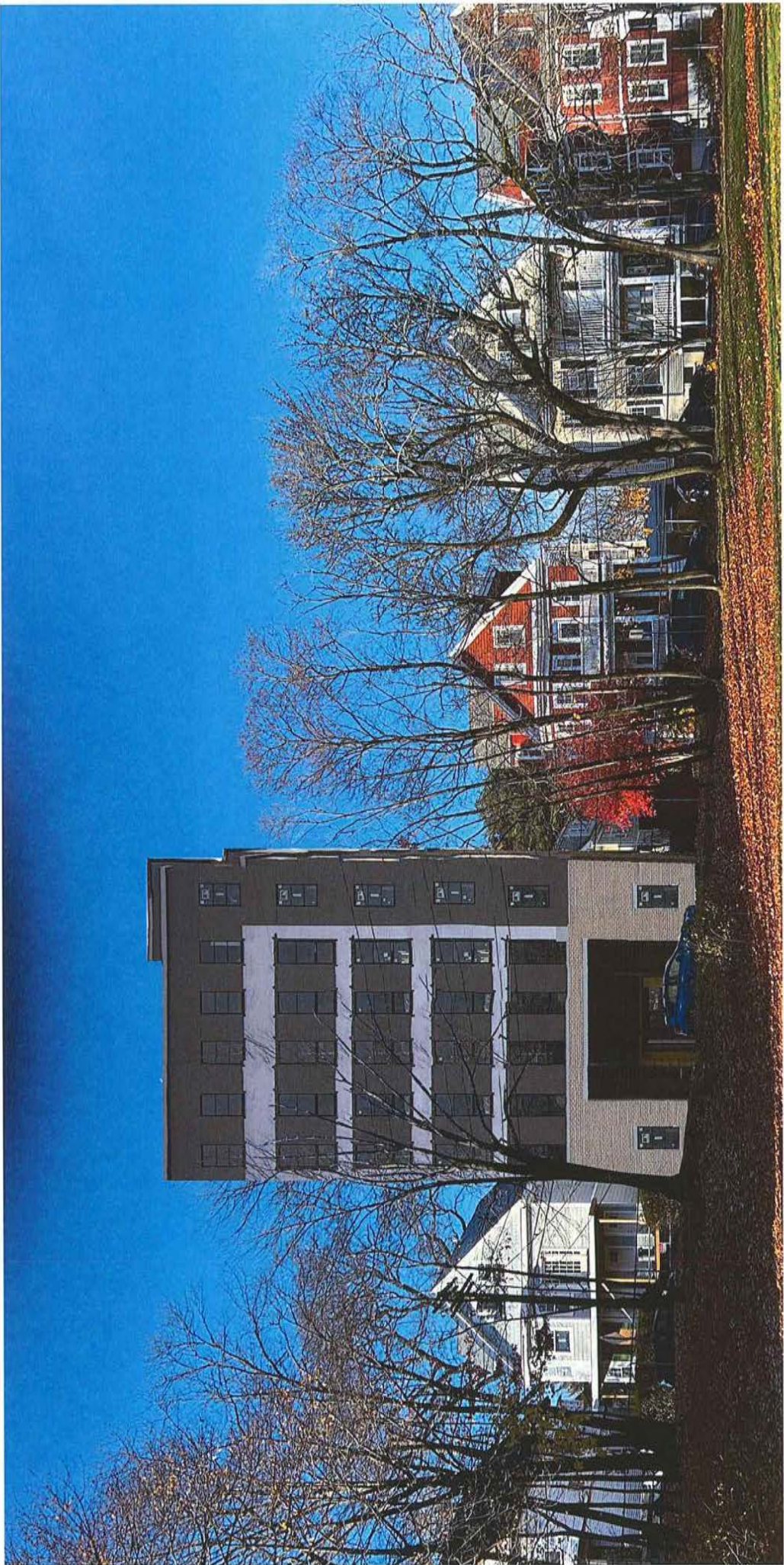
Please take the win.

John

John LaFreniere AIA
Principal
LaFreniere Architects

LaFreniere Architects
678 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

T: 617-661-4222
F: 617-661-4244
M: 781-330-9565
E: JL@L-Architects.net
www.L-Architects.net



Erwin, Nicole

From: Steve Wineman <steven.wineman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 5:54 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multi-Family Zoning Proposal

Dear Councillors,

My name is Steve Wineman, and I am a Cambridge resident at 26 McTernan St. I write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at the December 4 Ordinance Committee hearing.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's [petition](#) and its amendment to this zoning. I particularly support the creation of a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing. These policies are part of the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge affordable to all.

I support amending the multifamily zoning so that zoning changes are limited to projects that cross the "inclusionary threshold." In other words, these changes would only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing. This amendment would both significantly reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in **even more affordable units** than CDD has projected for the existing proposal, and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single family and two family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Steve Wineman
26 McTernan St.

--

This email communication is made possible by the labor of the people of the Congo, including thousands of children, mining cobalt for rechargeable lithium batteries in conditions tantamount to slavery. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/02/01/1152893248/red-cobalt-congo-drc-mining-siddharth-kara>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 5:44 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Re: query about public comment at Ordinance Committee

Understood. Is there a way to know how many are signed up on the morning of the meeting?

On Mon, Dec 2, 2024 at 5:31 PM City Clerk <cityclerk@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

If there are more than 20 people signed up for Public comment the time will be brought down to 2 min per person. Ordinarily it is 3 min per person. At this point we can not give you an answer since Public comment is open for sign up.

Lori Perez

City Clerk's office

From: Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 5:16 PM
To: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>
Subject: query about public comment at Ordinance Committee

Hello,

Is there a way to know how many people are signed up for public comment so that we know in advance how much time we will have to speak?

Thanks,

Andy

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ajay Sonalkar <asonalkar@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 4:34 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Multifamily Housing Required

Hello,
>
> I strong support zoning laws that would encourage a lot more affordable housing to be built in Cambridge.
>
> I am currently a Cambridge resident and residing in Ward 4-3. My son goes to Baldwin School on Oxford street.
>
> The cost of housing has been sky rocketing over the past 5 years. This is causing tremendous inequity and hardship between folks who can afford homes and those who struggle to pay sufficient rent every month.
>
> For my family I need a home that can cost about \$400-450k for which I can provide sufficient down payment and afford.
>
> We need more housing so that my family can remain in Cambridge and my son does not need to change schools.
>
> Thank you for acting on this with alacrity.
>
> Ajay

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ajay Sonalkar <asonalkar@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 4:29 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Cc: info@bettercambridge.org
Subject: Multifamily Housing Required

Hello,

I strongly support zoning laws that would encourage a lot more affordable housing to be built in Cambridge.

I am currently a Cambridge resident and residing in Ward 4-3. My son goes to Baldwin School on Oxford Street.

The cost of housing has been sky rocketing over the past 5 years. This is causing tremendous inequity and hardship between folks who can afford homes and those who struggle to pay sufficient rent every month.

For my family I need a home that can cost about \$400-450k for which I can provide sufficient down payment and afford.

We need more housing so that my family can remain in Cambridge and my son does not need to change schools.

Thank you for acting on this with alacrity.

Ajay

Erwin, Nicole

From: Catherine Hoffman <catherinehoffman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 4:12 PM
To: Wilson, Ayesha; Azeem, Burhan; cathie zusy; City Clerk; Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; McGovern, Marc; Patricia Nolan; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Siddiqui, Sumbul; sumbul siddiqui
Cc: 'CHJC CC'
Subject: Multifamily housing

Dear Councilors,

Perhaps since time immemorial, Cambridge has been a city designed differently to benefit different groups of people. One part of the city, the neighborhood in which I grew up, is generally characterized by large single-family homes on large lots surrounded by plentiful yards and set apart from one another for spaciousness and plentiful tree canopy. While other neighborhoods, including the one I have lived in since 1978 are characterized by two and three and four story (and sometimes eight or 12 stories) buildings snugly fit side-by-side with occasional yards, few parks and smaller amounts of trees.

This iniquity made possible by zoning needs to finally be rectified. Please lift the restriction on single and two family homes city-wide. If there is a genuine desire for fairness, please focus on enabling greater density and heights in these areas with subsidies, so it could be affordable in those historically exclusive neighborhoods.

At the same time, it would be highly unfair to accentuate those historical differences by creating a system of six story buildings as of right with no design or setbacks for the entire city that does not promote any affordability. This would likely leave West Cambridge untouched and further intensify the density of the other neighborhoods in Cambridge.

For the rest of the city, please only allow additional heights or density which are tied to inclusionary units and with the necessary oversights which genuinely support neighborhood life not a giveaway to developers. Anything less will set up currently "naturally affordable" units to be replaced by more market rate housing displacing affordable space for higher income tenants/owners.

Finally, there are many different "facts" being circulated about the number of affordable units currently in Cambridge and future housing plans. It would be essential for CDD to compile the most verifiable data.

Thank you,
Cathy Hoffman, 67 Pleasant st.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marie Keil <mariejkeil@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 3:52 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Dear members of the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Marie Keil and I am a homeowner in North Cambridge. I write today urging you to support the Multifamily Housing Zoning petitions under discussion this week with the Ordinance Committee.

The petitions as written are thorough and thoughtful, the result of many years of research and development on the parts of staff and citizens. Now is not the time for even more research and discussion; we can implement these new zoning regulations, and then learn from them and tweak as needed.

It was notable to me in staff presentations at the last Planning board meetings that *many existing structures in Cambridge* are not compliant with current single-family zoning: our neighborhoods *already have* multifamily housing, which are key elements of the positive character of the Cambridge neighborhoods we love!

Our neighborhoods are always changing. These petitions are a change that is necessary to keep Cambridge a vibrant, diverse place to live. As a homeowner, I can't wait to welcome new neighbors to North Cambridge and share what a wonderful place this is to live.

Please do not let "perfect" be the enemy of "good" -- we need more housing, without delay.

Thank you so much for your time and your service to our city!

Best,
Marie Keil
25 Rindgefield St, Cambridge 02140

Erwin, Nicole

From: Van Stee, Elena <evanstee@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 3:28 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: End exclusionary zoning in Cambridge

Hello,

I'm Elena van Stee, a PhD candidate at Harvard. I live in Cambridge and am writing to express my support for the six-story multifamily housing bill.

My rent is currently \$4,100, split between myself and my roommate (not including utilities). With a 40K graduate stipend, I've had to take on additional side jobs to make my monthly rent payments.

It's particularly difficult to rent in Cambridge as a single adult. As I approach 30, I would love to be done with the living-with-roommates phase of life, and unfortunately that's not feasible in Cambridge. Additional housing, especially taller units with more studio apartments, would help prevent rent increases for existing units and open up new possibilities for single young adults (of which there are many, given the graduate student population!) to have some semblance of an "adult" living situation.

Please help young adults like me by passing the six-story multifamily housing with no amendments.

Sincerely,
Elena

Elena G. van Stee
www.elevanvanstee.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Christopher Knight <cgknightsailor@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 3:10 PM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Please rethink the zoning proposal

I have a background in architecture and have lived in Cambridge for 50 years. Multifamily housing citywide is a good goal, but I am concerned that this radical deregulation is going to result in poorly designed buildings that will tower above and crowd their neighbors, preempting light, air and open space.

It will create huge loopholes for a developer to make more profits. They can stop at 9 luxury units with no setbacks and no trees and have no requirement to create affordable units. There are other unintended consequences This proposal will encourage McMansions that fill lots completely and increase teardowns of older homes (in some cases decreasing units). This will likely lead to evictions, lease terminations and force existing residents to leave the city.

If your neighbor builds to the plot line, this zoning would allow you to follow suit, *but the building code would not*. So the first builder restricts the rights of the second. With normal setbacks, the city can grant permits without eliminating the future rights of abutters.

A more moderate approach with flexible setbacks, lower height limits in residential areas and design review would allow better multifamily housing to be built. Cambridge is already one of the densest cities in the country and we have done this without radical deregulation. Small 3 or 4 story buildings are the most economical. Accessory units can add housing at low cost. Large buildings should be subject to design review.

This current proposal should be paused and rethought.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Paul E Fallon <fallonpaule@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 2:09 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee Hearing - December 4, 2024: In Support of Proposed Changes to Zoning Code

Members of the Ordinance Committee –

Since I wrote to the City Council in support of the proposed zoning changes for the City of Cambridge in September, 2024, I have had the pleasure to attend a workshop sponsored by Community Development and want to reaffirm my total and complete support for the proposed zoning changes.

First, it is important to embrace the sustainable attributes this proposal offers. Cambridge is blessed with some of the best infrastructure in our state in terms of utilities, power, and transportation. We can support higher density, with less environmental degradation, than more suburban and rural communities. Thus, we should do so.

Second, it is important to acknowledge that we have a two-tier housing crisis: an affordable housing crisis and an overall housing crisis. This zoning change will go a great way to address our overall crisis. In addition, since it will allow many more residential units to be built, and many of the new buildings will fall under inclusionary zoning guidelines, it will also increase the number of affordable units in proportion to the total amount of new development.

Third, claims that the character of our city will be lost are false. Most of Cambridge is divided into quite small, separately owned parcels that are not suitable for six-story development. However, where parcels are large enough to create such development, we should make the process clear and efficient. This proposal enables that.

I live down the street from one of the most egregious examples of spot-zoning anywhere in this city. 700 Huron is a 20-story apartment building in the middle of a neighborhood of two- and three- family zoning. It has been there for more than fifty years. It is not a pretty building. Yet it serves an important function in our neighborhood, providing more than 250 apartments to people who could not otherwise live here. Sure, the tower is odd in a residential area, and it casts serious shadows in the winter. But it has not destroyed the character of Strawberry Hill, and its deficiencies are minimal compared to the reality that it provides a large amount of importantly needed housing.

I am confident that scattering six story buildings in our neighborhood will add more to our neighborhood than it will detract.

I must add that I do not believe we will ever build our way out of this housing crisis. I urge the council to devote further energy and resources into finding ways to better utilize our existing housing stock: how to reduce the number of conversions from two- and three- family to single family; how to encourage small property owners to actually rent their empty units; and how to encourage cooperative and congregate forms of housing. All of these issues will have to be addressed to create satisfactory, sustainable, housing for all.

In the meantime, please, pass the proposed zoning ordinance. Make it a reality.

Thank you all for your service to our city.

Paul E. Fallon
618 Huron Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138

--

Paul E. Fallon
618 Huron Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138-4531
617-661-9464

www.paulefallon.com

www.howwillwelivetomorrow.com

www.theawkwardpose.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: John Wofford <johnwofford@earthlink.net>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 1:40 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Letter re: multifamily rezoning petitions
Attachments: Letter to City Council & Planning Board.pdf

Please see attached letter.
John G. Wofford

13 Cottage Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Email: johnwofford@earthlink.net
December 2, 2024

To the City Council and Planning Board:

For over 36 years, I have been the owner and resident of an 1868 single-family house at 13 Cottage Street in Cambridgeport. I submit these comments on the Multi Family Rezoning Petitions. I strongly oppose the Petitions because of the changes in height, lot size, and setbacks, but I support a zoning change to allow multi-family housing city-wide.

Support multi-family throughout the city.

I support revising the Zoning Code to allow multi-family housing throughout the residential districts of Cambridge as a stand-alone change. I believe this change will preserve the charms and characters of our various neighborhoods.

Oppose revisions to height limits, set-backs, and lot sizes.

I strongly oppose the revisions to the height limits, elimination of side- and rear-yard set-back provisions, and changes to minimum lot sizes. Allowing 6-story apartment buildings on most residential streets would drastically change the appearance and character of neighborhoods, dramatically increase shadows, threaten roof-top solar electricity, increase already-limited parking demand, eliminate rear-yard light and open space, threaten our tree canopy, and drastically change the beautiful, varied Cambridge neighborhoods to an increasingly uniform appearance. If a 6-story (or even a 4-story) apartment house were built across the street from our house, we would be in shadow for most of the day. It would be even worse if such an apartment house were built out to a boundary-to-boundary footprint.

Our block demonstrates that multi-family as-of-right will increase supply over time.

Multi-family, when allowed as-of-right, can evolve over time without changing the distinctive neighborhood character. Our block (between Magazine and Pearl Streets) is an example of such evolution. In appearance, we are twenty 19th Century single-family structures, one Twentieth Century 2-family (rebuilt after a fire), and one 3-decker; in reality, however, there are 34 dwelling units in those 22 structures – a multiplier of 50%. One house has four rental apartments, another has three, two of the original 1830's "cottages" for workers are now 2-family, one single-family was divided into two condos, one house has been reconverted to single-family from three rental units, and another is being restored to single-family after eliminating a third-floor rental apartment. In other words, we look like a block of 19th Century single-family homes (plus the 3-decker), but in reality one-third of the structures have multi-family units.

Allow flexibility to make changes as family situations evolve.

Our block demonstrates that with the right to establish multi-family units, residents adapt by subdividing or building out as their situations change. In our block, five of the 20 lots have, over time, built out the original structure to fill the available space; others, like ours, preserve the rear open space as garden. Three others have built entirely separate structures in the back in addition to the original house. With respect to off-street parking, 10 lots have used side-lot setbacks for pull-in parking. This flexibility is one of the great attractions of our neighborhoods. I recommend that such as-of-right flexibility be extended to all of Cambridge.

(Next page follows)

Goal of large increase in number of units is unrealistic and unnecessary.

According to USA.com, Cambridge, with over 15,034 people per square mile, is already the third densest city in Massachusetts, after Somerville (18,378/sq mi) and Chelsea (15,083/sq mi). It is over twice as dense as the cities of Boston (7,135/sq mile) and Lowell (7,468/sq m). According to the 2020 Census, Cambridge had 53,907 units of housing. The “goal” of increasing housing supply by 12,500 units, an increase of nearly 25%, was a product of the Cambridge Envision process, but it has never been approved by the City Council. Increasing the housing stock to this extent is not likely to result in lower prices; rather, Cambridge is so attractive that adding such units will be a bonanza for developers charging ever-higher prices. While we need more affordable housing, I do not believe we need such a drastic increase in the total number of units.

Variety of neighborhoods should be preserved.

One of the charms of Cambridge is the variety of the character of our neighborhoods: town-houses and three-deckers in East Boston, two-family structures in North Cambridge, modestly spaced single-family 19th Century homes in Cambridgeport, more tightly packed three-deckers in central Cambridge, spread-out single-family homes in West Cambridge – each has its own charm and character. In terms of urban design, we should celebrate our vibrant and distinctive neighborhoods. All could maintain their distinctive qualities while also permitting multi-family housing throughout the city.

Allow affordable housing bonus for apartments on “squares and corridors.”

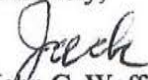
I strongly support increasing the supply of affordable units. There is already progress being made pursuant to the Affordable Housing Overlay, which should be the city’s primary means of increasing affordability. In addition, I would recommend that “squares and corridors” permit 4-story buildings, with the ability to go to 6-floors if it has the required 20% of affordable units. Our nearest “corridor,” Magazine Street, has a number of 4-, 5-, and 6-story apartment buildings, scattered among the 100-or so single family houses between Central Square and Memorial Drive. In addition, there are obvious huge areas in Cambridge that can be developed with affordable units: the large parking area on Prospect Street one block north of Mass Ave and close to the Red Line stop at Central Square; and the large area on Waverly Street at the end of Sidney Street across from the old Ford Assembly Plant. These should be developed with high-rise affordable units, perhaps by use of eminent domain if the owners and/or developers are not prepared to act.

Fairness throughout City while providing flexibility to residents over time.

I believe the above changes – allowing multi-family in all Cambridge residential areas, and allowing taller buildings as a reward for affordable units on squares and corridors – would go a long way toward creating more fairness city-wide, but do so in a gradual manner that fits with the changing individual needs and interests of our residents.

I fear these two petitions as written would result in a bonanza for developers, fail to substantially increase affordability, and result in more conflict than progress. With the changes I am suggesting, however, I think we could move forward toward modestly increasing the supply of housing while maintaining much of what we love about our City.

Sincerely,


John G. Wofford
617-803-8663

Erwin, Nicole

From: HELEN ABRAHAM <helen.abraham@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 12:35 PM
To: City Clerk
Cc: City Manager
Subject: Fwd: Serious Housing Issues

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: HELEN ABRAHAM <helen.abraham@verizon.net>
Date: December 2, 2024 at 12:31:41 PM EST
To: citycouncil@cambridgema.gov
Cc: planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov
Subject: **Serious Housing Issues**

To: City Councilors, City Planning and Zoning, City Manager, City Clerk,

Appologies if I am not up to date on the latest plan. I went to the "virtual information" presentation back a few weeks ago, but due to some ongoing difficult health challenges, and to my age, I have been unable to attend any since.

I am writing to you because I am alarmed and disturbed at what our City Councilors are considering, to address the Affordable Housing Issues. No one would dispute that we have a housing shortage, and especially an Affordable Housing shortage.

My understanding is that you want to address this difficult situation by having Citywide UP Zoning in all parts of the city, in any and every neighborhood (historical possible exception). That would mean buildings can be 6 or 7 stories, and even higher (no limitation), without building design controls, without review or oversight by the city. The rights of residents, homeowners, property owners, businesses, and neighborhoods would be removed. We would have no right to say what is built next door or in our neighborhoods. We would experience the elimination of green space, and current set backs. Space between buildings, sidewalks, properties next door, etc., requirements removed. Also allowed, combining 2 properties so that one huge building of any height could be built. In addition, I understand currently there is no parking requirement for new building, denying that people need parking, and creating a parking nightmare; which to some extent we already

have, in large part due to the removal of parking spaces to facilitate the addition of bike lanes.

Where are the INFRASTRUCTURE STUDIES of how our city and neighborhoods will be affected, including our roads, utilities, traffic, parking, electrical and communication systems, water and sewer systems? What about fire considerations, potential water table problems, and FLOODING?! What about the unintended consequences!

Real Estate Developers are already buying up properties wherever available, often gutting the single family home and small buildings with rental apartments, and transforming them into exorbitantly expensive townhouses (at 1 to 2 million and more). This has happened here on Winslow Street. In addition, because the developer was building in other parts of the city, the construction on our street (across the street from me) went on and on for years, with all the challenges of the construction itself, trucks & various apparatus, lack of parking, air pollution, constant noise, and rat infestation (caused by workers throwing away leftover food, pizza boxes, etc, into the dumpsters). These homes, townhouses, etc. are not affordable, except to the wealthy.

In addition the increase in Housing prices in our neighborhoods has resulted in higher property values, and therefore significantly higher real estate taxes. I believe 2 of the highest costing newly constructed townhouses, across the street, more recently sold for close to 2 million, and were not included in this past years property tax, so that next years property tax will be even higher.

Many homeowners will not be able to afford the higher real estate taxes, and will not be able to stay in their homes, including seniors living primarily on social security. Renters will also be affected.

I understand Real Estate Investors and Private Equity Companies from outside the area have been buying up properties west of the metropolitan Boston area, and building new housing at very steep prices, entirely as a money making scheme. These developers and private equity company investors care nothing about our city or neighborhoods, only about the money.

When one family homes are destroyed for new more expensive housing, even the affordable housing we have, is lost. In addition the destruction of current homes and buildings cause harm to the environment.

What about caring for and protecting our precious neighborhoods? Although with good intentions, why are our City Councilors and why is our City insisting on running roughshod over our neighborhoods which are such a special part of our city?

A friend of mine who lives in East Boston told me a similar thing happened there, and there were lots of meetings to explain what they wanted to do and to get input from the residents. She said, in the end the people in control just did what they wanted anyway. I am afraid that is what is happening here. I hope I am wrong. Moreover I hope this plan, upzoning etc, will not be pushed through during this holiday season and before the new year, when people are

preoccupied with other things, and are unable to make attending these meetings a priority.

I have mentioned some of my worries about this agenda. That's enough to be upset about. This bill or Affordable Housing agenda will change our city in ways we have never imagined. I urge you NOT to push this agenda forward. I think there are better ways to go about creating Affordable Housing, if that is truly the issue. Please know Affordable Housing (along with increasing property values and real estate taxes) has become a worry and challenge for me as well. There is no need to go to this extreme. We can build Affordable Housing that will conserve and enhance our neighborhoods.

From a more ethical consideration, if not legal, I feel if any of our City Councilors would benefit from this change, whether they are real estate developers, a private equity company or equity fund investors, etc, or taking money from them, that Councilor or those Councilors should not be involved in planning or voting on this proposal. I say this because I have heard from Councilors over the years that this has happened.

I appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

Helen Abraham
34 Winslow Street
Cambridge

Sent from my iPad

Erwin, Nicole

From: Gordon Moore <hugmoore183@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 12:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Submission attention of the Ordinance Committee Chairmen and Concilors
Attachments: The Shortfall Projections are Wrong-ordnance.pdf

Sirs

Please find an attached document regarding the Citywide Multifamily Petitions being discussed at 2:30 on Wednesday December 4, 2024.

Thank you

Gordon Moore

--

Gordon T. Moore MD, MPH (he/him/his)
Professor of Population Medicine, Harvard Medical
401 Park Drive, Suite 401, Boston, MA 02215
Gordon_moore@hms.harvard.edu or Hugmoore183@gmail.com
Tel: 617-491-6278
Cellphone: [617-966-7071](tel:617-966-7071)

Attention Ordinance Committee Chairmen McGovern and
Toner for December 4th Meeting:

The CDD housing unit shortfall calculation is wrong.
Cambridge Is Currently Close to Or OnTrack to Meet Its
2030 Envision Housing Development Target

Gordon Moore 11/31/24

The CDD projected housing shortfall is wrong. They report a shortfall of 5500 housing units from the target of 12,500 by 2030. Their project is calculated incorrectly, and I can prove it.

There are three fundamental calculating mistakes in the Cambridge Development Department's (CDD) projection of 2030 housing unit growth. Using CDD's own data, I can show that the claimed 5500 units significantly overstates the 2030 shortfall in housing. In fact, with current zoning in our hot market, Cambridge is on track to come close or to meet its target of 12,500 new units.

The three mistakes are:

- A simple addition mistake in their calculation of the shortfall in the Planning Board report.
- Not including new affordable housing in the total of units built by 2030, and,
- Failing to account for the economic downturn, Covid, high interest rates, and development lag time in the straight line extrapolation they make to project 2030 housing unit levels.

The projected housing units for 2030 must be accurate and trustworthy; in the CDD current proposal, they are not. The projected housing units should be corrected because zoning planning should be shaped by what we need to do to meet a planning target-- how well we are doing or not. Accelerating development if the underlying organic rate is already robust is, at the least, bad planning and at

the worst devastating to Cambridge as we know it. These errors misinform the Ordnance Committee, which deserves an accurate projection now.

1. Not adding the market and affordable housing correctly.
In their own report on page 71 (https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/ZoningDevel/Amendments/2024/multifamilyhousing/FINAL_20241119_Ord_CDDPresentation_Multifamily.pdf) CDD has miscalculated the total units. Adding the two properly yields 7710 units, yielding a lower shortfall of 4790 units. Although relatively small, this error should be added to those in my two next points.

2. Not including affordable housing in their projection

The total units projected, as the CDD itself states, 'does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust.' The Envision Report included affordable housing in its 12,500 target. The Affordable Overlay Zoning passed a couple of years ago was intended to stimulate affordable housing as part of the 12,500 projection. In the CDD recent Q and A, they provide some new data for FY 2024, which ended last July. They show that AHOs are about 25% of new units. For 2024, that amounts to about 200 AHO units that have not been included. If 2024 is a typical year, then over 11 years, AHO housing would amount to 2200 units, which have not been included in the target. Given that the real estate market is regaining momentum, the future AHO activity looks to be substantial. This should be added to predicted housing units in order to reduce the shortfall. Just eyeballing progress so far, it looks to me as though we could achieve at least 2000 or so affordable units by 2030. This would reduce the shortfall to 2790 units.

3. Failing to account for strong economic development headwinds in their projections.

In the projected units towards Envision targets, the market downturn is another large error (see the next page for my effort to calculate how big). One would expect a lag in building during this time. Notwithstanding the headwinds, CDD states that we built 3050 units in that four year period. If one corrects for impact of the severely down market, I project that we would add about 2500 units additional units to our stock by 2030. This puts us at a shortfall of 290 units, without any changes in our current zoning.

Planning Board Meeting Submission 11/19/24

Title: The CDD's Estimate of the Shortfall in Cambridge New Housing by 2030 is Significantly Overstated. It Makes a Big Difference in the Multifamily City-wide and the Avenue and Corridor Zoning Petitions

From Gordon Moore, 9 Rutland St. 617-966-7071

Housing Unit Projections in Meeting the 2030 Target

In 2019 the city council adopted the Envision report, which set targets of an additional 12,500 residential units including 3175 affordable housing units by 2030. This represented a 25% increase in Cambridge's residential housing units. This was an ambitious goal, with the underlying expectation that this level of development would make more affordable housing available.

The City's own very recent (2024) five-year report (and the Dashboard) on Envision's progress showed excellent development on meeting most of its targets, except for housing units. In last week's Planning Board meeting, the CDD now claimed that the city will have a 5500 housing unit deficit from its 12,500 goal for 2030, falling short of its target by almost half. The new zoning petitions being considered are intended to close that gap.

This dire projection is significantly overstated. There is a basic mistake in the methodology the CDD has used to project the number of housing units in 2030. Analysis of CDD's own data reveals that the Cambridge residential market is growing much more briskly than portrayed in the initial CDD report.

The projected shortfall is significantly overstated because it has a simple error in it. The mistake is using a straight-line extrapolation of the rate of unit development since 2019 without factoring in the headwinds facing developers between 2019 and 2024 from Covid, market downturn, hyperinflation, and high interest rates as well as a startup cycle time delay of 3-4 years for the standalone affordable, low-income housing.

The CDD calculation error is serious. By overstating the shortfall, the CDD is putting its thumb on the scale to favor the forces of development. The greater the amount we are actually falling short of Envision's market development target, the more likely we are to conclude that our zoning interventions have to be stronger

and more widespread stimuli. Therefore, an accurate 2030 projection is important in prescribing the right kind of zoning we need to tailor the zoning stimulus to achieve our 12,500-unit goal and to avoid irreversible overstimulation of market forces.

Correcting the Market adjusted projections

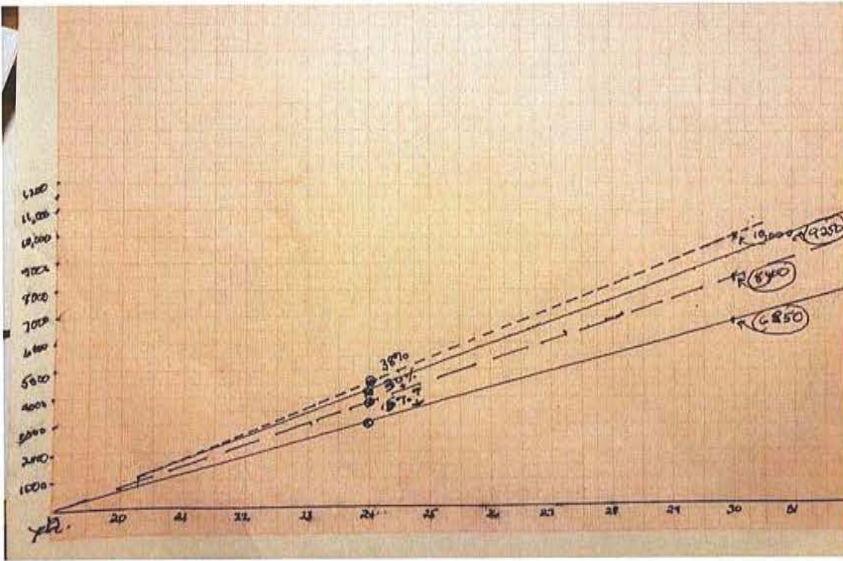
To get a correct estimation of underlying growth, I have gone back and roughly calculated the number of projected residential units in 2030 with our current zoning unchanged. In these calculations, shown below, we see the trend lines projecting what 2030 housing units should be if we actually built 3050 units of additional housing between 2019 and 2024 in a market depressed by 15, 30, and 38%. This correction gives a very different planning assumption about how strong a zoning stimulus is needed to meet our target. If the projected shortfall calculated factored in the down real estate market and development headwinds, we see that we are doing much better than the CDD analysis shows.

In the analysis, I used a recent report on the market that stated that Boston real estate was among the slowest in the country, down by 38% in 2024.

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/30/economy/housing-market-home-sales-redfin-report>

Assuming this to be the case, I went back and roughly calculated what the number of projected residential units in 2030 would be without any further zoning changes. In these calculations, shown below, I show the trend lines and what 2030 housing units would be if the 3050-unit figure for 2024 was achieved in a market depressed by 15, 30, and 38% .

In this still rough calculation, at 38% depression from 2019 to 2024, the growth of residential units would be about 10,000 in 2030 without changing any of the existing Cambridge zoning. This calculation shows a gap of 2500 units rather than the report's figure of 5500 and would require far less stimulatory zoning to achieve the Envision target.



Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 11:51 AM
To: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: Huang, Yi-An; O'Riordan, Owen; Farooq, Iram; Planning Board Comment; Roberts, Jeffrey; Cotter, Chris; City Clerk; Joseph, Swaathi; Warren, Dominic
Subject: 12/4/24 Committee Meeting re Multi Family Housing (MFH) Petition

To the Honorable Co-Chairs and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

I regret that I will be unable to attend the upcoming Ordinance Committee meeting regarding the Zoning Petition, as I will be out of town.

Regardless of your stance on the Petition, it is important that both your Committee and the Planning Board deliberate based on the same version of the CDD presentation. Currently, there is a discrepancy between the version presented to the Committee (dated 11/19) and that presented to the Planning Board (11/12), as well as the new [MFH Q&A](#) released just before Thanksgiving.

For example, the MFH Q&A states that 856 new housing units were permitted in FY24, while [Housing Data & Facts, April 18, 2024](#) mentions a total of 3,950 units currently permitted. This inconsistency highlights the need for clarity.

It is essential that all stakeholders—whether proponents or opponents of the Multifamily Housing Petition—have access to consistent and up-to-date data. We must work from the latest housing stock information, including realistic growth projections based on the economic recovery from COVID-19. The housing data should reflect changes since 2023, and not rely on [outdated figures from 2023](#). Housing growth rate during COVID-19 and ensuing economic downturn should be updated to reflect economic recovery.

Please ask CDD to present up to date information to your Committee and the Planning Board and start this deliberation fresh from the same starting point,

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully,
Young Kim
Norris Street

Young Kim
Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sidharth Prasad <sidharth@bhatni.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 10:22 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Building more housing in Cambridge

Hello,

My name is Sidharth and I have lived in Cambridge for two years. I support building more housing across Cambridge, as my rent is currently over \$2000 a month and increasing. This is making me have to consider moving out as the costs become less justifiable on my current income. As someone who works in Cambridge, I understand the value of being able to afford living in the area. As such, I urge City Council to adopt the multifamily housing ordinance as written and pass it into law.

--

Sincerely,
Sidharth Prasad
GN&C Systems Engineer
(425) 647-3684

Erwin, Nicole

From: Beth Gamse <bethgamse@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 10:27 AM
To: City Clerk; City Council; City Manager; Planning Board Comment
Cc: Judith D. Singer
Subject: Please consider pausing on up-zoning city-wide

Dear City Councilors and Members of the Planning Board:

We write to ask you to reconsider the proposed changes to the Cambridge zoning regulations. As long-time residents of Cambridge who fully support maintaining a vibrant and diverse city with a range of housing options available—including priorities for workforce housing—we strongly believe that the current proposal will not serve our city well. We believe there are other ways to achieve the goals articulated in the Envision Plan 1) without threatening the scale and livability of residential neighborhoods in Cambridge and 2) and while continuing the demonstrated progress already made toward achieving the planned affordable housing goal.

The Council should be commended for considering changes to zoning regulations to allow multifamily housing throughout the City, yet other changes should be deferred until there has been sufficient time, research/analysis, and citizen participation so that our continued progress is thoughtfully ambitious. Because new construction typically takes several years, there is a false sense of urgency in the Council's rush to decision-making.

Six story buildings on residential streets characterized by predominantly two-, three-, and occasional four-story buildings with mainly 2, 3 and 4 stories are unlikely to hit the development "sweet spot" (as was discussed at the November 19th meeting) except perhaps for developers, but certainly not city residents. The "one-size-fits-all" plan of six stories anywhere, with NO setbacks is ill-advised and threatens other goals such as preserving the tree canopy, preventing a heat sink, managing parking and traffic, managing congestion, and preserving the scale of residential neighborhoods, etc. Nor is there any guarantee that six stories will increase affordable housing, since developers are likely to stop at nine units; instead, these new buildings are likely to increase gentrification, as has already occurred around Central Square. This type of development has been seen in other cities (such as Brooklyn, NY) with no increase in affordable housing; rather, such development has produced high priced condos as developers stop exactly at the allowable number of units per building above which affordable units are not mandated. For this reason, we seriously doubt the proposed plan will achieve its stated goals.

Four story buildings may be feasible and would seem sufficient in most of Cambridge. It is clearly ill-advised for the city to give up its citizens' right to review, regulate and oversee development throughout the city, including set-backs and building heights. The only people this will advantage are real estate developers, not the residents of Cambridge. It certainly is not the way to achieve the goal of increasing affordable housing in the City.

Beth Gamse & Judy Singer
14 Walker St, Cambridge

Beth Gamse
617-448-4860

Erwin, Nicole

From: Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 8:37 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Council
Cc: Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; Huang, Yi-An; Peters, Melissa; City Clerk
Subject: Zoning & Related

Dear Members of the Planning Board and Cambridge City Council,

We are already on target to meet our 2030 new housing goals specified in our Envision Report. And, still more very tall and dense housing is in play. In addition to the Massport Alewife development, there also are two very large Baldwin Neighborhood AHO Housing Projects (one 9 stories, the other 5 stories). We can now add, two additional, and likely very large and tall AHO housing towers slotted for Porter Square (on former Lesley University parking lots). Nearby will be the 2072 MASS AVE AHO development at Walden Street, and another development (perhaps housing) on the current CVS site at Porter Square. Plus there will be 500 new units adjacent to Porter Square in Somerville and extensive new housing at Alewife MBTA. We have already met our MBTA requirement, and according to the new Boston Area Housing Report Card are one of a small handful of cities recognized for contributing most to meeting housing needs in the state. This report also highlight's the need to purchase EXISTING housing to keep it affordable

KEY UP-ZONING TAKE AWAYS

- This Up-Zoning proposal will lead to a rush of investor money seeking to demolish current homes to build large and likely even more expensive multi-million dollar single family homes and condos.
- Removes rights of residents, homeowners, property owners, businesses, and neighborhoods to have a say in what's built next door or in their neighborhoods.
- Guts building design controls since it removes any further review or oversight by Cambridge boards or commissions.
- Unlike the AHO where at least the city can decide NOT to work with a problematic developer, here the city (and residents) have NO recourse for shoddy work, poor design, or other problems.
- Eliminates trees, greenspace, and current setbacks (space between new building and sidewalks or adjacent properties).
- Recklessly allows demolitions of existing sustainable homes and removes these tenants - filling dumpsites, destroying the environment, and forcing some tenants onto the streets or out of Cambridge altogether.
- Allows combined lots for a single building with even more massive results.
- Allows the demolition of historic homes in existing preservation districts (NCDS) with heights far taller than those there now, with no design oversight.
- Is based on a failed model of "trickle down housing" – which like trickle down economics has never been shown to work. Supply/demand housing theory in high demand cities like ours is equally problematic (read Patrick Condon – Broken Cities)
- Has no goals or set objectives or termination date

Who Benefits?

- This move allows uncontrolled, large-scale development and profiteering by developers and investors (most from outside the state)
- Will drive up housing costs even further.
- The City admits it doesn't know impact or market response, but studies in Canada and elsewhere show that costs will rise.

What to do instead?

- Vote to approve multi-family housing in every district. Period.
- Urge the city and affiliated groups to purchase existing multi-family housing properties in Cambridge to keep them affordable (what Boston is doing).
- Take the necessary time to do this right and convene a committee comprised of members of the Planning Board, BZA and CHC to draw up a plan.
 - To study the plans of other cities (including Somerville with a form-based model and Boston's purchase of properties to keep them affordable)
 - To study what is already happening re: the real estate market in Cambridge
 - up-sizing, in-fill, impacted neighborhoods, large scale outside purchases of rental properties & condos
 - advocate for policies that can address these changes.
 - To evaluate the impacts of the new U.S. presidency on local universities, biotech and other commercial enterprises & likely housing need impacts.
 - Ask CDD to begin to draw up plans for smaller projects like ADUs (like the recent dormer policy) that might be done without special permit.

Read our NEW BLOG POSTS

1. [Urban History Matters: Here, There, and in Film](#) (11.27.24) Here we look at several well-known exemplars of problematic urban redevelopment (Corbusier's Paris Plan, and St Louis' Prutti-Igoe) as well as Cambridge's own troubled Riverview Urban Redevelopment project created by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority that recently has had to force out tenants because it was poorly built. We include in this blog as well an overview of the 2024 Boston Area Housing Report Card, a note on Trickle Down and Supply Demand Housing Theory as well as a brief overview of the Chinese Boom & Bust Housing Situation. As a bonus we include a listing and links to important films and videos on this subject (see below).
2. [9 Upzoning Lessons for Cambridge and Other Urban Centers](#) (11.26.24) Here we draw on the insights of a Cambridge Urban Planner, and the letter he authored to the Planning Board explaining the deep problems with the current citywide upzoning plan. We also include here a discussion of the "9 Lessons" article by Garima Jain & Jessica Espey in the journal *Urban Sustainability* (2002: 2, 7).
3. [Up-zoning Presentation HERE](#) (11.21.24) on Proposed Upzoning Petition and Impacts Presented to the Porter Square Neighborhood Association.

HERE ARE SOME of the films & videos we recommended for viewing in our Urban History blogpost.

1. *Hands Over the City*: Rod Steiger and the blistering film about land speculation and a vile land developer, as well as citizen activists up against a powerful city council by Francesco Rosi titled *Hands Over the City*, which won the Golden Lion Award in the 1963 Venice Film Festival (in Italian with English captions). Set in Naples. Cambridge documentary Film Maker Federico Muchnik selection. See it on [Criterion](#). Probably one can live stream [HERE](#)
2. *Citizen Jane*. The epic battle between Jane Jacobs versus Robert Moses. This 2016 Sundance competitor is titled: *Citizen Jane: Battle for the City* is available on Youtube: [HERE](#)
3. *Real Estate Expert Answers US Housing Crisis Questions* [Wired](#) (Kate Nelischer 2024)
4. *How Britain (almost) Solved its Housing Crisis* (Tom Nicholas 2024) [HERE](#)
5. *Push: Documentary on Housing Crisis in Modern Cities* (Fredrik Gertten 2019)
[Official Trailer](#) Review in [The Guardian](#)
6. *Broken City: Land Speculation, Inequality and Urban Crisis: a Conversation with Patrick Condon and Andrew Berman* (Village Preservation July 2024).
7. [Pause the Plan](#) (Vancouver Canada - Rally at City Hall, Nov. 23, 2024).
8. *Metropolis*: And not to be forgotten, is this frightening Fritz Lang 1927 silent film, about a grim futuristic city of Metropolis, pitting wealthy greedy industrialists against workers barely able to survive. [HERE](#) is the trailer.

READ or REREAD our other blog posts

[Towering Impacts: Planning Locally for the Realities Ahead \(11.10.24\)](#)

[The Cat In the Hat & Housing: Breaking Rules and Likely Outcomes \(11.7.24\)](#)

[Bottom Lines on Current Up-Zoning: Important Amendments \(11.4.24\)](#)

[Zoning Lessons From Other Cities: Will We Heed Them? \(10.31.24\)](#)

[Up-Zoning for Dummies: Our Citywide Up-Zoning Proposal \(10.22.24\)](#)

And still more blog analyses: HERE <https://www.cccoalition.org/blogs>

Also Recommended: Patrick Condon, *Broken Cities*: “It is not About Supply/Demand it is About the investment in and increased cost of land.

**Cordially,
Suzanne Blier
5 Fuller Place**

Erwin, Nicole

From: Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 8:30 AM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Council
Cc: Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; Huang, Yi-An; Peters, Melissa; City Clerk
Subject: Up-Zoning & Related

Dear Members of the Planning Board and Cambridge City Council,

We are already on target to meet our 2030 new housing goals specified in our Envision Report. And, still more very tall and dense housing is in play. In addition to the Massport Alewife development, there also are two very large Baldwin Neighborhood AHO Housing Projects (one 9 stories, the other 5 stories). We can now add, two additional, and likely very large and tall AHO housing towers slotted for Porter Square (on former Lesley University parking lots). Nearby will be the 2072 MASS AVE AHO development at Walden Street, and another development (perhaps housing) on the current CVS site at Porter Square. Plus there will be 500 new units adjacent to Porter Square in Somerville and extensive new housing at Alewife MBTA. We have already met our MBTA requirement, and according to the new Boston Area Housing Report Card are one of a small handful of cities recognized for contributing most to meeting housing needs in the state. This report also highlight's the need to purchase EXISTING housing to keep it affordable

KEY UP-ZONING TAKE AWAYS

- This Up-Zoning proposal will lead to a rush of investor money seeking to demolish current homes to build large and likely even more expensive multi-million dollar single family homes and condos.
- Removes rights of residents, homeowners, property owners, businesses, and neighborhoods to have a say in what's built next door or in their neighborhoods.
- Guts building design controls since it removes any further review or oversight by Cambridge boards or commissions.
- Unlike the AHO where at least the city can decide NOT to work with a problematic developer, here the city (and residents) have NO recourse for shoddy work, poor design, or other problems.
- Eliminates trees, greenspace, and current setbacks (space between new building and sidewalks or adjacent properties).
- Recklessly allows demolitions of existing sustainable homes and removes these tenants - filling dumpsites, destroying the environment, and forcing some tenants onto the streets or out of Cambridge altogether.
- Allows combined lots for a single building with even more massive results.
- Allows the demolition of historic homes in existing preservation districts (NCDS) with heights far taller than those there now, with no design oversight.
- Is based on a failed model of "trickle down housing" - which like trickle down economics has never been shown to work. Supply/demand housing theory in high demand cities like ours is equally problematic (read Patrick Condon - Broken Cities)
- Has no goals or set objectives or termination date

Who Benefits?

- This move allows uncontrolled, large-scale development and profiteering by developers and investors (most from outside the state)
- Will drive up housing costs even further.
- The City admits it doesn't know impact or market response, but studies in Canada and elsewhere show that costs will rise.

What to do instead?

- Vote to approve multi-family housing in every district. Period.
- Urge the city and affiliated groups to purchase existing multi-family housing properties to keep them affordable (what Boston is doing).
- Take the necessary time to do this right and convene a committee comprised of members of the Planning Board, BZA and CHC to draw up a plan.
 - To study the plans of other cities (including Somerville with a form-based model and Boston's purchase of properties to keep them affordable)
 - To study what is already happening re: the real estate market in Cambridge
 - up-sizing, in-fill, impacted neighborhoods, large scale outside purchases of rental properties & condos
 - advocate for policies that can address these changes.
 - To evaluate the impacts of the new U.S. presidency on local universities, biotech and other commercial enterprises & likely housing need impacts.
 - Ask CDD to begin to draw up plans for smaller projects like ADUs (like the recent dormer policy) that might be done without special permit.

Read our NEW BLOG POSTS

1. [Urban History Matters: Here, There, and in Film](#) (11.27.24) Here we look at several well-known exemplars of problematic urban redevelopment (Corbusier's Paris Plan, and St Louis' Prutti-Igoe) as well as Cambridge's own troubled Riverview Urban Redevelopment project created by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority that recently has had to force out tenants because it was poorly built. We include in this blog as well an overview of the 2024 Boston Area Housing Report Card, a note on Trickle Down and Supply Demand Housing Theory as well as a brief overview of the Chinese Boom & Bust Housing Situation. As a bonus we include a listing and links to important films and videos on this subject (see below).
2. [9 Upzoning Lessons for Cambridge and Other Urban Centers](#) (11.26.24) Here we draw on the insights of a Cambridge Urban Planner, and the letter he authored to the Planning Board explaining the deep problems with the current citywide upzoning plan. We also include here a discussion of the "9 Lessons" article by Garima Jain & Jessica Espey in the journal *Urban Sustainability* (2002: 2, 7).
3. [Up-zoning Presentation HERE](#) (11.21.24) on Proposed Upzoning Petition and Impacts Presented to the Porter Square Neighborhood Association.

HERE ARE SOME of the films & videos we recommended for viewing in our Urban History blogpost.

1. *Hands Over the City*: Rod Steiger and the blistering film about land speculation and a vile land developer, as well as citizen activists up against a powerful city council by Francesco Rosi titled *Hands Over the City*, which won the Golden Lion Award in the 1963 Venice Film Festival (in Italian with English captions). Set in Naples. Cambridge documentary Film Maker Federico Muchnik selection. See it on [Criterion](#). Probably one can live stream [HERE](#)
2. *Citizen Jane*. The epic battle between Jane Jacobs versus Robert Moses. This 2016 Sundance competitor is titled: *Citizen Jane: Battle for the City* is available on Youtube: [HERE](#)
3. *Real Estate Expert Answers US Housing Crisis Questions* [Wired](#) (Kate Nelischer 2024)
4. *How Britain (almost) Solved its Housing Crisis* (Tom Nicholas 2024) [HERE](#)
5. *Push: Documentary on Housing Crisis in Modern Cities* (Fredrik Gertten 2019)
[Official Trailer](#) Review in [The Guardian](#)
6. *Broken City: Land Speculation, Inequality and Urban Crisis: a Conversation with Patrick Condon and Andrew Berman* (Village Preservation July 2024).
7. [Pause the Plan](#) (Vancouver Canada - Rally at City Hall, Nov. 23, 2024).
8. *Metropolis*: And not to be forgotten, is this frightening Fritz Lang 1927 silent film, about a grim futuristic city of Metropolis, pitting wealthy greedy industrialists against workers barely able to survive. [HERE](#) is the trailer.

READ or REREAD our other blog posts

[Towering Impacts: Planning Locally for the Realities Ahead \(11.10.24\)](#)

[The Cat In the Hat & Housing: Breaking Rules and Likely Outcomes \(11.7.24\)](#)

[Bottom Lines on Current Up-Zoning: Important Amendments \(11.4.24\)](#)

[Zoning Lessons From Other Cities: Will We Heed Them? \(10.31.24\)](#)

[Up-Zoning for Dummies: Our Citywide Up-Zoning Proposal \(10.22.24\)](#)

And still more blog analyses: HERE <https://www.cccoalition.org/blogs>

Also Recommended: Patrick Condon, *Broken Cities*: “It is not About Supply/Demand it is About the investment in and increased cost of land.

**Cordially,
Suzanne Blier
5 Fuller Place**

Erwin, Nicole

From: Aditi Raju <aditisanram@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2024 8:05 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for Multifamily Building Proposal

Hello,

I am writing to express my strong support of the proposal to legalize up to six-story multifamily buildings in the city of Cambridge. As a student who has lived in Cambridge for nearly four years now, I have seen firsthand how difficult it is to find housing in the city of Cambridge, or even any housing at all. In order to make Cambridge more inclusive, I strongly support the proposal to legalize multifamily buildings and end exclusionary zoning.

Thank you,
Aditi

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sean Hart <seanhart0328@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2024 8:02 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Meaningfully Addressing the Housing Crisis

Hello Council,

My name is Sean Hart and I am a 23 year old resident of Cambridge. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed zoning changes. The cost of housing is the number one issue in our community, and I cannot think of a close second. Among people my age, most consider owning a home here at any point in their lives a pipe dream (unless they can inherit it). They know that if they want to own a home, they will have to move either deep into the suburbs or to another area of the country entirely. At the same time, unaffordable housing is making people delay or forego starting families. The idea that the government here is "working for you" feels very hollow, and at times it feels like the agenda is to actively push out young people as aggressively as possible.

There is a lot of hand-wringing about whether this proposal will "destroy the neighborhoods." While I do not agree with that claim, I can speak to what I believe the concern truly is: that the Cambridge that people have gotten used to seeing will change. That is absolutely correct. Cambridge will visually change with this policy, and hopefully it will change quite a bit. That's a good thing! Communities are meant to evolve over time. Enabling the next step in that evolution, with more neighbors and more people contributing to the vibrancy of Cambridge, won't destroy it; it will make it better.

I am asking you to vote for the next generation of Cambridge families by enthusiastically support this policy.

Thank you,
Sean Hart

Erwin, Nicole

From: Nancy Wechsler <nanwec@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2024 5:54 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: We need more affordable housing in Cambridge

Dear Cambridge City Council members,

My name is Nancy Wechsler and I am a Cambridge resident at 155 Raymond St, Cambridge, MA. I write to you about the Multi-Family Zoning Proposal which will be discussed at Wednesday's Ordinance Committee hearing.

I write to support the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's [petition](#) and its amendment to this zoning. I particularly support the creation of a municipal voucher program for inclusionary housing with at least \$5 million in initial funding, and the city's immediate and substantial investment in social housing. These policies are part of the long-term solution to creating a Cambridge affordable to all.

I support amending the multifamily zoning so that zoning changes are limited to projects that cross the "inclusionary threshold." In other words, these changes would only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. We must be intentional about creating affordable housing, not just market-rate housing. This amendment would both significantly reduce the acceleration of displacement and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. CDD has projected in its most recent presentation that CHJC's amendment would result in **even more affordable units** than CDD has projected for the existing proposal, and fewer overall projects.

To end zoning that allows only new single family and two family homes, I support changing the base zoning to C-1, allowing all types of multifamily housing, without the other changes to C-1 made by the city's petition.

I urge you to support CHJC's zoning amendment and believe that conditioning height/density increases on creating inclusionary housing, along with a C-1 base zoning change, will create affordable housing while limiting displacement and ending single-family zoning.

Sincerely,
Nancy Wechsler

"We who believe in freedom can not rest until it comes"

from Ella's Song by Sweet Honey in the Rock, for Civil Rights activist Ella Baker

Erwin, Nicole

From: Whelan, Michael <mwhelan@gsd.harvard.edu>
Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2024 5:36 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Legalize Apartments

Dear Council,

As a trained urban planner, I am writing in strong support of the proposal that you will be considering this week to increase height limits for multifamily buildings citywide. This would enable the construction of thousands of new homes and end exclusionary zoning, which has helped drive the terrible state's terrible housing crisis.

I also want to reflect on what your vote on this matter means in a wider context. I was shaken by last month's re-election of Donald Trump. I am convinced that one reason voters do not trust Democrats is that blue states like Massachusetts have failed to meet the moment when it comes to housing. Massachusetts is supposed to be a place that believes in opportunity, equality, and freedom. As great as we are at living out those values when it comes to education or healthcare or the environment, we have failed utterly when it comes to housing. Blue states are losing population while places like Florida and Texas boom. This reality will be reflected in the next census and resulting reallocation is congressional seats and electoral votes.

This is an indictment of blue state governance, and because housing is decided at the local level, it is especially an indictment of local governments. I fully recognize that you already do better on housing than many city councils and select boards around the region, but that is no reason to rest on your laurels. In fact, it is wrong that we so often speak of housing as if it were a burden to be "fairly" allotted to reluctant cities and towns. Homes are opportunities! If we want to welcome more people who will contribute to our dynamic and lively city, that is our gain regardless of what other cities are doing or what minimums are mandated by Beacon Hill.

On countless issues over the years, Cambridge has led the nation. Please vote for the upzoning proposal and ensure that we remain a "city upon a hill," where new apartment buildings can add to our shine.

Thank you,
Michael Whelan

Michael Whelan
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Master in Urban Planning, 2024

Erwin, Nicole

From: L Byron <elizabethbyron@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2024 2:42 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Public Comments for Tues. 12/4 City Council Meeting

Hi City Clerk,

I will be stating my name, address, and brief intro. Intro of C.A.R.E. Housing and describing problems with the current MFH proposal as well as solutions.

I will not read word-for-word, so I do not have a transcript for you.

Thank you, and I look forward to speaking.

Sincerely,

Liz Byron



Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Correction to Two Questions to MFH Petitions + new PRR Response

1 message

Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 19, 2024 at 9:31 AM

To: "McGovern, Marc" <mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov>, "Toner, Paul" <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>, "Simmons, Denise" <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov>, "Azeem, Burhan" <bazeem@cambridgema.gov>, "Nolan, Patricia" <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>, "Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan" <jsobrinhowheeler@cambridgema.gov>, "Siddiqui, Sumbul" <ssiddiqui@cambridgema.gov>, "Wilson, Ayesha" <amwilson@cambridgema.gov>, "Zusy, Catherine" <czusy@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Manager <citymanager@cambridgema.gov>, City Clerk <cityclerk@cambridgema.gov>, "Cotter, Chris" <ccotter@cambridgema.gov>, "Roberts, Jeffrey" <jroberts@cambridgema.gov>, planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov, "Joseph, Swaathi" <sjoseph@cambridgema.gov>, "Blier, Suzanne" <blier@fas.harvard.edu>, Ruth Ryals <rrials@comcast.net>, Lee Farris <Lee@leefarris.net>, Robert Winters <Robert@rwinters.com>, Carolyn <carolyn_shipley@yahoo.com>, Marc Levy <editor@cambridgeday.com>, news@thecrimson.com
Bcc: Gordon Moore <hugmoore183@gmail.com>

To Honorable Co-chairs McGovern and Toner, and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Suzanne just commented that the two identical graphs. Please accept my sincerest apologies. I have embedded the correct graph for the 2nd case.

Also I just received an email from PRAO that "As a result of the pandemic, there was no report for 2020." This again proves my point #2 below. Just because everyone was working remotely doesn't mean the annual report shouldn't be filed. If the Cycling Safety Ordinance could have been amended in 2020 to add a strict timeline, why couldn't CDD submit 2020 Annual Report even if just to report due to the pandemic, there was no change in the Total Dwelling Units or Affordable Dwelling Units in 2021? Are we to assume the 2020 data didn't change from 2029 data?

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

On Thu, Dec 19, 2024 at 8:07 AM Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com> wrote:

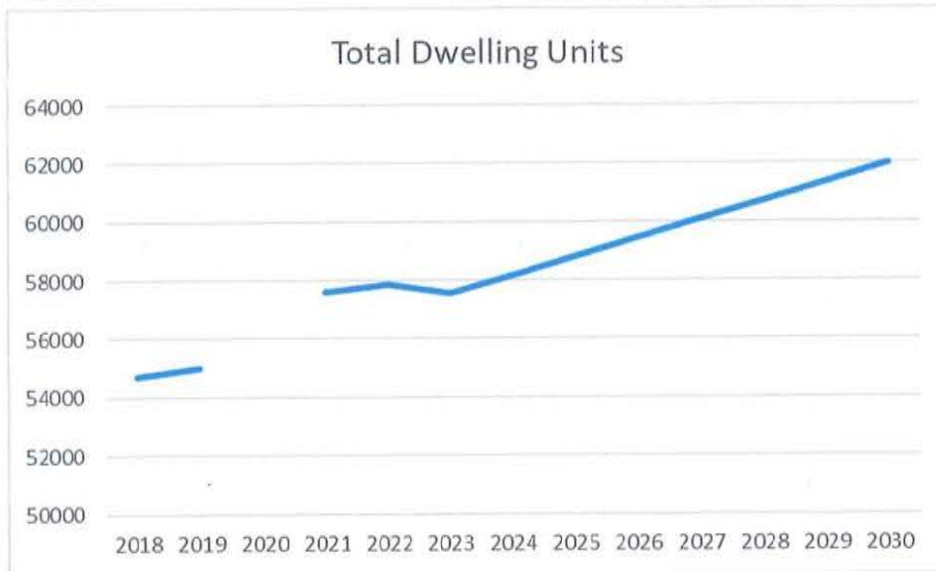
To Honorable Co-chairs McGovern and Toner, and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing work on the MFH Petitions, which will have a lasting impact on our City's future undoing a century of careful urban designing. As noted by the Planning Board, while they support the idea of eliminating exclusive zoning in Cambridge, they did not endorse the Petitions in their current form, leaving it up to the elected City Council to make amendments based on their deliberations.

As you deliberate on this important issue, I urge you to consider two key questions:

- 1) **What is the primary goal of this Petition?** Based on the attached flowchart, the objectives could be either:
 - (a) meeting the 2030 Envision Housing Goals, which CDD has acknowledged is unlikely until 2040, or
 - (b) eliminating exclusionary zoning, which requires a different process.
- 2) **Is CDD's analysis reliable?** Every new data from CDD continues to raise concerns about the accuracy of their data and analysis. For instance, the newly released Annual Housing Stock Updates from 2018, the Envision Cambridge's base year, to 2023 without the crucial 2020 Update contradicts explanations given in the [2024 Update](#)

If we are to believe CDD's admission they made a mistake in 2023 total Dwelling Units (DUs), the adjusted 2023 DU should be (total FY24 DU - number of DUs added in FY24). Here is a graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection using new DU added in FY24 (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*). The troubling fact in this scenario is that we actually lost DUs in FY23.



Now if we assume CDD's new DUs added in FY24 was correct, then graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*) is below. This is troubling also in that the rate of growth is much lower in this case and can achieve only 59,826 DUs by 2030, far less than 61,992 in the above scenario.

CORRECTED PROJECTION



I urge you to carefully consider these questions and the attached materials as you move forward with your decision.

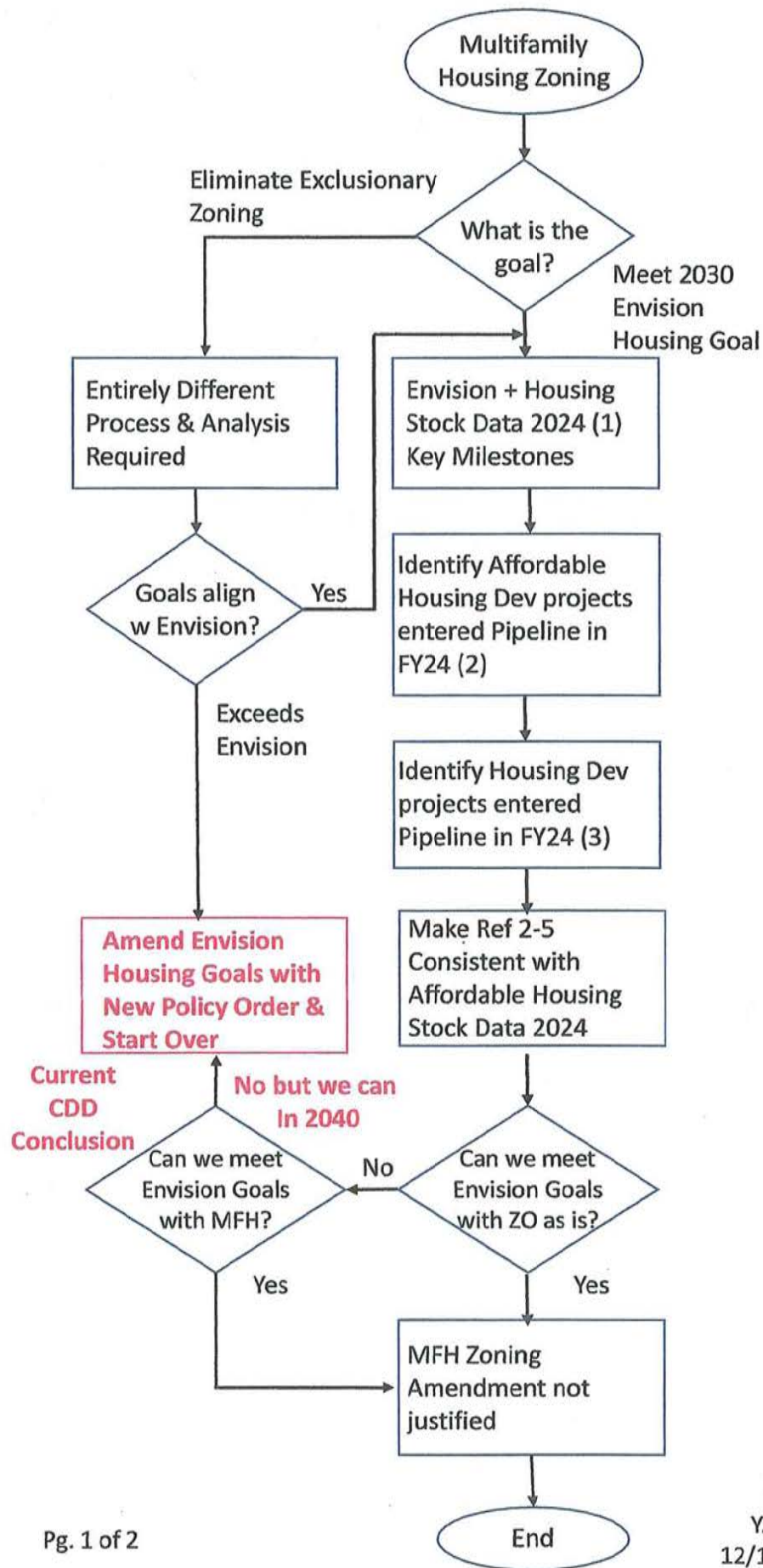
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions 1 & 2



Multifamily Housing Petitions' Outstanding Issues

Ever since CMA 2024 #207, "draft zoning language ... to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow up to six stories of multifamily housing in all residential districts" was [referred to the Ordinance Committee on 9/30/2024](#), Community Development Department (CDD) made a series of errors at the direction of City Council and City Manager.

First, the Planning Board (Board) is deliberating based on CDD presentation dated 11/12/24, whereas the Ordinance Committee (Committee) on 11/19/24 version. Additionally, CDD has published [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) on 11/27/24 and has provided additional material to the Board. The public must be given access to the additional materials and an opportunity to comment on new materials and changes since 11/12/24 Board meeting.

Second, on 12/11/24, the Public Record Access Office (PRAO) sent me a time extension reply stating that they will not be able to provide the relevant housing data I requested, P241953-112524, until January 2025, which will unfortunately be too late for these documents to be reviewed in time for this week's meetings. However, on the same day, CDD released [Annual Housing Stock Update 2024](#), one of the public records I requested. Why did CDD inform PRAO that they could not provide me this data yet posted it on its website on the day of time extension reply? And we are still missing data for dwelling units that are in the planning stages or in in permitting stages to accurately project number of housing units by 2030.

CDD admitted the third error with the release of 2024 Annual Housing Stock. CDD estimated 58,170 units were completed or under construction as of 6/30/24 and that 637 housing units have been added since 6/30/23. This means CDD made a critical error in the total number of all housing units as of 6/30/23 which should be 57,533 (58,170 – 637) not 57,894 as previously reported because this shows accelerated housing growth rate in FY24 invalidating CDD using growth rate to date to in their analysis. Housing development growth rate going forward has to be determined based on accurate annual housing stock data. Furthermore, if the FY23 housing data is incorrect, a revised data should be submitted to the state together with FY24 data.

This leads to the fourth error which is inconsistency in various housing data namely

1. [Annual Housing Stock Update 2024](#)
2. [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) #55 on pg. 18
3. [Housing Data & Facts](#)

Unfortunately, due to the late release of Annual Housing Stock Update 2024 and urgency of meeting the written comment deadline, I do not have the time to detail all the inconsistencies.

But even with these 3 sets of data, we are still missing the number of dwelling units that are in planning or permitting stages, i.e., all the potential units that are not yet permitted. Furthermore, the Housing Projection Analysis in the 11/19/24 version of CDD Presentation does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust. These excluded developments make it impossible to project the number of housing units to meet Envision Housing Goals by 2030.

References:

1. [Affordable Housing Stock Data – 2024 Update](#)
2. [Active and Recent Affordable Development Projects](#)
3. [Current & Completed Projects Table](#)
4. [Housing Data & Facts, Thursday, April 18, 2024](#)
5. [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) item 55, pg. 18

Erwin, Nicole

From: Catalina Arboleda <catalarbol@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 22, 2024 12:31 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Cc: City Manager
Subject: December 19, 2024 Ordinance Committee

I am strongly against the the current plan for AHO and the proposed removal of all zoning controls ("as right") and rejection of preservation and community concerns.

Please rethink your proposal, as it will not increase affordable housing significantly. The so-called "multifamily proposal" is a gift to developers, greedy multinational investors, and a reckless rezoning proposal.

If you need to add density please do it thoughtfully and only on the main corridors, with a maximum height of six stories, and with rules preserving or adding green spaces, trees, setbacks and shade. The latter have become all important as we face the climate crisis. It is also clear that these are important for wellness and the physical and mental health of our citizens.

Investment development cares about the profit and not making more housing **available** to low and middle income residents.

Respectfully,
Catalina Arboleda
950 Massachusetts Ave. Apt 413
Cambridge, MA 02139

Sent by:
Catalina Arboleda, Ph.D
508-450-3868 (cell)
www.arboledaphd.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 4:29 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Residents Alliance's updated Multifamily zoning position, 12-19-24

12-19-24

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Manager,

The Cambridge Residents Alliance Board supports allowing multifamily zoning citywide. We have proposed changes to the Multifamily zoning.

Because we want to ensure the most housing possible for lower-income people, we support **only allowing the new zoning to apply to buildings with Inclusionary** units (projects with over 9 units or 10,000 SF), which CDD calls "Scenario 3." This could be done by an overlay, conditional zoning, or changing the Inclusionary section of the zoning.

We agree that the **base zoning in A and B districts should change to C-1**. However we do not support the changes to C-1 proposed by CDD in "Scenario 1".

We ask that **CDD be requested to analyze the combination of current C-1 zoning with allowing the new zoning to apply only to buildings with Inclusionary units**.

Affordable housing developers have told us that the increased land values from all options of the proposed zoning will make it harder for AHO builders to compete with market developers for land due to increased land values. And being allowed to build 13 floors in the neighborhoods is not something the affordable housing developers want to do, so the "advantage" is not useful. We think the proposed zoning would likely result in less AHO units than under current zoning, which would cause serious harm to lower income people.

That downside to affordable housing developers is best reduced by our proposed combination of current C-1 base zoning and only allowing the new zoning to apply to Inclusionary projects. C-1 zoning allows 3 floors or 35' as of right. Current C-1 setbacks would remain, and current project review would remain. In comparison, Scenario 6 (4 floors plus 2 if Inclusionary), allows 4 floors as of right. Land prices would increase less under Scenario 3 with C-1 than under Scenario 6. Therefore **Scenario 3 would give AHO developers greater advantages in height, density, and project review as compared with #6**.

We think that there should be **no reduction in project review requirements**. We believe the current project review requirements are not the reason for the slowdown in new housing construction in Cambridge, which is caused largely by external economic factors such as high interest rates. The review process results in better buildings for the new residents and for existing neighbors. The project review process proposed in the draft zoning would omit the opportunity for input for many buildings. The

proposed zoning also decreases review for AHO buildings, which we do not support, as it is clear that the current review process is working well.

We agree with many Planning Board members who think their review of larger buildings is important to continue. Many of them suggested **review should start at 20,000 or 25,000 sq. ft.**, especially if the new building will be next to a 3 story building. The **special project review threshold should not be increased** from 50K Sq ft to 75K Sq ft, as proposed. We think **two community meetings should be required** for buildings that exceed 35' in height.

We also support any amendment to **reduce the loss of housing due to downconversions**, where a 2 or 3 family becomes a single family. Any changes in the **new zoning should apply only to projects with more than 2 units, and should only apply when the number of units is increased**. This will prevent tearing down a triple decker to replace it with 3 much larger units. We think the new **zoning should only apply to lots over 5,000 sq. ft.**, which will reduce the number of teardowns, which are harmful to lower income people.

We think that meaningful open space is important, both for humans and the environment. Therefore, we think that **in C-1 residential areas, at least 75% (not 50% as proposed) of the open space requirement should be met by permeable surfaces**, which will allow trees and shrubs. For mixed use areas where there is no front setback on the street, such as along Mass. Ave., impermeable surfaces such as rooftops could count as open space.

Similarly, we think **side and rear setbacks of at least 5 feet should be required* for buildings using the new zoning**, which will enable windows and light on all sides of the new building, will enable trees and shrubs, and will reduce impacts on existing buildings. *If both the old and new buildings are built to the property line, no side setback would be required, enabling row houses.

With these changes, housing development is incentivized in a way that reduces displacement, and is more livable.

We ask that Councilors consider these proposals seriously and adopt as many as possible. We think adoption of these proposals will increase support for the Multifamily zoning across the city.

Thanks for your consideration,

Lee Farris, President
Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*
<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 4:28 PM
To: City Manager; City Clerk; City Council; Amy Waltz
Subject: Please Consider Climate Friendly Affordable Housing Strategies.

Dear City Council Members & Ordinance Committee,

Our planet is warming so quickly that we are already on borrowed time for major tipping points that will prove disastrous! The poles are melting at alarming rates with the Arctic potentially having ice-free days as early as 2027, and scientists are in disbelief about the extent of Antarctic melting under the ice shelf. This places the AMOC ocean current tipping point on borrowed time. We must reduce emissions to avoid catastrophic results!

Cambridge, and cities around the world, must consider climate impacts in all our endeavours. It appears that there has been no study or serious consideration regarding the major impacts that rezoning the entire city would have regarding our city's increased embodied emissions. This could have far more impact than the square and corridor development due to completely unrestrained construction on any property in the entire city!!

Demolition and construction cause major emissions! Fortunately, there are ways to avoid a significant portion of emissions with regulation. However, the current proposed zoning allows for tremendous demolition and construction rights with no regulation of embodied carbon. Regulation must happen prior to such a major zoning change to avoid disastrous results that may be replicated in other cities.

There is another approach which could offer better affordability, a happier community, and stellar climate results! It could be implemented with full community support in a short period of time, and reap nearly instantaneous housing relief! I am estimating a conservative 1,600 units over 10 years.

Many of our single family buildings can easily accommodate a second unit or even three spacious units, and some would be ideal for shared living arrangements for perhaps 5-12 people. Many 2-6 family buildings also have ample space for additional units. By ending zoning, limiting the number of units, and encouraging some social living situations that also avoid loneliness, we could add as many units as those that were estimated from redevelopment scenarios. However, we would avoid nearly all emissions, preserve nearly all trees and greenspace, avoid grossly inflated housing rates, encourage owner occupied buildings, and keep the entire neighborhood happy!

Expectation within 5 years + 10 years:

Out of about 200 single family houses in Cambridge:

1 in ten might prefer to add one unit = 20 units in 5 years + 20 in 10 years

1 in ten units might prefer to become multi-unit buildings or group/co-op type living 20 units with 3-10 dwellings subdivision and group living options = 100 living units in 5 years + 80 in 10 years

Of about 400 Duplexes:

Perhaps 1 of 5 buildings may want to add an apartment (attic units) 400 = 80 units in 5 years + 80 in 10 years

Of about 600 3-6 unit buildings (approx 20% of buildings):

I would not be surprised to see 400 units in 5 years and 600 units in 10 years

Number of units = 600 in 5 years; 780 in ten years Total of 1,380

Embodied emissions and pollution from demolition (practically zero) from construction (practically zero)

High percentage of owner (or caretaker) occupied buildings

High likelihood of reasonable rents

Tree loss = 0 Shaded solar roofs = 0

This is basically a conservative estimate of additional units when adopting the Advancing Housing Affordability (Donovan Petition), this estimate only considered 1-6 unit buildings.

The city could always incentivise more or less development.

Once embodied carbon from construction and demolition, and environmental factors are taken into account, further construction could be permitted.

This sketch concept is based on these housing estimates from AI:

AI Overview

[Learn more](#)

As of 2022, there were 199 single-family homes in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This represents 6.5% of the city's housing units.

Here is a breakdown of the different types of housing units in Cambridge:

- **Single-family dwellings:** 6.5%
- **Two-family buildings:** 12.1%
- **Three-family buildings:** 10.7%
- **Four to six unit buildings:** 8.8%
- **Buildings with over six units up to 50 units:** 18.4%

- **Buildings with 51 or more units:** 43.5%
- **Condominiums:** 26.9%
- **Units located in mixed use buildings:** 13.1%

Thank you for your attention to this important matter!

Sincerely,

Amy Waltz

12 Blakeslee St.

Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: christine brown <chrisbrown182@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 2:34 PM
To: City Manager; City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Thoughts against the affordable housing ordinance

Good Afternoon,

My name is Christine Brown and I live at 182 Appleton Street. I have been a resident of Cambridge for 45 years, starting on Shepard Street, then on Lee Street, and now in Huron Village. What has made Cambridge so special to me in whatever stage of life I was in is the neighborhood feel of all the different communities; and the sense of living in a very special and unique part of the Boston metropolitan area.

My concerns with the new housing ordinance are many, but I will limit myself to two: the effect of the proposal on trees and open spaces, and the seeming lack of any restrictions on developers.

I am fortunate enough to live in a very residential-feeling neighborhood now. There are a mixture of single family and multi-family units. I live in a three-story building that houses two condominiums. I have single-family houses on either side and even in back of me. Across the street is 179 Appleton, which was a three-family building, which several years ago was bought by a developer. Within the last year, work began on the building, and it was my understanding that the plan was to build four high-end units on the land (the basement has been excavated to make livable space.) The work has been stopped for many months, and there seems to be much conversation that the developer is now going to wait and hope to build a much bigger project if the ordinance passes. Clearly, if this happens, there will be no increase in affordable housing, and the developer will simply have several more multi-million dollar units to sell. And the large backyard which provides open space, views and sun for the surrounding units will be totally gone.

I'm a strong supporter of affordable housing. I work with many non-profits focused on communities not as privileged as I am. What I'm not supportive of is giving unfettered license to developers to build whatever they want wherever they want. How can this be?

I ask that the city not pass this ordinance, and more thoughtfully consider how to increase affordable housing, while retaining open space and protecting our trees.

Thank you,
Christine Brown

Erwin, Nicole

From: City Clerk
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 3:26 PM
To: Jim Gray; City Clerk
Subject: RE: Zoom video link for 5:30 PM meeting ?

[The Ordinance Committee - City of Cambridge, MA](#)

This is the Calendar information which contains the Zoom link. The link will not be available until 15min prior to the meeting.

Lori

From: Jim Gray <james.h.gray@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 3:12 PM
To: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>; Jim Gray <james.h.gray@gmail.com>
Subject: Zoom video link for 5:30 PM meeting ?

Hello,
Would you kindly send the link for tonight's multifamily ordinance meeting from 5:30 to 7:30? The link I found on the website didn't work for me.
Thank you
Jim.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mark Smith <marksmith711@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 3:09 PM
To: City Clerk; Planning Board Comment
Subject: Zoning

Dear City Council Members and Planning Board,
My name is Mark Smith. I've lived here in Cambridge for over 42 years - in Avon Hill, Porter Square, Mid-Cambridge, and currently in East Cambridge. I support increasing our housing stock by amending Cambridge's current zoning to allow for multi-family housing in all neighborhoods. This simple and smart elimination of one- and two-family zoning will promote greater equity and density across all neighborhoods. I was also a proponent of the Affordable Housing Overlay adopted a couple years ago. The competitive advantage it gives to affordable-housing developers is proving to be a positive zoning change that I applaud.

My support of zoning for city-wide multi-family and affordable housing is accompanied by an equally strong opposition to the amendment that would blindly increase the building-height-limit to 6 stories or 75' and eliminate side & rear set-backs to all residential sites city-wide. These changes are not consistent with smart urban planning. They will increase density, but importantly, they will not increase equity. And these changes would have very negative effects on Cambridge's existing urban fabric and natural environment.

The proposed zoning amendments should be based in a more common-sense and ordered approach that acknowledges the relationship between the width of public ways and the heights of buildings. It is appropriate for major avenues and principal squares to have buildings that are 6 to 8 stories tall. Secondary streets could have buildings that are 4 to 5 stories, and tertiary streets should remain at 3 to 4 stories. It is also logical that zoning should guide development so it's mindful of solar and environmental factors, and is also done in coordination with public transit. A blanket 75' height-limit without setbacks takes none of these contextual urban-planning guidelines into account.

It is also important to not dismiss objections to the current proposed zoning changes as NIMBY concerns. Promoting the quality of residential neighborhoods can happen while simultaneously promoting more housing stock, and our zoning must ensure that developers are guided to build in responsible site-sensitive ways. Here are a few questions/concerns I urge you, the deciding City Council members, to consider:

- What is to keep the existing most-affordable housing stock from being torn down and replaced exclusively by luxury buildings with 9 or less units?
- How easy would it be for developers to build at 9 units or less and avoid 20% inclusionary housing?
- Is having no parking guidelines for new developments responsible zoning? (It's not hard to see that the most economic solution for developers would be to offer no parking - further loading the streets - or to build above-grade / ground-floor-level parking - creating dead zones where there should be porches, yards, and commercial space that facilitate community interactions).
- What is the environmental impact - to residents and to nature - when side and especially rear-yards are eliminated? (Understand that if just one building in the middle of a block builds to the rear lot line, it does not merely take away the one yard that it occupies. It interrupts the larger nature-corridor of all the back yards on that block, and it negatively impacts the life of animals, plants and people up and down street that previously benefitted from this shared natural space.)

The current proposal is a bold effort to promote city-wide housing, but it needs more structure and rigor. It does not acknowledge the basic relationship between street-width and building heights or the solar orientation of streets. It undermines the goals of the AHO. It ignores the qualities of current C-1 zoning. It does not retain enough project review and oversight of developers. It does not place enough value on the city's tree canopy and shared opens spaces. And importantly, it is not coordinated with transit infrastructure.

I urge you to say "YES" to immediate multi-family zoning city-wide, but "NO" to this overly simplified and flawed zoning ordinance! I urge you, our City Councilors, to urgently demand much better for all the citizens of this community.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and for your work on these important issues.

Mark D. Smith
104 Otis St. Apt. 1
Cambridge, MA 02141
617-780-6992



The Citywide Multifamily Housing Zoning Petition

On September 30, the City Council voted to advance a set of zoning changes to promote the creation of multifamily housing (like apartments and condos) across the city. These changes aim to:

- Allow multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the city.
- Allow residential buildings of up to 6 stories in all neighborhoods and districts of the city.
- Remove some requirements that make it more difficult to build multifamily housing like: minimum lot sizes, limits on the number of housing units, and amount of floor area.
- Continue to encourage the creation of permanently affordable housing through the City's [inclusionary housing requirements](#) and [Affordable Housing Overlay \(AHO\)](#).

Visit the [project webpage](#) to view all the available information, including the zoning proposal text and more informational materials.

Upcoming Meetings

Community Information Session

[Tuesday, December 3, 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.](#)

- City staff will present information about the Zoning for Multifamily Housing zoning petition and answer questions.
- There will be a Q&A for community members to ask questions to City staff.

- In-person meeting at St. John the Evangelist Church, 2254 Massachusetts Ave.

City Council, Ordinance Committee

Wednesday, December 4, 2:30 p.m.

- A follow up to the November 19 Ordinance Committee meeting. This meeting will begin with public comment followed by council discussion.
- There will be public comment.
- Hybrid Meeting, in the Sullivan Chamber at Cambridge City Hall or **virtual on the meeting portal**

Planning Board

Tuesday, December 17, 6:30 p.m.

- This is a continuation of the November 12 and November 19 public hearings.
- Board members will discuss the proposal and consider a recommendation to the City Council.
- There will be no more oral comment, but the Board will get written comments submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 16. Send written comments to **planningboardcomment@cambridgema.gov**.
- The meeting will be virtual (online). See **instructions for how to watch the meeting**.

City Council, Ordinance Committee

Thursday, December 19, 5:30 p.m.

- A follow up to the November 19 and December 4 Ordinance Committee meetings. This meeting will begin with public comment followed by council discussion.
- There will be public comment.
- Hybrid Meeting, in the Sullivan Chamber at Cambridge City Hall or **virtual on the meeting portal**

Past Meeting Materials and Recordings

Community Development Department Information Sessions

Thank you for joining us at the Community Development Department's Virtual Information Session and In-person Open House! In these meetings, City staff explained the zoning proposals, answered questions, and received comments. The recordings and documents below are a useful introduction to the proposal.

Virtual Information Session

Thursday, October 24th

- [video recording](#)
- [slide presentation](#)

In-person Open House

Tuesday, October 29th

- [presentation boards](#)

City Council

On October 31, the Economic Development and University Relations Committee heard a presentation from City staff on the expected impacts on Cambridge services and the economy.

City Council, Economic Development and University Relations Committee

Thursday, October 31st

- [video recording](#)

On November 19, the Ordinance Committee heard a presentation from City staff on the zoning proposal and housing growth projections.

City Council, Ordinance Committee Tuesday, November 19th

- [video recording](#)

Planning Board

As part of the required zoning amendment process, the Cambridge Planning Board is hosting public hearings about the Zoning for Multifamily Housing proposal. At the first meeting City staff presented information about the proposal, and the Board heard public comment. At the November 19th meeting the board discussed the proposal, and they decided to continue the discussion at the [December 17th meeting](#).

Planning Board

Tuesday, November 12th

- [video recording](#)

Planning Board

Tuesday, November 19th

- [video recording](#)

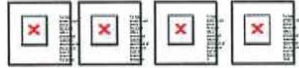
Questions and Comments

Thank you to everyone who submitted questions and comments. From October 19 - November 3, the City collected feedback through an online form. This form is now closed. We are working to compile all comments for the record and organize questions so we can provide responses.

You may send written comments to the Planning Board at PlanningBoardComment@cambridgema.gov or the City Council's Ordinance Committee at CityClerk@cambridgema.gov to be considered at the upcoming public hearings. Some of the meetings are listed above. Visit the [project webpage](#) for a complete list.

Learn more about Multifamily Zoning

Sign up for Multifamily Zoning emails



[Cambridgema.gov/CDD](https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD)

Cambridge Community Development Department | 344 Broadway 3rd Floor | Cambridge, MA 02139 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elizabeth McNerney <liz.mcnerney@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 1:58 PM
To: City Manager; City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Upzoning - yes - but not "as of right"

Hello City of Cambridge Officials,

I fully understand the need for more housing in our city and I'm willing to trade "views of the sky" as I travel on the main corridors for that housing to be built. I am not willing to grant permission "as of right" to developers to build large and tall anywhere in the city. Please do not pass this upzoning.

I completely agree that review & permitting needs to happen in months not years and that process is in your control. Do not upzone "as of right"; instead facilitate a better process and better targeting of development sites. We need to ensure that our city is resilient and liveable. We need to protect some open spaces and we absolutely need to protect our irreplaceable mature trees & the hundreds of new trees that are being planted all over the city.

I'm sure you are aware that there are many single story commercial buildings on Mass Ave north of the Common. Let's focus on development there.

It is a difficult issue and I thank you for all of your efforts. Please do not hand the developers an "as of right" permission,

Liz McNerney
32 Garfield Street
617.461.6155

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 12:54 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning

Dear City Councilors,

Before tonight's Ordinance meeting, I want to share my support for ending exclusionary zoning and also my concerns about what has been proposed.

I want to use my own situation as an example, but first note that I support Option #3, CHJC's proposal that the multifamily zoning provisions only apply to buildings larger than 10,000 sq ft (or over 9 units), ensuring that any new building would have to have at least 2 inclusionary units and resulting in more subsidized units than CDD's Option #1 or Option #6. Base zoning across the city should become C-1.

However, I continue to have concerns about the elimination of setbacks and curtailment of city review. My house sits 2.5 feet from the property line on 3.5 sides of the house. If new neighbors all used their new rights, my 2-story house would be sitting at the bottom of a dark well.

My southside neighbor is a 3.5 story apartment building. If I built 6 stories on their north side, it would have a very different effect than if they built 6 stories 3 feet from my south side, making the solar panels that the city encouraged me to install unusable.

I understand that the permitting process has been used to problematically stall many projects in the past. I would suggest that those process flaws be remedied rather than denying all residents the possibility of challenging design plans that create lasting harm and displacement. Handing over the city's role in urban planning to developers is irresponsible.

Finally, I don't know in what scenario it's beneficial to transition my street (which is currently about 50% affordable units) to 20% inclusionary/80% rich people. The main effect would be displacement, gentrification, and the turnover of family homes to developers. To top it off, all those exclusive neighborhoods that are theoretically being "opened up," would likely not have added any affordable housing to the city because all the developers would have left them alone to cash in on the eastern part of the city.

I understand why people who want to get into Cambridge would be willing to pave over every foot of it, but as our representatives it is on you to weigh multiple priorities and come to a solution that doesn't push out current residents.

Thank you,
Andy Nash
Worcester Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Annette LaMond <annettelamond@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 12:25 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Please Consider Impact of Upzoning on Open Space

Dear Councillors,

Others have written to question whether the zoning proposals that would eliminate side and back setbacks and allow six- or seven-story buildings would have much impact on affordable housing versus adding to the stock of luxury apartment rentals.

Another key question is the impact that these proposals would have on the City's open space and tree canopy.

According to The Trust for Public Land, Cambridge scores well on measures of the proximity of residents to parks enjoyed by Cambridge residents – 98 percent of Cantabrigians live within a 10-minute walk of a park. However, as measured by open space acreage, Cambridge comes up short. Only 7 percent of our City-owned land is used for parks and recreation – well below the national median of 15 percent.

These statistics are sobering, and should give new perspective on the importance of private open space in Cambridge. The spacing between buildings, both side yards and backyards, matters to everyone. Spacing provides visual and psychological benefit. Throughout Cambridge, side gardens add to the beauty of place. Out-of-scale buildings will take away green spaces, shading and diminishing the ones that remain.

Please consider the City's open space needs, public and private, as you deliberate the zoning proposals before you.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond & Joe Moore
7 Riedesel Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Melissa Ludtke <melissa.ludtke@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 10:55 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Upzoning: Remember the TREES and OPEN SPACE, and why it is VITAL that we protect our city's mature trees and open spaces

Hello:

At the recent Planning Board meeting about the council's upzoning plans, I heard a lot of concern raised by the public about removal of mature trees and loss of green space to make way “as of right” (with no appeal) for the demolition of homes leading to the building of far larger developments – from property line to property line in the sides and back.

I was delighted to hear Planning Board members voicing their concerns, too, about mature tree losses and what consequences this would bring to our city as we confront the urgency of dealing with the climate crisis.

I am writing to ask City Councillors to demand a city-wide evaluation of likely mature tree losses, of other green space losses this upzoning proposal would likely lead to, and the trees the city intends to plant to replace those mature trees that will be lost before taking a vote on the upzoning plan's diminishing setbacks and open space.

Thanks for your kind attention,

Melissa

Melissa Ludtke
30 Buena Vista Park
Cambridge 02140

Melissa Ludtke
Author, *Locker Room Talk: A Woman's Struggle to Get Inside*, forthcoming from Rutgers University Press,
August 2024

<https://www.melissaludtke.com/>

Substack: <https://melissaludtke.substack.com/>

Co-Producer, *Touching Home in China: in search of missing girlhoods*
[Website](#)

phone: 617-416-1989

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 9:32 AM
To: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: City Manager; City Clerk; Cotter, Chris; Roberts, Jeffrey; Planning Board Comment; Joseph, Swaathi; Blier, Suzanne; Ruth Ryals; Lee Farris; Robert Winters; Carolyn; Marc Levy; news@thecrimson.com
Subject: Correction to Two Questions to MFH Petitions + new PRR Response

To Honorable Co-chairs McGovern and Toner, and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Suzanne just commented that the two identical graphs. Please accept my sincerest apologies. I have embedded the correct graph for the 2nd case.

Also I just received an email from PRAO that "As a result of the pandemic, there was no report for 2020." This again proves my point #2 below. Just because everyone was working remotely doesn't mean the annual report shouldn't be filed. If the Cycling Safety Ordinance could have been amended in 2020 to add a strict timeline, why couldn't CDD submit 2020 Annual Report even if just to report due to the pandemic, there was no change in the Total Dwelling Units or Affordable Dwelling Units in 2021? Are we to assume the 2020 data didn't change from 2029 data?

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

On Thu, Dec 19, 2024 at 8:07 AM Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com> wrote:

To Honorable Co-chairs McGovern and Toner, and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing work on the MFH Petitions, which will have a lasting impact on our City's future undoing a century of careful urban designing. As noted by the Planning Board, while they support the idea of eliminating exclusive zoning in Cambridge, they did not endorse the Petitions in their current form, leaving it up to the elected City Council to make amendments based on their deliberations.

As you deliberate on this important issue, I urge you to consider two key questions:

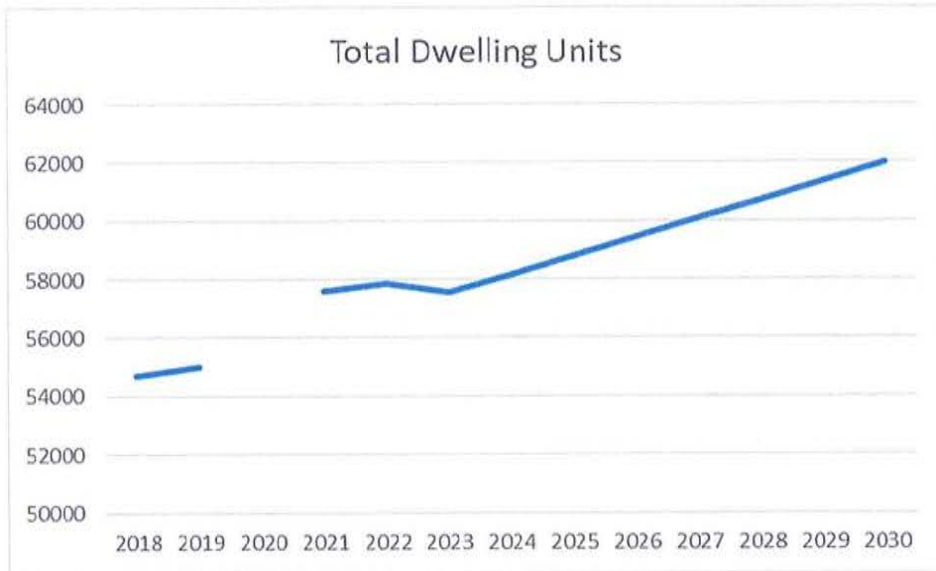
1) What is the primary goal of this Petition? Based on the attached flowchart, the objectives could be either:

- (a) meeting the 2030 Envision Housing Goals, which CDD has acknowledged is unlikely until 2040, or
- (b) eliminating exclusionary zoning, which requires a different process.

2) Is CDD's analysis reliable? Every new data from CDD continues to raise concerns about the accuracy of their data and analysis. For instance, the newly released Annual Housing Stock

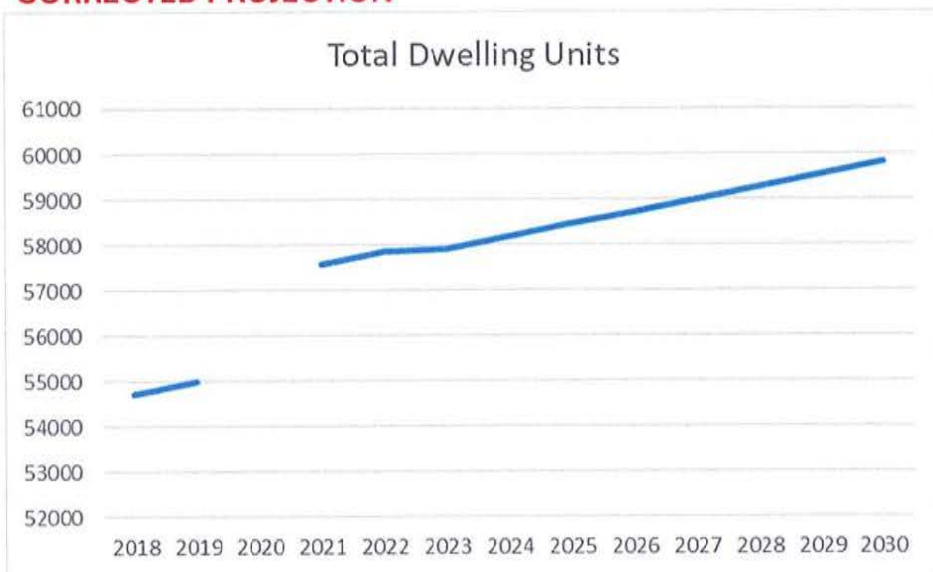
Updates from 2018, the Envision Cambridge's base year, to 2023 without the crucial 2020 Update contradicts explanations given in the [2024 Update](#)

If we are to believe CDD's admission they made a mistake in 2023 total Dwelling Units (DUs), the adjusted 2023 DU should be (total FY24 DU - number of DUs added in FY24). Here is a graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection using new DU added in FY24 (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*). The troubling fact in this scenario is that we actually lost DUs in FY23.



Now if we assume CDD's new DUs added in FY24 was correct, then graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*) is below. This is troubling also in that the rate of growth is much lower in this case and can achieve only 59,826 DUs by 2030, far less than 61,992 in the above scenario.

CORRECTED PROJECTION



I urge you to carefully consider these questions and the attached materials as you move forward with your decision.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: John Hanratty <john@avon-hill.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 8:29 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee Deliberations

Clerk: Please enter into public records.

Councillors,

As you consider amendments to create a coherent and effective petition, here are my thoughts.

- End "exclusionary" zoning - Convert A/B zones to C-1 - Declare victory
- Start a new, coherent petition that includes neighborhoods, corridors, and squares.
- Use real housing production numbers (including AHO, permitted, under construction units). We need to use real goals for the project and not depend on "the sky is falling" projections.
- Special permitting/review above reasonable heights (4 in neighborhoods, higher in corridors/squares
- Neighbors need a recourse / Developers need a hammer to do the right thing. AHO got a big pass on this, but city financing should mean there is some protection from bad-acting developers.
- Remove the poison pill of automatic AHO height escalation from 4 stories to 13 stories "as of right" in neighborhoods. There are AHO incentives other than height (e.g. AHT funding)

John Hanratty
15 Mount Vernon St, Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 8:07 AM
To: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine
Cc: City Manager; City Clerk; Cotter, Chris; Roberts, Jeffrey; Planning Board Comment; Joseph, Swaathi; Blier, Suzanne; Ruth Ryals; Lee Farris; Robert Winters; Carolyn; Marc Levy; news@thecrimson.com
Subject: Two fundamental questions re Multifamily Housing (MFH) Petitions
Attachments: PB_12_17_24 Y. Kim .pdf

To Honorable Co-chairs McGovern and Toner, and Members of the Ordinance Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing work on the MFH Petitions, which will have a lasting impact on our City's future undoing a century of careful urban designing. As noted by the Planning Board, while they support the idea of eliminating exclusive zoning in Cambridge, they did not endorse the Petitions in their current form, leaving it up to the elected City Council to make amendments based on their deliberations.

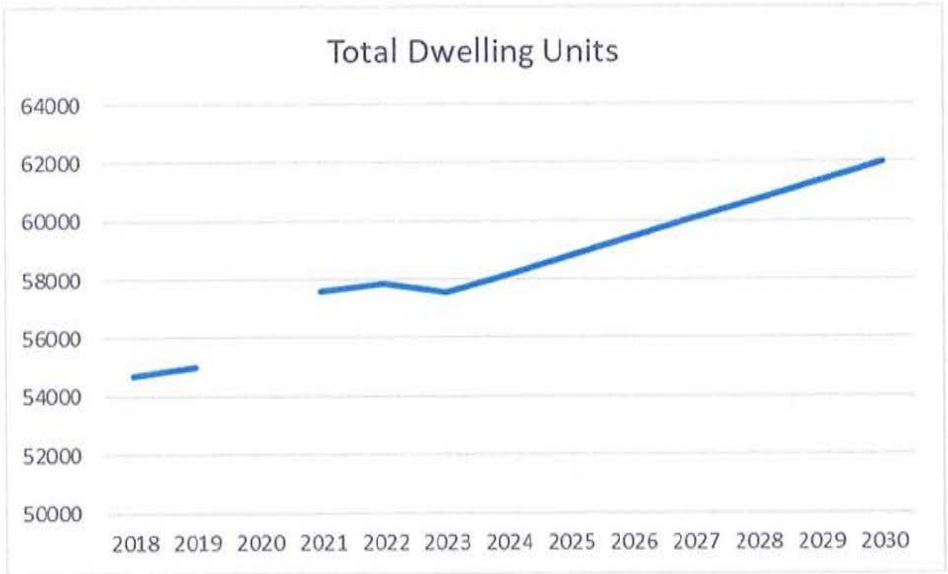
As you deliberate on this important issue, I urge you to consider two key questions:

1) What is the primary goal of this Petition? Based on the attached flowchart, the objectives could be either:

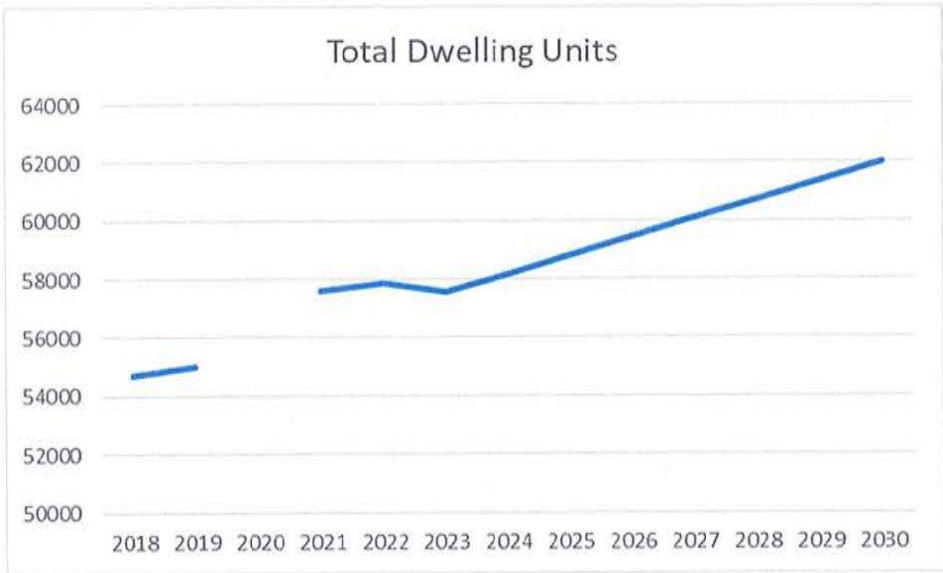
- (a) meeting the 2030 Envision Housing Goals, which CDD has acknowledged is unlikely until 2040, or
- (b) eliminating exclusionary zoning, which requires a different process.

2) Is CDD's analysis reliable? Every new data from CDD continues to raise concerns about the accuracy of their data and analysis. For instance, the newly released Annual Housing Stock Updates from 2018, the Envision Cambridge's base year, to 2023 without the crucial 2020 Update contradicts explanations given in the [2024 Update](#)

If we are to believe CDD's admission they made a mistake in 2023 total Dwelling Units (DUs), the adjusted 2023 DU should be (total FY24 DU - number of DUs added in FY24). Here is a graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection using new DU added in FY24 (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*). The troubling fact in this scenario is that we actually lost DUs in FY23.



Now if we assume CDD's new DUs added in FY24 was correct, then graph of what we can achieve by 2030 using linear projection (*nb not the best but the easiest projection*) is below. This is troubling also in that the rate of growth is much lower in this case and can achieve only 59,826 DUs by 2030, far less than 61,992 in the above scenario.



I urge you to carefully consider these questions and the attached materials as you move forward with your decision.

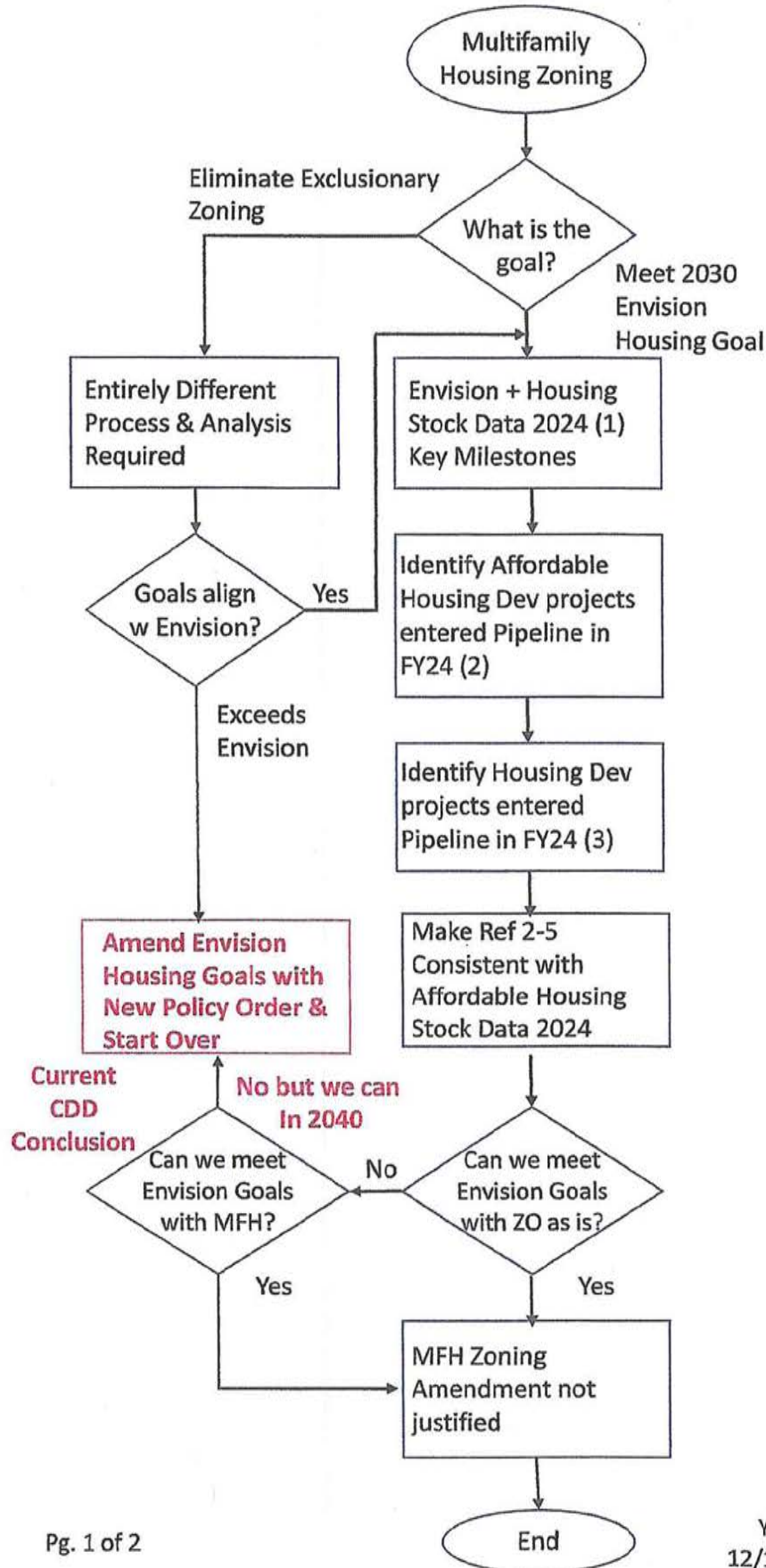
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions 1 & 2



Multifamily Housing Petitions' Outstanding Issues

Ever since CMA 2024 #207, "draft zoning language ... to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow up to six stories of multifamily housing in all residential districts" was [referred to the Ordinance Committee on 9/30/2024](#), Community Development Department (CDD) made a series of errors at the direction of City Council and City Manager.

First, the Planning Board (Board) is deliberating based on CDD presentation dated 11/12/24, whereas the Ordinance Committee (Committee) on 11/19/24 version. Additionally, CDD has published [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) on 11/27/24 and has provided additional material to the Board. The public must be given access to the additional materials and an opportunity to comment on new materials and changes since 11/12/24 Board meeting.

Second, on 12/11/24, the Public Record Access Office (PRAO) sent me a time extension reply stating that they will not be able to provide the relevant housing data I requested, P241953-112524, until January 2025, which will unfortunately be too late for these documents to be reviewed in time for this week's meetings. However, on the same day, CDD released [Annual Housing Stock Update 2024](#), one of the public records I requested. Why did CDD inform PRAO that they could not provide me this data yet posted it on its website on the day of time extension reply? And we are still missing data for dwelling units that are in the planning stages or in permitting stages to accurately project number of housing units by 2030.

CDD admitted the third error with the release of 2024 Annual Housing Stock. CDD estimated 58,170 units were completed or under construction as of 6/30/24 and that 637 housing units have been added since 6/30/23. This means CDD made a critical error in the total number of all housing units as of 6/30/23 which should be 57,533 (58,170 – 637) not 57,894 as previously reported because this shows accelerated housing growth rate in FY24 invalidating CDD using growth rate to date to in their analysis. Housing development growth rate going forward has to be determined based on accurate annual housing stock data. Furthermore, if the FY23 housing data is incorrect, a revised data should be submitted to the state together with FY24 data.

This leads to the fourth error which is inconsistency in various housing data namely

1. [Annual Housing Stock Update 2024](#)
2. [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) #55 on pg. 18
3. [Housing Data & Facts](#)

Unfortunately, due to the late release of Annual Housing Stock Update 2024 and urgency of meeting the written comment deadline, I do not have the time to detail all the inconsistencies.

But even with these 3 sets of data, we are still missing the number of dwelling units that are in planning or permitting stages, i.e., all the potential units that are not yet permitted. Furthermore, the Housing Projection Analysis in the 11/19/24 version of CDD Presentation does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust. These excluded developments make it impossible to project the number of housing units to meet Envision Housing Goals by 2030.

References:

1. [Affordable Housing Stock Data – 2024 Update](#)
2. [Active and Recent Affordable Development Projects](#)
3. [Current & Completed Projects Table](#)
4. [Housing Data & Facts, Thursday, April 18, 2024](#)
5. [Cambridge Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions Frequently Asked Questions](#) item 55, pg. 18

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mark Rifkin <mark.e.rifkin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 7:41 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance committee meeting 12/19 -- please legalize multifamily housing and "missing middle"

Hello,

Ahead of today's Ordinance Committee meeting, I just wanted to reaffirm my strong hope that you approve the proposal for legalizing multifamily housing as presented by CDD. This would be a groundbreaking and sorely necessary step toward addressing housing affordability in the city and the region. The City's exclusionary zoning codes and discretionary review process represent legacies of structural racial and class discrimination and continue to perpetuate segregation today. It's long past time we addressed these systems of inequity head-on and moved toward a fairer future.

I know amendments may be necessary to get this effort passed. I do, however, want to strongly caution against a particular alternative that I believe will kneecap our ability to create equitable and beneficial development patterns. In particular, while I understand the motivations behind the IZ only proposal, only allowing 10+ unit buildings will preclude development of smaller "missing middle" housing types. These buildings, exemplified by the triple-decker, provide an important option for many Cambridge residents who may not want to live in a larger apartment building but cannot afford a single family house. To truly end exclusionary zoning, we need to allow a wide range of housing options in every neighborhood.

I understand there is a worry about developers stopping at nine units in order to avoid the inclusionary requirement. I'd strongly encourage you to ask CDD to further evaluate this possibility (it may be that developers will prefer to build larger with inclusionary in most cases) and ways to address it, rather than continuing to ban small duplex, triplex, six-plex homes on small lots where 10+ unit buildings are not viable. Restricting development of nine unit buildings could address this concern without unduly limiting housing options. More practically, the inclusionary zoning ordinance could be amended to require sliding-scale contributions to affordable housing funds between eight and twelve units (with the option to contribute by including affordable units). Tax levels could be set to keep smaller projects viable while not disincentivizing building more units. Also, only allowing development of larger 10+ unit buildings prevents small developers from contributing to the housing market.

It's important to keep in mind that this cliff effect occurs because inclusionary zoning, while a well-intentioned policy that certainly can create some affordable housing, is not a solution to our housing challenges. This is for a few reasons. First, inclusionary zoning funds affordable housing by taxing developers of new buildings, but they don't benignly shoulder that cost -- they increase rents to make it up. IZ can also discourage developers from building in the first place, which in turn increases rents across the market due to lowered supply (see [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#) for more on how increased market-rate housing supply improves affordability). In those senses, IZ is a regressive tax, since it only extracts funds from renters and not homeowners. Second, it is very difficult to create large amounts of heavily subsidized housing with IZ, since more stringent IZ requirements can not only result in less market-rate production but also fewer IZ units. For more on the limits of inclusionary zoning, I highly recommend [these two](#) UCLA Housing Voice podcasts, with extensive show notes and transcripts.

We need city law encouraging affordable housing, including deeply affordable housing, but it should not be funded by only taxing renters — it should be funded with broad-based progressive taxes (like property taxes). The AHO and other affordable housing efforts in the city are examples of successful programs funded with broad-based taxes. Mandatory but [subsidized inclusionary zoning](#) via tax abatements is another innovative policy which could make a big difference in IZ's ability to deliver lots of truly affordable housing inside new developments (since income restrictions could be lower), without an unfair tax on renters. That would be a true affordable housing policy — keeping buildings under ten units banned just maintains parts of the exclusionary status quo.

While the city does not estimate a large net decrease in units under the "IZ only" alternative by 2040, those estimates are based on the assumption that the rate of housing starts in residential areas will not increase. This is a reasonable assumption to make for this kind of estimate, since it's difficult to precisely predict how housing starts will change in the

future. However, it is possible that housing starts will increase with the decreased barriers to housing production included in this proposal (simplified dimensional restrictions, no discretionary approval for small projects, etc.). Development projects on small lots are less likely to have the capital needed to weather the uncertainty of special permit approval that this reform will eliminate. It's reasonable, then, that small-lot "missing middle" development could outpace projections. If we analyze and monitor the risk of "stopping at 9," and implement policies (e.g. taxing 9 unit buildings or subsidizing inclusionary zoning) to address that risk, there's no reason not to legalize more housing options (which will contribute to supply and lower rents). Alternative 6, "4+2 Bonus for IZ projects", would be another option to encourage inclusionary buildings while not banning smaller developments.

As I've commented before, legalizing multifamily housing is a slam dunk for housing affordability, equity, and environmental action. Cambridge has a real opportunity to be a leader here, and I hope you take it. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,
Mark Rifkin
945 Memorial Dr

Erwin, Nicole

From: rosemous@rcn.com
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 4:34 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Cc: rosemous
Subject: RE Cambridge up-zoning proposal to be discussed today at Ordinance Committee Meeting

Subject: Fwd: [Notice from a Cleveland-Circle community group] RE Cambridge up-zoning proposal to be discussed at Ordinance Committee Meeting -- "Neighborhood Parking will disappear if they allow 6-story buildings in every neighborhood".

TO: The City Council Ordinance Committee

I believe that the upzoning proposal to be discussed today by the Cambridge City Council Ordinance Committee allowing for 6-story residential buildings to be constructed (as indicated below) in virtually every neighborhood in Cambridge -- without zoning-mandated setbacks, green space, (or parking) -- reflects a truly radical departure from customary zoning review in order to mount an effort to solve what is essentially a metro-wide (even nation-wide) affordable housing crisis. As is readily discernible in the email just below from a community group in Cleveland Circle (representing Allston & Brighton), this attempt in our small, dense city to redress an acute affordable housing crisis in metro Boston has attracted attention (& concern) in neighboring communities & even in The Boston Globe. Indeed, as that newspaper's article appearing this past summer affirms, the proposed zoning changes if enacted by the Cambridge City Council would represent "one of the most sweeping zoning reform efforts anywhere in the country" (Brinker, 8/17/24).

Given recent Council efforts to do away with decision-making RE proposed zoning changes at the neighborhood level (which was customary in the past in Cambridge), along with the mish-mash of proposals to allow up to 15-story buildings of affordable housing in the city's squares & corridors, plus up to 6 stories of market-rate housing anywhere in the city -- these combined municipal efforts represent an ill-considered attempt to solve the problems of those facing the most acute housing shortages by inflicting pain on another group of city residents: i.e., those with low & moderate incomes who live in the older 2-3 family houses that line the residential streets perpendicular to the very corridors -- i.e., Mass. Ave. or Cambridge St. -- targeted for the proposed dense development. Indeed, I sincerely doubt that those Cambridge residents fortunate enough to be living in large (even palatial) single-family homes in West Cambridge will be confronted with a single 6-15 story building anywhere in the vicinity of their gracious homes.

In contrast, the Cambridge residents who live on the many residential streets featuring rows of aging two-family homes & triple-deckers (minus driveways & much in the way of greenery) will eventually find themselves confronted with towers on the adjacent corridors: these future jumbo developments (enabled by the proposed up-zoning) will cast vast shadows down the adjacent residential streets -- overall producing in the affected neighborhoods much greater density, more congestion, less greenery, & even fewer parking spaces than are currently available. What is more, how will such overdevelopment affect the quality of life for families established in these already dense neighborhoods: where many adults juggle multiple responsibilities & commute between work, school, & family care? Furthermore, these communities already lacking in the tree cover & greenery that serves to mitigate the environmental impacts of climate change will also confront the increased

'densification' imposed by the towers stacked along the adjoining corridors -- notably lacking in setbacks in back & on their sides: the combined impacts of these conditions will thereby exacerbate summer heat, increase pollution from traffic congestion, & further stress aging infrastructure.

While local politicians may look to Paris or even Hong Kong as models of what dense, urban development might afford their fortunate residents, socio-economic & cultural factors in those cities are hardly comparable to those that we Americans experience in cities like Cambridge nor in greater Boston as a whole. What is more, I suspect that these cosmopolitan cities hardly confront the deficits of metro-wide circumferential mass transit that we indeed face in metro Boston. Moreover, all the necessities of family life cannot be conducted via bicycles in our congested city (what about those who juggle multiple jobs or work odd hours?), & where we are all too often subjected to harsh climactic conditions.

In view of the above-mentioned problems, I would urge the City Council to think carefully before constructing our very own Pruitt-Igoes (i.e., a massive housing project demolished in St. Louis decades ago & viewed as an abject social housing failure) -- sprouting up across the city & thereby making life increasingly arduous for families that are established here & lack the resources to seek out housing alternatives: i.e., as the upzoning inevitably encourages the destruction of the aging two- & three-family houses which are often the last resort for low- & moderate-income families already rooted in this city whose diversity is too quickly yielding to the 'gentrification' imposed by market forces.

Thanks for your consideration of what I have written above as well as the attached comments below.

Linda Moussouris
2440 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, MA

From: "'Char Knox' via Cleveland Circle Community" <cleveland-circle-community@googlegroups.com>
To: "'Eva Webster' via Cleveland Circle Community" <cleveland-circle-community@googlegroups.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:55:41 PM
Subject: Re: [Cleveland-Circle] FW: Neighborhood Parking will disappear if they allow 6-story buildings in every neighborhood.

Thank you for making me aware of this issue....
Good Luck.

Charlotte Knox

On Tuesday, August 20, 2024 at 12:59:16 PM EDT, 'Eva Webster' via Cleveland Circle Community <cleveland-circle-community@googlegroups.com> wrote:

This is happening in Cambridge. I'm sure that upzoning of A-B ([the process has started](#)) will have the same result as this posting is predicting.

On 8/20/24, 12:49 PM, "Cambridge Streets for All" <info@cambridgeforall.org> wrote:

Dear CSA Friends:

Tomorrow, August 21, 2024 at 11:00 am, the City Council Housing Committee will take up the city-wide up-zoning to allow 6 story market rate (luxury housing) in every neighborhood.

The city wants to allow 6-story buildings, without parking, set backs or green space in all our neighborhoods, replacing current zoning rules. Allowing 6-story buildings everywhere will further clog our streets, create more congestion and pollution, and turn us all into Parking Nomads, constantly searching for a place to park in our own neighborhoods. Let the city know that is not acceptable!

Read more about the plan on the City Website: [HERE](#)
Read more about the plan in the [Boston Globe](#)

Please Circulate among your Neighbors and Write to Council, City Clerk, Manager at:
council@cambridgema.gov; cityclerk@cambridgema.gov; citymanager@cambridgema.gov

This message is from [Cambridge Streets for All](#). Please support our work with your tax-deductible donation to CSA [here](#).



Copyright © 2024 Cambridge Streets for All, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:

Cambridge Streets for All

1798A Massachusetts Ave

Cambridge, MA 02140-2809



--
You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Cleveland Circle Community" group.
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to cleveland-circle-community+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.
To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/cleveland-circle-community/2282B2F2-FEBE-4B1F-8C29-7F920A2BB0EA%40comcast.net>.

--
You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Cleveland Circle Community" group.
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to cleveland-circle-community+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.
To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/cleveland-circle-community/226103986.5347601.1724176541999%40mail.yahoo.com>.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marilee Meyer <mbm0044@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 1:00 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; citymanager@cambridge.gov; Wilson, Ayesha; Toner, Paul; Nolan, Patricia; Zusy, Catherine; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc
Subject: Please don't be hasty on multifamily amendments- let the it expire before bringing it back.

Dear Ordinance Committee,

I hope you had a chance to hear the thoughtful deliberations of the Planning Board- It refused to have city staff herd them towards a **predetermined outcome** in an attempt to squash any independent thought by its members. They were not happy and I can only hope you get an accurate report from CDD who earlier stated, that **“their focus is on housing production- not urban design guidelines”**. **DESIGN REVIEW IS CRITICAL. THIS UP-ZONING IS A GIVE-AWAY TO DEVELOPERS AND INVESTORS. RESIDENTS WERE NOT AT THE TABLE.** With no permits, it is important to have **specific parameters**.

The original AHO has extensive design guidelines. AHO 2.0 was tweaked and amended specifically for height on corridors. It is assumed the original guidelines still stand, but its nuances are slowly being eroded like transitions between corridor and neighborhood. **AHO has a Design Review mechanism, but there are no indications that market-rate has to follow**. In fact, Market-rate will be built AS-OF-RIGHT with little or no design review or oversight, giving them an advantage over affordable housing. What is the zoning regulations proposed? The following quotes are from the AHO Design Guidelines.

Process “provides affordable housing developers, property owners, the Planning Board, neighbors, City staff, and the Affordable Housing Trust with a framework to guide the advisory design review process for affordable housing development ..”. (AHO Design guidelines 1.4)

“The following design objectives are intended to inform .. and to guide the Planning Board's non-binding review and report. The goal of these guidelines is to promote new affordable housing buildings that reinforce the city's existing sense of place by reflecting and enhancing the patterns and textures of its public realm and built fabric, contribute to the city's streets and other public open spaces, are sensitive and compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods, and respect the privacy and quality of life of the residents of abutting properties.”(Objectives and Principles) The principle still stands.

There is no language for scenarios on anything. **With no oversight or permits so how do you proceed?**

Provide a sense of comfort by making new buildings and additions inviting and compatible with their neighbors. Regardless of style, contribute to a sense of a rich architectural community by the arrangement, rhythm, and scale of architectural elements... Configure building massing and facades... with sensitivity to the privacy of existing residential neighbors and their need for light and air. (AHO 2.3)

Harmonize new buildings and additions in appearance and scale with historically significant buildings. (AHO 2.8) Unfortunately, we are getting big square boxes.

Thoughtful building placement, orientation, setbacks, green open space, landscaping, circulation, pedestrian access, and parking layout are critical elements to creating a desirable setting for housing projects, to creating a good fit with existing nearby buildings, and to contributing to the City's public realm. (AHO SIGHT DESIGN)

Consider the location, dimension, and orientation of open spaces to best promote healthy trees and other vegetation. (Open Space Guidelines 2.8)

Configure building massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. (AHO massing objective).

The Multifamily upzoning favors the 80% Market-rate housing while only 20% is "affordable". Again, there are no design guidelines applied to Market-rate which will have a greater impact on established neighborhoods. 6 stories as of right with little design review is too impactful.

Binding review should begin at 25,000 sq feet if not 10,000-, not the proposed 75,000 sq ft. We need side setbacks for trashcans and passage to back yard, and fire codes. Water and sewer lines are unreliable. Do we have the infrastructure capacity everywhere?

Moving height from 65' to 75' triggers 13 stories anywhere for AHO. This is a slight of hand.

ENVISION had a range of objectives- development patterns, reservation and infill development. The Impact on trees is in conflict with Envision and Urban Tree Master Plan.

Keep the planning board special permit for six stories and some infill projects, maintain 3-4 stories in established neighborhoods and C1. This needs more attention as does engagement with abutters.

6-9 stories have more incentives on corridors. Eliminating limits to massing and height on rear residential additions is ripe for abuse. This is in conflict with the AHO giving the advantage to market-rate developers.

Where new buildings are constructed in the rear yards of existing buildings, or on large lots with large setbacks, adjust their massing to reduce impacts on neighboring buildings and yards by careful siting, articulate massing, and by reducing the visual bulk of top floors.(Massing 1.6)

Do corridors and squares have different zoning regulations than neighborhood locations? Do we have a 5 yr review? is getting rid of zoning the goal? Build Baby Build will not alleviate the problem and will **displace** the most vulnerable. Condos are basically not accessible to those wanting to enter homeownership. This program needs to be strengthened. Rentals are being bought up by corporations and investors. How do we regulate them?

A big chunk of housing numbers are not included in the theoretical tallies. Numbers from AHO or those receiving AHT funding, or PUDs that have produced thousands of apartments, were **NOT** included in the overall unit count. Neither are Corridors and Squares part of this discussion. What is the produced numbers VS the permitted numbers? Why just count the produced and not the projected? How will this affect the AHO?

We need some kind of review mechanism giving structure and rules to building. Developers played a big part in this up-zoning based on their financial criteria- even being at the table. Missing are independent urban planners who understand how societies and cities work, not a co-conspirator. More supply will not satiate more demand in a high-demand city. This is bigger than IDEOLOGY. It has to be practical, responsible, equitable, and legislatable. Otherwise, it is death by 1000 cuts with a narrow and short view.

Please take your time on voting on any amendments. We have the AHO and AHO 2.0 in place. 1/3 of the city is already C1 zoning which allows multi-family. We are repeatedly reminded "we have time". THEN it is hurry- we have a deadline. Let this policy order expire, tighten up details and bring it back. Creating fear and panic is not helpful as we logically deliberate how the best way is to move forward.

Thank you,

Marilee Meyer + 10 Dana St + 02138 + mbm0044@aol.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Eisner <daeisner@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 11:26 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily zoning

To the city council,

As you continue your discussion about multifamily zoning at the ordinance committee meeting tomorrow, I hope you keep this question at the forefront of your minds: What option will lead to the most number of overall units of housing and the most number of affordable units?

Please do not support anything that will lead to fewer units than we could otherwise have.

Thank you,
Dan Eisner
6 Bristol St, Apt. 6

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 7:29 PM
To: Cotter, Chris
Cc: McGovern, Marc; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Nolan, Patricia; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Please Inform Ordinance Committee of True Picture of Housing Data

Dear Housing Director Cotter,

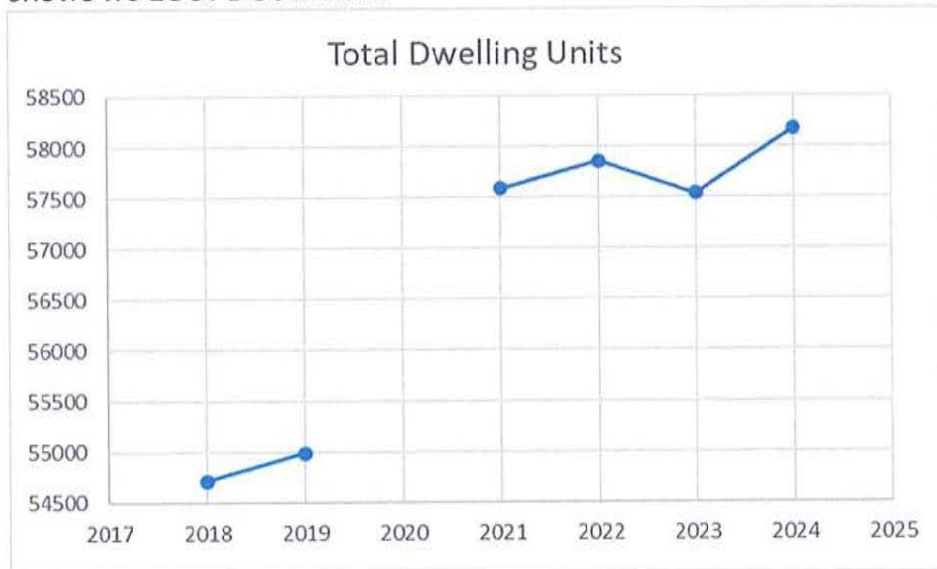
I urgently request you provide a true picture of housing data at 12/19/2024 Ordinance Committee Meeting.

Please accept my sincerest apologies for my email blizzard but the Multifamily Housing Petitions are too important that I am compelled to share any and all new data I receive.

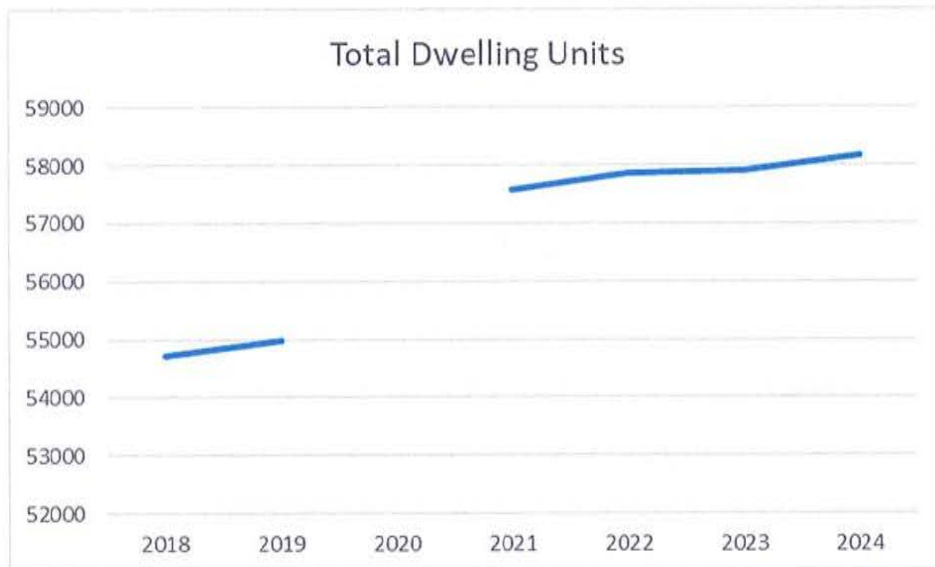
Just a couple of days ago, they informed me they will need more time to provide me with housing public records but today, I received Affordable Housing Stock data from the Public Records Office for 2018 to 2023, except for 2020, with 2024 data now on-line.

I graphed the total dwelling units (DUs) and the result is troubling.

If we are to believe CDD's admission they made a mistake in 2023 total DUs, the adjusted 2023 DU should be total FY24 DU - number of DUs added in FY24. The resulting graph is troubling because it shows we LOST DUs in 2023



Now if we assume 2023 DU was correct but the number of DUs added in FY24 is incorrect, then the resulting graph is



This is troubling also in that the rate of growth is much lower in this case.

So, again the bottom line is we need accurate and consistent data that we can have confidence in. And we need data on the number of DU's in the pipeline or soon to enter into the pipeline. We have many new acquisitions (Roseland/Frost Portfolio being the latest) through Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust's funding and accurate projection of the number of units that could be achieved is urgently requested.

Thank you for your cooperation on this matter,

Respectfully yours,
 Young Kim
 Young

Erwin, Nicole

From: David Hattis <davidwhattis@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 6:48 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: In Support of More Housing

Hello,

I wanted to write in support of the proposal to end exclusionary zoning. I specifically hope that we end up deciding on an option that allows for six story apartments everywhere in Cambridge, while also making smaller apartments possible and economically viable on smaller lots. Both large and small apartments help address the housing shortage. No matter what we do, there is going to be investment made into the housing stock of Cambridge. I hope that we end up with zoning rules that will allow that investment to result in more new homes, including affordable homes, instead of kitchen renovations and down conversions, which is what exclusionary zoning here has resulted in. Research has consistently shown that more housing helps with housing affordability across the income spectrum:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10511482.2024.2418044#abstract>

Cambridge tenants deserve more high quality apartments. More new apartments will mean more ADA accessible apartments, and more lead paint free apartments. Cambridge is a wonderful city with amazing economic opportunity, public schools, parks, and transit access. More people should have the chance to live here.

Thank you for your work on this,

Davis Hattis
434 Franklin St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ethan Frank <ethandf2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 5:52 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Supporting all housing

Hello,

Cambridge's renewed status as a Sanctuary City makes it vital we have homes people can safely live in. I am excited to pass this housing petition, with compromise so the petition works for everyone, and still builds as many homes as we can hope for.

Sincerely,
Ethan Frank
632 Mass Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: hwalker434@rcn.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 5:13 PM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Zusy, Catherine; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Citywide Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions,

Dear Mayor Simmons, Members of the Cambridge City Council, and City Manager Huang,

In advance of the Ordinance Committee Meeting on the Citywide Multifamily Housing Zoning Petitions, I would like you to have the main points I prepared for the Planning Board on November 17th. Interestingly, the Planning Board arrived at very similar positions on most items.

- Choose alternative rezoning scenario 3 or 6. Support relaxed zoning restrictions and also height incentives **only** for projects with inclusionary units, NOT 6 story as-of-right.
- Demand binding reviews for project minimum of 20,000 square feet or 15 units, as in Boston. (Boston Development Review evaluates design, density, use, physical and social impacts, while addressing affordability, climate resilience, and equity. Surely Cambridge should do likewise!)
- Support reasonable side and rear yard setbacks. (Planning Board cautions that eliminating side yard setbacks is unworkable/ unsafe unless there are back service alleys.)
- Support 30% required open space to be mostly permeable and at grade.
- Recognize that the parking problem is real. At minimum, large buildings need parking for service and delivery vehicles.
- And please edit out 13 story AHO towers in the neighborhoods. Limit tall buildings to corridors and squares. This can be done with a single line of text in Article 11.207.5 (d). Interestingly, the Planning Board believes that choosing alternative rezoning scenario 3 or 6 will limit AHO towers to 9 stories in the neighborhoods. This was the Planning Board intention.

With many thanks for your consideration,

Helen Walker
43 Linnaean Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: James Zall <jzall@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 2:30 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Zoning at Ordinance Committee, 12/19/2024

To the Ordinance Committee,

“Ending exclusionary zoning” was one of the Housing Committee's [key goals](#) in working with CDD on the multifamily zoning proposal. One small table from [CDD's FAQ \(#53\)](#), demonstrates how devastatingly effective exclusionary zoning has been:

A: The City’s Assessing Department reports the median assessed *single-family home values* in FY24 are as follows:

Residence A-1: \$5,482,800

Residence A-2: \$3,478,800

Residence B: \$1,663,950

The value of a single-family home is substantially higher (on average) in a district with higher zoning-imposed barriers.

In other Cambridge districts, we can see a mix of homes, from one- or two-family structures to 20-40 or more households per lot (many of the latter built before stricter zoning laws, of course) in which median housing prices and rents are beyond the reach of most current Cambridge residents.

Some Cambridge residents prefer our current exclusionary zoning code and seem unbothered by its results. Some have continued to insist that more and more data and analysis are required for zoning reform but wave it off when it's provided. Communities that have followed the data have made progress toward more and equitable housing; those that ignore it have seen homelessness and other inequities increase.

Our long-term housing shortage is experienced differently by different groups of Cambridge residents.

- The two-thirds of the population who don't own their homes face large increases in rent every year or so, often forcing them to move frequently. The expense, disruption and stress of forced moves can destabilize an individual or a whole family in many ways, for years to come, even in cases where they aren't pushed all the way to homelessness.
- The one-third who own their home enjoy more stable housing, substantial increases in their net wealth, property tax rates that are among the lowest in the Commonwealth and a half-million dollar exemption off the value of their property.

The use of zoning as a tool for segregation and exclusion should not be allowed to continue – as if city ordinances that afflict the afflicted and comfort the comfortable were ever justified in the first place. To conform to the values and policies behind the Council's recent unanimous vote confirming Cambridge's Sanctuary City status, Cambridge must remove the “No Multi-family Housing Here!” signs embedded in our land use laws. The only honest way to “end exclusionary zoning” is to end exclusionary zoning.

James Zall (homeowner)
203 Pemberton Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kavish Gandhi <kmbgandhi@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 1:53 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An; City Clerk
Cc: CH JC
Subject: Comment, Ordinance Committee 12/19

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Manager,

We, the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition, write to you in advance of Thursday's Ordinance Committee hearing. We write to make clear our position on the current options for multifamily zoning reform.

In short: we **support a modification of CDD's Scenario #3 (Inclusionary only) in which the residential base zoning is changed to C-1 citywide, coupled with a substantial municipal voucher program and future investment in social housing. We oppose Scenarios #1 and #6.** I will now explain the reasons for our position.

We share the goal of ending the legacy of discriminatory housing and zoning policies in Cambridge, which are part of centuries of oppression caused by our country's racial caste system. In particular, we believe that all policy changes should have the twin goals of encouraging affordable housing and mitigating displacement. For this reason, **we developed a petition, which you can find [here](#). The petition has three concrete proposals that would mitigate the risk of displacement and prioritize creating affordable housing.**

Regarding changes to multifamily zoning, **we support a modification of CDD Scenario #3**, in which the originally proposed zoning changes would be to projects that cross the "Inclusionary threshold." In other words, we propose these changes only apply to buildings that are either larger than 10,000 square feet and/or contain more than nine housing units. Our additional change is that we also support changing the residential base zoning in all of Cambridge to current C-1 residential zoning. We request that CDD project how many units would result from this proposal.

Together, these amendments would both reduce the acceleration of displacement (because not as many homes would be torn down) and also strongly incentivize developers to focus on projects that contribute Inclusionary Housing units. Compared to Scenario #1 and Scenario #6, CDD projects that our amendments will produce **more affordable units**, and 95% of the new units from Scenario #1. This is due to the fact that, without the option of developing 9-unit market-rate buildings, the tipping point at which developers choose to construct buildings with Inclusionary units is lower, at 12 units rather than 15 units.

For this reason, **we oppose Scenario #1 and Scenario #6.**

Next, **as part of one package**, we support the development of a substantial, **\$6 million / year municipal voucher program**. This would consist of a \$5 million / year voucher program that would allow low-income households to access inclusionary units, and a \$1 million / year tenant-based voucher program with a preference for immigrant families. We applaud CDD and the City Manager for taking first strides

towards consideration of a municipal voucher program, but we believe the initial proposal is not sufficient in scope or size. In particular, most of CDD's proposed vouchers would be aimed at stabilizing households already in affordable housing, rather than creating new opportunities for subsidized housing. If Multifamily zoning passes, it should create hundreds of Inclusionary units, and Cambridge needs to be able to offer city vouchers to make some of those units affordable to lower income families.

Third, we urge that the City Council focus future energy on establishing a mechanism to produce social housing and decommodify the housing stock. Many cities have embraced social housing and funding for a pilot was included in the recent state housing bill. This concept needs to be the focus going forward.

Thank you very much,
Kavish Gandhi (on behalf of the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition)
chjc@cambridgehousingjustice.com
<https://www.cambridgehousingjustice.com/>

Kavish

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carolyn Magid <cmagid@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 10:09 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Amendments to the Proposed Zoning (for Ordinance Committee 12/19)

Dear Councillors:

I am writing to ask the Ordinance Committee to make 2 amendments to the zoning proposal under consideration, as suggested by the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition.

First: zoning changes should be restricted to buildings that provide inclusionary housing (are 10,000+ square feet or 10+ units).

Second: base zoning in the city should be changed so that the entire city is like the **current** C1 zoning and multifamily projects can be built throughout the city, ending the practice of discriminatory zoning.

I also urge the Council to support a \$6 million municipal housing voucher program so that people below 50% AMI can live in the new inclusionary housing.

Why restrict zoning changes to buildings that provide inclusionary housing?

This balances the urgent need for more affordable housing than we can otherwise produce with the need to minimize displacement of low-income residents, including many low-income residents of color.

According to the CDD's own study, restricting zoning changes to buildings that provide inclusionary housing will provide more inclusionary units than the proposal before the ordinance committee or any other analyzed scenarios.

Restricting zoning changes to buildings that provide inclusionary housing will mean that 100% market rate housing will not be incentivized by new zoning. Zoning changes will have a smaller impact on the city as a whole, which should help retain smaller naturally occurring affordable housing and mitigate displacement.

The CDD zoning proposal before the Council will produce fewer inclusionary units and more market rate housing, which CDD has said will rent or sell for the very top of the market. So the greatest beneficiaries are people rich enough to afford new market rate housing. I urge you to support the CHJC amendments to produce more affordable housing, prevent displacement and maintain racial and economic diversity in Cambridge.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Magid
71 Reed St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mariah Villarreal <villarrealmn@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 3:13 PM
To: Planning Board Comment; City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Zoning and Inclusionary Units

Dear Ordinance Committee,

As a resident of Cambridge, I implore you to consider amending zoning requirements such that **buildings larger than 10,000 square feet or more than 9 units** have at least 2 Inclusionary units. Zoning proposals which make it easier for developers not to include Inclusionary Units are antithetical to addressing housing affordability in Cambridge, as stated in the original charge of the Housing Committee included “a goal of having viable housing for everyone, especially lower-income residents.” (Charter Right #2, 3/25/24).

Sincerely,

Mariah Villarreal

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marilee Meyer <mbm0044@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 11:30 PM
To: City Council; Zusy, Catherine; Toner, Paul; Nolan, Patricia; Joseph, Swaathi; City Clerk; citymanager@cambridge.gov; Wilson, Ayesha
Subject: Please re-examine multifamily upzoning and data

December 16, 2024

MULTI-FAMILY AND UPZONING:

Dear Committee Members,

CDD-- in presenting their power point advocating for taller buildings in and around Porter Sq-- included the public quote, ***“If I want to live in a city, it should look like a city...”***. One of Cambridge’s distinct advantages is that it **DOESN’T** look like a city. It encompasses different residential flavors, long-established neighborhoods, long-term landlords with tenants, working class row houses and cottages, historically significant and nationally recognized architecture. The retort could be ***“if you want to live in a city, move to non-descript Kendall Sq or Alewife”***. CDD stated, that ***“their focus is on housing production- not urban design guidelines”***. I thought that was their job.

Councillors should not be taking advice solely from experts in economic policy and development but from urban planners and designers, too. Cambridge has already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on urban design studies, the *AHO Design Guidelines* and the *Alewife Design Guidelines* being just two. ***The authoritative advice is always the same: new development should respect the existing built environment in terms of height, massing, setbacks, and open space.***

WHO benefits? The Housing Committee’s up-zoning is driven almost entirely by investor and developer interests. So far in this numbers game, 80% market-rate dwarfs the 20% affordable desperately needed. In the meantime, vintage housing is being torn down and replaced with formulaic as-of-right buildings designed by zoning regulations not design review. We also hear inclusionary units are “free” because developers pay for them, but they are not. Condos in their own right are EXCLUSIONARY. Only the rich can afford them. We need more ownership programs and rentals- not for the 7000 MIT grad students, but for Cambridge residents in dire straits. Adding more units in a small geographic area will not lead to affordability.

Housing is not like corn, the more you grow the cheaper it is. Each class of housing is a different “commodity”. Free market policies do not always make housing cheaper, and **in high- demand cities like Cambridge, supply and demand doesn’t work according to several studies- pushing costs higher in construction, land and property taxes.** The Housing Committee goal includes *“.. having viable housing for everyone, especially lower-income residents”*. What zoning impacts are there on households earning below 50% AMI?

Other concerns based on the fine print:

- In AHO 2.0, **several lots can be purchased and joined together for a single building up to 9 stories** as of right... inappropriate in the middle of a narrow one-way street of 2-story homes.
- If the current height of 65’ is changed to 75’, according to the AHO 2.0, **AHO automatically becomes 13 stories everywhere. This change is triggered in this PO.**

- Dismissed are many of those property-rich, cash-poor middle-class landlords with tenants many of whom support IDUs, infill and some height. **Displacement is real.**
- Now, ripe for abuse- **“Conforming residential additions are allowed as of right without limits on area or volume”**. (direct quote from this PO).
- While the city provides funding and has design review for the AHO- **there is no such mechanism for market-rate developers** who can actually afford review and permits. They build as- of -right as well.
- Many investors will be foreign or non-resident parking money or find profit for portfolios.
- How are **solar panels** accommodated with abutting height?
- **Smaller streets should have 3-4 stories, 6-stories with inclusionary.** While Production is focused on housing, neighborhood fabric is being sacrificed. There are no clear planning principles or data. It is about getting rid of regulations to make it easier and faster to build. Yet, AFFORDABLE HOUSING is not the focus.
- **New Street behind Fresh Pond Mall is defined by 4- stories.** In its well-suited location, it could have gone 5 or 6 in new construction. Now imagine those 4 story buildings in small established neighborhoods with narrow one-way streets. Context is everything. Projections of production depend on location. One-size-fits all is NOT appropriate everywhere.

Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

- **“Transitions”** from 13 stories to 8 stories backing up to neighborhoods is **no transition** at all.
- **We need set-backs and design review** from the Planning Board, Historical Commission and BZA- hopefully a professional advisory with expertise and experience- not just political correctness and “common sense”.
- Developers need to address traffic impact, storm water, infrastructure, **trees-** actual plans for Community well-being. **And with gentrification brings diminished diversity.**
 - Will any of this new up-zoning plan have a **five-yr review** monitoring progress?
 - **Heights need to be analyzed** on corridors at different stretches—maybe between 6 and 10 stories.

Maximizing theoretical and arbitrary regulations is a recipe for disaster and unintended consequences. We already have $\frac{3}{4}$ of Cambridge zoned C1, and AHO and AHO 2.0 in place so we can afford to look at this latest reiteration deeper. **Haste makes waste.**

We also have to coordinate with Porter and Central Squares and their re-zoning which may or may not dovetail with different regulations. Porter Sq is looking at 18 stories *“because Central Square is considering it”*. Central Sq boundaries have been expanded both deep into neighborhoods and **extended down Mass Ave** where residents don't identify with either Central or Harvard Squares **with the intention of capturing a few more blocks for 18 stories.** What happened to the **Anderson Petition of 1998** which identified the blocks between Lee and Trowbridge Sts as a separate corridor?

Given CDD's own numbers, we are close to 7000 units both finished and in the pipeline. Let's concentrate on corridors first before venturing into neighborhoods.

Obama said: "*Democracy is the art of compromise even if you are 100% right*", to me meaning affordable housing is the goal, but residents need to feel a possible compromise and not excluded because of ageism or property prejudice. Again, many people are property rich and cash poor and their homes are their biggest asset through no fault of their own. What is the housing goal and what is practical, realistic and sustainable? Where can we add units and appropriate tall buildings? Porter Square twin towers is a good start but it is all in the design how successful they will be.

Cambridge doesn't always have to be first, the guinea pig. Using the term "crisis" plays on fear and panic. This is not helpful as we work towards consensus for more AFFORDABLE housing while respecting our city.

Thank you.

Marilee Meyer + 10 Dana St + 02138 + 617-312-3999