



# HOUSING COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

11:00 AM

Remote Meeting

**The Housing Committee will hold a public hearing to continue the discussion on allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City.**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee was held on Wednesday, August 21, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00 a.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was remote only.

**At the request of the Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

- Councillor Azeem – Present
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present
- Councillor Wilson – Present

**Present – 5. Quorum established.**

The Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui offered opening remarks and shared that the Call of the meeting was to continue the discussion on allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City. Present at the meeting was Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Planning, Daniel Messplay, Senior Zoning Manager, Lev McCarthy, Neighborhood Planner, and Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner. Also present at the meeting was Councillor Toner and Mayor Simmons.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui opened Public Comment.**

Carolyn Magid, 71 Reed Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns regarding the proposed zoning.

Raffi Freeman, Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

Bill McAvinney, 12 Douglass Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

Jana Odette, 176 Larch Road, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns regarding the proposed zoning.

James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

Henry H. Wortis, 106 Berkshire Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on affordable housing in Cambridge.

Rabbi Yoni shared support for the proposed zoning.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against proposed language.

Ted Live, 17 Wendell Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about zoning and spoke in favor of multifamily housing.

Steve Trambert, 26 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

Brian Cafferelloi, 224 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the proposed zoning.

Federico Michnik, 82 Richdale Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed zoning.

Nancy Berliner, 545 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed zoning.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns regarding the proposed zoning.

Elizabeth Klerman, 533 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding height, shared concerns, and offered support for affordable housing.

Heli Meltsner, 74 Avon Hill Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns on zoning and support for affordable housing.

Tom Rawson, 121 Clay Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposal.

Aidan Wilson, 1572 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support.

Mark Goodman, 78 Lakeview Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke against proposed zoning.

Joseph Ronayne, 279 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke on ADU development and shared concerns about proposed language.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to zoning and affordable and inclusionary housing.

Marie Elena Saccocio, 55 Otis Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the historical context relative to zoning.

Heather Hoffman., 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against proposed language.

Teresa Cardosi, Woodrow Wilson Court, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of more housing.

Mark Kon, 872 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about development.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support.

Christopher Schmidt, 25 Banks Street, Cambridge, MA,

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA,

Kathy Richman, 31b Jay Street, Cambridge, MA,

Dan Phillips, 234 Broadway, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Iram Farooq who offered brief remarks and introduced the team from CDD. Jeff Roberts and Lev McCarthy gave a presentation titled "Multifamily Housing Citywide". The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered information on

zoning principles, proposed zoning concepts, projected outcomes, zoning changes, zoning map changes, new dimensional requirements, project review, and zoning and process timeline.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Azeem who offered comments that were in favor of the proposed zoning, sharing that it is an opportunity for the City to provide additional affordable housing. Co-Chair Azeem shared that he would be bringing forward motions from CDD that were shared with Co-Chair Siddiqui and him later in the discussion. The motions were shown on the screen for Committee members and the public to view.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared his excitement regarding the information that was provided by the City on the amount of additional housing that would be available if the proposed zoning were to pass. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked if the City has analyzed how many units and buildings would be built with this zoning in certain areas of the City. Iram Farooq explained that the data they currently have is a planning scale analysis that does not provide the precise information that he is looking for. Iram Farooq provided additional information on how Councillors can review replacement units and how trends would change with the proposed zoning.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who provided comments regarding housing and recognizing those who may need affordable housing in the future. Councillor Wilson asked how this zoning would benefit the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). Iram Farooq responded by providing examples of how this zoning would impact the AHO and indicated that the City is still working closely with AHO partners to get their feedback on the proposed zoning changes. Councillor Wilson shared follow up comments to Iram Farooq's response and noted how the City is trying to strategically build and move forward on the zoning to help with the housing crisis.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui made a motion to extend the meeting by thirty minutes.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 5. Motion passed.**

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who had a clarifying question on inclusionary housing and buildings that will be built on lots of 10,000 square feet. Iram Farooq responded by providing additional information relative to the results of reducing the inclusionary threshold and information on examples of projects over the 10,000 square feet. Iram Farooq noted how flexibility plays a role when looking at both potential scenarios. Vice Mayor McGovern asked for clarification on the setback requirements. Jeff Roberts responded by providing more detailed information on setbacks, developments, and districts. Vice Mayor McGovern offered comments that were in support of more housing, and pointed out that change in neighborhoods can be an adjustment. Vice Mayor McGovern pointed out that if this topic goes to the Ordinance Committee, there will be additional discussion with Councillors and opportunities for the public to provide feedback throughout the process.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Toner who asked CDD the six story developments will be located and built in Cambridge. Lev McCarthy responded by sharing which districts the City has currently analyzed, but noted that they have not looked at geographic distribution. Iram Farooq responded to comments made by Councillor Toner regarding residents selling their properties and pointed out that the analysis that has been done is not factoring in the financial feasibility. Lev McCarthy also noted that in the analysis, the City looked at the past 15 years as to how many parcels have been built to help project what may be able to be developed going forward. Councillor Toner noted the importance of discussing inclusionary housing and development as these conversations continue to move forward.

Co-Chair Siddiqui asked if any Committee members had comments regarding Councillor Azeem's two motions. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillor Wilson who offered suggested language to add to the motions. Co-Chair Azeem shared his support for the language.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Azeem who made a motion That the Housing Committee recommends that the Full City Council requests that the City Manager direct the Community Development Department (CDD) and the Law Department to draft zoning language based on the proposal discussed at the Housing Committee to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow up to six stories of multifamily housing in all residential districts, and bring back any analysis (if available) on displacement concerns, and report back to the City Council by September 15, 2024.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Azeem who made a motion That the Housing Committee recommends that the Full City Council requests that the City Manager directs CDD to hold public meetings to inform the Cambridge community about the proposed changes before any public hearings of the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board on this topic.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30p.m.**

**Attachment A** – The City Clerk’s Office received 108 written communications.

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at: [https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/808?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/808?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation relative to multifamily housing citywide.**

# Attachment A

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Sharon Stichter <sharonstichter@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 25, 2024 8:18 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council; City Manager  
**Subject:** proposal to raise building height limits

Please vote down the current proposal to rezone the entire city, allowing 6 or 7 story building height limits citywide. This is a slap in the face to many current residents and neighborhoods. It completely ignores community and environmental considerations in favor of corporate construction and development profits. There have been other, community lead proposals which show that it is possible to significantly increase housing in Cambridge while still preserving the city's liveability and non-shadow green space.

*Sharon Stichter  
108 Walden Street  
Cambridge, Mass. 02140*

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Eric Connally <econnally@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 10:07 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council; City Manager  
**Subject:** Upzoning proposal

Dear City Manager, City Clerk, and Council members:

Can you help me to understand the proposed up-zoning petitions as described [here](#)? Is it true that if approved they allow 75 ft buildings on my residential street? Is it true they remove discretionary review and permit removal of historic homes and green spaces? Is this plan truly beneficial to Cambridge citizens, or is it a windfall for developers?

I would like to feel good about these proposals as a way to remedy housing prices, but what I am reading sounds rather menacing. I have reached out to my neighbors to learn their thoughts.

Thank you  
Eric Connally  
217 Elm St.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** David Hattis <davidwhattis@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 8:15 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council  
**Subject:** In Support of Encouraging Multifamily Housing in Cambridge

Hello,

I wanted to write in strong support of the proposal discussed at yesterday's housing committee meeting that would allow for multifamily housing up to six stories citywide. The presentation given by CDD I think was really illuminating. CDD estimated that this proposal will generate 920 new affordable units by 2040, compared with just 30 (!) affordable units under the status quo zoning in the A, B, and C districts. These 920 affordable units are inclusionary units, so they will be built without any public money. It's basically 920 permanently affordable homes for free. These units are badly needed. There are 20,000 people on the affordable housing wait list. The status quo, which would only provide 30 new affordable homes by 2040, is clearly not going to get the job done given the level of need.

The market rate units are also badly needed. Cambridge has been creating more than 3 jobs per home for decades. As a result it has one of the lowest apartment vacancy rates in the country. It should be possible to live in Cambridge, and even raise a family in Cambridge, with a normal sized salary. There was an earlier housing committee meeting where Councilor Wilson brought up a group of Cambridge middle school students who were thinking about what it would take to continue living in Cambridge when they become adults. I think that's a great way to think about the issue. Those kids, whether they end up with high paying biotech jobs in the future, or if they end up with jobs that pay a more modest income, are going to have a better chance to stay in Cambridge and raise families in Cambridge if we start building more multifamily housing now. This proposal, with its thousands of market rate units and 920 affordable units, is really going to make a difference.

I also want to touch on a couple additional benefits of new housing. Much of the existing housing in Cambridge is quite old, and as a result it is not very accessible for people with limited mobility, and it often has lead paint, making it not ideal for families with young children. New ADA compliant buildings with elevators and lead free paint are badly needed.

Thank you for your work on this important topic.

Thank you,  
David Hattis  
434 Franklin St

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** helen snively <hmsnively@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 5:33 PM  
**To:** City Manager; City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Re: 75 feet tall buildings built on my Cambridge street???

Dear council, and city manager,

I apparently the meeting this morning, but I'm still aghast at this idea.

75 foot tall buildings.. where?

on corridors only.. can you promise us that.. or also on a street of 2-family houses?

Will this make housing cheaper in Cambridge? Or add to our stock of luxury housing.. as if we don't have enough of that?

And what about green space and trees?

Do you have good answers on all of this? Or will this just be jammed down our throats .. as apparently Cambridge isn't dense enough already.

Helen Snively



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Shakti Rovner <sarovner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 4:07 PM  
**To:** City Council; Huang, Yi-An; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Changing base zoning opposition

Do not change the zoning at this time for buildings smaller than 10,000 square feet. This means any new building would have to have at least 1 Inclusionary unit.

Do not change the zoning to automatically allow 6 floor buildings (up to 75') in the neighborhoods; instead require some sort of discretionary review. Affordable Housing Overlay buildings are required to hold community meetings and have 2 public hearings at the Planning Board. There should be some sort of public process for new Inclusionary buildings that are much taller and denser than allowed under current zoning.

Any zoning changes should shift development pressure away from C1 districts which already allow new multifamily buildings. Allow zoning changes only in the non-C1 districts. New development would happen in the areas that had restricted multifamily housing.

Create a substantial city-voucher program for deep affordability that subsidizes Inclusionary units. Without a voucher, Inclusionary units are only accessible to people who earn at least 50% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Create a social housing revolving fund that would fund mixed-income housing with a substantial percent of affordable units.

Establish anti-displacement guardrails, such as limitations on redeveloping tenant-occupied buildings, a right-of-return policy through the inclusionary units, required compensation for tenants displaced by redevelopment, strengthening the condo conversion ordinance, and/or expanding legal assistance.

We disagree with the changes proposed by CDD at the last Housing Committee meeting, which mean that "the Inclusionary bonus would no longer work as it does now." We are concerned that even less Inclusionary housing could result from this proposed zoning. We are frustrated by the lack of addressing our concerns around affordability.

Therefore the Council should not approve CDD starting to draft multifamily zoning yet. We do not want to come back in Sept. and see that the zoning clock has started.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Robert O'Neil <ron2122@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 3:54 PM  
**To:** City Council; Azeem, Burhan; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Pickett, Joan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Martha Zirbel  
**Subject:** Proposed Zoning Ordinance Change to Allow Multifamily Housing Citywide  
**Attachments:** 21Aug24\_ Multifamily Housing Citywide RONEil Comments.pdf

Members of the Cambridge City Council Housing Committee, Other City Councilors, Cambridge City Manager, and Cambridge City Clerk.

Attached for your consideration and for entry into the public record, please find my comments on the proposed "Multifamily Housing Citywide" prepared for today's (21 August 2024) Housing Committee Public Hearing Meeting.

I was not able to participate in the August 21, 2024, 11 AM Housing Committee Public Hearing of the, so called, "Multifamily Housing Citywide" proposal. Therefore, I am submitting my comments via this e-mailed letter communication.

Note that I oppose the proposal, **not in concept but as written**, as do many in my community.

Respectfully,  
Robert O'Neil

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*Robert O'Neil  
175 Holworthy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138*

August 21, 2024

Robert O'Neil  
175 Holworthy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Subject: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Change to Allow Multifamily Housing Citywide

Dear Cambridge City Council Housing Committee Members and other City Councilors,

I was not able to participate in the August 21, 2024, 11 AM Housing Committee Public Hearing of the, so called, "Multifamily Housing Citywide" proposal. Therefore, I am submitting my comments via this e-mailed letter communication.

I do not oppose the concept of allowing multi-family homes to be built throughout the City. However, I strongly oppose the proposal, as presented, in the Slides prepared for today's meeting and urge the City Council to reconsider the proposal for the following reasons:

1. The negative economic, social (e.g., quality of life and livability of the City), and environmental impacts of the proposal are significant, are totally masked by the benign title of "*allowing Multifamily Housing Citywide*". Furthermore, these issues are not addressed nor (presumably) even considered. While the proposal indicates the number of new housing units projected in future years, there appears to be no formal cost/benefit analysis of this proposed action. A formalized cost/benefit analysis for a proposal of this magnitude should be a fundamental requirement for the City Administration.
2. The proposed elimination of side and rear property boundary setbacks, and the drastic modification of building height (increase to 75 feet!) and front setback requirements is, at best, irresponsible. There are no studies presented that assess the impacts of the proposal on Cambridge Citizens' quality of life or the negative impacts on the characteristics of the City that make it a desirable and interesting place to live.

Many homes built before the current Zoning Ordinance have existing non-conforming side and back setbacks, some just several feet or less. The proposal will allow buildings 75 feet high to be constructed within several feet of single, two, and three family homes on three sides. And the proposal provides no avenue for the owners/residents of those homes to influence the design aspects of the new building. How is this fair and equitable to the owners/residents of those homes?

One aspect of Cambridge that makes it interesting is its varied neighborhoods. This proposal aims to eliminate that desirable aspect of the City.

3. The proposal eliminates the current mechanisms (e.g., relevant zoning requirements, Board of Zoning Appeals, etc.) by which residents have input into how their neighborhoods, and their City, change and develop.

Four years ago my wife and I chose to make a considerable investment in the renovation of our Cambridge home, paying close attention to the impact on our neighbors, fully maintaining the existing open space, ensuring the renovated home fit well within the context of the street, sharing plans with our neighbors, making appropriate adjustments to address

August 21, 2024

Robert O'Neil  
175 Holworthy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Subject: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Change to Allow Multifamily Housing Citywide

concerns, and navigating the Board of Zoning Appeal variance process. It was a big effort but it was worth it to us.

Before applying for the variance, we spent years deciding whether to stay in our house and renovate, or move out of Cambridge. We chose to stay, with the expectation that our City would be as respectful to us as we were to our neighbors and continue to provide a mechanism by which we would have input into, and a level of control over, future changes to our neighborhood and our City. The proposal under discussion today eliminates that mechanism.

I urge the City Council to reassess the proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance and consider alternative approaches to reaching its housing goals.

The City Council would do well to reflect on their responsibility to represent all of the citizens of Cambridge, including those that because of life's commitments cannot possible keep abreast of the fire hose of proposals formulated by the City Council that fundamentally change their City and have a direct impact on their day-to-day lives.

The City Councilors have a responsibility to all City residents not just an array of vocal special interest groups.

Respectfully,

Robert O'Neil  
Martha Zirbel

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Sharon Sears <sbsears@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 3:09 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing Proposal

My friends and tax payers are wondering why you are trying to destroy Cambridge.

What you see as modernization is pure destruction of a beloved city. Your disastrous and dangerous rat maze of narrow and winding roads was done without tax payers vote. The brick bump outs caused one to turn into oncoming traffic because they extend too far. The redesign of the roads and stop lights have caused traffic jams that it sometimes takes 15 minutes to drive 3-4 blocks. Fire trucks and emergency vehicles have a difficult time coursing through to their destination. Roads are so narrow that oncoming trucks extend into oncoming traffic.

Now you want to destroy neighborhoods with your development proposal. Who in the government is gaining from the developers? This is what many tax payers are asking.

Cambridge is already has one of the densest populations.

This must be brought to a vote. This government is acting like a dictatorship. It is already of the opinion that the government wants to get rid of older people, small businesses, and home owners.

You need to represent the taxpayers and homeowners, not the developers. I have lived in Cambridge for over 40 years. I have never seen anything like this before. Who are you representing? Developers?

Dr, Sharon Bushnell

I

Sent from my iPad

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Carol Greenwood <cgnunu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 1:26 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing: city -wide zoning

To the Council:

Increased multifamily housing is important, speaking as an owner-occupier of a 2-family on Cambridgeport/Riverside line.

That said, there need to be guidelines re location, setbacks and open space.

1. 6-7.5 story buildings need to be located along/close to major corridors in the city.
2. Setbacks are needed.
3. Some measure of open space - space for a tree- needs to be part of the development. A balcony doesn't count.

Zoning changes without these guidelines are no-go.

Carol Greenwood  
10 Kinnaird St

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Harriet Ahouse <hahouse@alwaysharriet.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:49 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Zoning options

I cannot believe you all think that one zone is good for all.. Each area is unique. Please consider the options. Thank you Harriet

Harriet H. Ahouse, Travel Advisor  
617-876-6007 land line  
617-588-4248 voice email message  
[hahouse@alwaysharriet.com](mailto:hahouse@alwaysharriet.com)

If you require after hours assistance please call 800-373-9169 There may be a fee.

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<http://alwaysharriet.wordpress.com> (blog)

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Thank you for all your referrals to family and friends.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Susan Shell <susan.shell@bc.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:34 PM  
**To:** City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** zoning proposal

Office of the City Manager

Dear Dr. Huang,

Allow me to add my voice to the chorus of concern over the proposed new zoning rules, which seem contrary to every known principle of sound city planning. This seems the very worst way to go about increasing affordable housing and likely to backfire in serious ways:

1. By replacing currently relatively affordable two and three family homes with expensive high rises with minimal allowance for affordable housing.
2. By insisting on a systematic approach to making green space and similar health amenities available in all neighborhoods.
3. By rendering the destruction of historically significant structures virtually unstoppable, whatever the legitimate concerns.
4. By putting housing for families and the elderly and/or disabled increasingly out of reach, thanks to drastic reductions in parking (including access for emergency vehicles) and lack of pedestrian-friendly walk-ways.
5. By putting increased pressure on small businesses cut off from their major customer base by lack of parking, public transit, etc. (Cf. the currently high vacancy rate in Harvard Square and along Mass Ave north -- a far cry from the lively and diverse commercial/residential locations they used to be). The resultant rise in "food deserts," banks without local roots, and inferior chain stores with rapid turn over are visible manifestations of what we are likely to see more of should the proposal go through and virtually unregulated housing of the sort contemplated proceed.

Please consider instead the many other promising options available, now being utilized in many areas in the US, Canada, and elsewhere including:

1. support for expanded metro rapid transit and other public transportation.
2. planned smaller high density communities with due attention given to transportation and green space.
3. greater flexibility with regard to alternative additional housing on current one structure lots.
4. planned car-free zones combined use shopping/housing with ample public transit and parking availability and practical options for night delivery of commercial and other items.
5. given the current and likely continuing deterioration of the MBTA, adding free or inexpensive regular local community bus service along major corridors.
6. Expanded public parking areas with local bus service along major corridors.

With many thanks for your consideration.

Susan Shell  
currently 3 Craigie St, formerly 66 Kirkland St. and 22 Prescott St.. (35 year.+ resident)





## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Kon, Mark <mkon@bu.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:30 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** upzoning of Cambridge residents

From: Mark Kon  
872 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

To: City Council and Housing Committee members  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the Housing Committee and the Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed zoning changes currently under consideration, which would allow large-scale multi-family housing developments across our city without adequate oversight or controls. While I support the need for multi-family housing, the current proposal is deeply flawed and poses significant risks to the character and livability of our community.

The most concerning aspects of this proposal include the allowance for increased building heights, the reduction of green spaces and trees, and the removal of essential building design controls. The elimination of review and oversight by Cambridge's boards and commissions threatens to undermine the careful balance that has made our city a desirable place to live.

If this upzoning is approved, it is likely to drive up housing costs for current residents by increasing property values and taxes while decreasing the availability of naturally affordable older housing. The lack of parking requirements will exacerbate existing traffic and parking issues, adding to the strain on our infrastructure. Moreover, the competition between market-rate developers and affordable housing initiatives for the same properties could further hinder efforts to provide truly affordable housing.

Buildings exceeding four stories should be limited to designated corridors where they are more appropriate. The leap to 5-6 story buildings in residential neighborhoods would have a massive impact, overwhelming the character of these areas.

Two key zoning petitions—the Ronayne petition and the Housing Committee Chairs' vision—along with the earlier Donovan petition, aim to facilitate multi-family housing development citywide. It is crucial for the Council to carefully consider the implications of these petitions. If the goal is to reduce housing prices, we must ask whether replacing sustainable, more affordable housing with expensive market-rate developments will achieve this aim, or if it will simply fuel further increases in housing costs.

The removal of historic homes, green spaces, and trees also raises significant concerns about the kind of city we want to leave for future generations. The lessons from other cities, such as Beijing's regret over the loss of historic neighborhoods, should serve as a warning. Strengthening the CHC Demolition Delay review and preserving BZA review with opportunities for neighborhood input are critical in a dense, historic city like Cambridge. The Housing Committee's proposal to remove discretionary review threatens to erode these vital protections.

I urge the City Council to support the following measures:

1. **Height Restrictions:** Limit any 5 or 6-story buildings (or higher) to designated corridors. The jump from 4 stories to greater heights is significant and should be carefully controlled.
2. **Preserve Green Space and Trees:** Protect green spaces and trees, which are vital for climate resilience and environmental equity. Arbitrarily removing them for oversized buildings will only lead to larger, expensive single-family housing, exacerbating existing inequalities.
3. **Maintain Front Setbacks and Back Yards:** Front setbacks must be maintained, and back yards preserved as critical spaces for tree growth, shade, and addressing the climate crisis.
4. **Conduct an Impact Analysis:** Require the Community Development Department (CDD) to conduct an input-output analysis before any upzoning, and follow up with a 5-year report to assess the actual impacts. We must be clear on the goals of this zoning petition—if it aims to reduce housing costs, we need to understand whether it will achieve that goal.
5. **Require Carbon Offset Reports:** Mandate developer carbon offset reports for demolitions and contributions to an offset fund. This fund should benefit nearby neighborhood advisory groups and help establish new green spaces.
6. **Ensure Neighborhood Input:** The CDD must engage with Cambridge residents and neighborhood groups to gather their perspectives. Many residents are unaware of this sweeping upzoning proposal.
7. **Strengthen Review Processes:** Preserve the opportunity for neighborhood input and strengthen BZA and CHC review processes. Residents must have the right to be informed and provide insight into development decisions that will impact their communities.

The environmental cost of demolitions is another critical issue. Studies have shown that demolishing existing buildings to construct new ones can have significant negative climate impacts, often taking decades for new construction to offset. We should strive for density without demolition and incentivize the retention and reuse of existing structures wherever possible.

Finally, I urge the Council to carefully consider the broader infrastructure issues that this zoning proposal could exacerbate. Our city's unique history, infrastructure, and community fabric must be preserved for the benefit of current and future residents.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. I hope the Council will consider the long-term consequences of these zoning changes and prioritize the preservation of Cambridge's character and livability.

Sincerely,

Mark Kon

Mark A. Kon, Professor  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
Boston University  
Tel: 617-460-1232  
Email: [mkon@bu.edu](mailto:mkon@bu.edu)  
URL: <http://math.bu.edu/people/mkon>

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Shariqah N Hossain <shossain@mit.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:24 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Multi-family Housing

Hello,

I live in Cambridge, and I support the proposal for multi-family housing.

Thank you,  
Shariqah Hossain

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Karen Eton <karenlme@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:23 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Cambridge Housing Meeting

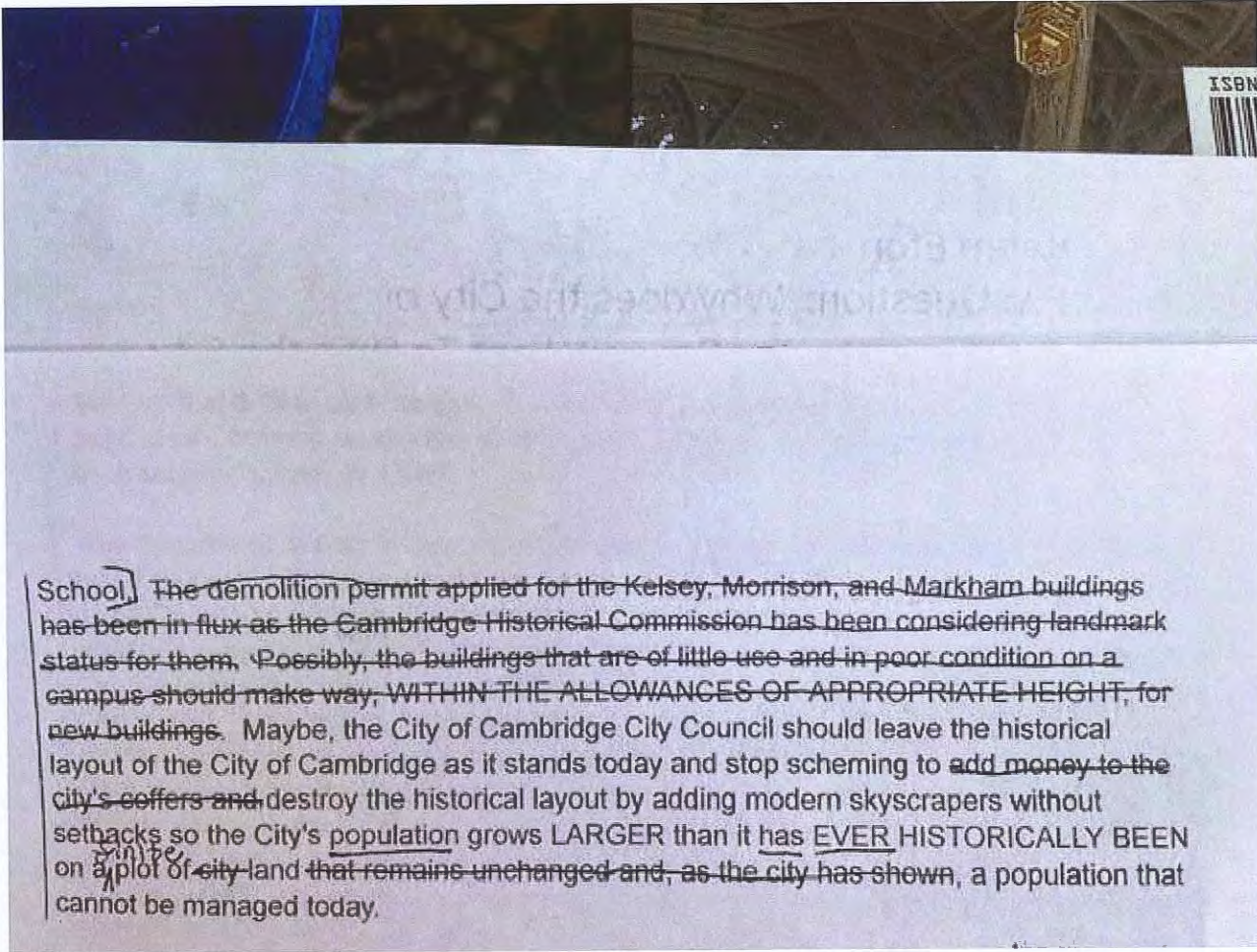


The skyline of the City of Cambridge suggests a historical <sup>town</sup> establishment ~~(date)~~ <sup>(it's 394 years old)</sup> ~~as cities~~ that is, on some lists, the eighth oldest, continuous settlement of a city in United States. It was established December, 1630, by Thomas Dudley, his daughter, Anne Broadstreet, and her husband, Simon Bradstreet as <sup>spell side</sup> Newe Towne (1632), but it was changed to Newtowne by 1638. Most people lived on farms and estates in-and-around what is today's Harvard Square and Cambridge Common. Newtowne was incorporated in 1636, but changed its name in 1638 to the City of Cambridge in honor of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England. In 1639, the Massachusetts General Court purchased the land on which the City of Cambridge had grown from the Naumkeag's/Pawtucket's Squaw Sachem of Mistick (northern Massachusetts). [Note: The Massachusetts tribe of Indigenous People were in southern Massachusetts]. Cambridge was the birthplace of the Continental Army - and the American Revolution - with the

installment of a new commander, General George Washington, on July 3, 1775, at the Cambridge Common where the soldiers were camped. Cambridge was incorporated as a city in Massachusetts in 1846.

The population of Cambridge (2020 Census) is 118,403 (an increase of 12.6% from the 2010 Census!) and has ranged from a high of 120,740 (1950 Census) to a low of 95,322 (1980 Census) over time. Students residing in Cambridge's numerous colleges, add approximately 49,780 <sup>additional</sup> "temporary citizens" for nine months each year. The City of Cambridge's City Council wants MORE housing so the population of the City of Cambridge, three-fourths of a calendar year, will be MORE THAN 168,183 humans! The addition of 15+ story buildings that will house ~~EVEN MORE PEOPLE~~ will endanger our public health by promoting contagious illnesses with people living on top of each other AND create serious traffic hazards on already CONGESTED City of Cambridge streets <sup>that are</sup> narrow, pot-holed, full of parked cars in a constant state of flux, <sup>and</sup> inadequately plowed, and have bicycles' poles and concrete barriers arising up from the pavement with two-way, painted lanes for cyclists speeding in the <sup>at</sup> narrow lanes that intersect with intersections of cars turning out in front of them. ~~WOW! WHAT! UNBELIEVABLE!~~

It is vital, in this day-and-age of cities becoming densely populated, to support the citizenry of the City of Cambridge in its present, historic situation by preserving the existing neighborhoods and empowering the established communities. We need to PRESERVE <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ historical feeling one gets <sup>as they</sup> ~~with~~ wandering the trail of our freedom and history in the City of Cambridge so our children and future generations can see what the Founding Fathers and Mothers saw and the love they felt here that prompted them to ~~risk~~ sacrifice their lives and those of their loved ones for the freedoms we ~~can~~ barely attempt to maintain via respectful laws and amendments. Travesties like AHO-2.0 MUST be scrapped, or those ancestors in all the City of Cambridge's historic graveyards, will cause an earthquake <sup>as</sup> ~~when~~ they roll over in unison <sup>and</sup> disapproval. It is also interesting that Buckingham, Browne, & Nichols School, as per the Head of School, Dr. Jennifer Price, reports that the Cambridge Historical Commission will not allow the BB&N Lower School to "reimagine and renovate the Lower School campus" despite "working with a team of architects committed to historic preservation and sustainability, all of whom strongly feel that three small, obsolete buildings on Buckingham Place - Kelsey, Morrison, and Markham - need to come down in order to best serve the needs" of the students and faculty there. BB&N School, all three campuses in Cambridge, "are committed to maintaining the historical feel" of its campuses as they have demonstrated most recently with the Middle



School] ~~The demolition permit applied for the Kelsey, Morrison, and Markham buildings has been in flux as the Cambridge Historical Commission has been considering landmark status for them. Possibly, the buildings that are of little use and in poor condition on a campus should make way, WITHIN THE ALLOWANCES OF APPROPRIATE HEIGHT, for new buildings. Maybe, the City of Cambridge City Council should leave the historical layout of the City of Cambridge as it stands today and stop scheming to add money to the city's coffers and~~ destroy the historical layout by adding modern skyscrapers without setbacks so the City's <sup>print</sup> population grows LARGER than it has EVER HISTORICALLY BEEN on a plot of city land that remains unchanged and, as the city has shown, a population that cannot be managed today.

From Karen Eton since I could not get my phone or laptop top to function and connect.  
iPhone

Sent from my



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** jessie@jenglish.us  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:16 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Citywide upzoning

Dear Cambridge City Council,

Removing review is relinquishing future design of the City of Cambridge to developers. The developers of these buildings generally don't live in our city. They will not live with the negative consequences of this massive rebuild of City. They do not have a vested interest in building a viable, livable city. Destroying neighborhoods so developers can make substantial profit is not the answer to the housing crisis. I am puzzled by why some member of the Cambridge City Council and CDD so enthralled by these developers as the solution? Given the discussion at the meeting on Aug. 21, 2024 it appears that outside analysis have been done that this proposal will not address the lack of affordable housing and will actually increase the cost of housing. Below are additional concerns.

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.

Regards,  
Jessie M. English  
27 Corporal Burns Rd

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Joe Antebi <joeantebi42@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:04 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing Committee Meeting

Dear Members of the Housing Committee

I am writing to express my support of the concerns raised by the Cambridge Citizens Coalition.

I am opposed to city wide up-zoning to allow buildings up to 75 feet tall with no side or rear setbacks throughout the city and not just along "corridors". This would lead to major reduction in trees and green space.

I am opposed to the elimination of project review for all except projects over 75,000 sf. All projects should be subject to review and input from the neighborhood

All large housing should include provisions for parking if the project is not close to public transportation

I hope you will give due consideration to the issues raised by the Cambridge Citizens Council

Regards

Joseph Antebi

5 Dunstable Road, Cambridge MA

[joeantebi42@gmail.com](mailto:joeantebi42@gmail.com)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Jana Odette <jodette@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:04 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council  
**Subject:** why are we listening to a "Somerville" resident???

I thought this was just a CAMBRIDGE forum.

Christopher Schmidt said he was from Somerville, and yet he still cited "our" city...

A number of other speakers (on the bicycle forum) have been from outside Cambridge... including one from overseas!

Please inform.

Thank you.

Jana Odette

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Henry Wortis <hhhavelock@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:38 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; ayooobimuse@gmail.com; sumbulstidd@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Zoning proposal

Dear Councillors,

There will be unintended consequences of the current zoning proposal. Information provided by the city indicates that the proposed changes will increase gentrification even though proponents claim otherwise. We argue that if the Council wants to maintain economic diversity the city needs a plan in which rezoning is a component, not the whole.

According to the Housing Cost Burden & Affordability document posted by Cambridge's Data Services, in the year 2000 18% of Cambridge Households were in the 10-50% Area Median Income (AMI) bracket while 43.43% were in the 100% or greater bracket. By 2020 only 13% were in the 10-50% bracket while the % in the high-income bracket had gone up to 54.24%. In other words, while in 2000 the ratio of high to low income households was 2.4 to 1, in 2020 the ratio was 4.1 to 1. This increasing ratio of wealthy to low-income households is what we mean by gentrification.

How would the new zoning proposal affect this ratio? According to CDD's analysis, by 2040 there will be 4,880 new market rate, high-income units, and 920 units for households in the 50—80% AMI bracket but zero units for people in the 10-50% bracket. That is, the CDD's analysis says this zoning proposal increases gentrification.

Therefore, do not move this proposal forward. Create an overall housing plan to maintain economic diversity. That plan would include social housing, vouchers, eviction guardrails, and rezoning designed to achieve this goal. Don't turn the city over to developers.

Henry H Wortis of 106 Berkshire Street, speaking on behalf of Our Revolution.

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Henry H. Wortis  
106 Berkshire St.  
Cambridge MA 02141  
617-733-0952



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:27 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; Huang, Yi-An  
**Subject:** multifamily zoning

Dear Councilors,

I know you are considering citywide residential upzoning. I applaud and support ending the exclusionary zoning that has kept multifamily buildings out of certain neighborhoods. However, zoning changes, now and always, need to address housing affordability and protect those most vulnerable to displacement.

The proposed zoning changes should be limited to non-C1 districts. Otherwise the densest (and cheapest to develop) areas of the city will shoulder the load of most of the new density. Stop enabling that.

Do not permit 6-story buildings as-of right, without review. Just because developments have inclusionary units should not allow them to bypass review. Even 100% affordable AHO projects, which better serve the community, undergo review.

More discussion is clearly needed, so CDD should not start drafting new zoning. And more attention to keeping residents from displacement, such as municipal vouchers and tenant protections would be appreciated.

Allowing escalating height and density that is 80% market rate (high-earners) is a recipe for displacement, especially when so many residents can't even afford to qualify for one of the 20% inclusionary units. The focus should be on protecting housing for those who live here and are being pushed out.

Thank you,  
Andy Nash  
18 Worcester Street

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Graeme Hendrickson <graeme.hendrickson@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:20 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Statement of support for 6-story Apartment Zoning

Hi folks,

I'm fortunate enough to be a homeowner in Cambridgeport and I'm writing to express my strong support for the zoning language outlined in the Housing Committee's conceptual framework drawn up this summer.

My home is small and makes extensive use of the split lot it was built on. It would not be compliant with existing zoning rules were it built today, due to lack of setbacks and a denser FAR than permitted. Nevertheless, the home is large enough for my spouse and myself to be planning to have children in it and excited to settle long term in Cambridge. I would love for other folks to have the freedom to build and buy houses like mine with small backyards and skinny driveways if that works for them. I plan on using a cargo bike instead of purchasing a car, and I appreciate that Cambridge's density and bike infrastructure makes that choice possible.

I'd also like to reiterate my support for the zoning language which permits 6-story apartments throughout Cambridge. My house is on the same block as the 4-story Woodrow Wilson Court buildings, which seem entirely in keeping with the character of Cambridgeport. We have many tall buildings, including at least one 6-story apartment, the Kensington, along Magazine street. I welcome the construction of additional denser housing to ensure that Cambridge can continue to house its citizens and strongly believe that many of the things that I love about Cambridge and Cambridgeport are enabled by density. I hope that my future children will be able to afford to live in Cambridge should they choose to do so, and I fear that if we do not build more densely that they would not be able to if they chose a less lucrative career than the one that I have chosen.

Apologies that I was not able to deliver this message in person, the Housing Committee meeting this morning conflicted with my working schedule.

Best,  
Graeme Hendrickson

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Arthur Strang <arthurstrang@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:09 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager  
**Cc:** City Clerk; Gianetti, Lee; O'Riordan, Owen  
**Subject:** Up-Zoning—I Oppose

Dear Honorable City Council:

I once worked for New York City on Public and Affordable Housing. That, long ago, shortly after Urban Renewal began to get a bad name.

Today, we talk of Up-Zoning. Like Urban Renewal, Up-Zoning will rip up neighborhoods. The very construction of multistory buildings will cause families to move on.

You might also consider that Cambridge has let itself become a transportation island. This, with respect to the number of people who attempt to commute rather than pay the high cost of living here. In comparison, a commute to NYC in an hour on the electrified Metro North brings a person 50 miles from home to work in Manhattan. This, on multiple express trains during the commuting hours. Try that from Fitchburg to Cambridge.

In summary, Up-Zoning will rip up the multifaceted fabric that we call Cambridge.

Sincerely in Opposition,  
Arthur Strang

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:04 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; City Council  
**Subject:** Please Consider Donovan & Ronayne Petitions - Rezoning city wide for 6 story buildings is counter-productive to city goals.

Dear City Council, City Manager, & Members of the Housing Committee,

The Current proposal to rezone the entire city to allow 6 story 75' buildings for housing - though conceived with good intentions - is going in precisely the wrong direction.

It favors profits for developers, investors, and multi-millionaires over the very citizens it aims to benefit. It will skyrocket land values so that only the richest (development / investors & multimillionaires) can win bidding wars. It encourages destruction of existing affordable housing in favor of redeveloping land at tremendous irreparable environmental / climate damage & societal disruption of demolition & reconstruction resulting in McMansions, or towering buildings.

The best solution to housing on residential streets was presented ages ago in the Donovan Petition, as well as an updated Ronayne Petition which lacks some of the beneficial environmental guardrails of the Donovan Petition, but beneficially includes essential Group Housing options, and additional flexibility for moderate construction.

Please revise zoning in a way that will not wildly exasperate the climate crisis, or cause other societal harm. The Donovan Petition, including the group housing proposed in the Ronayne Petition would offer immediate housing relief! Rezoning our city for massive construction will benefit the most wealthy, but cause irreparable harm for the majority of residents.

Thank you for your consideration on this critical issue.

Sincerely,  
Amy Waltz  
12 Blakeslee St.  
Cambridge, MA



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Daniel Hidalgo <fdhidalgo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 11:03 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Allow for more housing

Dear Council,

I'm writing about today's housing committee on allowing for multi-family housing throughout the city. I just wanted to send a quick note of strong support of a reform that will allow for many more apartment buildings throughout the city. As a father of 3, I'm worried about my kids being priced out. In fact, my neighbor's son desperately wants to return to Cambridge, but he just can't find housing that is affordable on a middle class salary.

Just last night at the DNC national convention, Barack Obama said that we need to "clear away some of the outdated laws and regulations that have made it harder to build homes for working people in this country." The need for zoning reform has been increasingly recognized as one of the chief barriers to prosperity and mobility. I hope you move in strong support of the zoning language being presented.

Thank you,

Daniel Hidalgo  
79 Norfolk St.

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Corina Oana <math1problemsolving@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:40 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** 75 feet tall buildings built on my Cambridge street???

Hello,

I heard about two upcoming proposed radical up-zoning petitions that if approved will change new building heights, and I have the following questions:

What are these petitions attempting to do?  
Will the changes be strictly for the corridors?

Will the changes bring down housing prices and housing costs?  
Will the changes lead to the removal of more historic homes, green spaces, and trees?

With a smile,  
Corina

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Kelsey Harris <kelsey.m.k.harris@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:39 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Allow new apartments in every neighborhood

Re: the Housing Committee meeting.

I'm writing today to ask the committee to write zoning language that allows for more and denser housing throughout the entire city of Cambridge.

I moved to Cambridge in 2011 for work, right after college; there weren't any jobs where my parents had semi-retired, and, ironically, I couldn't afford to return to where I grew up, the Bay Area of California. If I were graduating this year, I wonder if I'd also be locked out of this area - almost certainly yes.

Because ultimately, adding jobs without adding homes is a recipe for exactly what we (and the Bay Area) have experienced: tremendously increasing housing costs.

The status quo harms everyone (except certain landlords, in the short term), and it disproportionately harms those who have the least resources. Please do what you can to reduce these harms by allowing for more housing.

-Kelsey Harris

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Tom Rawson <trawson@pobox.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:36 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Testimony for City Council Housing Committee -- Hearing 11:00 AM August 21,2024

To the City Clerk:

I am submitting the testimony below for today's City Council Housing Committee hearing at 11:00. I understand that my submission is not in time to distribute to committee members before the hearing, but that it can be included in the record.

Thanks very much,

Tom Rawson

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My name is Tom Rawson, I'm at 121 Clay Street. I'm speaking in strong opposition to the proposal to allow six-story buildings citywide – that's not the kind of city I want to live in. I would like to see multifamily buildings across the city, but with a much lower limit outside of major transit corridors. Six stories is far too tall for many neighborhoods, and would completely change the character of the city.

This is also a huge gift to developers, who would be free to build large buildings with far less regulation than they face now even for smaller ones. Streamlining permitting is a good idea, but eliminating oversight is not.

The biggest question is whether adding these mostly market-rate units would actually lower housing costs. The proposal, according to its own most optimistic projections, would increase the number of housing units by less than 10% by 2040. The chance that this will materially reduce costs is miniscule. I don't buy the trickle down argument that more market rate supply results in lower housing prices for all, and there's strong evidence that in a desirable area increasing market rate housing supply increases prices for everyone. Experiences in cities like Malden, Worcester, and New Bedford seem to bear this out.

I work as a climate educator and activist, and I also see no indication climate issues have been considered here. Multiple six-story buildings easily create urban heat island effects, particularly with reduced open space and tree cover. And there are significant carbon costs to the teardowns that would be encouraged. It appears we haven't even looked at the climate impacts of this proposal, much less determined they'll be positive.

It would be better for the city, for our housing costs, and for our climate to defeat or drastically modify this proposal.

Thank you.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Julia Schlozman <julia.schlozman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:34 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support 6-story zoning

Dear all,

I write in strong and enthusiastic support of the plan to allow 6-story zoning citywide. Cambridge needs more housing, prices are skyrocketing, and it is imperative that we keep our beloved City the economically diverse place we all cherish. While that may involve taller--or even uglier--buildings than we might be accustomed to in beautiful, historic neighborhoods, I believe that addressing the housing crisis and pursuing economic diversity are more than worth it.

Our zoning code literally makes it illegal to build multifamily housing in large portions of Cambridge, and that urgently needs to change if we are to produce the amount of housing that is necessary to meet the existential crisis that is the housing shortage both in the City and across the region.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Julia Schlozman  
41 Walker Street

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Annette LaMond <annettelamond@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:33 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Multifamily Housing Citywide

Dear Councillors,

We are writing to oppose the up-zoning proposal before the Housing Committee.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond & Joe Moore  
7 Riedesel Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Dana Niu <x.dana.niu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:30 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council  
**Subject:** Please end exclusionary zoning

Dear Housing Committee and City Council,

I am writing to ask for your support to end exclusionary zoning and allow 6-story buildings across Cambridge.

I believe this is the structural change needed to make a dent in our housing crisis. I grew up in affordable housing and am appreciative of your efforts to expand it, but affordable housing cannot be the only lever we use. We are facing an unprecedented housing shortage, and I believe Cambridge can be part of the solution if we avail ourselves of all the opportunities at our disposal.

Thank you,  
Dana Niu  
Cambridge resident

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** hi@davidgnix.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10:19 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for Cambridge Multifamily Housing Citywide

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to enthusiastically support the proposed zoning changes toward “Multifamily Housing Citywide” in Cambridge.

I write to the Council as a designer, real estate professional, technologist, and entrepreneur. I am co-founder of MoDe Studio, an innovation workshop for the built environment, newly located on Arrow Street in Harvard Square.

Having studied architecture, urbanism, green building, and real estate finance in Philadelphia, Japan, and, before that, in Cambridge, I have received rigorous training in the many aspects of how to design, plan, and build buildings – how buildings simultaneously shape cities and are shaped by them – by invisible forces and systems, including zoning codes, that can restrain or unleash the potential of a place and its citizens. I know this from an academic perspective and equally – now, with years of sturdy work under my belt – from a practical, logistical, and professional perspective.

But my support today stems from a more personal point of view.

Twelve years ago, as a young professional and a co-founder of an MIT startup, I lived in Cambridge with five random Craigslist roommates to make ends meet. Our office was in South Boston and my small apartment in Cambridge – on Inman Street, just down the block from City Hall. I walked, daily, between the office and home: my quotidian moment of Zen. I enjoyed this commute for ten years. Quite literally millions of footsteps and countless snapshots of life and culture and creativity and change. I could walk that path with my eyes closed; I knew every crack in the pavement, every misplaced brick, every overtrimmed bush, every piece of gum stuck on the sidewalk. It felt as if I had always lived there.

Alas, my time as a Cantabrigian was finite.

Ultimately, in order to support having a family, I was forced to leave. You can’t raise a kid with 5 roommates. And I was unable to afford a home to support my family; as soon as I became close to affording to purchase a home through the amazing programs Cambridge is able to provide, like the HomeBridge program, I became ineligible. Stuck in this limbo, we were forced to decamp and buy a flat in another town.

I love Cambridge. I still aspire to call it home again one day.

Cambridge needs more housing options. And that simply means Cambridge needs to build more housing. It requires getting more creative with what housing can look like and how we enforce and incentivize those best qualities of the urban fabric. Unbridle the brilliant people in this city to build it better than it is now – more inclusive, more dynamic, richer, and – yes – more affordable.

It is my sincere hope that the Council takes action imminently, that it votes in support of bold policy change like the proposed zoning plan in front of the Housing Committee today.



In this regard, as it has been in many other regards, Cambridge can continue to be a shining city upon a hill. And, as is my personal hope, she can be a beacon to lead me back home.

Warm regards,

David Gordon Nix

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Karen Eton <karenlme@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 9:41 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting 8/21/2024 at 11 am

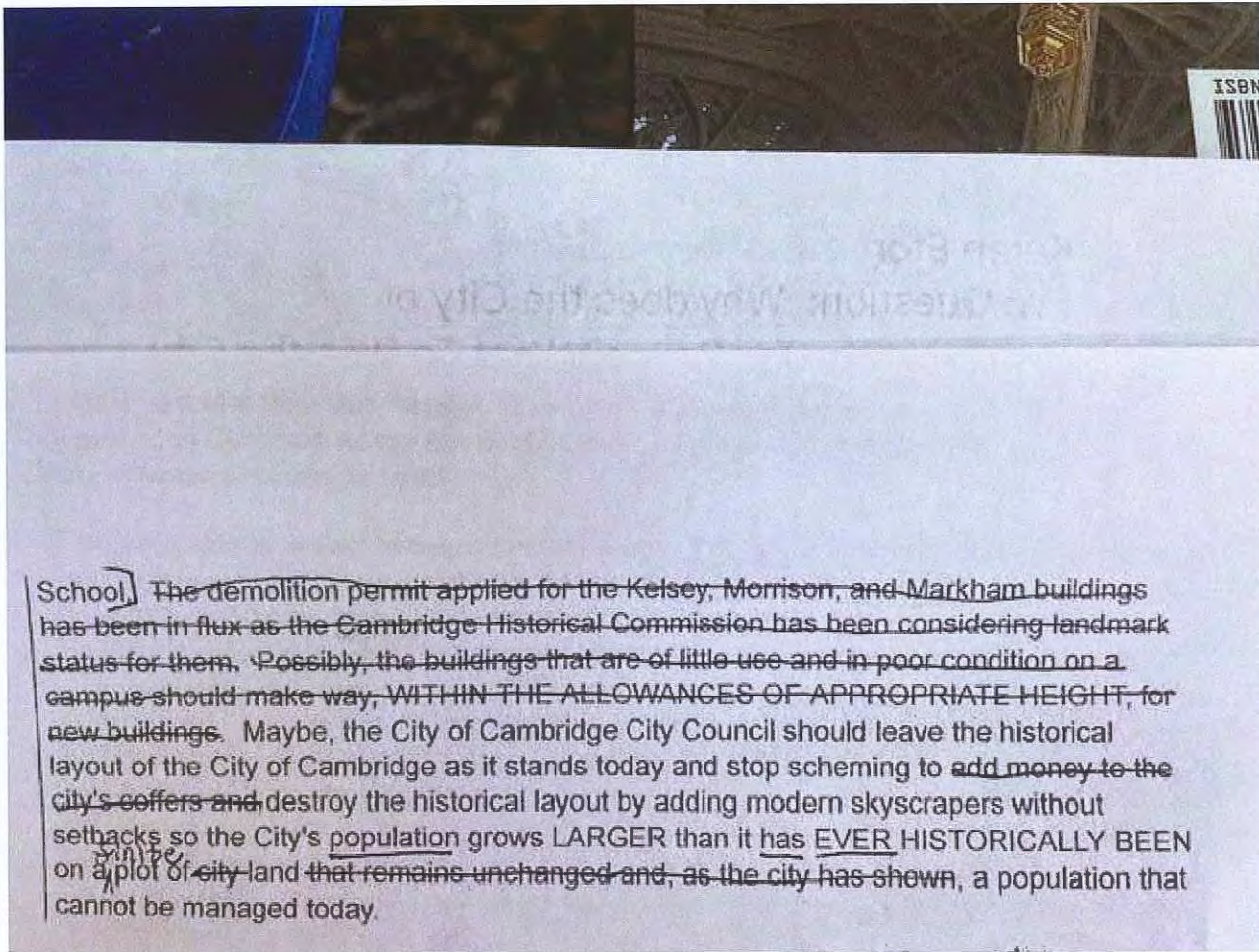


The skyline of the City of Cambridge suggests a historical <sup>town</sup> ~~establishment date~~ ~~town~~ that is, on some lists, the eighth oldest, continuous settlement of a city in United States. It was established December, 1630, by Thomas Dudley, his daughter, Anne Broadstreet, and her husband, Simon Bradstreet as <sup>spell it</sup> ~~Newe~~ towne (1632), but it was changed to Newtowne by 1638. Most people lived on farms and estates in-and-around what is today's Harvard Square and Cambridge Common. Newtowne was incorporated in 1636, but changed its name in 1638 to the City of Cambridge in honor of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England. In 1639, the Massachusetts General Court purchased the land on which the City of Cambridge had grown from the Naumkeag's/Pawtucket's Squaw Sachem of Mistick (northern Massachusetts). [Note: The Massachusett tribe of Indigenous People were in southern Massachusetts]. Cambridge was the birthplace of the Continental Army - and the American Revolution - with the

installment of a new commander, General George Washington, on July 3, 1775, at the Cambridge Common where the soldiers were camped. Cambridge was incorporated as a city in Massachusetts in 1846.

The population of Cambridge (2020 Census) is 118,403 (an increase of 12.6% from the 2010 Census) and has ranged from a high of 120,740 (1950 Census) to a low of 95,322 (1980 Census) over time. Students residing in Cambridge's numerous colleges <sup>now</sup> add approximately 49,780 ~~more~~ <sup>additional</sup> "temporary citizens" for nine months each year. The City of Cambridge's City Council wants MORE housing so the population of the City of Cambridge, three-fourths of a calendar year, will be MORE THAN 168,183 humans! The addition of 15+ story buildings that will house ~~EVEN MORE PEOPLE~~ <sup>new</sup> will endanger our public health by promoting contagious illnesses with people living on top of each other AND create serious traffic hazards on already CONGESTED City of Cambridge streets <sup>that are</sup> narrow, pot-holed, full of parked cars in a constant state of flux, inadequately plowed, and have bicyclists' poles and concrete barriers arising up from the pavement with two-way, painted lanes for cyclists speeding in the ~~at~~ narrow lanes that intersect with intersections of cars turning out in front of them. ~~WOW WOW WOW~~ UNBELIEVABLE!

It is vital, in this day-and-age of cities becoming densely populated, to support the citizenry of the City of Cambridge in its present, historic situation by preserving the existing neighborhoods and empowering the established communities. We need to PRESERVE ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> historical feeling one gets ~~with~~ <sup>of only - edit</sup> wandering the trail of our <sup>country's</sup> freedom and history in the City of Cambridge so our children and future generations can see what the Founding Fathers and Mothers saw and the love they felt here that prompted them to ~~risk~~ <sup>and</sup> sacrifice their lives and those of their loved ones for the freedoms we ~~can~~ <sup>are</sup> barely attempt to maintain via respectful laws and amendments. Travesties like AHO-2.0 MUST be scrapped, or those ancestors in all the City of Cambridge's historic graveyards, will cause an earthquake ~~when~~ <sup>as</sup> they roll over in unison ~~and~~ <sup>of</sup> disapproval. It is also interesting that Buckingham, Browne, & Nichols School, as per the Head of School, Dr. Jennifer Price, reports that the Cambridge Historical Commission will not allow the BB&N Lower School to "reimagine and renovate the Lower School campus" despite "working with a team of architects committed to historic preservation and sustainability, all of whom strongly feel that three small, obsolete buildings on Buckingham Place - Kelsey, Morrison, and Markham - need to come down in order to best serve the needs" of the students and faculty there. BB&N School, all three campuses in Cambridge, "are committed to maintaining the historical feel" of its campuses as they have demonstrated most recently with the Middle



I would like to read this to the City Council at today's 11 am meeting. Sent from my iPhone

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Cathleen Higgins <cahigg@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 9:13 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Strong support for six stories city-wide

To City Councilors,

Thank you for continuing to work on a proposal for allowing multi-family housing city-wide. Crafting zoning changes that open up segregated neighborhoods are a necessary step in reaching the housing production goals the city has set. Changing dimensional standards that allow the housing to be built are crucial and incentivizing inclusionary housing will mean housing for those with a range of incomes will be produced. Allowing 6 stories across Cambridge will result in a more vibrant, diverse and economically thriving city.

Thank you.

Cathy Higgins

345 Norfolk St

Cambridge, MA 02139

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Reiley O'Connor <reiley.oconnor@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 9:14 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Block/Reject - 6 Story Development in Cambridge w/o Parking - Concerned Cambridge Citizen

Hello City Council,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the city considering modifying the zoning in Cambridge to allow 6-story development without parking. This proposal is one of the silliest I have ever heard. I am not sure who in the city would be for this approach to development, but I presume they lack a reasonable understanding of what a healthy neighborhood looks like. Allowing developers to build high-density housing without parking for those residences is completely insane. Why does this make any sense to people on the council? Is the aim to enrich the developers at the expense of our neighborhoods? Is the aim to destroy all neighborhood parking for those unable to afford off-street parking? Or maybe to destroy street-side/small shop commerce? As a long-time resident of Cambridge, I'd love to hear the case for this reckless zoning change. Given my experience in commercial real estate, I can say with confidence - this change does not serve the interest of the residents of Cambridge.

Best,  
Reiley O'Connor  
Cambridge Resident

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** dzrebate@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 8:07 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council; City Manager  
**Subject:** Proposed changes to building zoning/ordinances for the city

Dear Cambridge City Council Members, Cambridge City Manager, Honorable Yi-An Huang, and Cambridge City Clerk:

I am writing to VERY STRONGLY OPPOSE the new plan for changing current building zoning to permit 6+ story buildings in any and all residential lots in the city. This proposal shows blatant disregard for current residents, homeowners and neighborhoods. It appears to disregard any semblance of concern for current residents' homes and neighborhoods - and for considerate planning for the future. Rather this proposal appears to sacrifice all in order to capitulate to developers.

As a long-time Cambridge resident, I urge you NOT to pass this proposal which I believe will be EXTREMELY detrimental to our city.

Acting on a desire to bring in new residents does not justify trampling on current residents. I sincerely hope you will reject this proposal.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Deborah Zucker

[Sent from AOL on Android](#)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Colleen Cohen <colleendianacohen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 8:03 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing Meeting

Cambridge Housing Committee,

I am writing in support of the up-zoning proposal being discussed at today's meeting. I just heard about this, and I am unable to attend the meeting, but I wanted to make my voice heard. I would love to see 6+ story housing being built throughout the city.

I am a renter who moved to Cambridge just over a year ago. I love this city and want to make it my permanent home, but housing prices make me nervous about how long my family can stay. I have a 2 year old and another baby on the way. I want them to be able to grow up in this incredible city, and for the city to maintain its diversity in socioeconomic status, race, etc. The more housing is available, the more this diverse population will be able to stay in the area rather than being pushed out by increasing rent and unattainable homeownership.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this issue. I hope to see a positive outcome on this topic, and to be able to speak with you more on housing issues in the future.

Best  
Colleen Cohen



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Karen Falb <karenfalb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 7:55 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** City Housing Committee Meeting - Today - Listen to city neighborhoods and plan holistically to keep Cambridge livability standards high

**Don't just follow the "Party Line" of more! more! housing! Keep smart good zoning standards. Listen to your citizens today - and act to keep standards of new development high.**

**There is a need for standards - rules - for Cambridge neighborhoods' livability.** Don't "poo poo" the long tradition of good urban planning theory in Cambridge that came out of Harvard's School of Design and the Olmsted firm in the 1890s which emphasized good design for neighborhood community building/ convenience in transportation/ and also sunlight and green spaces for outside livability and enjoyment. Equity for all shouldn't mean - let's lower standards for all, which it seems you want to do.

We want housing based on well-designed, coordinated, non-corrupted development: Right now, you have a chance to make this possible.

Sincerely, Karen Falb 245 Brattle Street  
Peter Falb "

**From:** Beth Gamse <bethgamse@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 7:05 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; City Council  
**Cc:** Judith D. Singer  
**Subject:** Concern about up-zoning to allow market rate housing

**Dear Councilors, City Manager and City Clerk:**

Encouraging construction of multi-family housing city-wide makes very good sense, although what the **City Council Housing Committee** is considering now needs data-related changes as well as ongoing efforts to ensure community participation throughout the process.

We strongly urge the Committee--and the Council thereafter! to heed the following considerations:

- Any 5 or 6-story building should be located on a main corridor, and not on residential side streets. The leap to 6 story buildings would be a huge change in scale for most of our city's neighborhoods.
- Eliminating minimum lot sizes runs the risk of reducing green space and trees, which are essential for health, environmental equity, and climate considerations. Changing the lot size requirements for out-of-scale buildings would have dramatic spill-over effects, *especially* given that setback requirements are also under consideration.
- Changing the density limits to favor market-rate high-rise dwellings -- in one of the densest cities in the Commonwealth -- does not address equity, climate, congestion, or other community concerns.
- Before changing current zoning requirements, we urge the committee to complete an input-output analysis (criteria-likely impacts) as well as a follow-up 5 year report.
- Reducing special permit requirements means that attention to climate, equity, green space, and pollution and parking will likely be ignored in the interests of building high-rise luxury dwellings.
- In our immediate neighborhood, on a small residential side street where the majority of homes are 2- and 3-family dwellings, 6-story structures

would dwarf current 2 & 3-story homes, and exacerbate insufficient parking and pedestrian safety concerns on already congested streets.

Beth Gamse & Judy Singer  
14 Walker St

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Beth Gamse  
[bethgamse@gmail.com](mailto:bethgamse@gmail.com)  
617-448-4860

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Elissa Warner <eewarner88@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 5:40 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; City Council  
**Cc:** Bill Warner  
**Subject:** 6 story buildings anywhere in Cambridge

Dear Cambridge City,

When people protest a certain law that seems hurtful to their neighborhood, please don't dismiss this outright as "not in my backyard" nonsense!! This isn't nonsense to keep certain areas that are a treasure to the entire city out of the hands of greedy developers.

Cambridge is a city of many neighborhoods each with their own character. Some areas will be more easily developed than others.

I live in the Larches off Brattle St. This neighborhood along with many others are extremely ill suited to over building especially with the potential of 6 story buildings.

We need laws that respect the differences in Cambridge and not laws that can blanket any piece of land in Cambridge with buildings that developers deem fit for large buildings.

Let's build into the laws some common sense that respect each neighborhood's unique character.

Yours,

Elissa Warner

Sent from my iPad

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** rosemous@rcn.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 5:12 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Cc:** rosemous  
**Subject:** Fwd: [Notice from a Cleveland-Circle community group] RE Cambridge up-zoning proposal to be discussed today at 11:00 am -- "Neighborhood Parking will disappear if they allow 6-story buildings in every neighborhood".

TO: The City Council

I believe that the upzoning proposal to be discussed today at 11:00 am by the Cambridge City Council Housing 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 recent article 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 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. Meanwhile, the Cambridge residents who live on the many residential streets featuring rows of rundown 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 here & juggling multiple responsibilities -- i.e., work, school, & family care?

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 & metro Boston. What is more, I suspect that these cosmopolitan cities hardly confront the deficits of metro-wide circumferential mass transit that we indeed face in greater Boston -- and yes, all the necessities

of family life cannot be conducted via bicycles in our congested city 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 (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.

Thanks for your consideration of what I have written above as well as the attached exchange below.

Linda Moussouris  
2440 Mass. Ave.  
Cambridge, MA

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**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. I never thought about. I doubt I am able to attend this meeting.  
Good Luck.

Thank you for being the person you are. - Helpful, Protector and Passionate about our neighborhoods.

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](mailto: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](#)

**ACTION:** please write in and sign up to speak, if you can: Wednesday August 21 at 11:00 at City Council's Housing committee.

**Please Circulate among your Neighbors and Write to Council, City Clerk, Manager**  
at: [council@cambridgema.gov](mailto:council@cambridgema.gov); [cityclerk@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cityclerk@cambridgema.gov); [citymanager@cambridgema.gov](mailto:citymanager@cambridgema.gov)

**Please sign up to speak here (likely 2 minutes). Raise the hand icon when they call for community input.** <https://www.cambridgema.gov/citycalendar/view.aspx?guid=eb8ad6a5aeb34dc3adcb6c62e4299d0c>

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## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 1:31 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for more housing - boldly, quickly, permissively

Dear Councillors -

I just caught up on DNC footage and I was thrilled to hear Barack Obama reiterate tonight that "if we want to make it easier for more young people to buy a home, we need to build more units". I'll expand that: **if we want to make it easier for ANYONE to buy OR RENT a home, we need to build more units!**

I've lived in Cambridge 11 years so far, at 5 different addresses. I love how close-knit our city is; I love that when you live near your community, it's easy to pop by on a moment's notice to hang out or help out with whatever needs doing. As my friends start to talk about having kids, this is extra important to me; I'm tired of moving and I'd like to stay in Cambridge. But if we don't build a ton more housing, rents are going to keep going up, and the scattering of my community to Somerville and beyond is only going to continue. **The housing shortage is the root cause of our community's instability.** Cambridge's young people want to stay here, but there is no future here if the city does not continue to make room for more people.

I urge you to press ahead with whatever version of the zoning will get the most units built the most quickly - particularly in historically high-exclusion neighborhoods. I am not concerned with setbacks or aesthetics - I know that the best-looking buildings in Cambridge predate any kind of legislative mandates, and the best-looking streets in Cambridge (Harvard St, Linnaean St, Franklin St) feature a diverse and varied set of 4-to-6-story apartment buildings with a variety of different dimensional standards. I love that CDD's framework makes sure that affordable housing is included too. I know that the development we need won't happen overnight, but I urge you to get it started as strongly as you can.

Thank you,  
Allan Sadun  
Renter at 237 Elm St #1

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** David Mankins <d.p.mankins@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 1:09 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Seven stories with no setbacks throughout the city

Hi, I am a home owner who has lived in Cambridge for 40 years, owning a home here on Cushing Street since 1993.

I am fully in favor of the proposal to allow seven story buildings with no setbacks throughout the city. I urge you to require provision for affordable housing among the units in each building, and make provision for retail space on the street level on major streets.

I also urge you to require rooftop solar and geothermal heating and cooling.

Yours,

- [d.p.mankins@gmail.com](mailto:d.p.mankins@gmail.com)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Tyler Etzel <tyleretzel1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:13 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for more multifamily housing

I'm writing to express my strong support for the housing committee's plan to expand multifamily zoning, including 6 story apartments by right in every neighborhood. This is an urgent and necessary step to keep rent growth in check. In the last couple of years especially, rent increases in Cambridge have significantly outpaced any pay raise one might reasonably receive. I've been in Cambridge for ~6 years, and it feels like a new wave of friends and acquaintances gets priced out every year. And, these aren't people in particularly dire straits: they're working normal jobs that benefit the community and make it a more interesting place (actual examples: physical therapists, restaurant workers, musicians)

If we continue to build offices and labs without building a proportional amount of new housing, the only possible/logical outcome is a Cambridge where only tech and biotech workers can afford to live. I'd love for Cambridge to continue to be a culturally vibrant place where a variety of people can afford to live, work, and raise a family. We need decisive action on housing to make that happen, so thanks for your thoughtful work on this issue!

-Tyler Etzel, 99 Hancock St, Apt 9

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Dan Totten <dantotten@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:03 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** multifamily housing

Hello,

<Just in case you don't have time to read my full message, here's the question that I hope is answered at this hearing: **Why would we allow this zoning relief to apply to projects of less than 10,000 square feet/less than 10 units?**

On the citywide rezoning effort, I still believe that as written it would likely end up being the next chapter in the long book of injustice that marginalized people have faced in this city and country. I'm really concerned that this will accelerate the displacement of renters in the city and put a target on the back of a neighborhood like The Port. I think that we should keep the current differential between the market rate and AHO, then figure out a way to scale up the production of publicly-owned mixed-income housing through a social housing pilot. This concept is not a joke or a buzzword, it could actually work...but it will be less likely to succeed in an environment where market-rate developers can do pretty much whatever they want, wherever they want, without ever seeking permission. Predatory developers like Billy Senné are licking their chops and working class people in a neighborhood like The Port are the ones who will lose out.

I suppose one could try to argue that displacement has run its course, and that gentrification has accelerated to the point where this isn't a concern. But I know for a fact that this isn't true, especially in the denser neighborhoods of the eastern part of the city, and anyone who has spent time knocking on doors knows it too. Besides, even if you believe there aren't working-class people living on the market here anymore, you have to reckon with the fact that there are **plenty** of Section 8 voucher holders living in market-rate housing. Though they have a subsidy, they will still be impacted by the displacement. This proposal is a bad deal for them, too.

If we want to end single-family zoning areas, why not focus on West Cambridge? That's where the larger lots are anyway. Proponents of this proposal invoke redlining and say they are undoing generations of harm, but in pushing something citywide that message falls flat. If we truly want to undo harm caused by eg redlining, we wouldn't so aggressively target a neighborhood like The Port. This has been stated many times by people who are far more qualified than me to state it.

However, I'm approaching this from a harm reduction perspective, recognizing that there seems to be a strong push to get this passed. From this angle, I must ask: **What is the justification for allowing this zoning relief to apply to projects of less than 10,000 square feet or fewer than 10 units?** The materials suggest the goal is to generate more inclusionary housing, and if the proposal were limited to developments that trigger inclusionary zoning, at least we would know that each project would produce at least one affordable unit. That's an outcome I could reluctantly support, as I continue to receive calls from people being displaced from Cambridge, particularly those who wish to return to The Port.

But this proposal doesn't ensure that outcome. Instead, it allows zoning relief to apply to smaller projects, where developers could strategically avoid triggering inclusionary zoning by keeping projects under 10,000 square feet or fewer than 10 units. This creates a loophole where a developer could partially utilize the relief up to the point where they avoid including a single subsidized unit—a route particularly attractive to developers of smaller lots.

Therefore, I urge you to consider: **Why not limit this relief to projects that will generate at least one inclusionary unit?** We would still see a significant increase in housing, and this would more directly support the city's stated goals. If you don't believe this zoning will generate inclusionary projects, then I have to ask—why are we pursuing it at all?

If the goal truly is to provide zoning relief for smaller projects that won't generate inclusionary units, I ask that you at least be transparent about that and acknowledge that this could disincentivize inclusionary housing. Even if this is the goal, it might make sense to have a separate process for projects under 10,000 square feet, so we can focus right now on developments that contribute to affordable housing. I think splitting it out would build consensus in this moment without sacrificing the stated goals of the initiative.

To be clear, **I'm not advocating for lowering the inclusionary threshold.** I understand the implications and the need for a new nexus study, which isn't a realistic option right now. Instead, my question is whether small projects that won't generate inclusionary units should be allowed to take advantage of the proposed zoning relief.

One last point—any new advantage conferred to AHO developers might be merely theoretical, as there are diminishing returns at play. We have yet to see evidence that our non-profits will build taller AHO, despite success stories in other major cities. So maintaining a differential on paper might not actually benefit them in reality.

Finally, it's worth noting that even single-family construction could potentially benefit from this zoning relief, which raises further concerns.

Thanks,

Dan Totten

54 Bishop Allen Drive #2

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** hwalker434@rcn.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 11:49 PM  
**To:** Azeem, Burhan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Simmons, Denise; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Joan Pickett; City Manager  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Multifamily Housing Citywide: "The Devil is in the Details"

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council and City Manager Huang:

First, thank you for posting the agenda packet for the August 21<sup>st</sup> Housing Committee Hearing on Multifamily Housing Citywide in a timely manner. I have written to you previously in strong support of multifamily housing in all residential districts as proposed in the Ronayne petition.

Unfortunately the current proposal contains several provisions which give pause. I believe it should be the role of the Council to strike a balance between the tensions that deeply and closely divide Cambridge residents on this issue. I see this proposal going "all in" on the unquestionable need for more housing, with little respect for the questions of how do we make sure that residents will thrive in that housing, and how do we make sure to protect those aspects of our city which make people want to live here. I recommend to you WBUR's August 20<sup>th</sup> "Radio Boston" discussion of the MBTA Communities Act; catch the Brookline representative talking about bringing ALL constituencies to the table, learning what was most important to each, crafting provisions to respond to the needs of each, and ending with agreement. In Cambridge, I see the Council going single-mindedly in one direction, with confidence of having five votes. This is not a formula for building community or for creating good housing.

I believe it should give pause that the City spends hundreds of thousands of dollars to have design professionals develop best-practice design guidelines for areas of the city and types of projects, yet now puts forth a zoning proposal that negates every one of these best practices. A few examples of best practices from the *Affordable Housing Overlay Design Guidelines* that fall by the wayside under the current zoning proposal:

- "It is expected that...projects will be designed **in a way that is compatible** with their existing neighborhood contexts." (P. 5)
- "Relate new building **height, massing, scale, and form** to that of existing adjacent buildings." (P.24)
- "Incorporate **stepbacks** to relate to the heights of adjoining buildings and to the scale of the street; and to provide a transition between the height of taller buildings and lower surrounding buildings." (P. 24)
- "**Adjust building configuration and massing** to maximize access to sunlight, air, and sky views from neighboring buildings and sites, and to maintain privacy." (P.26)
- "Locate and orient new buildings so that their **front yard setbacks** relate to those of neighboring and adjacent buildings." (P. 12)
- "**Locate open space** in relation to adjacent yards, residential units, and public spaces that would benefit from natural light and views." (P.12)

The current zoning proposal shows no understanding of the findings in the academic literature (sociological, behavioral) about why high-rise affordable housing, especially family housing, of the 50's and 60's, often did not serve residents well. I am talking about aspects of human-centered

architectural design, such as design so that parents can look out the window and make sure that their children playing outside are safe and are not being bullied. How exactly is this supervision supposed to happen in a high-rise building that occupies almost the entire site?

I question particularly these provisions of the current zoning proposal:

- Six stories by right everywhere in all residential districts: this single provision negates most of the AHO design guidelines mentioned above. I point out that there are a couple of miles of Massachusetts Avenue with one-story shops that could be appropriately redeveloped at taller scale. *Why not go this appropriate route first?*
- Six stories defined as 75 feet, not 65 feet as in the original AHO: this single provision opens the way for 13-story AHO projects everywhere, at great detriment to context (again, see *AHO Design Guidelines*) and to human-centered architectural design.
- Elimination of effective reviews for most projects: it defies human nature to pretend that developers unassisted will usually strike the best balance between quantity and quality.
- Degradation of public open space requirement: when the 13-story AHO tower extends almost to the edges of the site (constrained only by building code requirements), that green roof 13 stories up is not going to improve the microclimate at grade. *What happened to the spirit of Climate Resilience Zoning?*

I urge you to re-think these provisions in order to create better housing and a better city.

With many thanks for your consideration,  
Helen Walker  
Massachusetts Registered Architect  
43 Linnaean Street



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Sean Hwang <seanihwang@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 10:30 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for 6 Story Apartments in Every Neighborhood

Dear Cambridge Council Members,

I am writing to show my support for the proposal to allow building 6 story apartments in Cambridge with minimal restrictions. I have loved living in Cambridge for the past 4 years but every year as rent goes up, I am afraid I may be priced out of Cambridge soon. Please allow more housing to be built in Cambridge so prices on existing housing will stay flat.

Thank you,

Sean Hwang

8 Richard Ave Resident of Cambridge

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** McKelden Smith <mckeldensmith@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 10:07 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Upzoning

I am writing with my comments on the upzoning proposal.

I am in favor of multi-family housing, but I think increasing heights, decreasing green spaces, and removing trees is an **exceptionally poor** idea for Cambridge. I am particularly opposed to increasing heights on streets that are not main corridors.

Without parking requirements, traffic and parking problems will be worsened.

The plan could result in a flurry of tear-downs of good buildings and historic building types which would forever compromise the quality of the built environment in Cambridge. The historic fabric of Cambridge **MUST** be preserved, as it is one of our greatest urban assets. Upzoning as proposed would do immense damage that would be irreversible.

McKelden Smith

--

McKelden Smith  
15 Richdale Ave., Apt 302, Cambridge, MA 02140  
Cell: 203-247-9349  
[mckeldensmith@gmail.com](mailto:mckeldensmith@gmail.com)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Candace Young <thegroundup@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 9:44 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing rezoning

To City Council,

I have previously written regarding the re-zoning and the many reasons I am concerned about it.

The biggest issue-If the city is to pass this radical rezoning, the affordable housing criteria should be higher for each building. We should be solving the affordable housing problem, not just building bigger buildings. 20% in what seems to be increasingly growing buildings is not getting the job done.

Respectfully,

Candace Young

15 1/2 Shepard Street

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Andy Zucker <andyzucker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 9:23 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** New 6-story zoning proposal

Members of the Housing Committee and Councillors,

It is difficult to accept the idea that when it comes to housing in Cambridge more is always a good thing. The realistic view is that building more housing has some benefits as well as some undesirable impacts.

We are already one of the densest cities in the U.S. and we have lost many trees. Cambridge is nearing the largest population that it has ever had. Although adding more housing will help some people find a place to live, at the same time we will create added transportation problems -- including more delivery trucks and vans, greater crowding on the Red Line (should it ever come back to normal) -- plus less park acreage per resident, additional extremely expensive market-rate units, etc.

Fewer setbacks and less input from residents will also make the city uglier.

Housing is a regional problem and Cambridge is already contributing its fair share, or more.

For these reasons, the city should not adopt the new ordinance under consideration.

Andy Zucker  
35 Winslow Street

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Susan Cooke <susanmcooke@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 8:54 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Comments on City-Wide Up-Zoning Proposal

I understand that the City Council Housing Committee will consider an up-zoning proposal at its 11 AM meeting tomorrow. I also understand that this proposal would replace current Cambridge zoning rules so as to allow six-story market rate housing in every neighborhood without parking, as well as without setbacks or green space.

Such a sweeping abrogation of current zoning requirements is destructive of our neighborhoods and will impose additional traffic and parking problems on our already clogged streets. In addition, it will negatively impact our green spaces, reduce citizen access to sun and air, and engender increased pollution.

Fifty years ago I chose to move to Cambridge because of its balance of urban amenities and environmental resources, most especially its trees and green spaces. The proposal now being considered constitutes a sweeping and unwarranted change to the balance which the City has tried so hard to preserve over the years. I therefore strongly urge the Committee to reject the City-wide up-zoning proposal, and to ensure that appropriate urban planning principles continue to inform proper development of the City's precious resources.

Susan M. Cooke

Sent from my iPad

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Elizabeth Gilmore <gilmore.eliz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 8:18 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Opposition to 6 story zoning amendment

We are opposed to amending the zoning laws to allow for 6 and 7 story buildings in current residential neighborhoods.

They will no longer be residential neighborhoods. If this amendment passes, our neighborhoods will become hardened urban landscapes where tree canopy is gone, parking is jammed, and too many people live in too small an area.

It is not, and has never been, the responsibility of the City of Cambridge to provide housing for every person who wishes to live there. You are throwing out the baby with the bath water if you approve this amendment.

Please see the light of day (and reason)!

Sincerely,  
John and Elizabeth Gilmore  
47 Reservoir Street  
Cambridge

John is a lifelong resident and Elizabeth has lived in Cambridge for 49 years.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Dave Halperin <halperin.dr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 7:51 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support Multifamily Citywide

Dear Council,

I strongly support the zoning concepts in CDD's presentation for tomorrow's housing committee hearing. Based on the Envision dashboard, between now and 2030 we are aiming to produce about 10,000 total homes, around 2,700 of which are affordable. This would mean more than tripling the total production a more five times the affordable production the dashboard shows since 2018. Housing has consistently been the number one issue for Cambridge voters and taking the issue seriously means we need every tool in the toolbox. That includes higher density in our neighborhoods, which constitute the majority of land area in the city. I am happy to support 6 story buildings on my block, in my neighborhood and across the city. CDD's projections for these changes, as bold as they are, do not put us on track to meet our goals. They are a step that is commensurate with the scale of the problem, where if taken, Cambridge can feel proud to be a leader in this space. I am excited to see this process move forward.

Thank you,  
David Halperin  
14 Valentine St. Unit 3

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Michael Volles <mvolles2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 7:36 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Oppose zoning change

Hi, I ask that you oppose the up-zoning legislation to be considered on August 21. My view is that such a drastic change needs to be thought through and studied much more carefully before being moved ahead. Thanks,

Mike Volles  
76 Fresh Pond Ln



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Dan Eisner <daeisner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 7:36 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please support multifamily housing throughout Cambridge

To the city council:

I'm not the most persuasive person in the world, so I thought maybe other people could make the argument for building more homes to help solve our affordability crisis—

Elizabeth Warren: "To lower housing costs in Massachusetts and around the country, we've got to build more housing—it's Econ 101."

Joe Biden: "The bottom line is we have to **build, build, build.** That's how we bring housing costs down for good."

Kamala Harris: "In many places it's too difficult to build, and it's driving prices up. . . . We will take down barriers and cut red tape, including at the state and local levels."

I'm excited to see the proposed zoning changes get passed out of Housing Committee and get taken up by the full council.

Thanks,  
Dan Eisner

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Diane C Norris <diane@charyknorris.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 7:16 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Housing Committee Meeting 8/21 - Proposed Multi-Family Housing Citywide Upzoning  
**Attachments:** upzoning082024.pdf

20 Aug 2024

Dear City Councilors, City Clerk, and City Manager,

We are in full support of Multifamily Housing Citywide but are strongly against the proposed citywide upzoning change to allow 75' high residential buildings (above grade) in all neighborhoods with no setbacks and likely flat roofs.

The proposed upzoning seems to prioritize maximizing the numbers only and does not seem to address neighborhood context with urban design guidelines to make the project work for all. EXISTING CONTEXT MATTERS. Cambridge is not Paris.

As one example, the slide to justify eliminating side/rear setbacks is false information and very misleading. These statements are simply not true:

*"Historically, side/rear setbacks focused on issues like fire safety, natural light and air – today, these are regulated more in building, health and safety codes."*

*"Small or zero side setbacks are a typical pattern in much of Cambridge (e.g., townhouses, historic corridors)"*

When you are building next door to existing adjacent homes that have windows on the sides and existing rear yards, it is very disconcerting that these existing "light and air" features will simply be eliminated by a new building that follows the proposed zoning. It also seems that existing homeowners have a reduced process to review or challenge the project.

The saga of the Walden Square AHO tunnel project reminds us of what the proposed upzoning could incentivize. I am very thankful that the Affordable Housing Trust is holding the loan commitment for the Walden Square housing project, it is a win for homeowners and renters who care about quality affordable housing and open space in Cambridge.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane and Charley Norris  
446/448 Huron Avenue

20 Aug 2024

Dear City Councilors, City Clerk, and City Manager,

We are in full support of Multifamily Housing Citywide but are strongly against the proposed citywide upzoning change to allow 75' high residential buildings (above grade) in all neighborhoods with no setbacks and likely flat roofs.

The proposed upzoning seems to prioritize maximizing the numbers only and does not seem to address neighborhood context with urban design guidelines to make the project work for all. EXISTING CONTEXT MATTERS. Cambridge is not Paris.

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*"Small or zero side setbacks are a typical pattern in much of Cambridge (e.g., townhouses, historic corridors)"*

When you are building next door to existing adjacent homes that have windows on the sides and existing rear yards, it is very disconcerting that these existing "light and air" features will simply be eliminated by a new building that follows the proposed zoning. It also seems that existing homeowners have a reduced process to review or challenge the project.

The saga of the Walden Square AHO tunnel project reminds us of what the proposed upzoning could incentivize. I am very thankful that the Affordable Housing Trust is holding the loan commitment for the Walden Square housing project, it is a win for homeowners and renters who care about quality affordable housing and open space in Cambridge.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane and Charley Norris  
446/448 Huron Avenue

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Franziska Amacher <fran@amacher-associates.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 6:04 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Cc:** Suzanne  
**Subject:** Fwd: CCC Important Update and Reminder: Aug 21, 2024 11 AM Housing Meeting

A city without **ANY URBAN DESIGN!** Wow - Do people think at all in a field that requires years of professional training. Their single minded goal has had them lose all perspective and will destroy our beautiful city.

There are much smarter ways to improve the supply of housing. The health of people, especially children is affected if they don't have green space and light. Setbacks need to be considered in each particular case.

This proposal is really appalling!

Instead you could promote micro units, a much better more resource efficient use of existing buildings. ALLOW UNLIMITED NUMBERS OF UNITS, but keep height and setback requirements (although not in all zones)

Franziska Amacher, FAIA

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Suzanne <Suzanne@ccoalition.org>  
**Subject:** CCC Important Update and Reminder: Aug 21, 2024 11 AM Housing Meeting  
**Date:** August 20, 2024 at 3:11:51 PM EDT  
**To:** Franziska <fran@amacher-associates.net>  
**Reply-To:** Suzanne <Suzanne@ccoalition.org>

[View this email in your browser](#)

[View this email in your browser](#)



**REMINDER:** Please write to City Council today and sign up to Speak at the Wed. 11 AM meeting the Housing Committee

**IMPORTANT UPDATE:** Slides created by the city for this proposed radical upzoning proposal re stunning changes to our city's zoning code: See [HERE](#) *A few things jumped out at us.*

- Maximum height of 6 stories for new housing has increased to 7.5 stories above grade citywide , e.g. max height is now defined as 75' (the equivalent of 7.5 stories) not 65' as per original plans.
- The corollary of this is that ALL AHO projects anywhere can now be 13 stories above grade anywhere in the city. There is no mention of this as limited to the corridors.
- Setbacks: for the front yard are 10'; for the rear and side yards: 0' (This may mean that All rear setback of 15' can now be reduced to 0').
- Required Project review has been increased from 50,000 to 75,000 sf. Most housing projects are below 25,000 sf which would require minimal review if any, and no means of neighbor or neighborhood redress.
- This citywide up-zoning petition likely will be ready for voting at the first City Council meeting in early September.

### **ACTION-ITEM REQUEST**

The City Council Housing Committee will take up the city-wide up-zoning to allow 6 story market rate (luxury housing) in every neighborhood on Wednesday AUGUST 21 at 11:00 AM.

Read more about the plan on the City Website: [HERE](#)

Read more about the plan in the [Boston Globe](#)

**ACTION:** please write in and sign up to speak: Wednesday August 21 at 11:00 at City Council's Housing committee.

Please Circulate among your Neighbors and Write to Council, City Clerk, Manager  
at: [council@cambridgema.gov](mailto:council@cambridgema.gov); [cityclerk@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cityclerk@cambridgema.gov); [citymanager@cambridgema.gov](mailto:citymanager@cambridgema.gov)

Please sign up to speak here (likely 2 minutes). Raise the hand icon when they call for commun  
input. <https://www.cambridgema.gov/citycalendar/view.aspx?guid=eb8ad6a5aeb34dc3adcb6c62e429>

**Quick Writing/Speaking Points:** Allow multi-family housing city-wide but say no to increased heights and/or decreased green spaces and trees. This plan guts building design controls since it removes any further review or oversight by Cambridge boards or commissions. This upzoning passes will increase housing costs for current residents by increasing property values and tax and decreasing the current more naturally affordable older housing. It will exacerbate traffic and parking problems since no parking will be required. New larger market rate housing purchases 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.

**Key Issues:** There are two current zoning petitions in play to facilitate development of multifamily housing citywide: the Ronayne petition and the Housing Committee Chairs' vision. I also had an earlier petition, the Donovan petition, sought to do this as well.

Please ask Council to address the following question: What are these petitions attempting to do if it is to bring down housing prices, will the removal of our current sustainable housing to build more expensive market rate housing achieve this, or will it fuel still more housing cost increases. And with the removal of more historic homes, green spaces, and trees, be the kind of city we wish to pass on to the next generation, much less remain of interest to those who want to live here now in the near future.

Allowing greater density citywide will lead to a bonanza of teardown activity. While campaigning for City Council last fall, Hao Wang spoke movingly of how, after the fact, people of Beijing regretted tearing down the old historic neighborhoods. CHC Demolition Delay review should be strengthened. And BZA review, including the opportunity for neighborhood input, must be preserved. BZA and CHC review are really critical in an already dense historic city such as ours and the Housing Committee proposal seeks a plan that would be "without discretionary review" (page 14 of Housing Chairs' May 8<sup>th</sup> slide

deck: <http://cambridgema.iqm2.com/citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=4050&Inline=True>

**BOTTOM LINE** (from our last email): We want City Council to *support the following*:

1. Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) must be located on a corridor. The leap from 4 stories 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 citywide, will it do this?
5. Require developer carbon offset report for demolitions and contribution to an offset fund 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 perspective 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.

Read Patrick Condon, *Broken Cities*: "It is not About Supply/Demand it is About the Price of Urban Dirt": [HERE](#)

Limiting demolitions: A useful article on environmental cost of demolitions here: <https://restoreoregon.org/2021/04/12/understanding-the-carbon-cost-of-demolition/>

- "Conservatively speaking, residential and commercial demolitions in the City of Portland responsible for 124,741 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, which amounts to approximately 4.5 percent of the City's total annual reduction goal."
- "This study finds that it takes 10 to 80 years for a new building that is 30 percent more efficient than an average-performing existing building to overcome, through efficient operations, the negative climate change impacts related to the construction process."
- "calls upon policy makers to acknowledge the environmental impact of sending usable buildings to landfills; strive for density without demolition; provide meaningful incentives for retention and reuse; and maintain or strengthen demolition review requirements for designated historic properties."

Read CCC's blog post on this issue titled: [Zoning In on the 2024 Cambridge City Council Up Zoning Proposal](#)

We believe there must be neighborhood input into what new plans look like. It is important to address green space losses and heat island impacts. It is also important in each of our [13 Neighborhoods](#) to look at both their unique history and broader infrastructure issues: water, sewer, electric lines, transportation, fire, police, schools, libraries, parks, open space, shops, and even religious edifices.

## IN ONGOING NEWS

A NEW CITYWIDE HOUSING GROUP (CNU) has formed focusing on housing-linked issues; [CambridgeNeighborsUnited.org](#)

[Cambridge Streets for All](#) (CSA) has remained active in addressing traffic, transportation, and parking concerns and has insightful newsletters for which one can sign up on their website.

Cambridge 4 Trees (C4T) focuses on preserving our tree canopy: <https://www.cambridge4trees.c>

Write to Council at: [council@cambridgema.gov](mailto:council@cambridgema.gov) cc the clerk at: [cityclerk@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cityclerk@cambridgema.gov) and the City Manager at [citymanager@cambridgema.gov](mailto:citymanager@cambridgema.gov). Sign Up to Speak City Meetings (live or by zoom): [HERE](#).

We all need to stay involved! Thank you for being ACTIVE!!

Yours in Community,

Suzanne







You received this email from the Cambridge Citizens Coalition  
Address **P.O. Box 410291, Cambridge, MA 02141**  
Contact us at [CCCoalition1@gmail.com](mailto:CCCoalition1@gmail.com)

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Cambridge Citizens Coalition · 5 Fuller Pl · Cambridge, MA 02138-4905 · USA

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Camilla Elvis <camillaelvis@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 5:47 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support Apartments Citywide

Dear Councillors,

I'm writing to urge you to support apartments up to six stories by right citywide. It would produce far more inclusionary and market-rate units both of which we need to fight the housing crisis. Market rate units prevent displacement and inclusionary units would help more people in need find housing.

Like many of my colleagues at DPW, I grew up in Cambridge and am proud to work for the City. But most of us cannot afford to stay here. I remain in Cambridge by living with my parents (whom I'm lucky enough to get along with). Most of my colleagues who grew up here have moved away to places that require long car commutes, such as Tewksbury and New Hampshire.

We need zoning that doesn't create a 1000 sq ft home the minimum size. At \$1000 a square foot we are essentially requiring million-dollar homes. We need to allow for more and smaller apartments through zoning reform.

It is also important that this be allowed in every neighborhood in order to make them more accessible and begin to address the history of redlining and exclusionary zoning in Cambridge.

Thank you,  
Camilla Elvis  
28 Linnaean St

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Diana Yousef <dyousef@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 5:15 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Please do not allow overdevelopment without requisite parking or community input!

Dear Cambridge City Council, City Manager, and City Clerk:

PLEASE SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- 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.
- 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.
- Front setbacks must be maintained, back yards (private space) are critical for tree growth, shade, addressing heat island impacts and the climate crisis.
- 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?
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Replacing current zoning rules to allow 6+ story buildings in all Cambridge neighborhoods without parking, setbacks for green spaces, etc will CLOG OUR STREETS!! How can we even considering increasing the population when we are taking away basics that people need to live and function? This will exacerbate traffic and parking problems since no parking will be required!

To increase housing stocks, please look to other measures that do not include increased building heights or decreased green spaces. Please do not get rid of design controls. The current will not make housing more affordable for current residents by eroding the value of ordering housing in Cambridge. 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.

In considering new petitions around housing, please address the following questions:  
What is the goal of these petitions? If the aim is to bring down housing prices, will replacing current sustainable housing to build more expensive market rate housing really achieve this? It seems the

opposite, that it will fuel more housing cost increases. Removing historic homes, green spaces, trees, etc will fundamentally change the character of Cambridge, instead making it more like a crowded, faceless city with no community cohesion.

The push for density will lead to more teardowns, getting rid of Cambridge's history. The CHC Demolition Delay review should be strengthened. The BZA review with the opportunity for neighborhood input should be preserved.

Than you  
Diana Yousef  
413 Broadway

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** steve\_fitzsimmons@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:54 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Please reject the proposal on six-story housing

Please reject the current proposal to allow 6-story buildings, without parking, set backs or green space in all our neighborhoods, replacing current zoning rules. This will be a disaster for the environmental health, neighborhood cohesiveness, and traffic situation in all of our home-residence neighborhoods.

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Adriane Bishko <visiontowards@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:50 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Veto New Housing Proposal

Dear City Clerk,

While I am in favor of more housing, building units without setbacks or parking is poor planning.

When people buy luxury units, they expect to use their vehicles for shopping, taking children to the doctor, or commuting out of the city.

There is a new 6-story building on White Street across from Porter Square shopping center. It is an eyesore for starters. And without any green space it is devoid of any humanity.

Parking in the neighborhood is challenging enough. But to turn this into a competitive game to snag the last spot makes it a blood sport.

Please do not pass this without further modifications. Thank you.

Adriane Bishko  
5 Arlington Street  
Cambridge MA 02140

**Erwin, Nicole**

---

**From:** Catalina Arboleda <catalarbol@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:49 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** City Manager  
**Subject:** City-wide up zoning to allow 6 story luxury housing in every neighborhood

Respected City Councillors,

I would be interested in hearing what you hope to accomplish by allowing 6 story market housing anywhere and everywhere in the city. Without parking being required or green spaces/trees being protected, or reviewing whether our existing infrastructure could support this, I cannot imagine why you are allowing this, other than increasing your tax revenue and making the city pretty unlivable for the current residents. Have you considered the environmental impact of demolishing all of this housing to build more with less green spaces, trees, etc?

Best,  
Catalina Arboleda  
950 Massachusetts Ave. #413  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Sent by:  
**Catalina Arboleda, Ph.D**  
**508-450-3868 (cell)**  
[www.arboledaphd.com](http://www.arboledaphd.com)



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Elisabeth Werby <eawerby@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:44 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** City-wide upzoning petition

To the Council:

I write to support multi-family zoning city-wide **but I strongly oppose** the proposal for city-wide upzoning that would allow 75 foot (more than 6 stories!) market rate housing in every neighborhood. Buildings over 4 stories with limited (or not!) setbacks, should be limited to the corridors.

New proposals aimed at increasing housing supply, including for affordable housing, are now an annual event, engaging residents in often acrimonious battles year after year.

It doesn't have to be this way. Cities across the US have developed comprehensive plans that include ambitious housing and environmental goals, address the impacts of increased density; project parking needs and traffic issues, and look at both local and regional market considerations, and more..

Why can't Cambridge do the same? Let's argue it out in the context of one comprehensive plan--*a plan*, *not just a vision*-- that guide development over the next 10 years.

Liz Werby  
7 Wright St.

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Tanya Cosway <tvhcosway@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:24 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please vote against 6 story buildings being the norm for Cambridge neighborhoods...

Dear City Council,

As a long term resident of Cambridge, I'm very concerned about the most recent movement for 6 story buildings being allowed on all streets in Cambridge. I appreciate the need for more housing in Cambridge and have been supportive of higher buildings on the main streets of Cambridge like Cambridge Street and Mass Ave that are already full of a wide range of building heights. To allow this on the more residential streets like Antrim Street would completely overwhelm the tree canopy and cast deep shadows on the existing stock of 2 and 3 family homes. It is a sign of how ill thought this plan is by the illustration used to show a 6 story building that has land around it and not a two-family or triple-decker in sight. The leafy neighborhoods of Cambridge are already densely packed and wouldn't meet today's zoning requirements of setbacks and spacing but are still at a scale that neighbors know neighbors.

6 story buildings that would also have multiple units per floor makes an increase in population and density that I don't believe the city is ready to absorb. The addition of so many residents to such narrow streets would also make resident street parking, already a huge challenge, especially after the elimination of so much parking for bike lanes, all but impossible. There are no discussion about parallel plans to improve mass transit and all the other supports required by increasing housing on such a scale.

Please reject this proposal and consider the ramifications that go beyond adding more housing units to Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Tanya Cosway

--  
Tanya Cosway  
she/her/hers

[tvhcosway@comcast.net](mailto:tvhcosway@comcast.net)  
mobile +1-617-308-7170  
81 Antrim Street, Cambridge

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:04 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** City-wide Up-Zoning

Please say NO to the proposed city-wide up-zoning which would allow 6-story "luxury" housing in every neighborhood. We do not want nor need these increased building heights, nor the resulting decreased green spaces and/or trees which this would entail. We need to have a democratic review processes by Cambridge boards and commissions. Not to do so would mean disaster for our beautiful and historic city, as well as endanger the health and well-being of its residents. This new plan for up-zoning would also exacerbate the already difficult parking situation and traffic in Cambridge. Please protect, not destroy, the city we love, and say no to this ill-advised project.

Thank you,  
Shelagh Hadley, long-time resident and Cambridge voter.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Philip Laird <PLaird@arcusa.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:39 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager

Dear City Council Members,

I write to you once again to urge you to thoughtfully reconsider the new proposed petition on zoning and increased heights of buildings rather than try to implement such a far-reaching decision immediately.

Please consider the following points-

5-6 story buildings ( or higher) should be along a major corridor and not within any street or neighborhood within the entire city. Not every street is the same in Cambridge and on some streets a 6-story building would dwarf a neighboring house or neighborhood. It could remove all the sunlight from the houses nearby and impact their green space and trees and plants. It would create a disjointed and out of scale appearance .You would also be losing some important and historic houses in the process. These are what make Cambridge desirable and attractive to people to want to live here.

Setbacks are there for a reason and private yards allow for trees and plants to grow which help make the city more livable and cool the city when it is hot. Having some available parking is a necessity for residents , particularly of building that are a certain size.

This will adversely affect the property values of people's homes .Many people like us have lived in the same house for over 40 years. This is our only nest egg . We would never be able to afford to buy a house in Cambridge today. I greatly sympathize with people who need affordable housing. Please let us not destroy the city with an idea like this , however. This is not the way to achieve the goal.

To have single family homes bought by developers in order to tear them down and build a 6 story building will destroy the city and the very reason why people want to live in Cambridge. We have a city full of history and beautiful architecture. There are some gorgeous mature trees in some private yards that benefit all of us and assist us with climate change in the city. Each neighborhood is unique and of value. Some neighborhoods have very small houses , some medium, and some large. All neighborhoods should not be treated as one . Leave the taller buildings along the major corridors where the public transportation is located.

This is a misguided proposal and one that deserves much more careful discussion. Local experts, residents, and professionals should be asked to weigh in.  
Please do not use a sledgehammer like this that will ruin our city for our future residents.

Thank you  
Philip Laird  
22 Mt. Pleasant Street  
Cambridge, MA 02140

Philip L. Laird, FAIA, LEED AP  
*Pronouns: he/him*  
Principal

**arc.**

**Architectural Resources Cambridge**  
501 Boylston Street, Suite 4101  
Boston, MA 02116  
Direct : 617.575.4226  
Cell : 617.460.0289  
[www.arcusa.com](http://www.arcusa.com)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** AT Natenshon <atn123@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:37 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Wanted to voice my support for more multi-family housing in Cambridge and easing building restrictions

As a home and rental property owner, I feel strongly that Cambridge is a wonderful city and will be well served by making it easier to build higher density low-rise (6 stories or so) housing and support the effort being presented to the housing council tomorrow.

Best

Drew

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Andrew Natenshon  
Mobile: +1-617-335-6240  
[ATN123@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ATN123@GMAIL.COM)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Rosalind Michahelles <rosalind@dominick-jones.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:35 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Wednesday Housing Committee meeting

RE: the discussion on allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods

TO: the Housing Committee of the city Council

FROM Rosalind Michahelles, 6 Hurlbut St., Cambridge

Please take my opinion into consideration: I feel very strongly that **new housing should be no higher than six stories** in order to foster neighborhoods and community cohesion in those neighborhoods.

For that reason, **trees are also essential** -- for people and for the future of our plant.

Thank you.

--

Rosalind Michahelles  
617-491-3239  
[rosalind@dominick-jones.com](mailto:rosalind@dominick-jones.com)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Rick Roth <rick@mirrorimage.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:30 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Council; City Manager  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** zoning

Dear Councilors,

I am a long time resident of the city. I wish my kids could live here, but it is too expensive. However, that doesn't mean I want the zoning changes, which seem like they would be a boon to developers and put a pathetically small amount of "affordable" units out there, making no dent in our housing issues and not changing the current horrible dynamic in this country of housing prices.

Though I rent out an apartment, I am staunchly in favor of rent control.

I think we also should start by pressuring Harvard, MIT and Lesley to build enough housing for their students and staff and build it on their properties.

Big tall buildings will mean more corporate ownership of property and less by individuals, that's a giant step in the wrong direction.

The upzoning ideas are a horrible idea. I didn't want to reject it out of hand and I walked up and down my street and imagined six story buildings. It would be horrible on my street and the house next to me would probably be the first to go as it is a double lot with some green area, two stories to six? they would tear it down and do that in a heartbeat and would forever change my neighborhood.

Build along the corridors, build around former industrial areas like Lechmere, but don't ruin the neighborhoods. I can live with the Mass Ave 7 story buildings towering over us, but not right on our tree lined street with no other buildings over three stories

We need housing solutions on every level in this country, but this six stories everywhere is the worst Idea yet.

sincerely,  
Rick Roth  
648 Green Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

[rick@mirrorimage.com](mailto:rick@mirrorimage.com)

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field." - President Dwight Eisenhower



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:28 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; Huang, Yi-An  
**Subject:** Please oppose the proposed Radical City Upzoning

Honorable Mayor Simmons and Cambridge City Councillors,

Please oppose the proposed citywide upzoning that will radically change the city and will only serve to increase profits for outside developers and investors but is unlikely to decrease housing costs, and more likely will increase existing housing costs as property values (and taxes) will rise still further.

As planned, this upzoning proposal will play havoc with affordable housing interests citywide and will remove critically needed existing naturally more affordable housing (our long-standing triple-deckers and other units), forcing more renters onto the streets, needing to find housing in other communities.

This upzoning proposal also will be terrible for the environment, destroying existing sustainable homes, and exacerbating climate change by decreasing current green spaces and trees (countering a key goal of Envision).

As I read the proposal, this would allow 7.5 stories (75 feet) structures in all neighborhoods (currently 2.5 stories is the norm) – a massive change - and also would remove required review for most projects as well as input from neighbors.

Hopefully common sense will prevail and this terribly thought through plan will be rejected.

Instead: Please vote to simply upzone to allow multi-family housing city wide. This would be a great progressive win for the city and would likely bring far less harm.

Cordially,

Suzanne Blier  
5 Fuller Place

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Erik Sebesta <erik.sebesta@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:28 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Building sizes in Cambridge

Please do not increase the building heights in Cambridge or reduce existing green space.

--Erik Sebesta  
64 Walker St  
857-998-7541

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** David Halevy <dasamaru40@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:52 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** 6-story buildings without parking:

IT IS A VERY POOR IDEA.

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Milan Singh <milan.singh@yale.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:42 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Allowing multifamily housing in every neighborhood

Dear Cambridge City Council:

My name is Milan Singh. I am 21 years old, and I was born and raised in Cambridge. I am writing to you all today to register my strong support for Councilor Siddiqui's proposal allowing multifamily housing in every neighborhood up to 6-story apartments.

Unfortunately, I am unable to make the virtual Housing Committee hearing. Nonetheless, I want to make it very clear that I am in favor of this proposal.

Cambridge is one of the best places to live in America. Unfortunately, we are hampered as a city by the high cost of housing. This is not rocket science; it is a supply and demand problem. Currently, our zoning laws impose arbitrary density restrictions, designed to enforce a certain set of aesthetic preferences for single-family homes on everyone. This artificial supply constriction drives up prices, pushing many people who want to live in our city out of it.

I do not believe that centralized government mandates are appropriate here. If someone does not want a multifamily unit on their property, they are free to not build one. But if someone owns a parcel of land and wants to develop a six-story building on it, they should have the freedom to do so. More construction will ease our cost of housing crisis, and provide a larger property tax base that can be used to increase funding for public education or lower other taxes.

I would like to raise my family in Cambridge one day. But I am concerned that housing prices will make that unfeasible. This proposal is a step in the right direction, and I strongly urge you all to advance it. Whether or not you support this measure will be the number one issue that I and my family consider when you next up for re-election.

All best,  
Milan

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**Milan Singh**  
Yale '26  
+1 (617) 331-5796

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Tina Lieu <tinalieu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:33 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Pls support multifamily housing throughout Cambridge

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

I'm writing in support of the proposal for multifamily housing throughout Cambridge. The current zoning tries to pretend that we are not urban when we are. If we had more housing at reasonable prices then that would also support our push for more people who work in Cambridge to be able to also live here and thus move around using public transit and biking to relieve pressure in on needing parking. (That said though, we would do well to increase parking spots for those who really need it, such as for our school staff.)

At the same time, we should support our major T stations and bus stops in becoming lively city centers and hubs as they are in other countries such as Japan which further encourage people to commute as they can also pick up groceries or do shopping on their way home from work/school.

Respectfully,  
Tina Lieu  
37 Huron Ave #1, Cambridge, MA 02138

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** O'Neil, Sean <soneil@jd26.law.harvard.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:31 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Cambridge Resident Support for Proposal to Allow Multifamily Housing in Every Neighborhood

Hello,

I am writing today in support of Cllr. Siddiqui's proposal to allow multifamily housing in every neighborhood. I am a resident of Cambridge and am directly affected by our housing shortage through high rents, high broker's fees, and long wait times to find a place to live. By allowing multifamily housing in every neighborhood, the City of Cambridge could help combat the housing shortage, and help low-income renters like me.

Thank you,  
Sean O'Neil

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Amy Clarkson <amysclarkson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:30 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** opposed to up-zoning to 6 stories anywhere in Cambridge

Dear City Council members,

I write to you once again to urge you to thoughtfully reconsider the new proposed petition on zoning and increased heights of buildings rather than try to implement such a far reaching decision immediately.

Please consider the following points-

5-6 story buildings ( or higher) should be along a major corridor and not within any street or neighborhood within the entire city. Not every street is the same in Cambridge and on some streets a 6 story building would dwarf a neighboring house or neighborhood. It could remove all the sunlight from the houses nearby and impact their green space and trees and plants. It would create a disjointed and out of scale appearance .You would also be losing some important and historic houses in the process. These are what make Cambridge desirable and attractive to people to want to live here.

Setbacks are there for a reason and private yards allow for trees and plants to grow which help make the city more livable and cool the city when it is hot.Having some available parking is a necessity for residents , particularly of building that are a certain size.

This will adversely effect the property values of people's homes .Many people like us have lived in the same house for over 40 years. This is our only nest egg . We would never be able to afford to buy a house in Cambridge today. I greatly sympathize with people who need affordable housing. Please let us not destroy the city with an idea like this , however. This is not the way to achieve the goal.

To have single family homes bought by developers in order to tear them down and build a 6 story building will destroy the city and the very reason why people want to live in Cambridge. We have a city full of history and beautiful architecture. There are some gorgeous mature trees in some private yards that benefit all of us and assist us with climate change in the city. Each neighborhood is unique and of value. Some neighborhoods have very small houses , some medium, and some large. All neighborhoods should not be treated as one . Leave the taller buildings along the major corridors where the public transportation is located.

This is a misguided proposal and one that deserves much more careful discussion. Local experts, residents, and professionals should be asked to weigh in.Please do not use a sledgehammer like this that will ruin our city for our future residents.

Thank you,  
Amy Clarkson

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Rachel Plummer <rplummer@ceoccambridge.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:20 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for Bold Action on Allowing New Apartments in Every Neighborhood [Housing Committee]

Dear Housing Committee and Cambridge City Council:

I'm writing as a resident of Cambridge (Baldwin Neighborhood) and as the Associate Director at Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC), the city's anti-poverty nonprofit. I'm writing with strong support for zoning that allows for multi-family housing, up to 6 story apartments, in every neighborhood in Cambridge. An increase in housing will benefit everyone.

I love the neighborhood I live in: the Agassiz-Baldwin neighborhood has great parks, restaurants and shops, amazing proximity to the red line, and beautiful tree-lined streets. However, I'm ashamed of the fact that my neighborhood has the third lowest percentage of affordable housing in the City. Everyone should have access to our beautiful neighborhoods, and we need more multi-family affordable housing in all of our neighborhoods.

At CEOC, every day we see residents who struggle to make ends meet, residents who struggle to keep their housing, and residents who have lived in shelters or on the streets for months on end. We are confronted with the housing crisis on a daily basis seeing residents in need who walk through our doors, and even just by walking through Central Square and seeing the dire need that exists.

Cambridge needs more housing, and zoning has made it impossible to build enough apartments to keep up with the need and with the City's goals. I believe that changes to zoning to allow multi-family housing in all neighborhoods will benefit all residents of Cambridge, including the residents we serve at CEOC. It will also help renters like me, people who have a well paying job but see their rent increase each year, putting them closer and closer to having to leave the City because it's not affordable. Building more housing will improve affordability for renters, prospective first-time home-buyers, voucher holders, and anyone who wants to call Cambridge their home.

Thank you to the Housing Committee and staff for doing such important and meaningful work on housing to make Cambridge more affordable, inclusive, and welcoming.

All the best,  
Rachel

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**Rachel Plummer** (she/her/hers)  
Associate Director  
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)  
11 Inman Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 868-2900 ext. 328



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Chris Willard <cwillard@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:13 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager; Olivia Weisser  
**Subject:** housing

Dear All,

While I agree that Cambridge is in a housing crunch, I also firmly believe we are in a transportation crunch - I'd much rather resources go to resolving issues with the T, mandating new construction include electric shuttles to existing bus and T infrastructure, and so forth, than just building housing for the sake of housing that make our city less attractive and unique. I'd also love for new buildings that do happen to have some aesthetic and environmental / renewable energy standards, as well as size standards.

Thank you,

Chris Willard 12 Corporal Burns Road / Cambridge MA / 02138

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Chris Willard

Zoom: [us02web.zoom.us/j/5202855177](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5202855177)

617/909/7640

**\*\*\* PRE-ORDER FEELINGS ARE LIKE FARTS TODAY! \*\*\***

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Kirsten Greco <greco.kirsten@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:02 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Up zoning Proposal

Dear City Council Housing Committee:

I disagree with the proposed the city-wide up-zoning to allow 6 stories in every neighborhood. The height is not really my concern and I support this portion. As a resident of affordable housing I fully support building housing but in a responsible and respectful way to the current neighborhood and future residents.

While everyone wants to believe that parking is not necessary, that is just being in denial and will create more problems. While parking and green space are not basic human rights, until our public transportation system is better and every resident is able bodied so they can walk or ride bikes, it's ignorant to refuse to recognize this need with new buildings. Maybe the parking and green space/setback requirements can be reduced but not eliminated.

One recent proposal had two parking spaces for an 10+ story family-oriented building with no street parking on adjacent streets. Families are most likely to have and rely on cars. Let's use common sense when changing requirements.

Thank you,

Kirsten Greco

2103 Mass Ave.

Cambridge MA 02140

Sent from my iPhone

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** PAMELA WINTERS <pamharry87@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:42 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Housing mtg. on Aug. 21.

Hello...I just wanted to express my disappointment in the Council's Housing Committee thinking about changing the zoning so that developers could build high risers in the city. I have the following reasons which I would like discussed: 1. How will this impact the historical nature of neighborhoods? 2. The last thing the city needs is more people living here with Cambridge being one of the most dense cities for our population in the country...and 3. Where are the people going to park? There is no parking in these units and they are luxury units so most probably people who are living there will come with cars. This will impact the already crowded streets in those neighborhoods.....Thank You.

Pamela Winters  
41 Orchard St.  
Tel: 6178648199

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Amy Thompson <amythompson5557@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:28 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Proposed zoning changes

Dear City Clerk,

One of the unique qualities of Cambridge is the amount of green space for a city. I have lived in Cambridge since 1979 and overall, the city has done an outstanding job of managing changes of all kinds. This latest drastic reduction of zoning must be properly vetted as to the impact on residents who reside here. While we need more housing there must be a balance as to the impact on existing homes single to multifamily, sunlight, green space, parking, over crowding etc. Please perform a more extensive study as to the impacts these changes will have on the quality of life in Cambridge. Do not let money be the driving factor pushed by builders with deep pockets and make sensible decisions for the long term.

Thank you,  
Amy Thompson  
57 Jay Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Elizabeth Houghteling <e.houghteling@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:44 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** NO on city-wide upzoning

Dear Members of the City Council,

The proposal before the Housing Committee to allow 6 story buildings anywhere in the City - without parking, set-backs or review- should be a non-starter. The idea that you would even consider such a proposal while so many people are away or preoccupied with getting ready for a new school year shows how little its proponents care for transparency and public input.

Certain parts of Cambridge are ripe for new, denser development as long as realistic goals are met, like parking and greenery. To put a bullseye on every existing single family, row house, double-decker or triple decker in the city is obscene.

I hope you will vote against this and put your efforts into sensible development that won't cause displacement.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth C. Houghteling  
132 Brattle Street  
Sent from my iPhone

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Elizabeth Greywolf <esgreywolf@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:42 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** removing zoning regulations

I'm inquiring about whose idea it is to replace our current zoning rules to allow 6-story buildings everywhere in Cambridge -- without parking, set-backs or green space. We have already seen the unfortunate results for many of our small businesses in numerous neighborhoods by eliminating street parking, as a result of redesigning the city for bikers. How on earth would this new zoning ruling, if approved, not add to parking problems all over Cambridge?

Elizabeth Greywolf

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** nina herrera <herr9a@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:42 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Highrise Buildings

Dear City:

I am against the proposed plan to build six story highrise buildings in Cambridge. It will create further congestion- one can barely drive, bicycle or walk as it is!!! Dangerous!!! Also, the pollution will be terrible-And, again, the current noise levels are already unacceptable! Construction is lately done poorly, quickly and without sufficient considerations of any number of issues. For example water and global warming. For example, it is not a "luxury" to not be set back from the street, with no green spaces, to be unable to park, etc. This seems profit motivated rather than anything else. Parking will become more impossible than it already is. Cambridge is my favorite city in the world, and it is for the world to enjoy, as visitors flock here! But it will lose its unique and lovely qualities with the planned over-building and lack of in depth consideration. Especially for the people who live here who are attempting to thrive despite being thwarted at every turn.

Thank you,  
Nina Herrera

Sent from my iPhone

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Craig Lambert <craigalambert@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:28 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** please do not allow six story buildings

Dear Councillors, City Clerk, and City Manager,

Please reject the ruinous proposed change in the city zoning code to allow six-story buildings without parking, setbacks or green space in all our neighborhoods.

Let's do something for the local citizens rather than for real-estate developers.

Craig A. Lambert, Ph.D.  
41 Washburn Avenue

<http://craigalambert.net>



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Queen Christine <cmcannava@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:23 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** 6 Story Buildings

I am not in favor of 6 story buildings!

Christine M. Cannava  
4 Arlington Street  
# 31  
Cambridge, MA 02140

Sent from my iPhone

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Eileen McCullough <eileen20152016@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:23 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Wed Aug 21 meeting re 6-story developments

Thank you all for your time. I am a mid-Cambridge resident and property owner. Regarding the proposal to allow buildings up to 6 stories,

I am IN FAVOR of allowing buildings up to six stories BUT ONLY WITH:

- two integral parking spots per bedroom (ie in a below-ground garage that is a part of the building); AND
- sufficient visitor parking INSIDE the integral garage sufficient for every unit to have one car visiting at the same time, which is allocated to local residents during snow emergency; AND
- green space matching the at-ground footprint of the building (ie a grass roof or similar to be figured out by the developer; AND
- at least 25% of the bedrooms are in designated below-market rate units.

Otherwise, it's just a further tax on working mothers and caregivers, people who are not knowledge workers, and handicapped and the elderly, which serves to make our city less friendly to those populations, who are currently our neighbors and friends.

Eileen McCullough

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Bjorn Poonen <bjornpoonen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:18 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Multifamily housing citywide

Dear City Council Housing Committee:

I am writing with deep concern about the upzoning proposal that has been put forward and that you are considering in your August 21, 2024 meeting.

Certainly it is time to allow multifamily housing citywide, but surely you could find a way to do this without eliminating design review and weakening setback and green space requirements. Those requirements exist for a reason and are what have kept our city an attractive place to live and work. Eliminating them will lead to reduced tree canopy, less open space, higher city temperatures, and unattractive streetscapes.

In addition, any upzoning of this scale needs to be coupled with a plan for handling the additional infrastructure needs (utilities, open space, traffic, parking, pollution mitigation, etc.)

Best,  
Bjorn Poonen (resident at 303 3rd St, Cambridge)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Sandra Gamble <lioness778@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:18 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Refining is a really bad idea.

Sent from my iPhone

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Dan Phillips <danlphillips234@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 11:17 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Hello Housing Committee (and City Council),

First off, thank you for your work on allowing new apartments city-wide. This is a major step forward in tackling the housing crisis and the right thing to do to end exclusionary zoning and make Cambridge a more affordable, inclusive city.

The projections in CDD's materials, while estimates, really hammer home the trade-offs. We can continue on our current path, where we'll see very little new housing (and practically no new IZ), or we can unlock our neighborhoods' potential for multi-family housing. This will benefit people across the board, and as someone who's hoping to stay and possibly start a family in Cambridge someday, I hope we take a step forward this fall.

Thanks,  
Dan Phillips  
Broadway St

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Trevor Burnham <trevorburnham@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 11:16 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods

I'm writing to express my support for the proposal to allow multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of Cambridge.

All across America, people are experiencing a housing shortage driven largely by political constraints on new construction. This shortage has been felt especially hard in Boston, and especially here in Cambridge, for a simple reason: People want to live here. We've made our city attractive to new residents while failing to build new housing for them. Demand is outstripping supply, and the result is skyrocketing housing prices.

I consider myself fortunate to be able to afford the cost of living here in Cambridge. But many aren't so lucky, including many who have to commute from afar to work in this city. Allowing multifamily housing to be built in all neighborhoods will allow more people to live near where they work, improving their quality of life and reducing carbon emissions. At the same time, it will ease the cost of living for residents like myself.

I urge this City Council to embrace a vision of housing abundance for Cambridge.

Thank you,  
Trevor Burnham

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** marie elena saccoccio <saccocciom@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 11:04 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Fw: Proposed Relief from Aug 21, 2024 11 AM Housing Meeting Citywide Upzoning

Council Members and City Manager:

Nice to keep in mind whenever a zoning petition is before you. All we have seen are petitions that remove health, safety, privacy from the equation is if they have no role whatsoever. Truth is those are the constitutional underpinnings relied upon by the United States Supreme Court in ruling on all zoning. Zoning was truly born from the slums and removing more and more controls returns us to a dangerous path.

The proposed relief from zoning restrictions truly returns us to pre-zoning era when slums were the norm, and health, safety and privacy were never the consideration. This is a good read of how and why zoning actually developed.

[Slums are how the free market houses the poor](#)



### **Slums are how the free market houses the poor**

Cameron Murray

Comparing depression era housing policy to today

I am sure that many reading this will think "but that is not what we are planning." To really assess the plan in front of you it is essential that you consider the real basis for zoning and what it was created to protect against. The Proposed Plan in front of you essentially removes protections and restrictions of zoning and oversight from city departments that your residents once enjoyed. Somehow, setbacks, or height or FAR restrictions or even parking are no longer on the table. All that matters is density. And, the projects anticipated will mean that others in the neighborhood don't matter either. Again and again, at the many presentations I here Millers River, promoted as the gold standard, with no notation that it is really elder housing and was built for that.

The zoning changes being presented now seek to warehouse people, as if they are widgets, devoid of appreciation of privacy, and space, history or architecture, while shaming and punishing homeowners who had the means and audacity to actually buy a home with a yard. We all realize that more housing is in the plans for

this city. That is not even the controversy. It is about exemption of all restrictions that are based on health, general welfare, and even historical and architectural context.

Please do not recommend that our city go down this rabbit hole once again. While CDD leads with their goal to ZONE EQUITABLY WESTERN AND EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS, the truth is East Cambridge will be the sacrificial lamb in all this.

It has taken a hundred years for some sections of the city built pre zoning to begin to recover from catastrophic development. Why would you try to repeat this?? Here is a link to the first public health trial in the country

brought by residents of East Cambridge against Squire's.



[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Official\\_Record\\_of\\_the\\_State\\_Board\\_o/3FMFZC62xOAC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=squire%27s+public+health+east+cambridge+slaughterhouse&pg=PA473&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Official_Record_of_the_State_Board_o/3FMFZC62xOAC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=squire%27s+public+health+east+cambridge+slaughterhouse&pg=PA473&printsec=frontcover)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marie Elena Saccoccio, Esquire  
55 Otis Street  
Cambridge, MA 02141  
BBO#552854



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 9:36 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; Azeem, Burhan; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Pickett, Joan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha  
**Subject:** City-wide upzoning....consider your choices and consequences

There is a need to house more vulnerable populations in Cambridge. Sadly, given the current density of the city we cannot pretend *we can house everyone who wants to live here. Let's please stop that charade.*

Every choice/decision the council makes comes with costs - beyond financial ones. Choosing any option comes with loss and, in my experience, council decision-making has involved too little verbal acknowledgement of what your agreed to policies cost environmentally, socially, aesthetically.

**Even well-intentioned policies cause loss.** It's all well and good to rally around the "mandate du jour" but as city leaders you have a responsibility to acknowledge the downsides, losses, potential damage of policies you generate.

I urge you to be cognizant of the downsides - and acknowledge them to yourselves, colleagues, and voters as you work your way toward designing a policy to promote more housing in Cambridge.

There is a win-win solution...build housing for the needy following guidelines that mitigate all that will be lost in a dense city.

- Locating any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) on a corridor. The leap from 4 stories to higher is massive in many neighborhoods.
- Do not arbitrarily remove green space and trees citywide for out-of-scale buildings, resulting in larger expensive single-family housing.
- Maintain front setbacks as such are critical for tree growth, shade, addressing heat island impacts and the climate crisis.
- Be explicit about the aims of the current up-zoning petition. What is the purported aim for this zoning petition?
- Clearly state what the up-zoning petition aims to accomplish. Require CDD to monitor and evaluate the extent to which more housing - and of what types - actually reduces housing costs. IF that is the purported aim.
- **DO NOT** move quickly on this proposal - rush to end - while it is summer. **If this is such a game-changer as some of you seem to feel it is...and necessary to the city future - DO NOT make the September city council meeting your deadline. You OWE it to everyone who lives here to vet this proposal in the open air - at many public forums. NOT daytime meetings held over the summer.** Hold public forums - *many of them* - in the evenings over the fall so an informed public can understand the possible benefits and costs to all of us.
- Use all available methods to communicate... such as the text messages sent out by CPD, red alerts, email messages with the key information about meetings you plan to hold and what is

proposed, why, and the costs...financially, green space-wise, heat island effects, traffic, additional needs for city services, etc..

To upzone city-wide an already dense city will have a major impacts...some positive if more affordable units for the most needy among us are produced. And negative impacts as well. Given that, the current proposal deserves much more sunshine that has surrounded it to date.

Respectfully,  
Mary Jane Kornacki

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

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Judi Neu <judineu@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 7:00 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; City Council  
**Subject:** Cambridge neighborhoods!

Dear City Council and Housing Committee,

I am very concerned about the impact of plans to add multi-story buildings in our city's neighborhoods. **This will ruin Cambridge!** Please, please make sure that:

- 1) Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) is **located on a corridor**. A 5 -6 story building is massive and destroys the integrity of a neighborhood.
- 2) We must have **green space and trees**. Please ensure that green space and trees are maintained and NOT SACRIFICED for out-of-scale buildings! Beware of larger expensive single-family housing!!
- 3) We must have **front setbacks and back yards**. Both are crucial for tree growth, shade and offsetting the impacts of the climate crisis.
- 4) Please **study the impacts of the zoning petition**. Will it really bring down housing costs city wide? We won't know this unless an initial and 5-year follow up study are conducted. Responsible development conducts studies of the impact of its actions.
- 5) Make sure **CDD speaks with Cambridge specific individuals and groups** to get their input. People are totally unaware of this city-wide upzoning. Please don't take advantage of poorly informed people to slip higher, neighborhood destroying buildings by them.
- 6) Require **BZA or alternative neighborhood review and oversight**. Only with such review and oversight will Cambridge be spared the ravages of out-of-control development.

Thank you! Please prove that Cambridge is too smart to fall into the trap of this faulty, neighborhood-destroying zoning.

Thank you,  
Judi Neu  
14 Longfellow Road  
Cambridge  
Sent from my iPad

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Rebecca Pries <rebeccapries@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 4:30 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Cc:** Suzanne Blier  
**Subject:** Please don't ruin Cambridge neighborhoods!

Dear City Council and Housing Committee,

I am very concerned about the impact of plans to add multi-story buildings in our city's neighborhoods. **This will ruin Cambridge!** Please, please make sure that:

- 1) Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) is **located on a corridor**. A 5-6 story building is massive and destroys the integrity of a neighborhood.
- 2) We must have **green space and trees**. Please ensure that green space and trees are maintained and NOT SACRIFICED for out-of-scale buildings! Beware of larger expensive single-family housing!!
- 3) We must have **front setbacks and back yards**. Both are crucial for tree growth, shade and offsetting the impacts of the climate crisis.
- 4) Please **study the impacts of the zoning petition**. Will it really bring down housing costs city wide? We won't know this unless an initial and 5-year follow up study are conducted. Responsible development conducts studies of the impact of its actions.
- 5) Make sure **CDD speaks with Cambridge specific individuals and groups** to get their input. People are totally unaware of this city-wide upzoning. Please don't take advantage of poorly informed people to slip higher, neighborhood destroying buildings by them.
- 6) Require **BZA or alternative neighborhood review and oversight**. Only with such review and oversight will Cambridge be spared the ravages of out-of-control development.

Thank you! Please prove that Cambridge is too smart to fall into the trap of this faulty, neighborhood-destroying zoning.

Thank you,  
Rebecca Pries  
10 Longfellow Road  
Cambridge

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Guillemette Simmers <gcsimmers@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 4:27 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Cc:** Bill  
**Subject:** Up-zoning petitions

To the City Council Housing Committee:

Yes, please allow for multi-family housing city-wide but say no to increased heights and/or decreased green spaces and trees. **This plan guts building design controls since it removes any further review or oversight by Cambridge boards or commissions.** This up-zoning if it passes will increase housing costs for current residents by increasing property values and taxes and decreasing the current more naturally affordable older housing. It 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.**

What are these petitions attempting to do? If it is to bring down housing prices, will the removal of our current sustainable housing to build more expensive market rate housing achieve this, or will it fuel still more housing cost increases? And, with the removal of more historic homes, green spaces, and trees, will it be the kind of city we wish to pass on to the next generation, much less remain of interest to those who want to live here now and in the near future.

Respectfully,

Guillemette and William Simmers  
8 Alpine Street

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Joe Connolly <joe.connolly.200@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 3:55 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please Solve the Housing Crisis

Hi All,

I would like to express my strong support for the current motion to upzone every neighborhood in Cambridge to 6 stories by right. I think this will be a big step forward in resolving our housing crisis. I've read that this new regulation would make Cambridge a forerunner of cities in the country on housing-friendly policy, which would be exciting.

Studies show that even building market rate housing can be very beneficial for lowering the rent of metro areas. I just heard further support for this phenomena on a great podcast episode this morning on [building better urban areas](#). The host stated that Austin, Texas gave out 10 times the housing permits as San Francisco in recent years. It's no wonder that Austin fared better with housing costs. In fact, the price of housing in Austin fell during some periods even as the population expanded.

Joe Connolly  
518-469-6523  
[LinkedIn](#)

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Ronald Suleski <rsuleski@suffolk.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 3:37 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Please Don't Ignore My Strong Feelings on this Issue

I want our City Council to support the following:

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.

This City council seems out of control. Keeping resident input out of the requirements is absolutely unacceptable.

Ron

Ronald Suleski, PhD  
Professor and Director  
Rosenberg Institute for East Asian Studies  
Associate in Research, Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Reischauer Institute for Japanese Studies, Harvard University

Suffolk University, Boston  
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Boston, MA 02108  
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[rsuleski@suffolk.edu](mailto:rsuleski@suffolk.edu) [www.suffolk.edu/rosenberg](http://www.suffolk.edu/rosenberg)  
美國薩福克大學羅森伯格東亞研究所



SUFFOLK  
UNIVERSITY  
BOSTON



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Andrew S. <ams125@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 3:17 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Support for dense housing

Dear City Council,

I'm writing as a long time renter and voter here in the city to urge you to continue to support denser housing rules. There is a critical shortage of housing in the city. The last thing that we need is more limits, delays, and studies. We need action on construction of all types.

I appreciate the work that you have done to support this initiative in recent years and hope to continue to see progress.

Thank you,

Andrew Solomon  
3 Linnaean St  
Cambridge MA 02138

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Jonathan Haber <hijon89@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 2:56 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** POR-2024-37

Hello,

I just wanted to write in support of the policy order to end exclusionary zoning. The fact that there are areas of Cambridge that only allow single family homes is indefensible. Zoning should be used to prevent truly problematic land use (such as building an oil refinery next to an elementary school). We should stop using it as a weapon to exclude people and housing that some people don't like. The proposal is well-researched, informed, and extremely thorough. I look forward to seeing it become law in Cambridge.

Thanks,  
Jonathan Haber  
11 Bellis Circle

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** James Stathis <j.stathis@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 2:55 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** city-wide up-zoning

To whom it may concern,

It has come to my attention, via an email from a concerned community member, that Cambridge is considering a zoning plan to allow more multi-family housing (which is good) but would also allow increased building heights and potentially decreased green spaces and trees in residential neighborhoods, such as mid-cambridge where I live. Moreover, it is my understanding that the plan will exacerbate traffic and parking problems since no parking will be required.

I am opposed to any plan which could worsen traffic congestion or change the residential character of neighborhoods by adding unlimited multi-story apartments (more than four floors) in most neighborhoods.

Thank you for helping to keep Cambridge interesting.

Sincerely  
James Stathis  
Cambridge MA 02138

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Peter Martin <petermartinarchitect@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 2:53 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Recent Cambridge zoning changes and proposed zoning changes

I am a 25 year resident of Area 4, Cambridge, an architect and urban designer with over 45 years helping create livable urban environments in the USA and abroad. I am writing to express concerns about the recent enacted and proposed changes to the City Zoning By Laws.

My concerns have nothing to do with affordable v. market rate housing or rich vs. poor residents. I enjoy living in Area 4, which is perhaps the most socio-economically diverse neighborhood in town.

My concerns are about the flawed planning process are as follows:

- The **CITYWIDE** changes that have been enacted, or are now proposed, have/are been/ing carried without sufficient public notification or engagement. Having dealt with the BZA on numerous occasions to obtain variances, a written notification to abutters has been legally required. The recent dramatic changes to zoning in Cambridge have been carried out without any written notification or engagement of the community.
- As the recent zoning changes are **CITYWIDE**, I think that the lack of transparency is a dereliction of duty of the city staff and elected officials, to work in the best interests of city residents.
- The activist groups that attend the barely advertised meetings are distorting the response of the community. The lack of active engagement of the general community appears to be deliberate by the City. If the City is capable of sending its 'City View Newsletter' flyer out to households, it seems that information on any proposed **CITYWIDE** zoning changes could just as easily be sent out for broad community dissemination and input.
- As far as I understand, the city has no strategic master plan, or any idea of how much housing is enough! The most recent 'blunt instrument', proposal to enact a 6 story **CITYWIDE** change to zoning is in my view misguided and should not be considered without proactive community engagement. One should consider that 6 stories is the equivalent scale of the bulk of urban London, Paris, Brooklyn NYC, Berlin and Back Bay Boston.....This urban scale may be OK in some parts of Cambridge, but not everywhere.
- I believe that it's naive to believe that Cambridge, in its municipal bubble, can alone solve the regional housing shortage. However, it seems it is steadily, like a punch drunk boxer, attempting to do so.
- Sadly, neighborhoods will be wrecked and residents' lives will be negatively impacted on this City Council's 'watch', before people 'wake up', confronted with the consequences of the poorly thought out, emotional zoning.

- The recent AHO zoning change and this newly proposed 6 story idea makes a mockery of the current zoning Dimensional Standards. One assumes that key parts of the current zoning controls were developed over time to protect the health and well being of the community, so such large scale, radical changes should only be made through careful study and community engagement.

I respectfully ask that our elected officials set in place mechanisms to notify and positively engage the residents in the process of making **CITYWIDE** zoning changes.

This would seem to make sense, as they actually reside in the city and one could assume that their input would be informative.

Sincerely,

Peter Martin

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Peter Martin Architect (617) 308 4440

11 Tremont Street  
Cambridge  
MA02139

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Evan Fields <evanjeromefields@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 2:21 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please support expanding housing!

Hi Cambridge City Council,

My name is Evan Fields, and I'm writing to you as a homeowner at 2 Stearns St (ward 10-2) and 11 year Cambridge resident. I believe the current proposal to allow 6 story apartment buildings citywide is a great idea, and I encourage you to support it!

Restrictive zoning has an ugly and exclusionary history, and even its current incarnation restricts housing supply, increases housing costs, and limits the rights of property owners. Six story apartments are compatible with the kind of gentle density that make Cambridge a great place to live, and I'd be thrilled to see them legalized citywide.

Even as an already-homeowner, I believe this zoning change would also benefit me personally: it'd make Cambridge a more affordable city to live in, allow cheaper goods and services and a more robust culture, and provide my family more options for changing our housing situation in time.

All the best,  
Evan

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Paul E Fallon <fallonpaule@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 11:07 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Proposed 6-Story Residential Buildings throughout Cambridge

Councilors –

I understand that the Housing Committee will meet on Wednesday August 21 to finalize the proposal to allow up to 6-story apartment buildings anywhere in Cambridge.

I am in complete support of this idea, which may sound radical, but is actually a common-sense response to the intractable problem of housing supply in our city and the greater Boston area.

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 ever accomplished 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 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, seriously consider this proposal, and make it a reality.

Thank you all for your service to our city.

Paul E. Fallon  
618 Huron Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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Paul E. Fallon  
618 Huron Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02138-4531  
617-661-9464

[www.paulefallon.com](http://www.paulefallon.com)

[www.howwillwelivetomorrow.com](http://www.howwillwelivetomorrow.com)

[www.theawkwardpose.com](http://www.theawkwardpose.com)



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Jennie N <jnevin10@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 10:33 AM  
**To:** Siddiqui, Sumbul; McGovern, Marc; Wilson, Anthony; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan  
**Cc:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for 6 story apartments

Hi Cambridge leadership,

Despite living here for 10+ years, this is nevertheless my first note to you - I'm emerging from the woodwork to express support for the proposal to allow more 6 story buildings in the city. It is difficult to imagine any world where we can have more affordable housing here without higher buildings. That simple fact seems like it ought to be enough for anyone who cares about affordability in our city. I look forward to a more inclusive skyline to come.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jennie  
345 Broadway (across from the Annex)

**Erwin, Nicole**

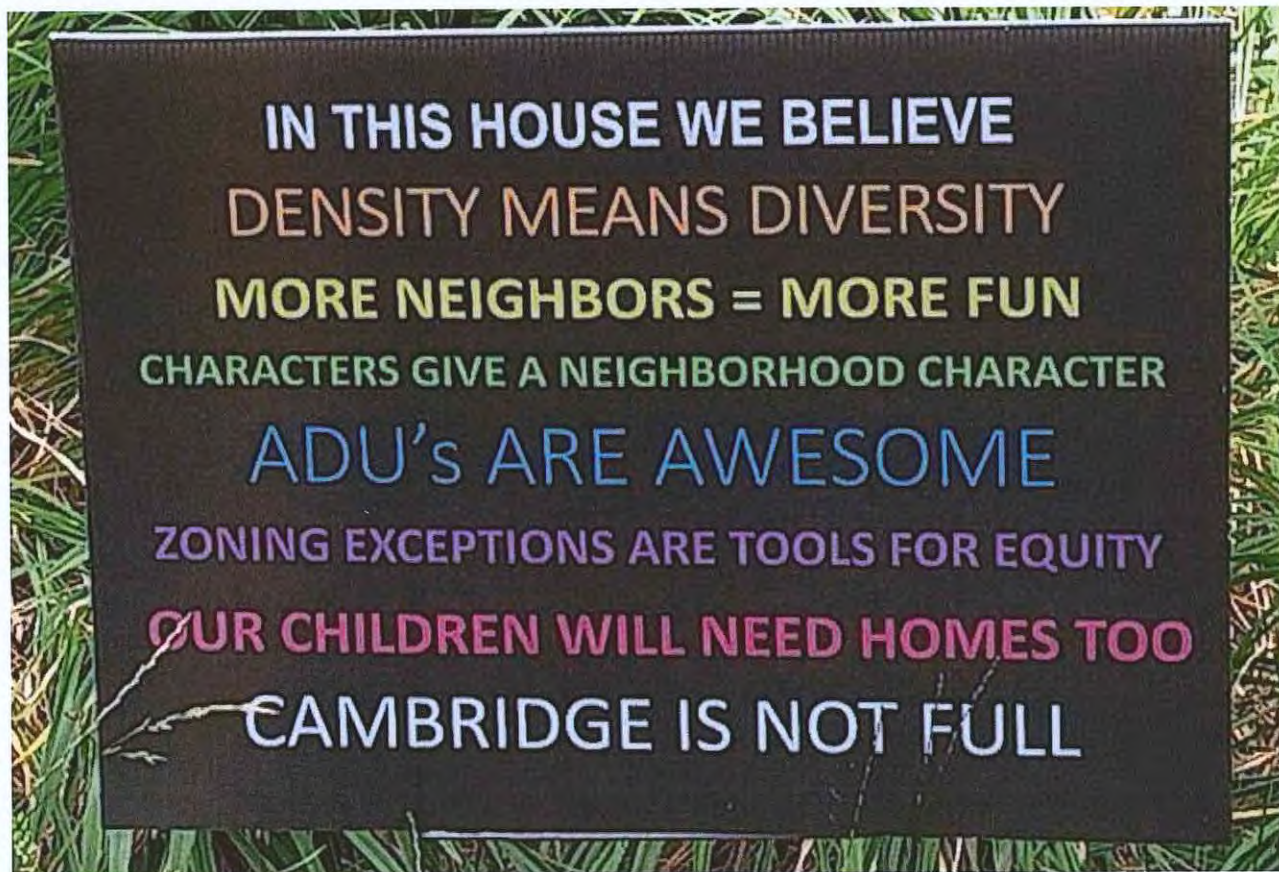
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**From:** Raffi Freeman <raffim@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 10:16 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for multifamily zoning

Dear City Council,

I would like to register my strong support of the forthcoming city-wide multifamily zoning. The amount of affordable and market rate housing will provide an important reprieve to rent increases and allow more of our community members to stay in the city. [Study after study](#) shows that adding to housing supply brings down housing costs, and Cambridge is not a magically exempt from the laws of supply and demand. Cambridge has thrived with housing diversity, with >50% of units in the city in apartment buildings, and adding more diversity in neighborhoods where there are already multifamily buildings of various shapes and sizes will be a great thing for the city.

The more scarcity exists, the more rich people win. We need policy that doesn't just let rich people win, and the only way to do that is through abundance.



Raffi  
Prospect Street

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Mai Nguyen <maikn.flute@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 10:06 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Dear Esteemed members of the City Council,

I'm Mai, 23, a lifelong Cantibridigan who has lived in both East and West Cambridge. I'm writing to ask you to take action now to allow up to 6-story apartments in every neighborhood. We need more housing to keep Cambridge affordable, accessible, diverse, and vibrant - the Cambridge that I knew and loved growing up.

Now that I am an adult, I understand that historic and exclusionary makes it impossible to build enough new apartments. This is something you have the power to change. Building more housing helps everyone: renters, prospective first-time home-buyers, existing home-owners, low and middle-income households, and many more. Research [shows](#) that new housing lowers nearby rents, benefitting even those who don't move into new housing themselves.

This is my personal story: My parents immigrated from Vietnam to Cambridge in the 90's and found an apartment through a friend of a friend. Out of kindness, our landlord did not raise rates on our family, and through his kindness, our hard work, the incredible opportunities of Cambridge, and a **lot** of luck, moving away and back to Cambridge, my parents were able to buy a small single family home in Cambridge, at a good price during the Recession no less.

Unfortunately, there is no way they would have survived and found success with the rent prices we have now, 30 years later. I'm one of the few lucky ones of my class at CRLS (2019) whose parents had enough luck to be able to buy and own a home in Cambridge - but at the rate that rent is going right now, I doubt that I or any of my peers, especially those whose families still renting despite living in Cambridge their entire lives or even for generations, will be able to stay. **It is a tragedy that we, as people who grew up in Cambridge, who wish to care for our city and know it best, will be pushed out by rising housing prices and policies historically designed to exclude by race and social class.**

I believe that what makes Cambridge Cambridge is not a superficial and ever-changing visual appeal of our neighborhoods and instead the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of our strong and tight-knit communities. This can only be preserved with more housing.

My thanks to the Housing Committee and city staff -

Mai Kim Nguyen

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Gabe Tiberius Colombo <gabe.tiberius.colombo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 8:30 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Bold Action on Housing

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

I am a resident of Mid-Cambridge writing to express my support for bold action to increase our housing supply, specifically the new proposal to allow apartments up to six stories in every neighborhood.

We all know that Cambridge urgently needs to significantly expand its housing stock to increase affordability and housing options especially for lower-income households. Unfortunately, its zoning—historically racist and exclusionary, designed to enforce segregation by class and race—continues to make building new housing difficult.

Building new housing will improve affordability for everyone, from renters to existing home-owners, voucher-holders to prospective first-time home-buyers; furthermore, research shows that new housing lowers nearby rents.

Many thanks to the Housing Committee, city staff, and you on the Council for doing important work on housing so far—but there's much more to be done.

I support new housing because it makes Cambridge a more affordable and truly inclusive city. Let's live up to our stated values and goals and make it easier to build more housing all across the city by passing this proposal.

Thank you,

Gabe

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**Gabriel M. Colombo**  
[gcolombo.com](mailto:gcolombo.com)  
512.659.5607

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Dave Slaney <dtslaney@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 18, 2024 10:37 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Bold Action on Housing

We strongly support allowing six story apartments in every area of Cambridge.

Leslie Cohen and Dave Slaney  
237 Norfolk St

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Amy Rothschild <amywrothschild@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 18, 2024 9:01 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for 6 story apartments in every neighborhood

Hi there,

My family was fortunate to purchase a townhouse in Cambridge a few years ago, thanks to Harvard providing a substantial housing subsidy annually to my spouse. We are glad to be raising our young child in this city. We support the zoning change to allow 6 story apartment buildings in every neighborhood in Cambridge. We have seen so many of our friends move out of Cambridge because of the housing cost, and we eagerly hope to live in a city where teachers, social workers, public servants, artists, and folks in the humanities can live, not just folks employed by Harvard/MIT professional schools, tech or pharma.

Many thanks,  
Amy Rothschild  
183 Harvey St  
02140

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 8, 2024 11:16 PM  
**To:** Huang, Yi-An; City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Families to be evicted from Registry- what is the plan?

Dear City Manager, Mayor and Councilors,

I heard the manager's report during the Council meeting on Monday about the state's policy changes at the Registry "respite center" in East Cambridge. This Globe article quotes two families staying there who have to leave tomorrow:

<https://archive.is/vbF9J>

If they do not find a place to go, is Cambridge going to let them sleep in the streets or outside a T station? I did not hear about a city plan at the Council meeting. I hope we develop a plan, because I do not feel confident the state will help these families.

I also encourage councilors to join Councilor Sobrinho-Wheeler in signing an [open letter](#) by the Massachusetts Coalition for Health Equity urging the governor to reverse course. Writing an op-ed with that position would also be welcome.

Please let me know what Cambridge plans to do.

Sincerely,

Lee (she/her)  
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617-354-6740 (9am-10pm)