

From: Harald Kliems <kliems@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Public comment Plan Commission meeting Feb 20

Dear Kevin Firchow:

Could you please forward this to the members of the Plan Commission (or let me know who to send this to)?

Public comment regarding Legistar item 59437: Potential Zoning changes related to the Urban Forestry Task Force Report

Dear members of the Plan Commission:

I saw that you will be discussing potential zoning changes in response to the report from the Urban Forestry Task Force at your next meeting. I'm writing to express my concern specifically about the recommendations about building setbacks. I strongly believe that trees in an urban setting have numerous benefits, but it is wrong to take those benefits as an argument to reduce residential density and therefore the supply of much needed housing. While the housing crisis in Madison is less severe than in some other metro areas, it is nonetheless a crisis, and one solution to this crisis is to remove barriers to dense development. Requiring greater building setbacks in our most desirable neighborhoods in order to allow trees has it backward. There is plenty of space in Madison, even right downtown; we just have made a decision to allocate that space for moving and storing private cars. Dense development is not the prime reason that we can't have street trees. And even if it were: reducing the housing supply downtown is only going to drive development to and beyond the edges of our city, resulting in low-density, car-dependent development.

I ask you to not create further barriers to the housing supply. Instead, we can use policies such as the Complete Streets policy that the Transportation Policy and Planning Board is going to take up to make decisions on how we allocate the public right of way, and how we can make sure that street trees are included in that process.

Thank you,
Harald Kliems

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