

Hoadley, Amanda

From: gordian@nym.hush.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 6:53 PM
To: housingpolicy
Subject: Oppose Item 3; Legistar 89917

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Tue. Sept. 23, 2025

Madison Housing Policy Committee members,

Please oppose Item 3, Legistar 89917, which would increase the minimum required heights of building setbacks in transition areas. [1] This change would turn Madison streets into areas of ugly, concrete canyons and is inconsistent with Madison's Comprehensive Plan, Amended December 5, 2023.

First, a note on terminology is needed. What the "Fall 2025 Housing Forward Proposals" web page calls a "step down" is what Madison's Comprehensive Plan, Amended December 5, 2023 [2] calls a "setback". This comment will use the word "setback".

The web page for "Fall 2025 Housing Forward Proposals" says,

"This [step down] requirement is called the "height transition area" and is intended to help transition the scale of buildings when moving from a more intense to a less intense zoning district." [3]

Aesthetic concerns about the scale of adjacent buildings are not the main purpose of setbacks. The Madison Comprehensive Plan, Amended December 5, 2023, calls for, "4. Building setbacks to lessen massing and shadow impacts;" [2; p. 43] The purpose of setbacks is avoid narrow concrete canyons between adjacent tall buildings and to admit light and air to the street level. Given this understanding of the purpose of setbacks, the presence of tall buildings adjacent to new buildings makes the lower, 25 foot standard for the start of setbacks even more imperative. Two adjacent tall buildings increase the importance of setbacks to "lessen massing and shadow impacts" as Madison's Comprehensive Plan requires.

Madison's zoning code must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. [4] Legistar 89917 is inconsistent with Madison's Comprehensive Plan and must be rejected.

The web page for "Fall 2025 Housing Forward Proposals" offers an example which shows how the proposed increase in the height of the first stepback would lead to adjacent buildings with flat facades that do not admit light and air to the street level.

"Here is another example: if a development was being proposed for a lot that was directly next to a Traditional Residential – Urban 2 (TR-U2) zoning district, which has a higher maximum height allowed due to its more urban setting, an increase from the current 25-foot maximum to the TR-U2 maximum of 52 feet could result in several additional full floors of homes on the sides and rear of the building that weren't possible under current requirements". [3]

Two building facades on adjacent buildings that rise 52 feet before the first stepback do not "lessen massing and shadow impacts" as Madison's Comprehensive Plan requires. [2; p. 43] Future generations will be condemned to live in a dark, claustrophobic environment. In their obsession with the quantity of housing units, City officials are ignoring the quality of life that future residents will experience.

Thank you for reading this comment.

Don Lindsay

SOURCES

[1] Legistar 89917 web page

<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7656025&GUID=8C69D5DE-950D-427F-8C7B-92B5A6EBC0E2&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|Other|&Search=>

Accessed 20250915

[2] Madison Comprehensive Plan, Amended December 5, 2023 Part 1:

https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/2024_Comprehensive_Plan_Part1.pdf

Accessed 20250922

"4. Building stepbacks to lessen massing and shadow impacts," [p. 43]

[3] Housing Forward Fall 2025 web page

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/priorities/housing-forward/fall-2025-housing-forward-proposals>

Accessed 20250911

[4] [MGO] 28.003 Relationship to Comprehensive Plan.

https://library.municode.com/wi/madison/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COORMAWIVOIICH20--31_CH28ZOCOR_SUBCHAPTER_28AINPR_28.003RECOPL

Accessed 20250826

"[MGO] 28.003 Relationship to Comprehensive Plan.

"The Madison Comprehensive Plan establishes the goals, objectives and strategies that serve as a basis for this zoning code. All regulations or amendments adopted pursuant to this ordinance shall be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as adopted and revised or updated."

Hoadley, Amanda

From: gordian@nym.hush.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 6:57 PM
To: housingpolicy
Subject: Oppose Item 4; Legistar 89918

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Tue. Sept. 23, 2025

Madison Housing Policy Committee members,

Please oppose Item 4, Legistar 89918, which would allow an Accessory Dwelling Unit to be a duplex, and which would remove the Accessory Dwelling Unit's footprint area from the maximum cumulative square footage allowed for permitted use accessory structures so that Accessory Dwelling Units are treated differently than garages and sheds.

This legislation is another step down the slippery slope leading to overcrowded neighborhoods. Most people think of Accessory Dwelling Units as modest additions to existing houses to make room for one or two people. New City legislation now allows a house to be built in the backyard of the primary residence, which may be an apartment building. Legistar 89918 would allow two housing units in the Accessory Dwelling Unit and paves the way for a backyard full of garages, sheds, plus the Accessory Dwelling Unit. Neighbors will have no say in this loss of open space. It is time to say, "Enough!".

Future residents of Madison will not think kindly of City officials who decided to turn a city of pleasant neighborhoods into an overcrowded dystopia.

Don Lindsay