

From: [Planning](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Apartment & Alternatives - Related to Recent Meetings
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From: the-greens31@charter.net <the-greens31@charter.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 11:23 AM
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Subject: Apartment & Alternatives - Related to Recent Meetings

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Good morning, all

To the Plan Commission: Please enter the following into your records. These comments relate to a series of recent meetings including those for the West Area Plan, Old Sauk Road development, and Proactive Zoning.

Citing

1. The Wisconsin State Journal editorial of 4 February 2024 -- "Moreover, none of the 4,574 multifamily units approved by key city commissions in 2023 are intended to be owner-occupied, as far as city planners know."
2. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Business Section article subtitled "Zoning changes would allow smaller-scale developments" of 17 March 2024

Milwaukee's planning manager says the idea is to promote more housing - but not high-rises, or even mid-rise buildings, in neighborhoods largely characterized by single-family homes. Instead, zoning would be changed to create a little more density, said a city planner. The planner went on to comment that "this really will allow for some incremental density, and create more choice for more neighborhoods". That includes such "neighborhood scale" housing as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and buildings with four to eight apartments.

The first seems empirically correct, and both articles propose better alternatives.

For us there are many problems with high-rise, high-density housing in a mostly R1 neighborhood. For an immediate example at hand: {subjectively} a 3-story (or higher!) 400 foot long (apartment) building with scant setbacks from all parcel sides is incongruous and appalling. But, the major point is this: {objectively} Rental units do not contribute to a permanency or "investment" (personal &

equity) in basic, fundamental neighborhood community; occupants are much less likely to have and raise families with children progressing up through the school system, to become engaged in neighborhood activities, and become stakeholders.

We are trying to find a better, more balanced, common sensical setting for new residents.

Unfortunately, the entire topic of densification and City enactments in that pursuit raise a major point of sustainability which we have yet to hear addressed. Has a substantial, robust dialog been conducted (and, if so, where recorded?) which answer questions such as these:

- Does densification have an end-point? Or, does it continue ad infinitum?
- What will Madison look like?
- Is that the Madison we want?
- To what extent/limit can/should Madison absorb a greater population?
- How much of the influx is to be absorbed by the City vs the Madison-area vs the County?
- What is sustainable before the Madison we love evolves into an "urban jungle" (pardon hyperbole) via infill, loss of surrounding environment, and going vertical in the pursuit of sky's-the-limit higher-densification?
- What is a sustainable balance between the preferences of current residents vs the desire of incoming residents?
- What sacrifices should be made before we say enough is enough?
- Is the City producing the other outcomes professed in policy?
- At what level can/should these be decided ... neighborhood, sub-area, district, area, or city-wide?

The city planners I've heard speak present themselves very well! What gives pause, however, is this embrace of densification and requisite, enabling (re)zoning. Where does this come from? It doesn't seem consistent with the concepts of neighborhood and community as espoused in the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you,
Mike Green
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