

From: [Jordan Mader](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Zoning code change
Date: Sunday, March 28, 2021 9:18:52 PM

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Hello,

I am writing to express support for altering the zoning code to opening up more by-right development opportunities. If anything, I was a little disappointed to read that some other factors like lot size to unit ratios (that I think often operate to make housing more expensive) might make the change less consequential than it might appear initially. Either way I think it's a step in the right direction.

Thank you,

Jordan Mader

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Jordan Mader
Director of Analytics Engineering
Education Analytics Inc.
608.535.8277 | jmader@edanalytics.org

From: [John Beeman](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Agenda item #13
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 5:34:31 PM

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I oppose this proposed change to Madison's zoning process. Neighborhood input should never be eliminated from consideration.

From: baytree@chorus.net
To: [Stouder, Heather](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: LEGISTAR 63902
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 5:10:48 PM

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City of Madison Plan Commission:

My name is Dewey Bredeson and I have been a developer since 1984 and I support the proposed changes to the conditional use thresholds LEGISTAR # 63902.

Early in my development career I use to do projects in the City of Madison, but I found it was easier and had more assured outcomes by staying out of the City. The current process adds time, expense and uncertainty early in the development process. Developers take on more risk, by paying an option fee for land or paying a premium on the purchase price to tie up the land for the 3 to 6 months it takes to get city approval. Plus there are design and legal fees just to get to the point of asking for approvals, all while not knowing if the approvals will be granted. A developer can easily spend \$25,000 to 100,000 or more in an attempt to get approvals and if the approval is not given or the size of the project is reduced to the point it does not make economic sense, then it just a loss.

The current process besides adding unnecessary risk and expense leads to poorer design, reduced density and higher rental rates. This proposed change will definitely lead to more housing being built in the city of Madison by increasing the number of new developments, density, housing units and reducing uncertainty, time and costs.

Thank you for supporting the proposed change.

Sincerely
Dewey Bredeson
116 E Dayton St., #100
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Pilar Rebecca Gomez-Ibanez](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Opposition to Legistar #63902
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 4:01:10 PM

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Dear Plan Commissioners, Alders, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

I am writing to urge you to oppose Legistar #63902, the zoning text amendment on housing density and conditional use thresholds, in its current form. I strongly support several of the goals explained by Planning, such as providing good housing choices for people, supporting small/less wealthy/more diverse developers, and looking at development through an equity lens. However, the more I have studied the proposal, the more I believe it will end up doing the opposite of what it intends.

Part of the problem is that there is nothing integral to the proposal that actually addresses either affordability or support for small developers. These are only hoped-for outcomes, and market forces will work against them. I understand that the city is working to increase incentives for affordable housing, but without those measures being linked or integral to this policy, it will just cause a rush toward more of the same high-end housing that's already flooding our neighborhood. In practice, I think the proposal will result in less affordable housing, less inclusivity, and the real possibility of destabilizing at-risk neighborhoods through speculation.

An additional problem is that this proposal removes a mechanism for citizen participation. What is described as "uncertainty," "unpredictability," and "barriers" is actually neighborhood input that makes projects better. The tiny gain in speed for developers would come at a huge cost to neighborhoods where these buildings (if built well) will last for decades. While Planning has characterized the zoning changes as small, slight, and modest, in many cases this is not true – particularly in mixed-use areas and densely-packed areas where adjacent properties have different zoning. Going from two to three units may be modest. Building a 48-unit or 24-unit next to an old house is not. Neighbors know a place in granular detail, lot by lot. This is necessary to help a development fit well and have a positive impact.

I'll use my own home as an example of what I fear this proposal will do. I live on Dewey Court, a one-block street at the edge of Marquette's residential area. We're a pocket of mainly small, old houses on small lots, among the most affordable remaining in our increasingly expensive neighborhood. We have a mix of owner-occupied single-family homes and rentals. These include two-flats and three-flats with relatively low rents for the area. Across the railroad, there's a swath of industrial land between us and the new developments progressing down East Washington, bringing mostly high-rise luxury housing.

We've felt vulnerable to the development pressure looming over us for some time. We regularly get postcards from companies looking to buy our house for cash. ("You don't even have to clean it up!") A developer once told me that bulldozing my street for redevelopment would be a "greater good." While I see my home as full of value – walkable to amenities, close to transit, relatively affordable, with family-friendly housing close to a school, and ecologically green old housing stock, not to mention a community I care deeply about – it's also seen as a prime development target. A neighbor once said that "neighborhoods dissolve from the outside in," and here we are, on the edge.

The houses here are zoned TR-C4, and the Comprehensive Plan has us at low density residential. But there's a chunk of NMX in the northwest corner of our neighborhood, between Dewey and Baldwin. There's another at Port St. Vincent on Baldwin. Under the new proposal, what could happen there? Would the older buildings be demolished, and 24-unit buildings go up, by right, with no neighborhood input? Given recent building history and the desirable location, they would be market-rate or luxury apartments. What would happen then to our small neighborhood? I expect that speculation on land prices and development pressure would become intense, and eventually houses would begin to sell, beginning with the small, affordable rentals that would be overshadowed by a large building. A neighborhood destabilized in this way runs a real risk of disappearing. Already-existing older and more affordable housing – including some of the "missing middle" this proposal supports – would be torn down (also a huge environmental waste), and high-end units would take over. In practice, this proposal would be a gentrification ordinance. I know that's not the goal.

At meeting after meeting over the last several years in my own near-east neighborhood, it's the neighbors who implore developers to include affordable, family-friendly units instead of all market-rate one-bedrooms, to consider adding density with smaller "missing middle"-sized buildings when wedged between existing homes, and to preserve trees and green space to address flooding and climate change. More often than not, developers tell us none of these things are "financially feasible." As a result, our neighborhood is rapidly becoming financially infeasible for people without high incomes. Citizens, and not always the for-profit developers, are on the city's side in the quest for affordable, inclusive, sustainable neighborhoods where all people can thrive. Please protect our seat at the table where these decisions are made, and please take another look at this ordinance to make it one that really helps our affordable housing problem.

Thank you for your consideration.

Pilar Gomez-Ibanez
1326 Dewey Court, Madison

From: [Jackie Suska](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Rummel, Marsha](#)
Subject: PlanComm Agenda Item 13, Legistar #63902, Zoning Text Changes
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 4:19:27 PM

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Dear Plan Commission members,

As residents of Third Lake Ridge neighborhood and business owners in the downtown, we oppose this proposal.

Removing the civic process in development decisions is never a good idea. More alarmingly, this opens up a Wild West of land grabs and rampant demolition. Most new projects end up better after public and city input.

We agree that more avenues need to open up to meet growing housing demand including more affordable options, but this proposal seems like a Trojan horse under the guise of expanding mid-range priced development.

The comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans that the city spent so much time and money on, including the time and engagement of so many residents, would be made redundant.

We ask that this zoning text change be stopped and that the issues surrounding affordable housing be looked at further so the city gets the housing it needs without so many negative unintended consequences.

Sincerely,

Henry Doane & Jackie Suska
946 Spaight Street

From: [b](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Lemmer, Lindsay](#)
Subject: Re Legistar #63902
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 3:40:15 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Legistar #63902: Amending various sections of Subchapters 28C and 28D of Madison General Ordinances in order to increase allowable densities and decrease conditional use thresholds in certain multi-family residential, mixed-use, and commercial districts.

Members of the Madison Plan Commission:

I appreciate the thorough evaluation of this proposal by Linda Lehnertz and agree with her comments as well as those from David and Leigh Mollenhoff and Brad Hinkfuss.

I will only add that the resolution's definition of the "missing middle housing" is far broader than that which is usually employed.

Opticos Design founder Daniel Parolek coined the term Missing Middle Housing, described at <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/about>, as "*a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood....The majority of Missing Middle Housing types have 4-8 units in a building, or 4-8 units on a lot in the case of a cottage court. Most Missing Middle building types are 2 to 2.5 stories in height....*"

Note further: "***Upper Missing Middle Housing types typically have 12 units per building, with a maximum of 19 units. These are typically deeper buildings, and 3-4 stories in height. These buildings should be treated as a separate category of Missing Middle, and used very carefully in low-to-moderate intensity neighborhoods or more liberally in higher intensity neighborhoods.***"

Given this more accurate definition of the missing middle, projects of 12 units or more should continue to require neighborhood notice and input as well as conditional use review. Please do not adopt this proposed Resolution.

Sincerely,
Beth Godfrey

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)