



HOUSING COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

12:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Housing Committee will meet to discuss potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay district as outlined in the November 21, 2022 policy order adopted by the City Council.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Housing Committee was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 12:30 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Simmons. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

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

Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Carlone – Present/Remote

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 5, Absent – 0. Quorum established.

Councillor Simmons began by noting that the call of the meeting was to discuss potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay district as outlined in the November 21, 2022 Policy Order (Attachment A) adopted by the City Council. She offered opening remarks (Attachment B) and introduced members of the City Council who would be giving an overview of a presentation titled “” (Attachment C). Other City staff that were present at the meeting were Jeff Roberts, Zoning and Development Director and Chris Cotter, Housing Director from the Community Development Department (CDD). Mayor Siddiqui and Megan Bayer, Deputy City Solicitor for the Law Department who joined through zoom.

Councillor McGovern, Councillor Azeem, and Councillor Zondervan began their presentation titled “Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment: Presentation to the Housing Committee” (Attachment C) and highlighted important key factors regarding the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) amendments including what the current AHO has already accomplished and their envision goals.

Mike Johnston, Executive Director for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) shared that the amendments allow Cambridge to be more competitive in the market and bring more development into the City. He commented that the AHO is positive legislation and thanked Councillors that brought forward the petition.

Margaret Donnelly Moran, Deputy Executive Director of Development from CHA, noted that she was supportive of the amendments and shared how they would add flexibility and allow better outcomes. She offered comments about green open spaces, and how that language would provide opportunities at Norfolk Street and Jefferson Park for additional units and maintaining or adding to the current open space.

Clara Fraden, Director of Planning and Development for Planning for CHA, spoke on Norfolk Street housing and the positive and critical opportunities it would provide the community.

Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director from Just A Start, shared how the amendments would improve what is already an excellent and ground breaking policy. He emphasized what the AHO has already allowed CHA and Just A Start to accomplish in the community. He noted how the amendments open possibilities to give flexibility around design and make for better projects.

Sara Barcan, Executive Director from Homeowners Rehab Inc., shared her support for the AHO and its changes. She commented how it is another way for Cambridge to be a leader and an example for other communities.

The Chair, Councillor Simmons opened Public Comment.

David Sullivan, 16 Notre Dame Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the proposed AHO amendments and shared that he was in favor of it moving forward.

Allan Sadun, 237 Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the affordable housing overlay and was in favor of the proposed amendments.

Itamar Turner-Trauring, 139 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on building more affordable housing through an AHO expansion.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the amendments to the affordable housing overlay and was in favor of expanding the AHO.

James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street, Cambridge, MA, thanked the Council for passing the AHO and considering the improvement to it through the proposed amendments.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they supported the proposed amendments to the AHO.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the how the proposed amendments came forward and asked for community outreach.

Jessica Sheehan, 48 Fairmont Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of the AHO expansion and echoed comments made by previous speakers.

Ann Stewart commented on the new AHO amendments and commercial corridors.

Rabbi Yoni thanked Council members who were in favor of the AHO and offered suggestions on how the City could provide housing.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, spoke on housing within the unhoused community and allowing people to build equity on their own property.

Elaine DeRosa, 4 Pleasant Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on AHO, the proposed amendments, and open space.

Lisa Drier, Cogswell Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed amendments to the AHO and asked for a more robust and diverse approach to increase housing.

Merry White, 6 Cypress Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that the City is polarized along many issues, especially affordable housing, and spoke against the proposed amendments.

Gus Rancatore, 18 Amory Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed amendments and believes there should be more discussion going forward.

Dan Phillips, 234 Broadway, Cambridge, MA, supports more housing and the expansion of the AHO.

Dana Niu, 234 Broadway, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of affordable housing and shared how affordable housing helped her and her family growing up.

Ryan Snider, 216 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, is in favor of affordable housing but not in favor of the proposed amendments. They asked for the City to look at a new perspective around affordable housing going forward.

Joshua Redstone, 1 Percy Place, spoke on language around properties regarding setbacks.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the City wide upzoning and spoke on their issues within the AHO.

Robert Camacho, 24 Corporal Burns Road, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the amendments and how there was no transparency with residents when the amendments were put together and proposed.

Charles Franklin, 162 Hampshire Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they supported the AHO amendments and offered suggestions on building height requirements.

Annmarie Flynn, 341 Walden Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed amendments and suggested to not only make it affordable but make it desirable.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the AHO proposed amendments and shared that the City should be focusing on housing that is buildable and affordable, and not take away the quality of living.

Mark Kon, 5 Ashton Place, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the affordable housing overlay and shared there has to be a limit on how much housing is available and the quality of life.

Marie Saccoccio, 55 Otis Street, Cambridge, MA, commented that the timing of the AHO proposed amendments does not line up with tech companies who are laying off employees and that the City is not approaching the problem correctly.

The Chair, Councillor Simmons recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to close public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carbone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Yes -5, No – 0. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Simmons noted that due to the current time, there will not be enough time for Councillors and City Staff to have discussion. She shared that the Housing Committee plans to have a continuation of the meeting in March or sooner.

The meeting was recessed at approximately at 2:15p.m.

Attachment A – Policy Order 2022 #306, Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay

Attachment B – Opening remarks from Councillor Simmons

Attachment C – Presentation titled, “Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments: Presentation to the Housing Committee”

The City Clerk’s Office received fifty-three communications, Attachments 1-53

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.

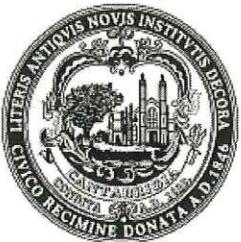
The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/440?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=ab1b67d613df0b9e869c067773c7b6a0

Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay.

A communication was received from Councillor Marc McGovern, transmitting the AHO amendments for the Housing Committee meeting.

Attachment A



**Cambridge City
MA**

Order Adopted as
Amended
Nov 21, 2022 5:30 PM

**Policy Order
POR 2022 #306**

Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Information

Department:	City Clerk's Office, BA	Sponsors:	Councillor Burhan Azeem, Councillor Marc C. McGovern, Councillor E. Denise Simmons, Councillor Quinton Zondervan
Category:	Policy Order		

Attachments

Printout
AHOpolicyorder
AHOcommunication
Original Order _15_2022_306

Body

- WHEREAS: The Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) has so far generated a healthy pipeline of six projects since it was first ordained in 2020; and
- WHEREAS: Though there is much to celebrate about the work that has been done, two years of implementation have also revealed that the somewhat inflexible dimensional requirements of the AHO have proven to be more of an obstacle than expected; and
- WHEREAS: The recent annual report revealed ten instances where affordable housing providers “decided not to pursue” and four instances where they actually made an offer but it was rejected; and
- WHEREAS: The proposal to build 49 affordable units at 2072 Mass Ave was not able to take advantage of the AHO and was withdrawn in August 2021 after it became apparent that a feasible version of the project wouldn’t be approved under 40B; and
- WHEREAS: It is clear that some refinements to the AHO would result in more new affordable housing and fewer missed or stalled opportunities; and
- WHEREAS: Offering substantially relaxed dimensional requirements on a citywide network of corridors and squares will allow more projects to advance, especially considering the recent linkage fee increase; and
- WHEREAS: Permitting additional height when green area open space is protected or expanded will add flexibility and expand options around providing such space without sacrificing any affordable housing production; and
- WHEREAS: The active affordable housing developers in Cambridge are in agreement that these changes will make a big difference; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Council refer the attached zoning petition to the Housing and Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committees

11.207.5.1 General Provisions

- (a) For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "District Development Standards" shall refer to the development standards of the base zoning district as they may be modified by the development standards of all overlay districts (with the exception of this Affordable Housing Overlay) that are applicable to a lot.
- (b) District Dimensional Standards shall include the most permissive standards allowable on a lot, whether such standards are permitted as-of-right or allowable by special permit. A District Dimensional Standard that is allowable by special permit shall include any non discretionary requirements or limitations that would otherwise apply.
- (c) An AHO Project that conforms to the following development standards shall not be subject to other limitations that may be set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance, except as otherwise stated in this Section.
- (d) For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "AHO Corridor" refers to Albany Street, Alewife Brook Parkway, Bishop Allen Drive, Broadway, Cambridge Street, Concord Avenue, First Street, Fresh Pond Parkway, Massachusetts Avenue, Memorial Drive, Mount Auburn Street, Prospect Street, and Sidney Street. For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "AHO Corridor Project" shall mean an AHO Project on one or more directly abutting Lots owned by the same entity, where at least one of the Lot Lines abuts an AHO Corridor.
- (e) For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "AHO Square" refers to the Central Square, Harvard Square and Lesley Porter Overlay Districts, as well as any Lot or directly adjacent Lots owned by the same entity, where at least one of the Lot Lines abuts the northern side of Massachusetts Avenue or Somerville Avenue between Davenport and the city border (just west of Acadia Park), or either Webster Avenue or Columbia Street, north of Cambridge Street.

11.207.5.2 Dimensional Standards for AHO Projects

11.207.5.2.1 Building Height and Stories Above Grade. For an AHO Project, the standards set forth below shall apply in place of any building height limitations set forth in the District Development Standards.

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less, an AHO Project shall contain no more than four (4) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of forty-five (45) feet, as measured from existing Grade. For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to fifty (50) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed four (4) stories.
- (b) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than forty (40) feet but not more than sixty-five (65) ~~fifty (50)~~ feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than nine (9) ~~six (6)~~ Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred (100) ~~sixty-five (65)~~ feet, as measured

from existing Grade, except as further limited below. For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to seventy (70) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed six (6) stories.

- (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a parcel subject to paragraph (a) shall be limited by the provisions of Paragraph (a) above, except that if the AHO project parcel extends into that District, then the height limitation shall only extend thirty-five (35) feet from the property line.
- (c) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than sixty-five (65) fifty (50) feet, or if the project is an AHO Corridor Project, an AHO Project shall contain no more than thirteen (13) seven (7) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and fifty (150) eighty (80) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below.
- (d) An AHO Square Project shall have a maximum height of twenty-five (25) stories, or two hundred and eighty (280) feet, except as further limited below.
- (e) (d) The Height Exceptions set forth in Section 5.23 of this Zoning Ordinance shall apply when determining the building height of an AHO Project.
- (f) For an AHO Project with more than one base zoning district, the base zoning district that covers the majority of the lot shall apply.

11.207.5.2.2 Residential Density

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards establish a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 1.00, an AHO Project shall not exceed an FAR of 2.00. Otherwise, there shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project. There shall be no maximum FAR for AHO Square or AHO Corridor projects.

11.207.5.2.3 Yard Setbacks

- (a) For the purpose of this Section, the applicable District Dimensional Standards shall not include yard setback requirements based on a formula calculation as provided in Section 5.24.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, but shall include non-derived minimum yard setback requirements set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance.
- (b) Front Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum front yard setback of 15 feet, except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement, or may be reduced to the average of the front yard setbacks of the four (4) nearest pre-existing principal buildings that contain at least two Stories Above Grade and directly front the same side of the street as the AHO Project, or may be reduced to a minimum of ten (10) feet in the case of an AHO Project on a corner lot. Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth different requirements for residential and non-residential uses, the non-residential front yard setback requirement shall apply to the entire AHO Project if the Ground Story contains a non-residential use as set forth in Section 11.207.4 Paragraph (b) above; otherwise, the residential front yard setback shall apply no minimum front yard setback requirement.
- (c) Side Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum side yard setback of seven and one-half (7.5) two and one-half (2.5) feet, or may be reduced to the minimum side yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive no minimum side yard setback requirement.
- (d) Rear Yards. An AHO Project with a height of less than 4 stories or 45 feet, shall have a minimum rear yard setback of fifteen (15) twenty (20) feet or may be reduced to the minimum rear yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive. For all other AHO projects, no minimum rear yard setback is required.
- (e) Projecting eaves, chimneys, bay windows, balconies, open fire escapes and like projections which do not project more than three and one-half (3.5) feet from the principal exterior wall plane, and unenclosed steps, unroofed porches and the like which do not project more than ten (10) feet beyond the line of the foundation wall and which are not over four (4) feet above Grade, may extend beyond the minimum yard setback.
- (f) Bicycle parking spaces, whether short-term or long-term, and appurtenant structures such as coverings, sheds, or storage lockers may be located within a required yard setback but no closer than seven and one-half (7.5) feet to an existing principal residential structure on an abutting lot.

11.207.5.2.4 Open Space

- (a) Except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement or as otherwise provided below, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area for an AHO Project shall be thirty percent (30%). However, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area may be reduced to no less than fifteen percent (15%) if the AHO Project includes the preservation and protection of an existing building included on the State Register of Historic Places.
- (b) The required open space shall be considered Private Open Space but shall be subject to the limitations set forth below and shall not be subject to the dimensional and other limitations set forth in Section 5.22 of this Zoning Ordinance. Private Open Space shall exclude parking and driveways for automobiles.
- (c) All of the required open space that is located at grade shall meet the definition of Permeable Open Space as set forth in this Zoning Ordinance.
- (d) The required open space shall be located at Grade or on porches and decks that are no higher than the floor elevation of the lowest Story Above Grade, except that up to twenty five percent (25%) of the required open space may be located at higher levels, such as balconies and decks, only if it is accessible to all occupants of the building.
- (e) For the purpose of this Affordable Housing Overlay, area used for covered or uncovered bicycle parking spaces that are not contained within a building shall be considered Private Open Space.
- (f) In any AHO project where pre-existing contiguous Green Area Open Space will be preserved and/or expanded, or new Green Area Open Space will be created, in excess of what would otherwise be required for the project, including through consolidation and/or relocation of some portion of the Green Area Open Space to another part of the lot, without reducing the size of any contiguous portion, the project may exceed the applicable height limit without restriction, provided that the maximum possible FAR for the lot shall not be exceeded. If the AHO project is not subject to an FAR restriction, the effective FAR not to be exceeded under this provision shall be calculated using the dimensional requirements that apply to the AHO project, including the original height restriction and open space requirements.

Meeting History

Nov 21, 2022 5:30 PM City Council Regular Meeting

RESULT: **ORDER ADOPTED AS AMENDED [8 TO 1]**

YEAS: Burhan Azeem, Dennis J. Carlone, Alanna Mallon, Marc C. McGovern, Patricia Nolan, E. Denise Simmons, Paul F. Toner,

Sumbul Siddiqui

NAYS: Quinton Zondervan

Attachment B

OPENING REMARKS FOR HOUSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, Feb 8, 2023 at 12:30 pm

Zoom link: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/s/97895847144>

Committee Members: Simmons, Azeem, Carbone, Mallon, and McGovern

Call of the Meeting: "The Housing Committee will meet to discuss potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay district as outlined in the November 21, 2022 policy order adopted by the City Council."

I want to thank everyone for tuning in and attending this afternoon's meeting of the Housing Committee. Just over two years ago, the City Council adopted the Affordable Housing Overlay in order to make it easier for developers of 100-percent affordable housing to build these kinds of projects all across the city. This was part of our ongoing efforts to expand the tools available to us – whether it's linkage fees, Inclusionary Zoning, possibly building on city-owned parking lots – that we're using to tackle our affordable housing crisis.

Since it was first implemented, the AHO, as it is often abbreviated to, has helped ease the path for affordable housing developers to build new homes – BUT we recognize that this legislation does have room to be strengthened and improved. My Council colleagues and I understand that there is no one singular solution that will solve the housing crisis in our community – but we believe that the AHO, with some modifications, could be doing even more to provide new hope to the THOUSANDS of people on our affordable housing waiting lists.

Over the past few weeks, in addition to receiving emails urging swift adoption of the amendments we're discussing today, the Council has also received numerous emails from community members urging us to shelve this discussion, to abandon the AHO, or to scrap this entire process – and what I'm hoping we can do today is to start separating fact from fiction, to demystify this process and this legislation a little bit, and help folks better understand what these amendments WILL and WILL NOT do.

We have a lot of ground to cover today, so I want to lay out the flow of the meeting: after I conclude my opening remarks, we are going to have Councilor McGovern share information about the history of the Affordable Housing Overlay, Councilor Azeem will walk us through the proposed amendments first introduced last November, and Councilor Zondervan will discuss how open space fits into this equation. After my colleagues speak, I will ask representatives from the CHA, Just a Start, and Homeowners Rehab to share their thoughts on the AHO.

After THAT, we will go to Public Comment and I'll use my discretion as Chair to ask that people keep their remarks to one minute or less. IF we have any time left after Public Comment, then we will then move to Discussion among the Committee members; otherwise, we will recess and hold the discussion among the Committee members at our next meeting on March 8 at 3 pm.

With that, I will yield the floor to Councilor McGovern to provide us with some context for what we're discussing today. Councilor McGovern? The floor is yours.

Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments: Presentation to the Housing Committee

February 8th, 2023

What the current AHO has accomplished

The current AHO was passed on October 5, 2020. There are currently 596 100% affordable housing units being built under the AHO:

- 107 units at 52 New Street
- 278 units at Jefferson Park
- 103 units at Walden Square
- 46 units at 49 Sixth Street
- 62 units at 116 Norfolk Street

Isn't this a "radical" change? Why are these amendments needed?

- Yes. It is radical in the sense that it is bold. We have a housing emergency that is not going to be solved by nibbling around the edges.
- According to the Cambridge Housing Authority, there are currently over 20,000 people on the affordable housing waiting list. Of those 20,000, over 7,000 of them live and/or work in Cambridge.
- We are nowhere close to being on track to reaching our Envision goals which state that we need to build 12,500 housing units by 2030.

Envision goals include:

- Change zoning to enable more housing, including affordable housing, to be built along major corridors, squares, and in other areas that have the capacity to accommodate growth and are well served by transit
- Offer density bonuses and relief from other dimensional regulations for fully affordable housing developments through a citywide affordable housing overlay or other regulatory mechanism.
- Act to ensure deed-restricted affordable housing is created to provide housing options for low-, moderate-, and middle-income household
- Help residents remain in Cambridge in the face of rising costs and demographic change.

116 Norfolk - CHA

62 units of permanent supportive housing, 3.5 stories tall on addition next to 4-story existing building, 44% open space

Under proposed Green Space language, we could have studied two scenarios that resulted in better design:

- +1 floor, 4.5 stories total on addition, we could have gained 4 units and increased open space by 4% (+~930 SF) to 48%
- +2 floors, 5.5 stories tall on addition, we could have gained 9 units and increased open space by 6% (50% open space)
- The added flexibility of the proposed AHO language would increase height for larger setbacks, more open space, and more units

Jefferson Park Federal - CHA

278 units of family housing, 4 stories tall, all new construction, 31% open space

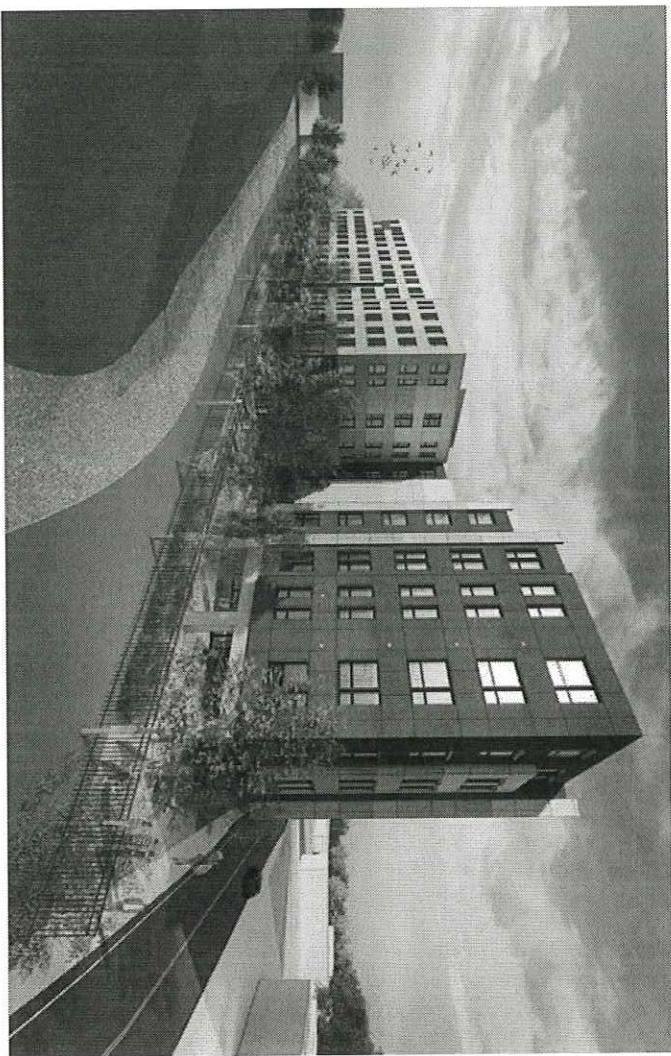
Under proposed Green Space language, we could have varied the heights in certain buildings (include one six or seven story building at the back of site) to result in better design

- Gain up to 16 more units
- Less expensive PSF because fewer elevators would be required across the property (2 instead of 6) and fewer egress stairs across the property (shrinking overall SF)
- Increase open space due to smaller building footprints from less circulation area and/or eliminating a couple of stacks of units with units made up for in taller, 6-story building

52 New Street - Just A Start

106 affordable apartments and the 1st permitted Affordable Housing Overlay project

The Resilient Cambridge plan required that the 1st floor of the building be raised above ground level by several feet in order to be prepared for flood conditions under the 2070 flood plans. If the law is updated to raise the height limit, we could improve the resiliency of the project without additional cost and with better floor-to-ceiling heights.



Broadway Park, Broadway and Windsor - Just A Start

15 affordable condos

This 15-unit proposed condo project does not comply with the AHO (it exceeds the max FAR). It stalled in the planning and community process, leading to the rescinding of a state funding award. This has left the project in limbo.



Prospective Just A Start Projects

Increased FAR and height limits of the type included in the proposed AHO amendment would have enabled Just A Start to be more competitive with sites we have recently evaluated and pursued. These amendments would have allowed for more apartments/homes at each of these sites and would have given us the flexibility to design better projects.

Cambridge Housing Authority's "Can't Wait List"

- “We rent and pay 80% of our income on rent.”
- “I'm paying more than 50% of my income to sleep on my sister's couch”
- “We are victims of domestic violence and have been homeless and living in a shelter since January 2020.”
- “I am a single mother living with my 20 year old son, my 15 year old daughter and my 1 year old grandson.”
- I am a single, middle aged man... I receive a very small monthly amount of SSI. It is not enough to live on.”

Process thus far

- We are proposing a number of changes to the dimensional requirements of the AHO ordinance based on feedback we received from affordable housing developers.
 - We collaborated with CHA, HRI, Just a Start and other affordable housing developers.
 - One of the main points they brought up was the importance of flexibility when it came to dimensional requirements within the zoning code.
 - Some sites were too restrictive with height/setbacks/FAR and were missed opportunities for AHO projects.

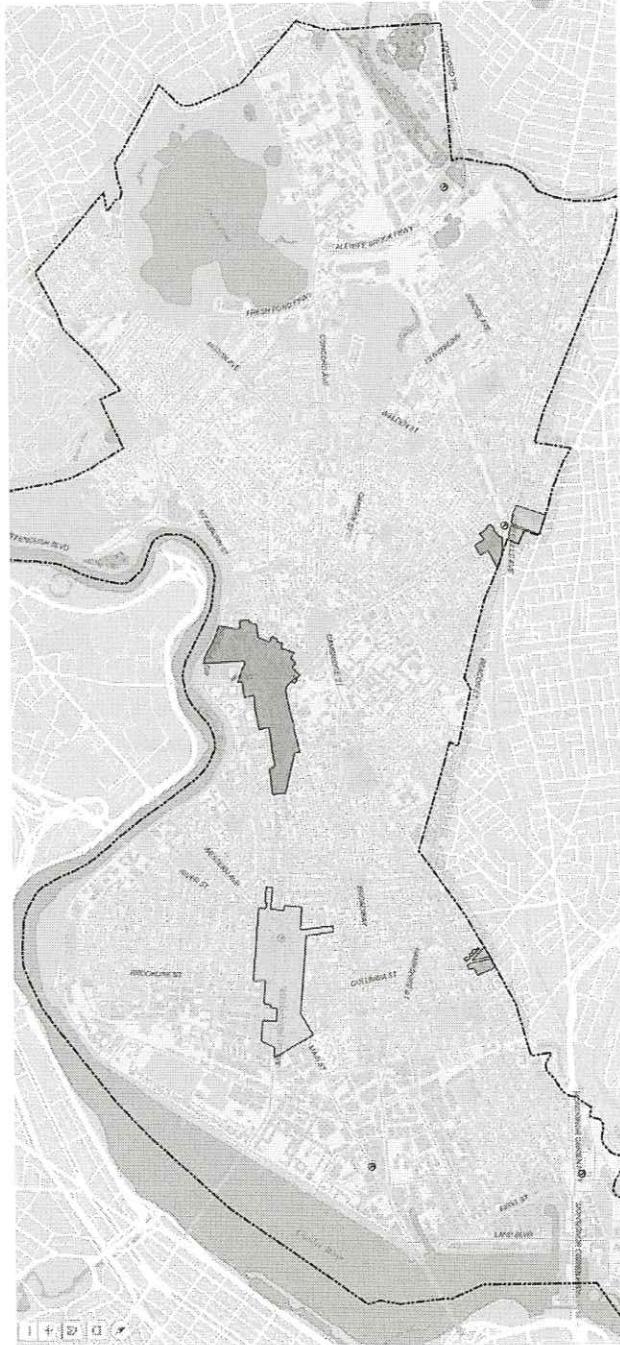
Summary of Proposed Zoning Changes

- We are proposing a number of changes to the dimensional requirements of the AHO ordinance.
 - Building height
 - AHO projects can now be up to **9 stories** (up from 6 in the original AHO) or **100ft** in areas where the maximum allowable residential height is between **40 and 65ft** or if it is an **AHO Corridor project**.
 - This includes zones **C-1A, C-2A, C-2B, BA, BA-2, BB-2, BC, BC-1, IA-1, IA, and IC**
 - AHO projects can now be up to **13 stories** (up from 7 in the original AHO) or **150ft** in areas where the maximum allowable residential height is **above 65ft**.
 - This includes zones **C-2, C-3, C-3A, C-3B, O-2, O-2A, O-3, O-3A, BB, BB-1, IA-2, IB-1, IB**
 - Density
 - The proposed amendments **remove the FAR requirements** for an **AHO Square/Corridor project**.
 - Setbacks
 - The proposed amendments remove side and front setbacks
 - An AHO Project with a height of **less than 4 stories or 45ft**, shall have a minimum rear yard setback of **15ft** (down from 20ft in the original AHO).
 - All other AHO projects have no minimum rear setbacks

AHO Squares

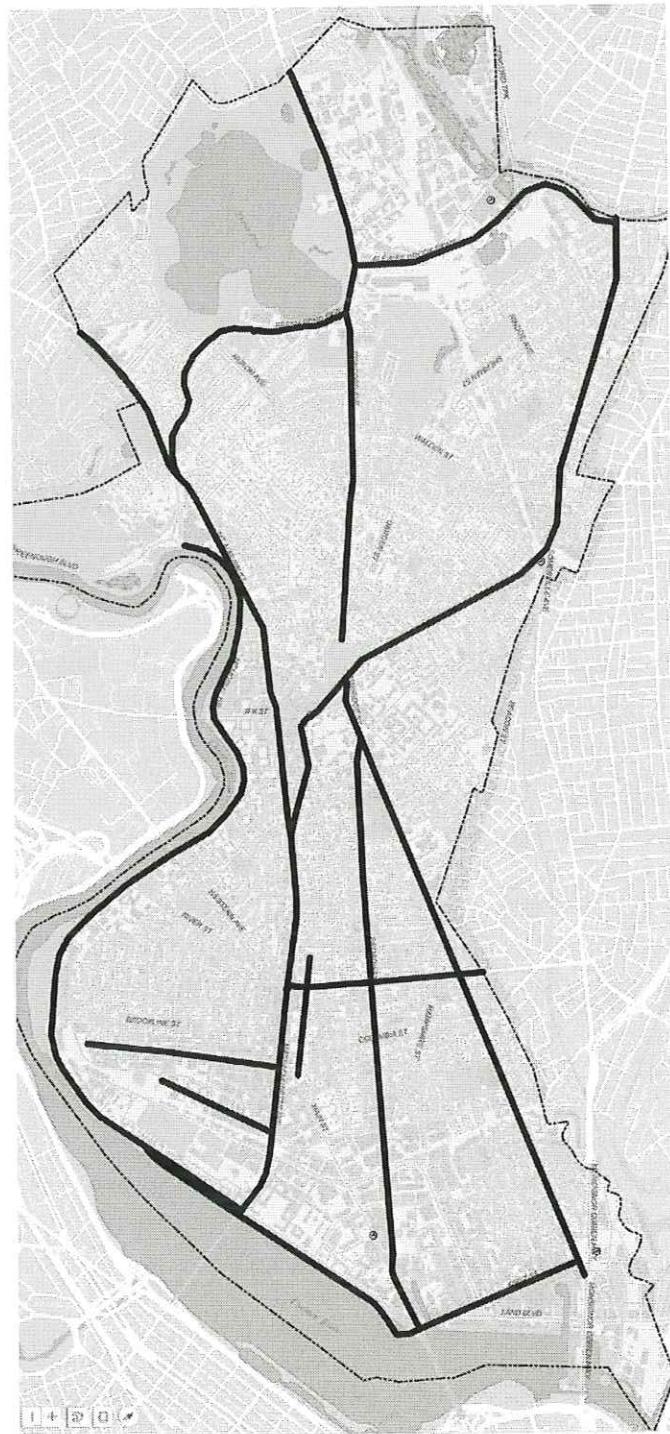
For the purposes of this Section, the phrase “AHO Square” refers to the Central Square, Harvard Square and Lesley Porter Overlay Districts, as well as any Lot or directly adjacent Lots owned by the same entity, where at least one of the Lot Lines abuts the northern side of Massachusetts Avenue or Somerville Avenue between Davenport and the city border (just west of Acadia Park), or either Webster Avenue or Columbia Street, north of Cambridge Street.

- An AHO Square Project shall have a maximum height of twenty-five (25) stories, or two hundred and eighty (280) feet, except as further limited below.



AHO Corridors

“AHO Corridor” refers to Albany Street, Alewife Brook Parkway, Bishop Allen Drive, Broadway, Cambridge Street, Concord Avenue, First Street, Fresh Pond Parkway, Massachusetts Avenue, Memorial Drive, Mount Auburn Street, Prospect Street, and Sidney Street. For the purposes of this Section, the phrase “AHO Corridor Project” shall mean an AHO Project on one or more directly abutting Lots owned by the same entity, where at least one of the Lot Lines abuts an AHO Corridor.



Dimensional Requirements - Building Height

(11.207.5.2.1)

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than forty (40) feet but not more than sixty-five (65) fifty-(50) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than nine (9) six-(6) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred (100) sixty-five-(65) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below. ~~For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to seventy-(70) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed six-(6) stories.~~
- (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a parcel subject to paragraph (a)~~district whose District Dimensional Standards allow a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less~~ (a) shall be limited by the provisions of Paragraph (a) above, except that if the AHO project parcel extends into that District, then the height limitation shall only extend thirty-five (35) feet from the property line.
- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than sixty-five (65) fifty-(50) feet, or if the project is an AHO Corridor Project, an AHO Project shall contain no more than thirteen (13) seven-(7) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and fifty (150) eighty-(80) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below.
- (b) An AHO Square Project shall have a maximum height of twenty-five_(25) stories, or two hundred and eighty_(280) feet, except as further limited below.
- (c)-(d) The Height Exceptions set forth in Section 5.23 of this Zoning Ordinance shall apply when determining the building height of an AHO Project.
- (d) For an AHO Project with more than one base zoning district, the base zoning district that covers the majority of the lot shall apply.

Dimensional Requirements - Residential Density (11.207.5.2.2)

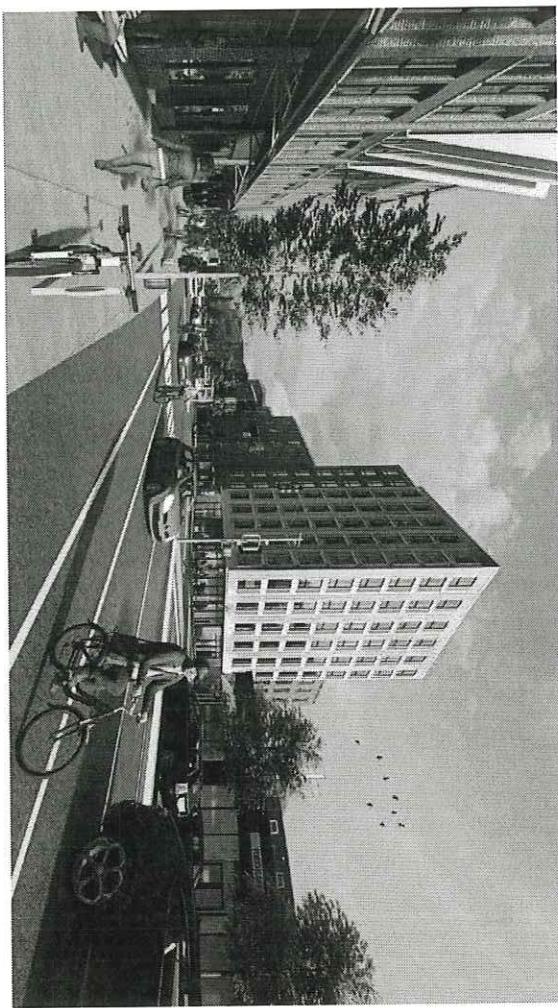
- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards establish a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 1.00, an AHO Project shall not exceed an FAR of 2.00. Otherwise, there shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project. There shall be no maximum FAR for AHO Square or AHO Corridor projects.

Dimensional Requirements - Setbacks (11.207.5.2.3)

- (a) Front Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum front yard setback of 15 feet, except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement, or may be reduced to the average of the front yard setbacks of the four (4) nearest pre-existing principal buildings that contain at least two Stories Above Grade and directly front the same side of the street as the AHO Project, or may be reduced to a minimum of ten (10) feet in the case of an AHO Project on a corner lot. Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth different requirements for residential and non-residential uses, the non-residential front yard setback requirement shall apply to the entire AHO Project if the Ground Story contains a non-residential use as set forth in Section 11.207.4 Paragraph (b) above; otherwise, the residential front yard setback shall apply no minimum front yard setback requirement.
- (b) Side Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum side yard setback of seven-and-one-half (7.5) two-and-one-half (2.5) feet, or may be reduced to the minimum side yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive, no minimum side yard setback requirement.
- (c) Rear Yards. An AHO Project with a height of less than 4 stories or 45 feet, shall have a minimum rear yard setback of fifteen (15) twenty (20) feet or may be reduced to the minimum rear yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive. For all other AHO projects, no minimum rear yard setback is required.

Why we chose corridors & squares

- Direct transit options and the most plausible/potential “soft” sites
- Many recent AHO “missed opportunities” were on main corridors
- Smaller side streets not as conducive to land acquisition projects; focus on giving AHO developers the greatest possible market advantage where they need it most
- Corridor network runs through every neighborhood

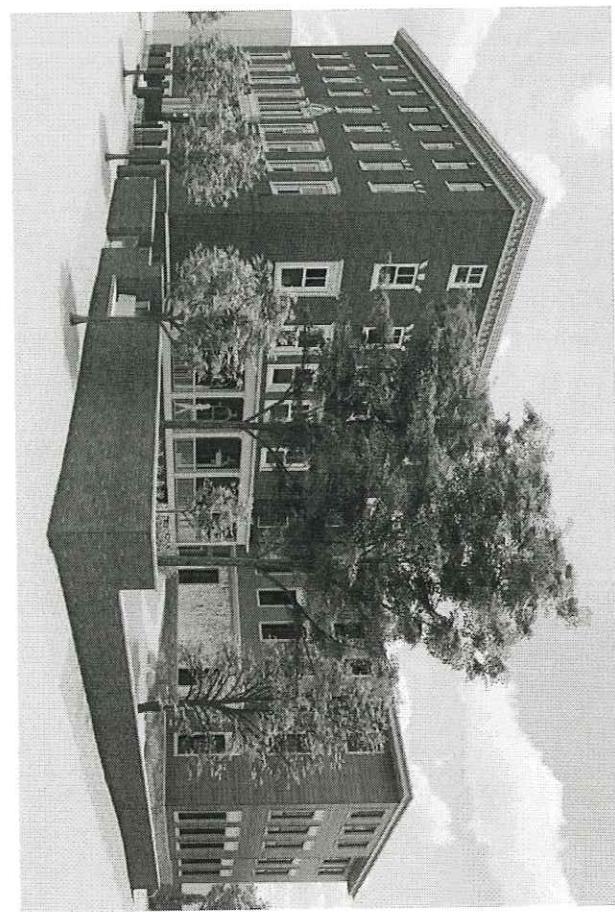


Open space amendment

More flexibility on building height in exchange for additional open space

Language allows for more height but not more density

CHA has analyzed how this would have impacted their recent projects, with very positive results



Erwin, Nicole

From: Camilla Elvis <camillaelvis@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 7:31 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support the AHO Amendments

Dear City Councillors,

I hope you will support amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay that will allow the creation of more affordable homes in Cambridge. The AHO has been a success so far because affordable housing developers already owned the land they are building on. **Without changes to the AHO, new affordable housing is likely to slow down to a trickle.**

Affordable housing developers have struggled to put together competitive bids for land they do not already own. The increased height requirements will make projects more competitive for federal tax credits and increase transit oriented development which is critical to fighting the climate crisis.

Encouraging corridors throughout the city will help integrate some of our more economically and racially segregated neighborhoods. It may not be perfect it would be one concrete step to adding diversity to different parts to Cambridge. The status quo is a choice to not make progress. Many Cambridge residents will get the opportunity to live their values of a progressive, less racist America.

The open space amendments give developers and neighbors more flexibility to preserve or increase more open space without sacrificing homes.

Finally, I want to highlight that **even with new zoning the built environment will change slowly**. Approving these amendments means a few more buildings over a long stretch of time. It does not mean our squares and corridors will radically transform. **Most buildings will be the same ones that here right now.**

Thank you,
Camilla Elvis
28 Linnaean St

J

Erwin, Nicole

From: Federico Muchnik <federico.muchnik@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 11:39 PM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Caralone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc;
Crane, Paula
Subject: Advocate for affordable housing on a human scale.

Dear Housing Committee.

Make sure you destroy Cambridge's unique small town character by turning Mass. Ave into a congested corridor of skyscrapers, wind tunnels, darkened sidewalks, and more. And make sure you spend years building monster-sized buildings thereby clogging up our freedom to move about the city.

Is City Hall nuts? 13-25 story skyscrapers? No parking? Legislation prioritizing affordable housing at any cost and at any height smacks of 70's style architectural projects.

Lawmakers aren't paying attention to public housing in this century. Antiquated thinking. Just ask the folks happily living in townhouse-style affordable housing. Stakeholders interested in preserving their community.

Lewis West, a Black, blind, bluesman was living in Walden Square 2. Fed up with Winn Management's shenanigans, he moved to assisted living in east Cambridge - still a big building, but at least some hope of living rodent and crime free.

My film on Lewis: <https://vimeo.com/767913953/eff0643fd8>

14 minutes. Take a look. The film is playing on social media, CCTV, and at local film festivals. Lewis left affordable/public housing because large, poorly managed buildings lead to untenable living conditions.

For a so-called progressive city hall, it's shocking how old school the policies are.

Show some leadership. Advocate for affordable housing on a human scale.

Federico Muchnik



Erwin, Nicole

From: Dana Niu <x.dana.niu@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:37 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Please expand affordable housing

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to express my support for expanding affordable housing.

I lived in affordable housing until I was 7. My parents were young immigrants, who had made the decision to live in this country due to political violence in China. And they struggled -- working multiple jobs, learning a new language, raising two young children, and navigating the challenges of poverty.

I was lucky to have known none of this at the time. I was a little kid who got to worry about little kid things. I played in the little courtyard in front of our apartment with other neighborhood children, I ate dinner at the kitchen table with my family, and my parents tucked me into bed in the room I shared with my sister. Home was home. And I never had to find out what our lives would have been without it.

I know now that the life my parents built in this country, the life they built for me, was made possible by affordable housing. It enabled my dad to find a stable, well-paying job and eventually afford a home of our own. It enabled me to go to college and eventually earn my public policy degree at Harvard Kennedy School down the road. And it enabled me to get a job in Massachusetts state government, where I hope to give back to the community what it gave to me.

I support affordable housing because it is a part of my story, and I want it to be a part of 21,000 more stories. I support it because it represents to me what a community should be, one in which we give what we can and take what we need, so that everyone can thrive, or at the very least, survive.

Best,
Dana Niu
Cambridge resident

Erwin, Nicole

From: Michael Hoff <hoffmichaelao@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:02 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: Allan Sadun, A Better Cambridge; Tom Burke
Subject: AHO Expansion

Dear Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the AHO expansion proposed by Councillors Azeem, McGovern, Simmons and Zondervan. Some say that the height limits go too far, but I think if we have more big buildings that are for affordable housing, that'd be a pretty cool symbol for what the city literally stands for. The Rindge Towers are visible from far away, and no one bats an eye about that. If we had some more of those, we could point to what we value, and that's the characters that make up our community, not personal aesthetics and aversion to progress.

Sincerely,
Michael Hoff
80 Fawcett St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Madeline Lee <lee.madeline.g@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:56 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Expanding the Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear Cambridge City Council:

I write to express my strong support of the proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) in Cambridge being heard this Wednesday, February 8th.

I am a renting resident of Neighborhood Nine and work in Cambridge. I am grateful for the sense of community throughout the City I have by living here, and having housing that I can currently afford, with access to transportation, parks, and cultural spaces, allows me to thrive. Expanding the AHO would help make all of these benefits even more of a continued reality for residents like me, my neighbors, and future neighbors.

The AHO is an impactful tool for tackling the housing affordability crisis in Cambridge and after several years of implementation, these amendments will continue to allow the AHO function as intended: to increase affordable housing creation and access throughout Cambridge and in areas where amenity and transportation access are high. The proposed amendments would:

- give affordable housing developers more opportunity and flexibility to design quality, climate-resilient housing in locations where public transportation is available;
- make affordable development much more feasible in "AHO Corridors" and "AHO Squares," which otherwise would face steep real estate market competition or project infeasibility, even with the existing AHO, and
- prioritize meeting the housing needs of residents.

I hope that you will support the AHO amendments under consideration and look forward to the City Council's continued work toward long-term housing solutions in Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Madeline Lee
238 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

-
(440) 785-7054
lee.madeline.g@gmail.com
madelineleeart.com
pronouns: she/her/hers

Erwin, Nicole

From: Leslie Cohen <lzenacohen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:17 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: AHO Amendments

We strongly support the proposed amendments to the AHO that would expand and strengthen the AHO by making more sites across the city available for affordable housing, and increasing the allowed density of affordable housing on those sites. This November, we plan to vote only for those council candidates who support those amendments.

Leslie Cohen

Dave Slaney

237 Norfolk St

7

Erwin, Nicole

From: Becky Sarah <bsarah@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:55 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: DePasquale, Louie
Subject: Please support the Affordable Housing Overlay, and let us build enough housing

Please allow taller buildings. I live quite near 2072 Mass ave and I look forward to affordable housing there.

We need housing, not rules about keeping the city looking the same as it used to.

My children grew up in Cambridge but couldn't afford to move back here now.

thank you,
Becky Sarah

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cathleen Higgins <cahigg@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:15 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: support the AHO amendments

Dear Councilors,

I am writing in support of the very reasonable and much needed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay. It makes a great deal of sense to build higher and denser in a few squares and allow taller along selected major corridors. There is no way we can meet the great need for affordable homes without taking every opportunity to make changes that enable more units.

Our wealthy city can rise to the challenge of marshalling all of the resources required to accommodate new neighbors—we are rich in creativity, expertise and compassion. To those opposed, I ask you to consider whether you are imposing your aesthetics on others who do not share your views. After all, many people are fine with multi-family housing next door, don't need setbacks and welcome tall buildings.

7 councilors wanted 2072 Mass Ave to be built and by extension, would support more of this type of 100% affordable housing. If these amendments had been in place, 50 units of permanently affordable homes would be coming to the Porter Square area and 50 families would have the security and stability to pursue their lives.

Sincerely,

Cathy Higgins

345 Norfolk Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kavish Gandhi <kmbrgandhi@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:54 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO Amendments

Hi,

I am writing to strongly, strongly support the AHO amendments. Coming from the lab discussion meeting, I see this as a second side of the same coin, an incredibly important effort to fight displacement in our city. I have little sympathy to most of the concerns around height on our corridors – I think we have buildings like this already, e.g. Harvard Towers on Harvard St. – and similarly in our squares. I am open to reasonable adjustment but think that the council needs to take many types of bold action, and this is one of them. If affordable housing developers hope to compete in these corridors and build an appropriate amount of housing that helps quickly alleviate the cost-burdenship of our community, they need to be able to build at these types of density.

I will add, I hope that the discussion tomorrow centers around the cost-burdenship of our community. 49% of Cambridge renters are cost-burdened, which means that they pay 30% or more of their income in housing costs. 20% of Cambridge **households** are severely cost-burdened, which means that they pay 50% or more of their income in housing costs. This is an absolute crisis, and the % of deed-restricted affordable units is not a suitable metric to capture this crisis. But of course increasing the number of deed-restricted affordable units is an incredibly effective way of mitigating this crisis, and we must take bold steps to do so.

All the best,
Kavish Gandhi, 376 Windsor St #1

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Avik Chatterjee <avc031@mail.harvard.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:34 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: tburke@wellesley.edu
Subject: Comment

To the Cambridge City Council,

My name is Avik Chatterjee. I live in Cambridgeport and have lived in Cambridge since 2013, and am a shelter-based physician at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP).

I am writing in support of the amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay in order to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cambridge.

I work on the Family Team at BHCHP. It turns out that more than half of the people who are homeless in MA are homeless as part of a family—typically a single mom with two children under 6. For these families, as well as for the single adults and the youth I see, while mental health and substance use concerns often acute present, the lack of affordable housing is ultimately what made them homeless, and what keeps them homeless.

I'm happy to share specific stories, but cities and towns across the Commonwealth, including Cambridge, have to step up to build the housing that will ease the housing crunch, help make housing more affordable to ease this burden.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Avik

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Avik Chatterjee, MD, MPH
Physician, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Medicine
Lecturer, Harvard Medical School
Associate Epidemiologist, Division of Global Health Equity, Brigham and Women's Hospital

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Jenny Netzer <jennynetzer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 5:58 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: Tom Burke
Subject: Support for Expanding the Affordable Housing Overlay

I am a long-time Cambridge homeowner in favor of proposed amendments to the Overlay to allow taller structures, making it easier to build affordable housing in Cambridge . I have worked on affordable housing issues nationwide for over 30 years and I know that zoning restrictions are the single biggest obstacle to increasing the housing supply where it is most needed.

I know that the proposed changes could affect the nature of my neighborhood but it's time for those of us who lucked into the housing market when prices were lower to make room for everyone else.

Jenny Netzer
57 Crescent Street

18

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jeff Murray <jnj.murray@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 5:23 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: housing

Please consider increasing the affordable housing overlay. Jeff Murray 115 Pearl St

From: Ellen Gallagher <ellensgallagher@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:53 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: tburke@wellesley.edu
Subject: In Support of Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to call on the Cambridge City Council to pass the amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) which were proposed by Councillors Azeem, McGovern, Simmons, and Zondervan. The proposed zoning changes would allow:

- more height for affordable housing along corridors in **every part of the city**;
- significantly more height near T stations, to support **transit-oriented affordable housing**; and
- greater flexibility to encourage **more open space** in AHO developments.

I love our city and think it is unfair that so many are being priced out. My children, who both attend Peabody Elementary School in North Cambridge, have lost friends who had to move out because housing costs are unaffordable.

We live in a city with several subway stops, the best universities in the world, and several bus lines. We can, and should, do more to create affordable housing for our wonderful community. If we don't, we will continue to lose talented people. Even worse, we will contribute to climate change because more people will have to drive into Cambridge. And we will contribute to creating a less equitable region where only the "haves" can afford to live in our city that provides incredible opportunities for its residents.

I urge you to pass the amendments to the affordable housing overlay.

Sincerely,
Ellen Gallagher
54 Fairfield St, North Cambridge

From: Rachel Plummer <rplummer@ceoccambridge.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:48 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear City Council,

I am writing today as a resident of Cambridge and the Director of Programs and Public Policy at CEOC to ask you to please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). The amendments to the overlay would make affordable housing easier to build, especially 100% affordable housing. We are not on pace to meet the Envision Cambridge goal of building 3,175 new affordable homes by 2030. At CEOC, we see the impacts of the paucity of affordable housing daily. Every day, we meet someone who can't afford their rent who is desperate for assistance to just scrape by. The need for affordable housing outpaces the availability of affordable units/buildings by a long shot - we see this with the 21,000+ CHA waiting list.

The proposed amendments would expand and strengthen the AHO by making more sites in every neighborhood of the city available for affordable housing, and increasing the number of affordable homes that could be built on those sites. This is a necessary and important step to making Cambridge more affordable, diverse, and vibrant.

Please expand the AHO.

All the best,
Rachel Plummer

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Rachel Plummer (she/her/hers)
Director of Programs and Public Policy
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)
11 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 868-2900 ext. 328

15

Erwin, Nicole

From: David Hattis <davidwhattis@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:35 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Expanding the AHO

Hello,

I wanted to write in support of the proposal to expand the affordable housing overlay. There is always going to be a limited amount of public money to construct affordable housing, and I would like to see that limited amount of money produce as many affordable homes as possible in places like Cambridge that are rich in opportunity and transit. Cambridge needs more projects like 2072 Mass Ave, which was not financially feasible with the existing affordable housing overlay.

Thank you,

David Hattis
154 Central St. Somerville MA 02145

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ares Alivisatos <araliv@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:01 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Expand the Affordable Housing Overlay

Hello,

My name is Ares Alivisatos - I have been a Cambridge resident for the past two years. I am emailing to strongly urge the City Council to expand the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Best,
Ares Alivisatos

From: dswalther@yahoo.com
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:40 PM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton; Toner, Paul
Subject: Proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay

Hello,

I'm writing in regards to the proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). Given the newness of the AHO, I don't feel that there should be any large changes until the program has had time to show its level of success. We should have a detailed study with conclusions on whether the AHO was successful, or not, in meeting its intended goals (which should be clearly outlined in the study) before considering big changes. If the AHO is not meeting its intended goals, then the report should outline where the AHO has fallen short and give suggestions on how to make improvements. I would advocate for no large changes to the AHO until an analysis has been done and a report is publicly available for discussion.

Increasing affordable housing in the city is a key item that we must be focused on - we need to give time to see the results of the current AHO. In addition to not wanting large structural changes to a new overlay, I also disagree with the approach that is in the proposed update (I am basing my viewpoint on reading this proposal: https://cambridgema.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=4291&MediaPosition=&ID=17534&CssClass=). Rather than building high-rise towers that create clusters of low income housing, and do not fit into the scale of our neighborhoods, we should be much more focused on innovative solutions to develop housing opportunities throughout the city that take advantage of vacant and under-utilized sites and become parts of all of our neighborhoods.

From a more fundamental point of view, we critically need a city-wide plan and strategy. I do not feel that we have one for affordable housing, or, honestly, for most other critical areas (e.g. transportation). Without citywide strategies and goals, that should be voted on and ratified by the citizens of Cambridge, we will continually spend energy on divisive discussions of single projects - that is energy that we could all be spending to really lead our city into the future.

That brings up the last point that I would like to make: we should not make large structural changes to our city without extensive public consultation and, in many cases, public votes on the issues (I feel that the original AHO should have gone to a ballot vote city-wide). This is especially important to me with the current review of the city charter - we should clearly change nothing with the charter without a specific city-wide vote.

OK, maybe there is one more related point that I would like to bring up: voter turn out in local elections. If my memory serves me correctly (I cannot find my notes, but can recreate my methodology if needed), turnout in the last local election was around 30%. That is much lower than any of us should accept. Are there programs in place to drive the voter participation number up drastically?

Thank you,

Dane

From: Ellen S. Slater <sterling.slater@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 11:49 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; gzondevan@cambridgema.gov
Subject: AHO Amendments consideration Feb 8

To the Housing Committee

February 7, 2023

With regard to the Housing Committee Agenda for February 8, 2023

We applaud the work of AHO to increase the affordable housing stock in Cambridge for renters and homeowners. As homeowners in the AHO Square we have an appreciation also for what makes Central Square an appealing and healthy place to live and work. And we have experienced ways in which quality of life in Central Square is threatened by stress on its shops and services.

Amendments under consideration to allow an AHO Square project of up to 25 stories is a major change. Provisions for community input to any design considerations would be undercut by allowing for the enlarged scope as a starting point. Green Space next to or close by, while given some protection in the amendments, would be cast in shadow for hours of daylight. Yard setbacks are almost nonexistent as the amendments now read. These elements of the amendments under consideration are concerning.

Potential amendments should not only address the business interests of developers, but also the current residents of the AHO Squares who value the human scale and greenspace of our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your concern.

Signed :
Ellen & Scott Slater, 10 Bigelow St, Cambridge 02139 Cynthia MacDougall, 17 Bigelow St. Cambridge, MA 02139 Kate Olivier, 23 Bigelow St., Cambridge, MA 02139

From: Dana Schaefer <danaschaefer2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 11:31 AM
To: Dana Schaefer
Subject: Affordable housing proposal committee meeting

Dear city council,

After reviewing the proposal, I am **opposed to any AHO revision** that would **not allow** for extensive public consultation, extensive community outreach, proper notice, impact studies, analysis or be automatically approved with no public recourse.

It is imperative that the residents are involved with any AHO revisions and proposals. This is taxpayer money and the residents are stakeholders who need proper notice (not 4 days--- proper notice would be 7 business days) and extensive community outreach. The city council does not do a very good job at informing the community of their plans and proposals. The common feeling among residents I talk to, is the lack of notice and communication is intentional. That is not democratic.

Affordable housing needs to be inclusive by fitting into the neighborhood, not highrises, using innovative designs that fit the scale of the neighborhoods and taking advantage of vacant and under-utilized sites. We need a city-wide plan and strategy for affordable housing.

Sincerely,

--
Dana Schaefer
Cambridge
617-797-5293

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Erwin, Nicole

From: McCann, Elizabeth (DEP) <elizabeth.mccann@state.ma.us>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 11:16 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton
Subject: Comment on plans to expand the Cambridge AHO

Hello,

I would like to register my opposition to the proposed revisions to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Overlay. I cannot attend the public meeting tomorrow and testify in person, so please accept this email.

As a long-time Cambridge resident and as an urban/environmental planner by profession, this proposed overlay is far too extreme for Cambridge at this time. The whole concept of 25 story, or even 13 story, housing towers for affordable housing has been abandoned in many cities as “vertical slums” where building maintenance is difficult and housing conditions tend to deteriorate to the detriment of the residents and the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, to build such towers without considering parking needs (even low-income families have cars), impacts to local schools, impacts to local traffic congestion as Cambridge is simultaneously reducing roadway capacity along Massachusetts Avenue and other major thoroughfares to increase bicycle capacity, MBTA capacity and broader impacts to local infrastructure would be irresponsible.

The idea of reasonable increases density along transportation corridors and at public transportation hubs can make a great deal of sense – after careful consideration and in tandem with a plan to ensure infrastructure and city services are ready to support the increased density.

Please reject the current proposal, or at very least table it for further study. If increased density is warranted (and it probably would make sense if properly implemented), then put together a comprehensive plan for reasonable density increases as part of a plan that includes consideration of educational, public transportation, local traffic and local parking impacts.

Thank you,

Elizabeth McCann
Environmental Analyst
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Water Management Program
and Cambridge resident at 28 Clarendon Avenue

N

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jonathan Lehrich <jlehrich@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 11:06 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Caralone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton
Subject: Housing Committee: Concerns about the proposed AHO

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for your thoughtful work on the AHO proposal. Although I'm sure you consulted thoroughly with housing developers, it seems that residents, affordable housing groups, and even other Councillors were not apprised.

I disagree with the notion that Cambridge will be a better place to live if its affordable housing residents are forced into giant tower blocks and if major squares' and thoroughfares' buildings are 250-500 feet high. (I don't want Mass Ave to look like Tim Burton's Gotham.) But more to the point, I disagree with the lack of inclusion – unintentional, I hope – that went into the proposal process. Furthermore, I object to a structure that gives no public recourse to comment on projects that would dramatically reshape a neighborhood.

I look forward to the results of the W 2/8/23 meeting. I trust that you will give your best efforts to incorporating public comment (including mine) and reconsidering both the guidelines and paths for community consultation. However, if you commit to pushing forward with the AHO revisions in their existing form, I will commit to not vote for you in any future election.

Best,
Jonathan Lehrich
15 Cogswell Ave.

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Erwin, Nicole

From: ashleygittman@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:34 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carbone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton; Toner, Paul
Subject: POR 2022 #306: comments AGAINST proposed revisions to AHO

Dear Members of the Housing Committee, Members of the Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, and Arts & Celebrations Committee, and certain other individuals:

We are writing to express our opposition to the 11/21/22 revisions that were proposed for the Affordable Housing Overlay. (We believe they are identified as POR 2022 #306.)

The revisions are far too extreme and should not be adopted.

City Councilor Dennis Carbone has written two thoughtful, cogent, and concise expositions on what affordable housing initiatives can –and should—look like here in Cambridge.

Please see “Make The Right Investment In Affordable Housing,” published in Cambridge Day on 5/21/21, and also “Cambridge Can Do Better On Affordable Housing,” published there on 12/30/20.

We commend them to your attention, and we strongly support Mr. Carbone’s perspectives as expressed therein.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Ashley G. Pittman and Monique C. Fischer

47 Cogswell Ave., #19, Cambridge, MA 02140

23

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jean Reiser <jmreiser1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:27 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Caralone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton; Doug Gesler
Subject: AHO Revisions: Meeting Feb 8

To Cambridge Housing Committee,

We are residents of Bigelow St., Central Square, and would like to express our concerns and opposition to the proposed AHO Policy Order POR 2022 #306 which will be discussed at the meeting February 8.

Cambridge is a vibrant, innovative city that must find ways to have inclusive housing, but must also maintain the character that makes our city so special.

We thoroughly agree that Cambridge must continue to grow, and in order to do so, the city must increase density and provide affordable housing for residents. However, this is a complex issue and should be considered carefully with adequate community input instead of injecting sweeping allowances into the AHO without public recourse as this proposal does. A more thoughtful overall plan and strategy for affordable housing with public support would alleviate the starts and stops of larger anticipated AHO buildings (e.g. 2072 Mass Ave) that we have seen.

Thank you,

Jean Reiser
Doug Gesler
16 Bigelow St.

24

Erwin, Nicole

From: Patrick Joyce <patrick@joycemail.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:39 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: Please expand the AHO

Dear Cambridge City Council members and the City Clerk -

We're writing to ask you to expand the Affordable Housing Overlay as proposed in Policy Order POR 2022 #306.

We are longtime residents of Cambridge and live on Massachusetts Avenue near Porter Square, which puts us in a proposed "AHO Corridor" and near a proposed "AHO Square. That means we are saying "YES in my backyard" to create more opportunities for housing for families who are struggling to find it.

It is heartbreaking to hear about so many people who need what our city has the potential to offer, and yet to watch new projects fail or get passed. The AHO is off to a great start, but it will be even more effective when it is expanded.

Best,

Patrick & Rajee Joyce
2130 Massachusetts Ave., #7C

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Luke Edson <luke.edson01@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:26 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for amending the Affordable Housing Overlay

Councilors,

I'm writing to express my support for amending the Affordable Housing Overlay to increase the allowed height and density of affordable housing projects. I am a resident in Porter Square near Mass Ave, and many lots in our area have the capacity for more housing. Cambridge is in desperate need of more affordable and market rate housing units, and this amendment is a step in the right direction.

Thank you,
Luke Edson

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Justin Saif <jsaif@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:24 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: World's tallest timber building opens—25 stories

Hi all,

I know some of you are discussing wood frame vs. steel frame and residential construction costs in advance of the Housing Committee meeting tomorrow. Please keep in mind that using modern construction techniques, wood frame can go up to 25 stories.

"Who would have imagined...the tallest timber building in the world is in Milwaukee, Wisconsin," said Brian Brashaw, who's leading the Forest Service's national mass timber market development efforts. "It's real, it's catalytic, and future mass timber projects like Ascent will support forest health and low carbon buildings across the country."

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/apply/worlds-tallest-timber-building-opens>

I know many of you find it important that Cambridge stay on the cutting edge of environmental technologies, and of course the more people we house in Cambridge using these modern construction techniques, the fewer live far away with lengthy, polluting commutes, not to mention the less deforestation and energy inefficient, single-family exurban sprawl from the Cape to Worcester to New Hampshire.

Best,
Justin Saif

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Erwin, Nicole

From: michael kennedy <mp_kennedy@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:14 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Azeem, Burhan
Cc: Crane, Paula; Zondervan, Quinton
Subject: Housing Committee and Overlay Amendment Discussion

Dear Housing Committee Members,

Thank you for your thoughtful, careful work on the part of tax-paying, voting citizens of Cambridge. These meetings can be dreadfully long and as boring as dry toast.

You are tasked with review of a preposterous proposal, one to amend the as of yet unreviewed two-year-old overlay.

I'm surprised-- and you should be too-- that this proposal is even under consideration given present circumstances in Cambridge: we are one of the most densely , thickly settled small cities in the US of A, our 6 square miles house 18,000 people per square mile, and we abut the second most densely populated city in the US of A, Somerville, Ma. Without proper planning, any would be gatecrashers of the present limits on development in Cambridge would wreak serious havoc on our city streets with absolute impunity, not having to abide by parking minimums, necessary setbacks, or restrictions to height and density, among other concerns such as oversight of money, traffic patrols, staging equipment, and the safety of Cambridge's young, old and vulnerable. The proposal you have been tasked to take into committee and consider is ludicrous in the first place, and the product of developers in the second place, ones salivating in the wings and influencing, unfortunately, members of the city council, none of whom I suspect of being naive. This is a naked profit motive of developers usurping the rights of Cambridge's taxpaying residents, ones who are naturally vested in a social contract—pay your taxes, pay your bills, share your gifts, and be assured of certain rights: we expect a democratic process whenever any party would like to catalyze any significant change for whatever intention, let alone such radical changes to the present overlay.

If it's not broken, let it alone and don't fix it, but if you'd like to tinker with it conceptually, then you ought to conduct a deep, reflective process filled with legitimate third party studies rather than rely on hearsay and studies that have clear bias in authorship and belong to other cities whose contexts are exotic to our own.

To be clear, commuters and residents need to traverse our ever-shrinking city streets (shrinking bc of bike lane rollouts), and now certain councilors would like to hand over our city's need for more 'housing stock' under the pretense that this will serve the waitlist of people seeking affordable housing in Cambridge, in particular, and Massachusetts, in general. I don't buy it for a moment: It's not right, not feasible, and not judicious, simply to hand over such a great and difficult responsibility to the maws of developers who are merely motivated through profit and would make life utterly miserable in the process of construction and leave it another mess afterward, administratively. Consider for two short seconds what such amending would mean for life as we know it in Cambridge at a practical level—to get in and out of your street and to the grocery and back where one of these developers would set up house and upset traffic patterns much, much more than our already congested and sometimes impossible to navigate city streets. Let alone the noise, the pollution, and the fragility of water mains, subways, foundations of historic buildings, etc.

Erwin, Nicole

From: john.britton.aia <john.britton.aia@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:17 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; Zondervan, Quinton;
McGovern, Marc; Crane, Paula; Toner, Paul
Cc: Judy Merryman; susanfrankle@comcast.net
Subject: Cambridge - The Radical AHO Proposal, our comments

Dear Council,

We're the home owners, landlords and businesses who care about the texture and quality of life in Cambridge. We have an historical perspective on the city: we knew it when it was a special place to live and not a development opportunity. The renters, who tend to be younger & transient, don't care about Cambridge the way we do and comprise a voting block that's very easily manipulated by special interests.

For the younger folks, it's all about convenience. How close can I live to where I work, workout, go to bars, restaurants, biking, groceries, public transit.

They like things to be NEW... the IKEA mentality of a disposable lifestyle.

I think very few of them come here with the commitment to making it longtime home or to building sustainable neighborhoods. That "next great job offer" will have them bailing out on Cambridge. In the meantime, they love to support all the progressive pie-in-the-sky development ideas that promise an egalitarian, Cambridge utopia that they will have no long-term investment in. When they're gone, they leave Cambridge lifers to pick up the Planning and policy mistakes and missteps that their idealistic voting habits have placed upon the shoulders of the long term residents/taxpayers.

The small property owners, the ethnic communities, the small businesses that are being squeezed, the city support workers ... are aging out and some of the current city councilors know this and are cynically encouraging development plans like this one which will accelerate the demise of the historic character, quality and community of Cambridge that they hope no one will be left to remember.

When Cambridge moved to at-large city counselor elections, the neighborhoods and local, small businesses lost all control of their self-determination. Who can say which counselor watches out for your neighborhood anymore? It's become easy for big money developers and single issue special interests to selectively support a handful of candidates who will then be beholden to them(and not to a neighborhood or ethnic community).

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elena Tate <elenataelmt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 10:53 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay

Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay. I was born and raised in Cambridge but I cannot raise my own family there because it is too expensive now. My elderly mother is lucky enough to live in one of the few affordable apartments left, so I am still able to visit. I have beautiful memories of attending the King Open school with a diverse class of children from all different backgrounds. We had a lovely childhood. I don't think any of them are still in Cambridge.

Best,
Elena

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dave Halperin <halperin.dr@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 9:23 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear City Council,

It is currently a multi-year wait for people on CHA's priority waitlist for affordable housing to get a unit. Housing is a human right, and while Cambridge has done better than most cities in permitting and maintaining affordable housing, I don't believe we can say we are living up to our ideals if we say this broken status quo is good enough. I thank the council for passing the original AHO, which helped put more than 350 new affordable units in the pipeline. Unfortunately, it seems what the current AHO allowed was mostly to expand existing affordable housing sites and most of the low hanging fruit has been picked. The 2072 Mass Ave project was not viable at current AHO densities and despite being supported by 7 city councilors, the BZA saw the AHO as a ceiling and voted it down. The only way we will produce more affordable housing in this city is if we expand the AHO to allow more density to make more sites viable.

I live on the top floor of a non-conforming triple decker in Cambridgeport. I can see Manning Apartments out my front window and LBJ Apartments just 2 blocks over out my back window. These are both CHA properties that are significantly taller than their surroundings. Manning is Central and roughly at the scale the amendment would allow in squares. LBJ is in the middle of a bunch of 3 story buildings in a neighborhood, not even on a corridor, roughly at the scale the amendment would allow on corridors. People make renderings to scare people about what the proposed amendment would allow but once the buildings are there, they're just part of the landscape. People coming to visit me often praise how attractive Cambridgeport is and I've never heard anyone mention either building. Not only is LBJ's height unobjectionable but it's an important community space and where I've voted most elections since I moved here.

There will only be funding opportunities for a few new affordable housing projects to be built each year. Given that constraint, we should ensure we are not missing opportunities because no suitable site could be found due to zoning constraints. There are many possible zoning changes that could achieve this, and other options and compromises can be explored at Wednesday's meeting. But I also believe the current proposal fulfills this objective well, zoning for a density that will work for affordable housing developments on corridors across the whole city. If this proposal is not adopted as is, I hope an AHO expansion of similar scale can be agreed on.

Thank you,
Dave Halperin
14 Valentine St. Unit 3

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Erwin, Nicole

From: ELLEN-MALCOLM MAYER-PITTMAN <pittmanmayer@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 8:46 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay

Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay. Cambridge desperately needs more affordable housing.

Ellen Mayer
42 Maple Ave.

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Malcolm Pittman <malpittsbanjo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 8:37 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay

Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Malcolm Pittman
42 Maple Ave.

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Erwin, Nicole

From: EMILY EHRENFELD <ehren@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 11:58 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Need more affordable housing

Please expand the Affordable Housing Overlay

Emily Ehrenfeld
Cambridge resident

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Martin, Lenore G. <lgmartin@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 11:42 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: 25 Story AHO amendment

Dear City Clerk,

I am writing to strongly protest the building of 25 story sky scrapers in our Squares in Cambridge! This will destroy the character of these important parts of our community.

These buildings will add congestion and cut out light.

It also separates those in affordable housing from others in the community as it is available only for those who qualify for affordable housing, and not those who are of mixed income.

I also totally disagree with the proposal to increase the height along our avenues .

There is not recognition of the need for careful oversight of setbacks. We need space and especially greenspace not more overcrowding!

Lastly, there is no requirement for parking in these buildings. There are many people who need to drive to get around. Not everyone can ride a bike or walk. This is totally unthought through!

Lenore G. Martin
3 Channing Circle
Cambridge

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Michael Byrne <mcbyrne@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 11:37 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlane, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk
Subject: Please reject the 25 story City Council "Trump Tower" Plan and release correspondence

Hello Council Members,

My family and I are residents of Cambridge and want the City Council to REJECT the 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment.

While it appears to be well-intentioned,

- it is clearly flawed and additionally,

- is quite ant-democratic and

- prevents public input into the process of completely changing the character of our neighborhoods.

For this process to have happened behind close doors with some councillors working for or with real estate developers is quite concerning.

I would ask for all records and communications between any City Councilor and their team, with any real estate developers and staff be made public immediately.

Emails, correspondences, conversations and phone logs etc. to be released for review by the public.

The temptations around hundreds of millions of dollars of potential development are just too great for this process to remain hidden from public scrutiny and oversight.

Thank you.

Best,

Michael Byrne

79 Kirkland St #3

=====

From: Kennie Lyman <kennie.lyman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 11:23 AM
To: Caralone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk; Azeem, Burhan
Subject: development

Please reject the massive 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment. Of course life will change over time, but we need to preserve the atmosphere, interests, and values of Cambridge. If people want to live in a big city, they should move to New York or Boston or LA. If we are dependent on developers for the funds to run our city, we need to find another way. What will we do when there is no more room for development?

Kennie Lyman
13 Rockwell St.
Cambridge 10239

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Steve Dickman <sdickman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 10:49 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Zondervan, Quinton; Crane, Paula; Toner, Paul
Subject: AHO overhaul - please reconsider

Dear Councillors,

I'm writing as a concerned citizen about the proposed overhaul of the AHO. I welcome an increase in affordable housing in Cambridge but the current proposal is going to create many more problems than it solves. We need parking. We need setbacks. We need buildings to fit the cityscape. I urge the committee to reconsider and then proceed according to these principles:

- Any revision to the AHO should involve extensive public consultation and be based on sound analysis. The proceedings of several councillors outside of public view and in conjunction with developers is unacceptable.
- We need housing that is consistent with the existing scale of the neighborhood. Destroying the character of Porter Square is not in the interests of the city, the new residents or the current ones.
- There has to be an analysis of what's working under the current AHO. The review has to be transparent and open to input from residents.
- We need a strategy for affordable housing that includes views from all who live here. I am convinced that a large majority of us will favor new housing construction that respects the residents and the scale of the city. But the same majority would agree that doing to Porter or Central what MIT has done to Kendall Square (skyscrapers) would be a terrible thing.

Best regards,
Steve Dickman (31 years living in Cambridge)

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Steve Dickman
sdickman@gmail.com

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Rosalind Michahelles <rosalind@dominick-jones.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 12:07 PM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlane, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk
Subject: NO to more sky-scrapers in Cambridge!

- TO: City Councillors and the City Clerk
- FROM: Rosalind Michahelles, Hurlbut St., Area 9
- RE: **Please reject the 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment.**

--
Rosalind Michahelles
617-491-3239
rosalind@dominick-jones.com

From: John Gilmore <jadgilmore@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 12:12 PM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk
Cc: Elizabeth Gilmore
Subject: Proposed AHO amendment opposition

My wife has lived in Cambridge for 45 years and I have lived here for nearly 75 years (now on Reservoir St but previously off Oxford St, on Huron Ave, and off Upland Rd.) and we write in vigorous opposition to the proposed AHO amendment that would allow 25 story affordable housing in our squares and significant height increases elsewhere all without neighborhood design review, without parking and with meagre set back requirements. Cambridge has had explosive growth in the last few years including major projects in Kendall Square, the Fresh Pond Area (with much more to come on the 25 acre CC&F parcel and WR Grace parcels) and at Northpoint. All this development has led to environmental degradation in the form of traffic and a huge loss of our tree canopy. This proposal is not backed by any expert support from economists or housing experts on what the consequences of such an amendment would be. It threatens the nature of our neighborhood based city and with an approach- affordable housing high rise (not mixed income residences) that was discredited after the 60s when it was seen as a solution. Proceeding with such a radical city changing proposal is simply reckless. We need to work on sensible solutions by partnering with Kendall Sq businesses, with our Universities and with our adjacent cities and towns.

Thank you

John and Elizabeth Gilmore

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Alexander <timeleaper@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 12:26 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: affordable housing

Greetings to all,

As a matter of course I must speak out regarding the sorry state of affairs in terms of "affordable" housing here in Cambridge with the understanding that this is a national problem as well. It is my suggestion that we get ahead of this chronic problem as Cambridge is a leader in progressive initiatives, and compassionate outcomes. Let us demonstrate to the rest of the country that our city is creating the gold standard in affordable housing.

I would like to address the language here because I believe that appropriate and truthful language is the key to spearheading and succeeding in this important task.

The word "affordable" has been misused and abused by those builders and owners as a way to get around the idea of housing low income, typically, working class and elderly folks in need of the 30% of household income standard created by the Fed and housing authorities across the nation. (In truth in a landmark study done decades ago it was stated that NO household should pay more than 25% of household income for their housing). What passes for "affordable" with much of the new construction being insinuated across Cambridge is far more than 30% of any low income household. In no way is this corporate, investors scamming technique acceptable in our city. ***The idea of using language to give the appearance and not the substance of the word AFFORDABLE is reprehensible and we are not all foolish or uneducated enough to miss it or ignore it! Let us lead as we know we can in this vital work!***

Sincerely,
Alexander Herwitz
President LBJ Tenant Council
member Ward Five Democratic Committee

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:59 AM
To: Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carbone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Siddiqui, Sumbul; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk; City
Manager; Erwin, Nicole
Subject: Reject potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay district
Attachments: 2010-12-06_City_Manager%27s_Proposed_Multifamily_Conversion_Zoning_Changes.pdf

Dear Chairwoman Denise and Housing Committee Members,

Please reject the potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) district as they are not based on or backed up by thorough analysis for their impact on the community or conformance to the long-term vision of City's growth. These amendments will turn Cambridge into a tenement jungle with no setbacks and no parking.

Zoning ordinance amendments that will affect the entire City must follow a more deliberate process starting with the City Council adopting a Policy Order requesting the City Manager (CM) to conduct a review of section 11.207, Affordable Housing Overlay of the City Zoning Ordinance to determine whether any changes are warranted. In response, CM will confer with the City Solicitor Assistant City Manager for Community Development and report back language for proposed amendments developed by CDD staff with full participation from all stakeholders.

An example of such a CM report is attached.

Please don't let the Accessory Parking amendments that have been adopted and this Policy Order for AHO amendments become the norm for the zoning ordinance amendment procedure driven by special interest agenda.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully,

Young Kim
Norris Street

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
Voice: 617.349.4300 Fax: 617.349.4307 TTY: 617.349.4242 Web: www.cambridgema.gov

December 6, 2010

To the Honorable, the City Council:

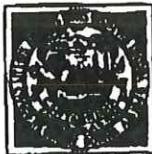
Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item Number 10-179, regarding a report on a review of Section 5.28.2 of the Zoning Ordinance to determine whether any changes should be made to the current square footage calculation for the purpose of decreasing the density of converted buildings in already dense neighborhoods, received from City Solicitor Donald A. Drisdell and Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development Susan Glazer.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy".

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

SUSAN GLAZER To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager
*Acting Assistant
City Manager for
Community Development*

From: Don Drisdell, City Solicitor

Susan Glazer, Acting Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Date: December 1, 2010

Subject: Council Order O-9, dated November 22, 2010, requesting a review of section 5.28.2 of the City Zoning Ordinance to determine whether any changes should be made to the current square footage calculation for the purpose of decreasing the density of converted buildings in already dense neighborhoods.

In response to the City Council order and discussion of November 22, 2010, we have attached the following proposed changes relative to section 5.28.2 to clarify that multi-family dwellings may be permitted in converted buildings in the Residence A-1, A-2 and B Districts; to change the calculation in those districts that determines the maximum number of residential units in buildings that are converted from non-residential to residential use; and to clarify that parking spaces must be provided where it is required.

**MODIFICATION TO THE TEXT OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE
RELATED TO SECTION 5.28.2
(With additions thus indicated)**

I. Amend the Table of Use Regulations – Section 4.30 by adding a new footnote “58” in the columns headed “Res A-1&2” and “Res B” for the uses “d. Townhouse development” and “g. Multifamily dwelling” in Section 4.31 – Residential Uses as set forth below.

4.30 TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS

Use Categories	Open Space	Res A-1&2	Res B
4.31 Residential Uses			
d. Townhouse development	No	No ⁵⁸	Yes ³
g. Multifamily dwelling	No	No ⁵⁸	No ⁵⁸

II. In Section 4.40 – Footnotes to the Table of Use Regulations add a new Footnote 58 to read as follows.

58. Except that such use shall be permitted in Residence A and B districts consistent with the provisions of Section 5.28.2.

III. Amend Section 5.28.2 by adding additional text in Sections 5.28.2, 5.28.22, 5.28.27 and by renumber existing Section 5.28.27 to 5.28.28, as indicated below:

5.28.2 Conversion of Non Residential Structures to Residential Use. Where it is proposed to convert an existing principal use structure, designed and built for non residential use, to residential use (excluding Transient Accommodations, Section i (1) and (2)), the dimensional standards generally applicable in the district as set forth in the Tables of Dimensional Requirements in Section 5.30 and other applicable regulations in this Ordinance shall apply. However, where some or all of those requirements cannot be met (including residential uses not otherwise allowed in the base district), the following provisions shall apply after issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board.

5.28.21 Gross Floor Area. The Gross Floor Area permitted shall be that which is the result of the application of the FAR permitted in the district in which the structure is located, or the existing Gross Floor Area of the structure itself, whichever is greater. However, additional Gross Floor Area may be added to the non residential structure without limit provided all construction creating additional Gross Floor Area occurs within the physical limits of the existing structure.

5.28.22 Dwelling Units. The number of dwelling units permitted shall be that number which is the result of the application of the Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit requirement in the district in which the structure is located, or that number of units produced when the Gross Floor Area of the structure as permitted in Section 5.28.21 above is divided by: (1) 900 square feet in Residence C, C1, C-2, C2B, C-2A, C-3, C-3A C-3B districts and all non-residential districts, (2) 1,600 square feet in Residence B districts, and (3) 2,500 square feet in Residence A-1 and 2 districts, whichever is greater.

5.28.23 Yard Requirements. The required yards shall be those of the structure existing at the time of the conversion to residential use. However, any construction occurring outside the limits of the existing structure shall be subject to the yard requirements of the district in which the structure is located.

5.28.24 Maximum Height. The maximum height shall be that height permitted in the district in which the structure is located, or the building height, whichever is greater. However, any construction that occurs outside the existing limits of the structure, other than construction exempt from the height limit as set forth in Section 6.23, shall be subject to the maximum height limit of the district in which the structure is located.

5.28.25 Private open space Requirements. The Private open space requirement shall be that required in the district in which the structure is located, except as modified herein.

a. The dimensional and locational limitations for Private open space set forth in Section 5.22 shall not apply; any combination of at-grade private open space and decks and balconies at other levels shall be permitted as shall walks intended for non vehicular use. However, in every case where those requirements of Section 5.22 waived by this Paragraph (a) are not met, all portions of the surface of the lot shall be Green Area as defined in Article 2.000 that are (1) not covered by the building or (2) devoted to the minimum area necessary to provide at grade, conforming parking spaces and the minimum necessary circulation and driveways for no more than one parking space per dwelling unit. The amount of Private open space required may be reduced by the Planning Board should the Board find that full compliance cannot reasonably be expected given the existing development of the lot and the provision of parking necessary to serve the dwelling units.

5.28.26 Conforming Additions. Conforming additions to such non-residential structures shall be permitted without reference to the limitations set forth in Section 8.22 for such additions to non-conforming structures.

5.28.27 Parking provided shall be as required in the applicable base district, or where the residential use is not generally allowed in the district, as required where the use is permitted.

5.28.28 Criteria for Approval of a Special Permit. In acting upon this special permit, the Planning Board shall take into account the standards and criteria set forth in Sections 10.43, 10.47 and 10.47.1 of this Ordinance. In addition the Planning Board shall consider the following:

(1) The impact of residential neighbors of the new housing use as it may affect privacy. The location and size of windows, screening elements, decks, entries, and other aspects of the design shall be reviewed to maintain reasonable levels of privacy of abutter where significant variations

from the normally required dimensional standards for the district are granted. In reviewing a proposed development plan, the Board shall consider, among other factors, the potential negative impacts of the new activity on abutters and the location, orientation, and use of structures and yards on adjacent properties.

(2) The impact of increased numbers of dwelling units above that normally permitted in the district, on on-street parking, particularly in neighborhoods where off street parking is limited. In reaching a determination, the Board may acquire an analysis of on-street parking utilization on streets in the vicinity of the proposed development to consider availability capacity relative to the demand generated by the proposed development. The scope and methodology of such an analysis shall be determined in consultation with City staff. Following its consideration of the results of the analysis, the Board may require changes to the project.

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Lisa Gamble <gamblelisa5@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 11:02 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: NO to skyscrapers

Please reject the massive 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment.
Many thanks.

Lisa Gamble
17 Gerry St.
Cambridge

Sent from my iPhone

43

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cetrulo, Lawrence <LCetrulo@cetllp.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:57 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: 25 Story AHO up-zoning Amendment

Dear City Council Members,

1. This is to register my opposition to the massive 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment.
2. These buildings are without neighborhood design review, are without parking , and do not have setback requirements.
3. The number of Cambridge city residents on our affordable housing list can easily be reached with our current ordinance and related policies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry Cetrulo
46 Grozier Road
Cambridge, MA

Lawrence G. Cetrulo, Esq.
CETRULO LLP
Two Seaport Lane
Boston, MA 02210
email: lcetrulo@cetllp.com
Office: (617) 217-5210
Telephone: (617) 217-5500
Fax: (617) 217-5200

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Cetrulo LLP Boston MA

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Rhonda Smith <rhondsmi@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:56 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: No on 25 storey AHO

Sent from my iPhone

45

Erwin, Nicole

From: arabella baldini <arabella2@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:55 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk
Subject: AHO

Please reject this massive 25 story AHO up zoning amendment. I have been a Cambridge resident since 1973, a Cambridge home owner since 1979, and a Cambridge business owner for 43 years. There are better ways to deal with this housing issue. Our beautiful city has been marred enough.

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Rosemary Booth <rosemarybooth1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:50 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Gerald C. O'Leary
Subject: reject proposed revisions to AHO

To Cambridge City Council Members;

We write as resident homeowners in the Kendall Square neighborhood of East Cambridge to urge that the Council's Housing Committee reject proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay that would allow 25-story buildings in Central, Harvard, and Porter Squares, while removing setback, parking, and other requirements.

We instead support development of a long-term strategy to increase affordable housing in Cambridge. As described in yesterday's (2/7/23) *Cambridge Day*, such a strategy would be devised "in partnership with residents and urban design experts and leveraging the innovations and best practices from communities around the country and the world....[and would] include numeric targets, budget allocations and an implementation plan that draws on diverse approaches to increasing housing stock – including using vacant and underutilized city properties, buying existing buildings or units and using vouchers and subsidies, as well as creating well-designed new construction."

We urge you to reject the proposed AHO revision and focus on developing a transparent and well-thought-out strategy that is supported by the community, to increase affordable housing in Cambridge.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Booth
Gerald O'Leary

303 Third Street, Unit 505
Cambridge MA 02142

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:42 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carbone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: AHO skyscraper proposal

This is to urge you to reject the AHO proposal that would allow up to 25 story buildings in some sections of the city.

This is NOT the way to address affordability of housing. It is out of place and dare I say misguided. The hand of developers is all over this proposal.

Listen to your constituents....we want affordable housing in a way that augments the city, keeps it green and complements existing squares. This can be done in partnership with stakeholders and by that I mean residents. NOT developers.

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)

From: Romana Vysatova <romana@lucidcatalyst.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:39 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: AHO amendment

Dear Cambridge City Councillor.

Our whole family — some of us architects and city planners who support affordable housing — very strongly oppose the AHO amendment change that would allow 25 story affordable housing in our squares as well as significant height increases (9-13 stories) on our avenues and significant height increases elsewhere. These would very much impact the city of Cambridge negatively for many generations to come until they are deemed a travesty and demolished as was the original Tobin School building. Not only will these buildings be unpleasant and unhealthy for their residents — as Tobin was for the generations of students and teachers who had to study and work there — it will also badly serve the neighborhoods and city as a whole. Affordable housing should be mixed income as the research shows and include design reviews by neighbors, parking and setbacks to fit into neighborhoods positively. Please reject this and work on a more considered plan that will positively represent your legacy as a city representative and leader. Please tell us where you stand on this as it is our most important issue for Cambridge.

Thank you,
Romana Vysatova
Eric Ingersoll

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Marjorie Hilton <margiehill@post.harvard.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:38 AM
To: Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton;
City Clerk
Subject: height and use of buildings

Hello, and thank you for reading,

I oppose the massive AHO amendment change that would allow 25-story affordable housing (not mixed-income residences) in our squares as well as significant height increases (9–13 stories) on our avenues and significant height increases elsewhere. These are without neighbor design review, are without parking, and do not have few setback requirements. The sponsors: councilors Azeem, McGovern, Simmons, and Zondervan.

Please let the neighbors have a say and choice in the matter.

I voted for you because I thought that you would have neighborhood interests in mind and because I thought you would reach out for our opinions and suggestions.

Thank you.

Marjorie Hilton

--

"Life isn't waiting for the storm to pass...it's about learning how to dance in the rain."

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Tatar, Maria <tatar@fas.harvard.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:26 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: AHO

Please reject the massive 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment.

Have we learned nothing from Covid, earthquakes, flooding, and much else?

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Alice Hoffman <cambridge708@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:22 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Skyscraper

Hello. I just want to put forth my belief that 25 story skyscrapers will ruin the our historic city and destroy many of the reasons people come to live here which is to be in an urban setting where people are more important than buildings.

Best

Alice Hoffman

Sent from my iPhone

From: Philip Laird <PLaird@arcusa.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:16 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Caralone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk
Subject: 25 Story Zoning Amendment

Dear City Council members and clerk,

I have lived in Cambridge for 40+ years since college. My wife and I have raised our children here and now we have grandchildren who reside nearby. We love our fine city and care deeply about keeping it a clean and livable city with plenty of trees and green spaces while not allowing it to become overly dense with tall buildings. To that end, I **reject** the massive 25 story AHO up-zoning amendment. It will be completely out of scale with the other architecture along the major streets and alter the city in a major and irreversible way .If built , the tall buildings will obscure the sunshine . There should be neighborhood design reviews for this kind of radical change. To consider building these without any parking or setback requirements will significantly alter the city and its' inhabitants . I support affordable housing that is going to be a positive experience for those that reside within the apartments. Most people prefer NOT to live in skyscrapers and need green spaces with trees nearby to live happily.

We have found that many recent decisions by the city council are hastily decided with little regard for the effects on the neighborhood in which they are implemented. The biking lanes and decisions to make roads one way such as Garden Street is an example. It only makes other roads have more traffic and the plastic poles are an eye sore that create too much visual information to handle in bad weather and at night. The South End in Boston is putting bike lanes in on their streets in a much more thoughtful way with the end result keeping the road more attractive and not having too much visual distraction.

In addition, I **support** keeping our streets clean by maintaining the current towing policy. The system works and it makes an enormous difference to keeping the city clean.

Finally, I **reject** increasing housing costs by speeding up MA State 2050 timeline on gas to electric conversion. Although I support smart environmental policies, I think we need to move forward with this enormous transition in a thoughtful and considered way . To force middle income people to carry the enormous costs of the transition without any financial support is not feasible or fair. If our electric grid is not prepared for all electric vehicles then it is also not ready to handle 100% electric with houses and condos . Until that is figured out it is premature to speed up the timeline. This goes with my above comments on some council members wanted to implement major changes in a hasty and ill-conceived way which has unfortunate results.

Thank you,

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

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Leah <l.e.hamiltonfrench@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:43 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: Please expand the affordable housing overlay.

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of expanding the affordable housing overlay. I grew up in Cambridge, and over the course of my life have watched housing prices soar, forcing many friends and neighbors out of the city. My family was very thankfully able to stay in the city due to affordable housing (my parents both work in the arts), and my sister and I (non-profit/education) have been able to stay in our hometown of Cambridge due to affordable housing. Please expand the AHO and other programs that support affordable housing in the city. Our diversity makes us who we are.

Leah

Leah Hamilton French
Lifelong Area 5 resident, graduate of the Cambridge Public Schools, former teacher in the Cambridge Public Schools.