

From: [Salome Viljoen](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: please don't ban small apartments in our neighborhoods
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Dear Commissioners,

I am a resident of the Old West Side, but I'm writing from my old home--charming, dense Cambridge, Massachusetts--to ask that you please do not create a new Residential subcategory with a 3-unit maximum. Cambridge is what I imagine parts of Ann Arbor could become. There are the [iconic three-unit triple deckers](#), alongside large homes (some of which are single family, some of which have been subdivided), alongside three and four-story brick apartment buildings. The variety adds to the aesthetic and social appeal of walking around the neighborhoods here. Grad students live among and between families, young couples, and empty-nesters. This variety does not stop Cambridge from being verdant and lovely (indeed, I find it more charming than monoculture SFHs!). But it does allow Cambridge to fit a population roughly the same as Ann Arbor's into a quarter of Ann Arbor's size!

I am concerned that the proposed new Residential subcategory with a 3-unit maximum is the kind of no-win compromise that does not address the long term issues that make housing such a high stakes local fight. It will only exacerbate Ann Arbor's housing crisis, as it imposes further restrictions on building. And it will place greater pressure on builders to build fewer, larger, more expensive units. Too often, large scale new builds are, to put it mildly, NOT charming, which further alienates those Ann Arborites who mistrust that density can co-exist with the charm they value so highly.

But sitting here, I know it can co-exist! However, to show that density and charm can go hand in hand, we need to allow builders the flexibility to build more *small* apartment buildings dotted in and throughout our current sea of SFHs in R1/R2 neighborhoods. Small apartment buildings dotted among the homes and triple deckers of Cambridge support a greater variety of incomes and family types, and encourages the kinds of mini-hubs of bakeries, pre-schools and shops that make life walkable, social, and fun. We can have that in Ann Arbor too, and all be better off for it.

Allowing more types of housing throughout Ann Arbor is crucially important and every delay has real impacts. Please don't add further limits on what housing we allow.

Thank you,

Salome Viljoen

512 2nd Street