

Ann Arbor City Clerk  
City Hall  
301 E. Huron St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Lesli Hoey  
901 Edgewood Place  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

April 15, 2019

Dear Ann Arbor City Clerk,

I am writing to protest the zoning amendment for Ordinance No. ORD-19-07 – West Hoover Avenue and West Davis Avenue Zoning. As an Urban and Regional Planning faculty member at the University of Michigan and a resident of one of the 62 lots within this proposed zoning area, I find the proposal to downzone the area to a single-family dwelling district deeply problematic based on the affordable housing crisis Ann Arbor faces.

Our city is losing ground on its progressive history, in great part because we are allowing our city to maintain exclusionary zoning practices that do not embrace efforts to rezone areas *towards* greater density rather than *away*. Downzoning my neighborhood to all single-family units effectively keeps the density of this neighborhood low, when we need to consider how to increase density across the city. A city's economic development, ability to attract employees and overall productivity is affected when an undersupply of housing makes a city unaffordable to the teachers, blue-collar workers and many others that make a city function (Rodriguez and Schleicher 2012; Saks 2008). Housing pressures also create a more homogenous, affluent populous while adding to regional economic segregation (Been et al. 2018). As was recently noted in an MLive article about the housing crisis: "Ann Arbor can't have it both ways. Being a beacon of inclusion, compassion, diversity and sustainability doesn't exactly jibe with being the eighth most segregated metro area in the country" (Ann Arbor News Editorial Board 2019).

We need to go far beyond Accessory Dwelling Units, which I applaud, but are ultimately expensive to establish and have so far had little effect on Ann Arbor's housing needs. I would instead propose that we move in the direction that Minneapolis did recently, eliminating single-family zoning throughout the city and allowing duplexes and triplexes in every neighborhood (Mervosh 2018). In Ann Arbor's case, we could at least encourage duplexes, which would allow homeowners more flexible options to remain in their homes while renovating to develop their homes into duplexes. More also needs to be done about the contribution of University of Michigan to this housing crisis, as it has continued increasing student numbers without building more dormitories. Many other affordable housing issues and solutions could also be explored.

Please consider voting "no" on the zoning amendment, or at least tabling it. Far more public engagement and study is needed to rethink the direction of our city when it comes to housing. We need practical solutions that will match Ann Arbor's ideals with the material reality of all of our residents – moving us towards affordability, not exclusion, as Ordinance No. ORD-19-07 would do. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration over this matter.

Lesli Hoey

### References

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