**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE BIRMINGHAM PLANNING BOARD**
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021**
**7:30 PM**
**https://zoom.us/j/111656967** or dial: **877-853-5247 Toll-Free, Meeting Code: 111656967**

---

A. Roll Call
B. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the regular meeting of **February 24, 2021**
C. Chairpersons' Comments
D. Review of the Agenda

E. Study Session Items

Rules of Procedure for Study Sessions: Site Plan and Design Review, Special Land Use Permit Review and other review decisions will not be made during study sessions; Each person (member of the public) will be allowed to speak at the end of the study session; Each person will be allowed to speak only once; The length of time for each person to speak will be decided by the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting; Board members may seek information from the public at any time during the meeting.

1. **Direction from Review of First Draft of 2040 Birmingham Plan**
2. **Status Update on Study Session Items**
3. **Action List 2021-2022**

F. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:
   a. Communications
   b. Administrative Approval Correspondence
   c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting **(March 24, 2021)**
   d. Other Business

G. Planning Division Action Items
   a. Staff Report on Previous Requests
   b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting

H. Adjournment

---

**Notice: Due to Building Security, public entrance during non-business hours is through the Police Department—Pierce St. Entrance only.** Individuals with disabilities requiring assistance to enter the building should request aid via the intercom system at the parking lot entrance gate on Henrietta St.

Persons with disabilities that may require assistance for effective participation in this public meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at the number (248) 530-1880, or (248) 644-5115 (for the hearing impaired) at least one day before the meeting to request help in mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

*Las personas con incapacidad que requieren algún tipo de ayuda para la participación en esta sesión pública deben ponerse en contacto con la oficina del escribano de la ciudad en el número (248) 530-1800 o al (248) 644-5115 (para las personas con incapacidad auditiva) por lo menos un dia antes de la reunión para solicitar ayuda a la movilidad, visual, auditiva, o de otras asistencias.* (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

**City Of Birmingham**
**Regular Meeting Of The Planning Board**
**Wednesday, February 24, 2021**
Held Remotely Via Zoom And Telephone Access

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on February 24, 2021. Chair Scott Clein convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

## A. Roll Call

**Present:** Chair Scott Clein; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Daniel Share, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams; Alternate Board Members Jason Emerine (arrived 8:30 p.m.), Nasseem Ramin (all located in Birmingham, MI, except for Bryan Williams who was located in Commerce Charter Twp.)

**Absent:** None.

**Administration:** Jana Ecker, Planning Director ("PD")
Brooks Cowan, City Planner
Nick Dupuis, City Planner
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

**02-026-21**

## B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of February 10, 2021

On page three of the minutes, second paragraph, Mr. Share recommended that 'neighborhoods' be changed to 'neighborhood associations'.

**Motion by Mr. Share**
**Seconded by Mr. Williams to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of February 10, 2021 as amended.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Share, Williams, Koseck, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Clein, Jeffares
Nays: None

**02-027-21**

## C. Chair's Comments

Chair Clein welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. He stated the meeting was being held under the auspices of state legislation. Chair Clein reviewed the meeting's procedures.

**02-028-21**

## D. Review Of The Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

**02-029-21**

## E. Special Land Use Permit and Final Site Plan & Design Reviews

**1. 555 S. Old Woodward – Birmingham Pub (Formerly Triple Nickel),** Special Land Use Permit Amendment request and Final Site Plan and Design Review to consider changes in ownership and name, as well as interior and exterior changes to allow the approval of Birmingham Pub, a food and drink establishment serving alcoholic liquor under an existing economic development license.

PD Ecker reviewed the item.

In reply to a question from Ms. Whipple-Boyce, PD Ecker noted that the Planning Board had the right to require changes to the third-floor balcony wall lights under the new SLUP. She stated the lights do not change quickly enough to run afoul of the ordinance regarding flashing lights. She stated that the City had not received any complaints regarding the wall lights.

After Board discussion regarding the wall lights, there was consensus that the effect of the lights was generally positive and did not need be limited by the SLUP.

There was also Board consensus that the eastern view of the kitchen should be cleared of pots, pans, and other clutter, and maintained that way.

Joseph Shallal, lawyer for the applicant, said the applicant, Joe Vicari, would commit to decluttering the view of the eastern window fronting Woodward.

**Motion by Ms. Whipple-Boyce**
**Seconded by Mr. Boyle to recommend approval to the City Commission of the applicant's request for Revised Final Site Plan for Birmingham Pub restaurant at 555 S. Old Woodward with the following conditions: (1) The Planning Board designates the Bowers elevation as the principal building frontage or the applicant reduces the overall building signage by 47.76 sq. ft.; (2) The applicant remove the proposed illumination from the building identification sign on Woodward Avenue or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals; and (3) Applicant provide all material, color and lighting specifications for all signage.**

**Mr. Shallal asked if a variance would need to be obtained for the proposed illumination of the building identification sign on Woodward Avenue since a variance was previously granted for the illumination of that sign, and usually variances stay with the building.**

**PD Ecker said the applicant would have to request another variance from the BZA because all granted variances are tied to the specific submitted plans as a condition of approval.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Boyle, Share, Williams, Koseck, Clein, Jeffares
Nays: None

**Motion by Ms. Whipple-Boyce**
**Seconded by Mr. Boyle to recommend approval to the City Commission of the applicant's request for a Special Land Use Amendment for Birmingham Pub restaurant at 555 S. Old Woodward with the following conditions: (1) The Planning Board designates the Bowers elevation as the principal building frontage or the applicant reduces the overall building signage by 47.76 sq. ft.; (2) The applicant remove the proposed illumination from the building identification sign on Woodward Avenue or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals; (3) Applicant provide all material, color and lighting specifications for all signage; and (4) Applicant execute a revised contract with the City of Birmingham outlining the nature of the proposed operation of Birmingham Pub and approving the use of the existing Economic Development liquor license under the new name Birmingham Pub.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Williams, Boyle, Share, Koseck, Clein, Jeffares
Nays: None

**2. 720 N. Old Woodward – Vinewood Bistro (Lower Level in Kohler Building),** Special Land Use Permit request and Final Site Plan and Design Review to consider approval of Vinewood, a new bistro proposed at the rear of the building, including the service of alcoholic liquor.

CP Dupuis reviewed the item.

Chair Clein noted the Board received two emails from residents of Brookside, across the Rouge River from the proposed Vinewood Bistro. The emails were from Drew Detling and Kristen Tait, both expressing concerns about the proposed plans. He noted the emails would be included in the March 10, 2021 Planning Board agenda packet.

Brian Najor, co-applicant, Roman Bonislawski, architect, Ron Rea, architect, and Chris Bakos, restauranteur and co-applicant, were present on behalf of the application.

Mr. Bonislawski explained:

- The garage door opening at the north end of building will be removed and turned into a screen;

- There will be an infrared linear gas tube heating component in the building;
- The building will have fire sprinklers throughout;
- The rooftop mechanical will be screened;
- The proposed ducting architecture in the back of the building is because Kohler cannot have new shafts built through it;
- The grade differential outside the garage in the rear of the building means cars can only enter/exit very slowly;
- The rear canopy will be redesigned without the freestanding column;
- The part of the patio furthest from the building will be not engaged at all, with plans to sink it a bit to dampen the noise;
- There will be adequate space to take in the outdoor furniture at night in the off-season; and,
- There will be a separate natural gas radiant heater in the outdoor space, but nothing coming off of the interior HVAC into the outdoor space.

PD Ecker noted that the applicant could do off-season outdoor dining as long as they secure a permit from the City and bring in the outdoor furniture every night.

Chair Clein said the design was beautiful. He said he was supportive of the rear sign aesthetically but would defer to legal considerations on that. He asked what the applicant could do to address some of the nearby residents' concerns.

Mr. Bonislawski said that the foliage blocks a lot of the sound and light in spring and summer. The planned outdoor lighting is minimalist. He said they could add more greenery along the metal partition screening along the ramp, which faces Brookside to the east. He said the applicant team would be averse to putting any greenery between the outdoor dining and the river since part of the charm is seeing the river. He said their plans also keep the seats closer to the building rather than further out towards the ramp in order to maintain the distance from Brookside as much as possible.

Public Comment

Helene Fertal, owner/operator of Birmingham Wine, spoke largely in favor of the application. Her concerns were the often overfull dumpsters behind the building, and the grease trap given issues with flooding in the immediate area.

Kristen Tait, resident of Brookside, provided a brief overview of the concerns previously expressed in the email she submitted to the Board. She said that noise would be her biggest concern. She said that she is able to see and hear clearly across the river in all seasons. She also clarified that even when the foliage comes in, it still does not block her views into Vinewood's proposed outdoor seating area, and vice-versa.

Rob Kamenec, Brookside resident, said he was deeply concerned about the prospect of increased noise from Vinewood especially with the proposed closing hours of 1 a.m. He observed that staff would be staying after 1 a.m. to finish cleaning and closing, meaning that the noise would necessarily occur even after 1 a.m.

Mr. Share said that one evening the prior week he had been walking by Social Kitchen at 8 p.m. when the temperature was not above freezing. He said the outdoor seating area at Social was very crowded. He asked for some assurance from the applicant that the winter garden at Vinewood will not replicate some of the issues the City has faced from the outdoor seating at Social.

Some Board members asked for some clarifications of the plans in addition to the ones specified by CP Dupuis in his report. Those requests for clarifications included:

- Information about how deliveries will be handled;
- A floor plan that makes the number of seats and their location clear;
- Comments on the plans from City departments, including and especially the Fire Department; and,
- Consideration of the appropriate dumpster configuration due to the proximity of the river.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said that two dumpsters are not enough behind Vinewood, and said she has often seen trash on the placed outside the dumpster. She recommended Mr. Najor consider a compacting dumpster for the rear of the building. She said she would not recommend adding a third dumpster. She advised the applicant team to have a conversation with the building owner to the south in order to make sure that Vinewood's plans do not conflict with the rear garage door used by the condominium owner on the top floor of that building. She said she was in favor of the winter garden idea as long as it is well-maintained.

Mr. Koseck expressed concerns about the outdoor seating not activating the street, which he stated was a significant aim of the bistro ordinance. He said that having the seating in the back could make it hard to police. He also said the logistics of trash pick-up, deliveries and cleaning would be made more difficult by the entrance in the back.

Mr. Jeffares noted that when bistro options were reviewed by the Commission at their October 26, 2020 meeting, Mr. Najor proposed two bistros: Vinewood and a bistro in the center of town that would have activated the street. He highlighted the fact that the Commissioners advanced the plans for Vinewood, even with the understanding that the outside seating would not be on the street, because it seemed like a unique opportunity to have seating by the river.

Mr. Williams, Mr. Jeffares, and Mr. Boyle expressed concern about making sure that the proposed hours do not adversely affect the residents across the river.

Mr. Williams recommended that staff return with information on the hours of operation for Market North and Luxe Bistro, the two nearest bistros, to see how those hours compare to the hours proposed for Vinewood.

Mr. Boyle said reviewing noise or other complaints for the two aforementioned bistros might clarify Vinewood's potential impact on the residents across the river since those two bistros abut residential area.

Mr. Koseck and Mr. Jeffares expressed concern about the high number of total proposed seats since the application was coming in as a bistro and not as a Class C license.

Mr. Emerine noted that the area behind the building is a regulated floodway, and that raising the ground elevation would require additional permits.

PD Ecker stated that information had been communicated to the applicant team.

**Motion by Mr. Boyle**
**Seconded by Mr. Williams to postpone the discussion regarding 720 N. Old Woodward – Vinewood Bistro – to the April 14, 2021 Planning Board meeting.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Williams, Boyle, Share, Koseck, Clein, Jeffares
Nays: None

**Motion by Mr. Williams**
**Seconded by Mr. Share to suspend the rules for the April 14, 2021 Planning Board meeting to allow the review of site plans.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Williams, Boyle, Share, Koseck, Clein, Jeffares
Nays: None

Mr. Jeffares noted the City should take a look at the lighting in Lot Six to see whether that can be better screened so as not to adversely affect the residences across the river.

**02-30-21**

**G. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:**
**a. Communications**
**b. Administrative Approval Correspondence**

After a brief review of the proposal from CP Dupuis, the Planning Board told Randy Dickow they had no initial hesitations about the Mad Hatter moving into the vacant space next door to their current location in order to expand their access to space for outdoor dining.

In reply to Mr. Jeffares, Mr. Dickow said he would remove the two gazebos currently in front of the Mad Hatter as soon as possible.

CP Dupuis then presented a brief proposal from Brooklyn Pizza that would include two outdoor dining pods.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Boyle said they did not like the proposed pod to the north.

Chair Clein said the zigzag path that would result from the adding the dining pods would have negative ramifications for a visually impaired person's ability to navigate the sidewalk around the restaurant.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said she could not endorse an administrative approval of the dining pods without more information on the proposed design and build.

**c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting (March 10, 2021)**
**d. Other Business**

Chair Clein agreed with Mr. Williams that it would be helpful for the Board to receive feedback from the Commission regarding the master planning process thus far.

In order to solicit that feedback, the Chair explained the master planning team would be providing the Board with a letter summarizing their understanding of all the recommended changes to the first draft for the Board to review at their March 10, 2021 meeting. After the Board's review of the letter, the letter will then be sent on to the Commission with a request from the Board for feedback on the recommended changes.

**02-031-21**

## H. Planning Division Action Items

**a. Staff Report on Previous Requests**
**b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting**

**02-032-21**

## I. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

Jana L. Ecker
Planning Director

City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

# MEMORANDUM

**Planning Division**

**DATE:** **March 5, 2021**

**TO:** **Planning Board**

**FROM:** **Jana Ecker, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** **Direction from Review of First Draft of the 2040 Plan**

Please find attached a memo that will be discussed by the City Commission on Monday, March 8, 2021, along with a proposed resolution to affirm and approve the remaining steps in the master plan project that has been ongoing for the past 2 years. The intent of this resolution is to clarify the process to move from the first draft of the 2040 Plan to consider adoption of a final version of the Birmingham 2040 Plan. The remaining steps include providing direction to the DPZ team for changes from the first draft, the review process for the second draft of the 2040 Plan and the process for completing and reviewing a final draft of the 2040 Plan through the formal public hearing process required under State and local law.

Next Step – Providing Direction

As we have completed the detailed review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan to solicit public input, the DPZ team is now preparing a summary of the public input received, and the recommendations for changes to the first draft expressed by Planning Board members to date for your review. A summary report will be provided under separate cover and in an Amended Agenda Packet to be published in the morning on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. Planning Board members are asked to review the recommendations for changes discussed through the review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan and to provide direction on the changes to be included in the second draft of the 2040 Plan.

City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

# MEMORANDUM

**Planning Division**

**DATE:** **March 3, 2021**

**TO:** **Thomas M. Markus, City Manager**

**FROM:** **Jana L. Ecker, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** **Resolution Outlining the 2040 Master Plan Review Process**

Public communications for the 2040 Master Plan project have been ongoing for almost two years. Public meetings have been held at the Planning Board, the City Commission and at joint meetings of both groups. An extensive public engagement schedule has included roundtable discussions with residents, stakeholders and property owners, a week long design charrette in the spring of 2019 and a multi-day drop in clinic in the summer of 2019. In addition, three surveys were created and launched to allow all members of the community to provide their input even if they were unavailable to attend any of the public meetings. Media coverage has been ongoing, and the City has also provided a project website at BirminghamPlan.com to host all material created and discussed throughout the Master Plan project, and to solicit input and provide a forum for public engagement. The Planning Board has conducted multiple public meetings to present and obtain public input on the first draft of the 2040 Plan. The City has also provided ongoing communication through the Birmingham Plan App, social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, Inside City Hall and other television segments, as well as newsletters and articles.

Due to the global pandemic that started in 2020, the City-wide master plan process was interrupted and temporarily stalled during the first half of 2020. As a result of this and the suspension of in-person meetings, the City and the DPZ CoDesign consulting team established a plan recommence the public review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan. The City and the DPZ team also established a revised process and timeline for the preparation and review of the second draft of the 2040 Plan, and the third and final draft to be considered for adoption by the City Commission.

As a result of the temporary pause in the master plan process, and the resultant changes to the schedule and process outline, numerous residents have contacted City Hall for clarification of the remaining steps in the process of adopting a new master plan, clarification as to when the public input received on the first draft of the 2040 Plan may be reflected in a second draft, and the overall timeline for adoption of the final draft of the Birmingham 2040 Plan. Accordingly, please find attached a resolution prepared for your review and consideration that clearly outlines and documents the remaining steps in the process to update the City-wide master plan.

**Suggested Action:**

To adopt Resolution # _____ to affirm and approve the master plan review and adoption process from the first draft of the 2040 Plan to the final public hearing to consider adoption of the final draft of the Birmingham 2040 Plan.

**RESOLUTION # _____**

**2040 MASTER PLAN REVIEW PROCESS**

WHEREAS Birmingham has a long standing commitment to strong local planning throughout the City to support its vibrant neighborhoods and mixed use districts and continue to build on Birmingham's success;

WHEREAS Birmingham is one of few communities in the region having preserved its historic downtown, enhanced other commercial districts and maintained its walkable neighborhoods to foster an environment that is offered in very few places in Metro Detroit;

WHEREAS with this success and the lack of similar urban environments in the region, demand for both residential and commercial space has continuously increased, raising housing prices, lease rates and parking concerns;

WHEREAS as part of a larger region, Birmingham is desirous of continuing to lead the region by example and incorporating best planning practices to support its downtown, neighborhoods and mixed use districts while also encouraging innovation and sustainable practices;

WHEREAS Birmingham entered into an agreement with DPZ CoDesign in 2018 to conduct a comprehensive update of the last City-wide master plan that was completed in 1980;

WHEREAS the DPZ CoDesign team conducted extensive research on existing conditions in Birmingham, best practices in urban planning for similar communities, and conducted extensive public engagement utilizing neighborhood round table discussions, three City-wide surveys, a one week public design charrette, a three day drop in clinic, conducted many public meetings and presentations, and established a project website to garner public input from residents with regards to the future direction of the City;

WHEREAS the DPZ team completed the first draft of the 2040 Master Plan in October 2019 for review and consideration by the City Commission, Planning Board and the public and commenced a detailed review of each section of the first draft at public meetings until the global pandemic started early in 2020 and temporarily halted the master plan project;

WHEREAS the DPZ team worked with the City of Birmingham to amend the master plan process in light of the delays caused by the pandemic and the restrictions on public gatherings;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Commission hereby affirms approval of the amended review process previously agreed upon for the drafting and consideration of the final draft of the Birmingham 2040 Master Plan as follows:

1. The City Commission affirms support for the key themes and objectives of the 2040 Plan as listed below and discussed at previous meetings of the Planning Board, City Commission and a joint meeting of both groups:
    a. Connect the City;
    b. Embrace Managed Growth;
    c. Retain Neighborhood Quality;

d. Invest in Civic Spaces and Programs;
e. Support Mixed-Use Areas; and
f. Advance Sustainability Practices;

2. The Planning Board continue review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan through virtual public meetings to review each section of the plan and to solicit public input;
3. The Planning Board provide to the City Commission and the DPZ team a summary of public input on the first draft of the 2040 Plan, and outline their direction for proposed revisions to the first draft;
4. The City Commission review the summary from the Planning Board regarding recommended revisions to the first draft and the recommended direction to the DPZ team for preparation of the second draft of the 2040 Plan;
5. The DPZ team prepare the second draft of the 2040 Plan with revisions as directed incorporating all requested amendments to the City in May 2021 and publish same on the project website;
6. The Planning Board hold up to four public meetings to review the second draft of the 2040 Plan and focus on discussing all outstanding strategic issues;
7. The Planning Board and City Commission conduct a joint meeting to discuss public input and direction on revisions to the second draft of the 2040 Plan;
8. The DPZ team complete the final draft of the 2040 Plan and distribute to all adjoining jurisdictions and other entities as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, and publish on the project website;
9. The City and DPZ team continue to accept and record public input on the final draft of the 2040 Plan; and
10. The Planning Board and the City Commission each conduct public hearings on the final draft of the 2040 Plan, with the City Commission making the final decision on the adoption of the 2040 Birmingham Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the terms and conditions of the original contract between DPZ CoDesign and the City of Birmingham, as amended, shall continue in force, and all other applicable State laws in effect at the time of the issuance of this resolution, and as they may be subsequently amended, shall also remain in force.

I, Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk Designee, of the City of Birmingham, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Birmingham City Commission at its regular meeting held on March 8, 2021.

_____
Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk Designee

To: City Clerk, PLANNING BOARD & CITY COMMISSION: 2/23/2021

,, Birmingham still seemed like a village when I moved here in 1943.. When World War II ended,many of the vacant lots began to sell through out the city Near Pierce School, a number of . young people bought them and built their first homes Some had children and grandchildren have . lived out their years in our city . Only a few vacant lots are noted in our neighborhoods . . Today our city is fully developed and the population is stable.It is my reason for disagreeing with the proposed 2040 Master Plan that states Birmingham needs more population

Patricia Andrews
235 Chesterfield
Birmingham, MI
48009

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# A couple built an apartment above their garage. Ann Arbor officials want more like it. Ann Arbor is aiming for more accessory apartments in neighborhoods.

1 message

**jeffrey.joseph.atto@gmail.com** <jeffrey.joseph.atto@gmail.com> Mon, Mar 1, 2021 at 5:21 PM
To: Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

Hi Jana,

I'm not sure if you saw this article in MLive: https://trib.al/K7Ek1iT (Longer URL: https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2021/03/a-couple-built-an-apartment-above-their-garage-ann-arbor-officials-want-more-like-it.html)

It's interesting to me just how diametrically different Birmingham and Ann Arbor seem to be on this question.

Best Regards,
Jeffrey Atto

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# New City Master Plan

1 message

**kirsten riess** <krriess@gmail.com> Sat, Feb 20, 2021 at 12:49 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org, abingham@bhamgov.org

Dear Mr. Dupuis, Ms. Bingham, The Planning Board and City Council,

Mr. Dupuis and Ms. Bingham, would you please forward this e-mail to the Planning Board and City Council?

We regret that we are getting acquainted with the Birmingham Plan at this late stage, but would like to share our thoughts and concerns nonetheless.

My husband grew up in Birmingham and we moved back to this fine city about 10 years ago. We now have a few rental properties as well. We are invested in love this community.

We read and agree with the Opinion of the "concerned citizens of Birmingham, MI" issued in the Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle. This sounds like a very expensive plan for a city that is already heavily taxed.

Below are a few of our general thoughts, but please know that we feel the majority of the plan seems to be making changes that will increase taxes, traffic/frustration navigating the city, and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Housing
We don't understand how you plan to make affordable housing in an area that is not affordable. Do you plan to subsidize it? How much will this cost? Multifamily housing is not a housing trend that is foreseeable in the future. We are opposed to increasing taxes to subsidize "affordable" housing.

We are absolutely opposed to implementing associations in the neighborhood and hiring someone to liaise with them.

Height restrictions - We have restrictions on how tall we can build now. People want tall ceilings. Why restrict this further, especially when so much exists now? We can leave the current restrictions.

Additional permitting- Birmingham already has a robust permitting system.

Please leave the parking in the neighborhoods alone unless they are downtown or in a busy area where they are required. We don't want parking signs on our neighborhood street.

Streets/Traffic
Please stop narrowing the streets. The changes made to Maple downtown are dangerous. If I park on the street, I don't feel safe and feel like I can easily be hit by a car. As a driver, it is very narrow to navigate, especially now that we have had some snow. The parked cars are a foot into the street because the snow isn't or can't be cleared. With the changes as they are, we don't understand why you didn't just pedestrianise it.

The changes to Oak also now make it dangerous for bikers and cars. The street should have been left the size it was and we should have added bike lanes. In order for bike lanes to be safe, they should be 6 feet wide. These narrow bike lanes are difficult for bikers to stay in, especially in the fall when the leaves consume the street, and now with the snow. My children want to ride their bikes to school, but we don't feel safe on Oak any more. Also, more and more people are walking in the streets instead of the sidewalks, adding more challenges. Additionally, when you narrow the streets, we are losing some of the trees that the Plan says it wants to save.

Snow - As the streets are narrowed, the snow removal needs to be more robust. There are streets that have multifamily locations currently in the city that use a lot of street parking and the snow removal isn't great, making it difficult for these communities. We should be doing better now and make sure snow removal is included in any future planning.

Please don't reduce the speed on Woodward and in town. We are unclear on the long term changes to Woodward, but all of the changes seem like they will increase traffic, not improve it.

We love the idea of encouraging biking, but we must do this safely. The narrower the streets, the more dangerous. The "protected bike lanes" need to be big enough to protect the cyclists.

Please consider only adding crossing islands in streets that are wide enough to accommodate them. The one on Oak is cumbersome.

What is a circulator stop? A traffic circle/roundabout? Americans don't seem to navigate these well, especially on narrow or busy streets. Why add the confusion? Please don't put these on Oak or near Derby.

We don't understand why the plan is to add residents to the city and simultaneously make it more difficult to navigate the city.

Nature and Parks

We love having the parks and green spaces, but some of the plans are going to ruin the natural beauty. Please don't put in "environmentally sensitive, hard-surfaced, and well-lit pathway for pedestrians and cyclists along the Rouge River." A dirt path is natural and won't the lighting pollute? And why do we have pictures of nature in our green spaces? This is going too far and will detract from the natural beauty.

We love the idea of some splash pads. Any chance these will be built in time for my young children to enjoy them?

These are just a few of our thoughts and are consistent with other residents of whom we've discussed the plan.

Thank you for listening. We hope others are reaching out and sharing their opinions as well.

Best regards,
Kirsten & Patrick Barnds

**From:** Richard Belanger <rbelanger@mcww.com>
**Sent:** Friday, February 12, 2021 7:14 AM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Additional density planning in Birmingham

Nicholas, Alexandria,

I read about your master plan in the Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle newspaper.

As a taxpayer in Bloomfield, whose taxes support Birmingham and Bloomfield schools, I have to say to you and the City Council, I am very unsupportive of your proposed master plan to massively increase the density of Birmingham by 2,000 housing units.

Richard Belanger
C 248-866-0812

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Multi family housing

1 message

**Judy** <jbernhard7@gmail.com> Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 12:57 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

Mr. Dupuis
My husband and I own a home in Birmingham on Quarton Rd. We are very concerned and against the plan to add multi family homes to our beautiful city. I have also sold real estate in Birmingham and surrounding area for over 20 years. This is something that should be voted on by the voters of Birmingham. We need green space and the people that will be affected should be notified directly. We bought our home on Quarton because of the beautiful lot. Adding more homes in this area will only increase traffic on Quarton which is technically a residential street and is very busy especially during rush hour. Please forward our objection to this plan that does nothing for the citizens of Birmingham.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Judy Bernhard

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:41 AM
**To:** The Blanks
**Subject:** Re: Planning Board actions

Received.

On Fri, Feb 5, 2021 at 9:34 AM The Blanks <bclank56@gmail.com> wrote:

> Hi Alexandria -
>
> Wanted to go on record as being opposed to the Planning Board's proposed density increase in housing units for our home community. More multi-unit housing seems contradictory to our Birmingham lifestyle.
>
> Kind regards, Mary & Charlie Blank
> 943 Donmar Court

--
**Alexandria D. Bingham**
*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**
**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802 Office Direct
(248) 530-1080 Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org
***Important Note to Residents***
Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

**From:** borsenikc@yahoo.com
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 3:41 PM
**To:** Ndupuis@bhamgov.org
**Cc:** Abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Multifaily housing

As a home owner and resident of Birmingham for 30 years, I am much opposed to the Multifamily Housing being considered. We need fewer people, preservation of historic sites, Green Space, and FEWER PEOPLE! My family and I used to enjoy walking the Rouge River trail to Quarton Lake. Now, there are almost always too many people and dogs to make it an enjoyable experience.
Sincerely,

Janice Borsenik

**From:** Christie DeWitt <christiedewitt@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 6:18 PM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** More info needed an thoughts on planned multi-family housing

Hello Nicholas and Alexandria,

I hope that this finds you well and warm.

Unfortunately, I received my paper too late, and wasn't alerted to the Planning Commission meeting in time to attend.

In October, my family and I purchased a home on South Bates, with a (not so small) price tag and huge tax bill. We are very happy to pay it though, due to stability and charm of the neighborhood and city. We weren't anxious at all about paying the "Birmingham Markup" because we knew that the neighborhood (and city overall) was stable, had great schools, cultural diversity, location and a great vibe. We've lived all over the world, and just moved from the Pacific Northwest - and we picked Birmingham.

I'm concerned about what I've been reading in the news about the plan to introduce multi-family housing. I do not have enough information to form a final opinion, but would like to understand the anticipated benefit to the existing home owners/tax payers.

What would the multi-family housing bring to the communities? In particular, the jog along 14 mile (between Southfield and Woodward) is already a big enough of a mess that adding more congestion, more noise, more visual clutter would be a detriment to the adjacent neighborhoods. Why would there be an expectation that wouldn't be compounded?

My full-time job is macro-trend research and ethnographic studies - I have not seen any evidence of Millennials preferring to live in multi-family units, as the newspaper concerned citizen echoes. The evidence I've seen, has been quite the opposite, that an overwhelming majority of buyers prefer single family housing.

Where do I find more info about the plans, and/or a recording to the planning meeting on 2/10/21?
Thank you,
Christie

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

## from Dr. Annis Pratt re my support of Master Plan

1 message

**Annis** <avpratt@aol.com> Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 9:54 AM
Reply-To: Annis <avpratt@aol.com>
To: "jecker@bhamgov.org" <jecker@bhamgov.org>

Dear Commissioner Ecker,

Thank you so much for filling me in on the Birmingham Master Plan during our telephone call last week.

I wanted you to see the letter I send to Nicholas Dupuis re my support of the plan:

Dear Mr. Dupuis,

I am pleased that the City of Birmingham has come up with a Master Plan to build affordable housing; I have looked through the plan, and I see that it will add more folks to our tax base and also enhance the diversity of people living here.

We are a long-time Birmingham family, having moved here in 1979 to be near our parents, who had built their home in 1958. We live one house up from Lincoln, and would have no trouble welcoming multi-unit apartments to our neighborhood.

Our only problem with Birmingham has been its lack of diversity. The plan will fulfill our desire to live in a neighborhood that has a more vibrant mix of ages, incomes, and ethnicities.

I put a copy of this letter on NextDoor Midvale and have written to my Birmingham friends asking them to submit their opinions as well.

With thanks for all of your good work,

Dr. Annis Pratt

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Birmingham Master plan

1 message

**Khaled El-Hoshy** <kelhoshy@gmail.com> Thu, Feb 11, 2021 at 9:18 PM
To: "ndupuis@bhamgov.org" <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

Dear Mr Dupuis,
Please inform the planning board that I, and am sure the majority of fellow neighbors, oppose strongly the plan to transform single houses into multifamily housing. This would forever change our lovely city and destroy its charm.
I have been a resident here since 1993, and absolutely love the character of the city as is.
Khaled El-Hoshy, MD
1159 Davis Avenue
Birmingham, MI 48009
--
www.elhoshy.com

Inline image

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:09 PM
**To:** Nancy Lawrie
**Subject:** Re: Multi family housing

Received

On Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:27 PM Nancy Lawrie <nancylawrie@yahoo.com> wrote:

> I oppose the pros all before the increasing the density of Birmingham by 2,000 housing units. It would unnecessarily compound the parking problem, increase traffic and tax the infrastructure.
> Birmingham has a manageable population now and why add more potential problems.
> Please share my strong opposition wth the City Council.
> Mary Elliott
> 878 Hidden Ravines Ct
>
> Sent from my iPhone

--
**Alexandria D. Bingham**
*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**
**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802 Office Direct
(248) 530-1080 Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org
***Important Note to Residents***
Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Multifamily Housing Plan for Birmingham

1 message

**louise.emerson@ubs.com** <louise.emerson@ubs.com> Mon, Feb 8, 2021 at 2:15 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org
Cc: Todd@sdc.build

Dear Nicholas Dupuis,

I have just learned about the proposed plans for multi family housing in the city of Birmingham. I live and work in Birmingham and am strongly opposed to this idea. My husband and I plan to attend the Zoom meeting on February 10. Most that I have discussed this plan with are opposed. As a matter of fact, I have not talked to anyone who remotely can understand how this could possibly be a good idea for the city and its residents. Will you please forward these comments on to the planning board?

Thank you,

UBS

Louise A. Emerson, CIMA®
Senior Institutional Consultant
Senior Vice President - Investments

Penniman Wealth & Institutional Consulting Group
Our *insights*. Your *advantage*.

UBS Financial Services, Inc.
325 North Old Woodward, Ste 200
Birmingham, MI 48009

Tel. (248)645-3935
Tel. (888)802-5126
Fax. (855)789-5811
louise.emerson@ubs.com

**From:** Scott Everly <scottmeverly@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 6:22 PM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Opposition to first draft of the master plan

Dear Nicholas,

As a resident and taxpayer, I would like to submit my opposition to many aspects of the master plan. While I found a number of the underlying assumptions and objectives to be troubling - such as the "need" to increase the housing stock by 2,000 units - I was most concerned about the plans for "Seams". My street (Westwood) is a quiet, beautiful street in a single family neighborhood that has been deemed a seam for potential lot combinations and presumably construction of multi-family properties. This would destroy the fabric of my street and adjacent streets such as Oak. We chose to live here based on this street and neighborhood and feel that this would be a bait and switch. This would damage property values. I thought the comment (I paraphrase) about angering some residents by "allocating housing at increased intensity" is a small price to pay to support the common good (pg. 115), is offensive. I am at taxpayer and this home is my largest single investment. I am choosing to raise my family (four children under the age of 15) in a quiet single family neighborhood for a reason. The high (relative) tax bill I pay annually is the price I pay for these benefits and I do not think the city council should hurt the few to help people who don't even live in our city yet.

I have many other thoughts on the subject but the plans for Westwood concern me greatly so I want to register my fierce opposition to the plan as currently proposed.

Thank you,
Scott and Katie Everly
1036 Westwood Dr.

**From:** GARY FANCHER <fancherg@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 3:19 PM
**To:** ndupis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Multifamiy Housing

Your reasons for supporting multifamily housing do not make any sense and I do not believe this is what Birmingham residents want. How do you put a multifamily house on a sixty foot wide residential lot? Please do not destroy Birmingham's charm. Those people supporting this plan will not be reelected. There will be a groundswell of people against this and I hope these plans will be dropped.

Gary Fancher

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:42 AM
**To:** ELLEN FIRESTONE
**Subject:** Re: Master Plan draft

Received.

On Mon, Feb 8, 2021 at 7:50 PM ELLEN FIRESTONE <twigsbham@comcast.net> wrote:

> Mr Dupuis,
> I have lived in Birmingham for 50 years.I now reside in the Birmingham Crestview Neighborhood home I built 20 years ago. My neighborhood consists of single family homes which makes for a unique charm and is a reason that I chose this location to build. I oppose the master plan draft which envisions multi family housing that will surround my home on three sides all within 1-3 blocks. The units on Southfield, Maryland and Lincoln are currently and have always been single family homes.They are part of the fabric of our neighborhood. Moreover, the homes in my area vary in size and value and are populated by people of diverse income levels.If all of the seams surrounding me are rezoned and become multifamily housing the character look and feel of our neighborhood will change. The increased density will make the remaining single family homes less attractive and will greatly reduce our property values that are now high as a result of the desirability of the area. As it is, drivers now use Northlawn as a cut through to avoid the stop light on Southfield and Lincoln.More density will only exacerbate the traffic problem.
>
> I recently put an addition on my home and other costly improvements. I am worried that if this passes I will NEVER be able to recoup my investment. I didn't hesitate to make these improvements in what I believed would remain a solid stable environment of single family homes.
>
> With these proposals being considered I am wondering whether this will be an issue that must be divulged to any potential buyer.It will certainly serve as a disincentive to those seeking the kind of neighborhood we are now.To the extent the city is planning on having subsided housing along the seams that border me in order to accommodate the target income groups in the plan, I believe this will result in lower quality construction to our determent.
>
> Ellen Firestone

--
**Alexandria D. Bingham**
*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**

**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802 Office Direct
(248) 530-1080 Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org
***Important Note to Residents***
Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

**From:** Tom Friesen <tom.d.friesen@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:57 AM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Proposed plan

Please forward the following comments to the city council.
I strongly object to the cities plan. Reviewing the history and growth of Birmingham provides a view of well thought out city growth. The current proposed plan not only does not continue this fine tradition it reverses it. Taking streets like Maryland and arbitrarily turning a street that has been developing in Birmingham's fine tradition and turning it into a multi unit zone will change not only Maryland but nearby streets and lower values and life style of the whole area.
I trust the city leaders will rethink their plans and consider the current residents and the city's fine history.
Thomas Friesen
1535 Maryland Blvd.

**From:** DARLENE GEHRINGER <maplepro@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 2:58 PM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; Alex Bingham
**Subject:** Multifamily Housing plan

We are against bringing multifamily housing into Birmingham, especially into single family residential zones.
This will lower property values, increase residential vehicle traffic, disrupt each areas neighborhood design (ie Poppleton Park, Quarton Lake Estates, etc.)

The city is overdeveloped as is, with parking problems, traffic jams and business leaving the city.

This plan does not represent good intentions to the residents of the City.

Darlene Gehringer
1108 W Maple Rd

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Master plan proposal

1 message

**Fran Gross** <frosting911@aol.com> Fri, Feb 5, 2021 at 9:08 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

Mr DuPuis: I am writing to register my complete disapproval of the proposed master plan including your process of attempting to hoodwink our community - yet again. Remember the Restoration Hardware fiasco? I am not opposed to good master planning. I am a resident of the HAL neighborhood for almost 40 years and I have watched our community suffer from a variety of bad choices, starting with the BIG FOOT house to the recent changes to the PSD/ Maple Road - leaving it more narrow, more difficult to park and a destroyer of tire rims. I am opposed to the continuing attempts to over populate our suburban community. Yes, we are a suburb - of an urban area - Detroit. Where is it written that we must become an urban center ourselves? The proposed “Seam” Project appears to create some level of multi-family housing on every major and minor thoroughfare in our community. In the HAL neighborhood as well as other streets and neighborhoods, beautiful alleles of trees and greenspace will be destroyed or truncated. All of the recent construction in Birmingham may be providing real estate developers with financial gain but what are the residents getting in return? At every corner you are reducing our light and air - one of the reasons people choose to live in the suburbs. You are encasing each thoroughfare seam with cement buildings of various heights and garages. Any homeowner living the third house in on almost every street in Birminham should be made immediately aware or your proposed plan. Can our commissioners and planning board once again be so easily tricked by “outside” consultants into believing what is best for the residents (in this case SEAMS) rather than the residents themselves. Whose agenda are you hoping to move on so quickly? Furthermore, I am opposed to the City granting any subsidies or other incentives and abatements in order to complete future development.

Please pass this letter in to the commissioners and planning board members.

Fran Gross
c 248.535.0524

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# Master Plan

1 message

**lisa hamill** <lhhamill@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 12, 2021 at 11:55 AM
To: pboutros@bhamgov.org, tlonge@bhamgov.org, cballer@bhamgov.org, rhoff@bhamgov.org, bhost@bhamgov.org, mnickita@bhamgov.org, ssherman@bhamgov.org, jecker@bhamgov.org

>
> As a 25 year resident of Birmingham, I am urging the Planning Board and City Commissioners to scrap, or at least, table the master plan. After participating in the February 10th Zoom meeting, it is apparent many residents are alarmed by the plan. The lack of clarity in the 200+ page document leaves much room for interpretation, and the original misinformation given regarding “seams,” lot combining and low income housing is concerning.
>
> Why the need to push this through? This current pandemic is going to severely alter the City of Birmingham. With restaurants and businesses closing, residents leaving, and office space rentals greatly reduced, because of remote working, the master plan becomes obsolete practically the minute it is adopted.
>
> These new problems created by the pandemic should be addressed first. If the Planning Board wishes to proceed with revamping sidewalks and biking/walking paths, along with adding cafes in parks, by all means, do so! We can definitely benefit from making Birmingham more beautiful and walker friendly. But until we get a grasp on the effects of COVID the master plan is a waste of time and money.
>
> In addition, a plan that is 200+ pages, should be voted on by the residents. Five City Commissioners should not be the sole determining factor for passage.
>
> Lisa Hamill
> 1122 Brookwood

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:42 AM
**To:** Corey holter
**Subject:** Re: Fw: Birmingham Master Plan comments - Westwood Drive

Received.

On Mon, Feb 8, 2021 at 1:26 PM Corey holter <corey_holter@msn.com> wrote:

Ms. Bingham - would you please share this note with the city commisioners?

thank you,
Corey Holter

Sent from Outlook

---

**From:** Corey holter
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 9, 2021 1:44 AM
**To:** jecker@bhamgov.org <jecker@bhamgov.org>; bcowan@bhamgov.org <bcowan@bhamgov.org>; ndupuis@bhamgov.org <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>
**Cc:** juliemholter@gmail.com <juliemholter@gmail.com>
**Subject:** Birmingham Master Plan comments - Westwood Drive

To: Jana Ecker, City Planning Director; Brooks Cowan, City Planner; Nicholas Dupuis, Planning

From: Corey Holter, 1087 Westwood Drive, Birmingham, MI

Subject: Comments on The Birmingham Plan: A Citywide Master Plan for 2040

Date: February 8, 2021

Ms. Ecker, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Dupuis:

I am writing to express a specific concern with the Birmingham Master Plan proposal. Specifically that Westwood Drive be defined a neighborhood seam and therefore (as I understand it) eligible for duplexs and lot consolidation in order to develop “Cottage Courts”.

Before I get to my concern, I would like to let you know that I have read the entire Master Plan (took about 2 hours!) and believe that there are a lot of positives in the Master Plan proposal. Among other positives was the emphasis on parks, extending sidewalks, developing the circular cycling path through Birmingham, and the development of the mixed-use area downtown. Clearly a lot of thought has gone into the plan.

I believe I understand the concept of neighborhood seams, but I believe that Westwood Drive should not be a neighborhood seam. It seems like the reason to label Westwood a neighborhood seam is simply that it is the furthest West street in Birmingham. However, its character and feel is the same as any other North-South street in Quarton Lake such as Glenhurst.

Note also that to the West, while not Birmingham, is Bloomfield Village, which has the same feel as Westwood and other streets in Quarton Lakes: similar lot sizes, similar home sizes, and very walkable. In fact, you wouldn't know that you'd gone between Birmingham and Bloomfield Village in most cases. In fact, Westwood Drive encompasses both Bloomfield Village and Birmingham! The first two blocks are Bloomfield Village and the remaining blocks are Birmingham. To me that's evidence that there should not be a seam between Birmingham and Bloomfield Village along Westwood – frankly they're almost indistinguishable and indeed are linked on the same street.

I would also like to provide specific verbiage from the Master Plan proposal that I think contradicts Westwood as a seam:

Pages 21-22: "This plan identifies limited locations along with key design restrictions which would allow increased housing diversity. It does not propose more intense housing within neighborhoods, rather at edges along larger roads, and controlled in intensity." (Clearly Westwood is not a larger road)

Page 33: "Neighborhood seams are located along the edges of neighborhoods, typically at collector and arterial roads like Lincoln, Fourteen Mile, Southfield, Maple, Cranbrook, and similar roads, and along the edges of mixed-use districts where they meet neighborhoods." (Clearly Westwood is not a collector or arterial road, or on the edge of a mixed-use district)

Page 115: "This plan maps neighborhood seams along the edges of neighborhoods, principally at major roadways, transitioning to protect the lower-intensity single-family neighborhood fabric." (Clearly Westwood is not a major roadway)

Page 8: "In considering Birmingham's future, its borders should be a blurry line". (I would submit that nowhere is that line more blurry already than on Westwood Drive – a street that itself is already split between Birmingham and its neighbor Bloomfield Village)

In conclusion, it appears that Westwood was chosen as a "seam" simply because it is the furthest West street in Birmingham and Quarton Lakes. I believe I have pointed out why it shouldn't be a neighborhood seam, using logic and references from the Master Plan itself. If anyone working on the Plan would like, I'd be happy to take a walk with them along Westwood and neighboring streets (both in Birmingham and Bloomfield Village) to show that in reality there is no seam but only a continuous neighborhood feel.

Thank you,

Corey Holter

1087 Westwood Drive

Sent from Outlook

--

**Alexandria D. Bingham**

*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**
**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802  Office Direct
(248) 530-1080  Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org
***Important Note to Residents***
Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Bhm Master Plan

1 message

**J. Peter Johnston** <jpjerdoc@gmail.com> Sun, Feb 7, 2021 at 2:17 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

The new master plan which removes single family homes along a "seam" and replaces them with multi family units (apartments, townhouses_will change Birmingham as we know it. Increasing the density will change the character of our city. Perhaps those who want such density should consider moving to cities which have a larger population.. At this time we have an adequate tax base to sustain maintenance of a very attractive small town, a pleasant place to live. Also, the recent bond approval shows that the schools have adequate funding.

Peter and Mary Jo Johnston long time residents Please share this with the Planning Board and the City Council

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:42 AM
**To:** Craig Knight
**Subject:** Re: Birmingham Master Plan

Received.

On Mon, Feb 8, 2021 at 4:14 PM Craig Knight <ddkbny1@icloud.com> wrote:

> Dear Alexandria,
>
> Could you please share this email with the City Council. Thank you!
>
> Please reconsider the city plan for multi-family housing in seam areas. As a 26 year Birmingham home owner I cannot see the benefit of changing the landscape of our single home neighborhoods that are the fabric of this community.
>
> During a worldwide pandemic where tensions are already at at all time high and where our neighborhoods and homes have become refuges, why would we want to create an additional sense of uncertainty for our residents?
>
> I know that some of the new housing would not require tear downs of existing homes. However adding the proposed 2000 new housing units adds the potential of 2000-4000 more cars on our majority of single lane streets. Adds an increase in noise pollution, less green space, increased class sizes in our schools, an increased demand on our city resources including, and most importantly, our police and fire departments.
>
> What will happen to our neighbors on these seam streets where the proposed 1000 new residences would be built? The same residents that could potentially be separated from their friends and families, where do they go? During this pandemic our relationships have been of the utmost importance. Additionally, I worry about the financial impact on the home owners that border a seam area. Some of these seam areas are across from our neighbors of Beverly Hills and Bloomfield Village. Is it fair to those homeowners to impact their property values? Are their quiet streets now going to be cut-throughs for the additional cars?
>
> I read the need for an increased tax base. Is it not already increasing with the existing new single family homes that are currently being built? Could it be met in addition to current new home construction with just the construction of proposed housing in the triangle and railroad district that would not require tear downs?
>
> I have not spoken with one Birmingham resident that thinks this is a good idea. Please do not tear down existing homes, displace our residents, affect our home values and change our town.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Deborah Knight
>
> Sent from my iPhone

--
**Alexandria D. Bingham**
*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**
**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802 Office Direct
(248) 530-1080 Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org
***Important Note to Residents***
Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing regarding the master plan updates regarding increasing housing density. I disagree with the approach to do so, especially with the scale that is proposed in the document of increasing density along the entire length of every artery in the city.

The plan as I see it paints the density increases with a broad brush. There seems to be areas in the city that might benefit from this, such as the immediate downtown area. However, other areas, like Maryland Avenue, Lincoln Street outside downtown, and Oak Street are single family neighborhood streets and are inappropriate areas for multiple housing units. It appears that these units are being forced on these areas with no real consideration for them as historically single family neighborhoods.

At this moment when homebuyers are looking for more space, the city is proposing a higher density of smaller living spaces. The pandemic has shifted housing needs, perhaps permanently. Remote work is forecasted to continue or increase, with families needing space for quiet work areas. Buyers are rediscovering suburbs, yet we continue on the path to make Birmingham into an urban style area; while these kind of areas are seeing a flight to suburbs and exurbs. It does not make sense to make our city an urban type experience when homeowners' needs have shifted dramatically, suddenly and perhaps permanently away from that lifestyle. New York's most expensive areas are seeing flight for more space. We do not want to see that here.

Additionally, this type of infill housing is generally seen in areas that are seeing a downward shift in property values. I would hate to start that process when we have a lovely city to begin with. It will most certainly affect housing values negatively. We recently moved to a lovely historic home on Lincoln and had planned and started many updates. I am immediately rethinking future investments in updating the home given the risk that you might force an apartment in next door!

I suggest that given this sudden shift in American lifestyles, and the potential for it to be a permanent one, that we need to go back to the drawing board, and not pass a plan based on old assumptions of work and life styles that suddenly and perhaps permanently do not fit. I would like to see the city have respect for current owners and their lives and home values. Too often we see decisions made that benefit developers and not residents. This seems like one of those proposals. I respectfully request that Birmingham support single family housing and not force multi family units into single family neighborhoods.

Tricia Meade
1880 W. Lincoln St.
February 10, 2021

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Multifamily Housing Plan?

1 message

**Alice Lezotte** <zareyskid@gmail.com> Sat, Feb 20, 2021 at 2:54 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

Dear Mr. Dupuis: I believe if something isn't broken you don't need to fix it.

Birmingham hasn't been concerned about the need to"raise the city's tax base", the need "to bring additional children to support our schools" and/or issues regarding "housing to attract millennials". I won't state the obvious arguments to support my view point.

Instead of unnecessary,horrific impactful changes to our community, why not look to areas that can be reasonably addressed?
The city planning concept of "seams" seems appropriate when applied to those few areas that may be applicable in our City. Instead of 2,000 housing units replacing 800 well established single-familly homes (increasing population density, ignoring the known health implications,and potential reduction of city tax base), get creative! Surely one can design an attractive, lower income housing in available areas that will compliment the neighborhoods and maintain the living environment we want for all our neighbors.

I know this isn't an easy subject to address. It is my hope the powers that be will do what is necessary to maintain the integrity of our town while addressing new ideas for today and the future.

Please for my comments to all members of the Planning Commission.

Sincerely, Alice Lezotte Birmingham resident and taxpayer

**From:** John <jcmalert@hotmail.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 11:47 AM
**To:** ndupis@bhamgov.org
**Cc:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** 2040 Master Plan Comments

Mr. Dupuis

I have reviewed the 2040 Master Plan draft and my wife and I listened in on the Zoom Meeting last night. The Master Plan Themes as written are very well thought out with the exception of "Embrace Managed Growth"". Let me comment on this.

My wife and I moved to Birmingham in 1970 after I got out of the USMC. We paid dearly for our first house hoping the price would go up and it did. It did because Birmingham has been a very desirable community and the folks that moved here found the means to make it work…..no one helped pay my mortgage or utility bills…I paid them because I worked hard to make the money necessary to live in this great community. It is noted that the City needs 2000 more homes by 2040. I'm still not clear why that is but those homes certainly don't have to be subsidized housing at any level. Our taxes were not meant to be used to provide subsidized housing for anyone. There was a note about the City needing to have reasonably priced housing so Teachers, First Responders, etc can live here. What about all the other city workers and Birmingham store workers…do we need to provide reasonably priced housing for them as well? Of course not. There are many great communities around here i.e. Royal Oak, Berkley, Beverly Hills where folks that can't afford to live in Birmingham can live and flourish. Use our tax dollars to fix the streets, create bike paths and all the other things mentioned last night that can be done to enhance our city. Subsidized housing or whatever term you want to use will not help housing values…just the opposite. The note that "the community overall needs this type of housing to maintain diversity and future population" is as bogus as it gets. Let the free market system decide who lives here and who doesn't, not some artificial scheme that hurts the long term residents of this wonderful community.

John/Kris Martin
1131 Lyonhurst
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 644-3660 (H)
(248) 885-1277 (Cell)

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Opposed to Multi-family housing

1 message

**MARYANN MCKENNA** <mam247@comcast.net> Fri, Feb 19, 2021 at 12:18 PM
To: "ndupuis@bhamgov.org" <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

I am opposed to the master plan proposal to increase city density by replacing single family units with multi-family housing.

MaryAnn McKenna
1905 Maryland Blvd
48009

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing regarding the master plan updates regarding increasing housing density. I disagree with the approach to do so, especially with the scale that is proposed in the document of increasing density along the entire length of every artery in the city.

The plan as I see it paints the density increases with a broad brush. There seems to be areas in the city that might benefit from this, such as the immediate downtown area. However, other areas, like Maryland Avenue, Lincoln Street outside downtown, and Oak Street are single family neighborhood streets and are inappropriate areas for multiple housing units. It appears that these units are being forced on these areas with no real consideration for them as historically single family neighborhoods.

At this moment when homebuyers are looking for more space, the city is proposing a higher density of smaller living spaces. The pandemic has shifted housing needs, perhaps permanently. Remote work is forecasted to continue or increase, with families needing space for quiet work areas. Buyers are rediscovering suburbs, yet we continue on the path to make Birmingham into an urban style area; while these kind of areas are seeing a flight to suburbs and exurbs. It does not make sense to make our city an urban type experience when homeowners' needs have shifted dramatically, suddenly and perhaps permanently away from that lifestyle. New York's most expensive areas are seeing flight for more space. We do not want to see that here.

Additionally, this type of infill housing is generally seen in areas that are seeing a downward shift in property values. I would hate to start that process when we have a lovely city to begin with. It will most certainly affect housing values negatively. We recently moved to a lovely historic home on Lincoln and had planned and started many updates. I am immediately rethinking future investments in updating the home given the risk that you might force an apartment in next door!

I suggest that given this sudden shift in American lifestyles, and the potential for it to be a permanent one, that we need to go back to the drawing board, and not pass a plan based on old assumptions of work and life styles that suddenly and perhaps permanently do not fit. I would like to see the city have respect for current owners and their lives and home values. Too often we see decisions made that benefit developers and not residents. This seems like one of those proposals. I respectfully request that Birmingham support single family housing and not force multi family units into single family neighborhoods.

Tricia Meade
1880 W. Lincoln St.
February 10, 2021

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# It would be tragic to see these plans to replace 800 single family homes in Birmingham with multifamily housing. STOP

1 message

**Mary Jo Meso** <maryyo@me.com> Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 6:57 PM
To: jecker@bhamgov.org

Sent from my iPhone

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# multifamily homes

1 message

**MOLLY MITCHELL** <mol7@comcast.net> Sat, Feb 20, 2021 at 4:19 PM
To: "ndupuis@bhamgov.org" <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

February 20, 2021

Good afternoon Mr. Dupuis,

I am writing you today after reading a section of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle titled "Multifamily Housing is being planned to replace 800 single family Birmingham neighborhood homes!". In reading the current article, I am honestly heartbroken.

Born and raised in Birmingham at the southeast corner of the city I have watched changes occur; some good and some bad. I have watched areas develop such as the rail district that has provided opportunities for housing and small business at a high price tag. I have watched houses built from a Sears Catalog be torn down for mass production homes without value to history to take their place. I have watched families leave and new ones move in; minimal stay for the long haul.

See I am one who knows my neighbors, who shovels snow for the elderly, places newspapers on front porches, and who mows and rakes the leaves for those in need. I do not ask for repayment or acknowledgment. I enjoy my neighborhood. I have been blessed to live here for 46 years, born and raised. My family moved into this area well before I was born and this is the town, I chose to raise my son.

Unfortunately, the Master Plan was invented. Most likely from someone who did not live here, go to school here, or cherish the Birmingham that was created in order for us to be here today. This plan has created congestion on streets that were never meant for traffic. Disturbed families from enjoying safe areas to play, in efforts to be more approachable to doners who contribute funds for investment; investments that exist for portfolios.

The idea of taking down existing homes to replace with multifamily structures to attract millennials and younger buyers is inharmonious to the families of the neighborhoods of Birmingham. The creation of structures such as this promotes multiple vehicles in which parking is lacking. The streets have already been decreased due to the bike path created; which remains dangerous as the drivers are not paying attention to anything but themselves. The streets also have been affected during the fall when leaves are to be cleaned up and there is limited space in which to place them. These are all aspects that when the idea was pitched did not cross the minds of the elected officials of how it would directly affect their constituents.

I am a loyal Birmingham resident. I have lived in other places during my early adulthood but always compared it to the town in which I grew up. Birmingham today is nothing like the town in which I knew. The town is losing its appeal for the family unit. I do not want to live in a neighborhood or town for that matter, in which history is torn down to make way for what one would consider a measure for increasing the population. It would be a much more pleasant environment if families

could purchase the homes that already exist rather than building companies, who in turn tear them down and deplete the history of Birmingham.

I would hope that city officials recognize that not every individual follows social media, participates in Facebook or nextdoor; that some people remain happy with reading a newspaper and would inform those who will be affected by these changes in a proper timely fashion. The meetings and zoom calls have already taken place, but this resident sure does oppose the idea. I would hope that this would be recognized by the city officials and taken off the agenda. I will absolutely be discussing with my neighbors and will be reviewing each board and office member who has brought this to the table; reflecting and making my vote next election season.

Thank you for your time.

Dr. Molly Mitchell DNP, FNP-C

1713 Mansfield

Birmingham, MI 48009

248-459-8660

Mol7@comcast.net

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# 2040 Master Plan

1 message

**Alice Moss** <alicehmoss@hotmail.com> Tue, Mar 2, 2021 at 3:42 PM
To: "city-commission@bhamgov.org" <city-commission@bhamgov.org>, "jecker@bhamgov.org" <jecker@bhamgov.org>

To: Mayor Pierre Boutros ,and The Birmingham City Commission,
Planning Director Jana Ecker, and The Planning Board

I am writing to express my concern with elements of the proposed 2040 Master Plan: Specifically concerning the promotion of increased density in single family neighborhoods.

I believe that changing zoning to permit (and promote) Multi-family housing to 'Edges' of single-family neighborhoods could have severe negative effects on our city.

Adding Densification to Edges of neighborhoods effectively sets up a WALL, cutting off and isolating neighbors instead of joining them and making access to Downtown, Parks and shops easier.

One of your stated assets in the Birmingham Plan is TREES. More likely they would be destroyed to make way for higher density developments (infrastructure, traffic, parking and increased impermeable surfaces).

Neighborhoods can be fragile and this kind of density change would be disastrous losing value and the uniqueness that makes them desirable.

Concerning Lot Enlargement Areas- we need the smaller homes/lots. We need the diversity of housing. That is what you're trying to achieve with adding multi- family dwellings. To remove the smaller homes by combining lots (to one bigger thus more expensive house) defeats the purpose.

If we want to encourage more multi-family residential housing, there are ways and places to do that without disturbing the fabric of our neighborhoods.

Thank you,

Alice Moss

**From:** Noreen Novrocki <norwren@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Monday, February 15, 2021 9:56 AM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Multi family housing plan

We are against the plan for 2,000 multi family homes in our beautiful city. It's a horrible idea.
Please forward to city council.
Thank you,
Noreen Novrocki & Burt Pierce

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** jeff@nowickiautosport.com
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 5:43 PM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Multi

Hello Alexandria,

I'm a Birmingham resident, home owner and have lived in the area for almost 45 years. I have witnessed the growth and now the contraction due too the current situation. I'm also a business owner so I understand the hardships local businesses have endured. I understand for the push for diversity, but at what cost? Don't we already have a significant tax base? We have one of the wealthiest counties and city in the US. As always follow the money….

I'm very much against multifamily housing in the Birmingham area for the following reasons.

- What this will do too our property values
- Make the area less desirable
- Increased crime and larceny. (we have already seen what is happening at Somerset) I have a friend who is a Sargent on the Troy police dept with some startling stats that the media won't disclose. We saw in town over the year's more fights and even a shooting between non- local residents plus gang and drug activity. I know a family that had their kids assaulted by a group by Poppelton park a few years back. If this is the direction the city wants too take? The city will lose more business and residents, because the locals will not go into town. It will happen….
- Increased traffic and foot traffic/parking in town which is already an issue.
- Environmental impact with removal of trees, green spaces etc. that makes this area a "walkable" community.

Regards,

Jeff Nowicki

Nowicki Autosport/Design LLC.
www.nowickiautosport.com

**From:** ken pembroke <pembrokeken@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 10:01 PM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Hair brained Idea!

Here is a copy of the e-mail I sent to the planning board. I have lived here all my adult life. This is the DUMMEST "idea" I have ever heard of. NOTE::::: I VOTE. This better not go thru. q e d

It is totally wrong for you to destroy established neighborhoods with established great neighbors. Why? Home owners invested in this community and now your going to destroy the very reason we moved here. Do NOT do this --its wrong. We work hard all our lives for our homes and now your just going to nilly-willy take it away. That is morally wrong. Ken Wancho 2813 Pembroke

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Multi-family Housing

1 message

**Ken Platt** <kpswing9@gmail.com> Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 5:04 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

Dear Mr. Dupuis, please pass on our disapproval of the planning commission on multifamily housing in our mature quaint and lovely town. Our  town with the increase in noise heard nearly nightly off Woodward Avenue is proof that this town is maxed out and bulging at the seams, as it is. This proposal will only bring bad things to our community. We offer a strong NO!!!

Ken and Janet Platt
1308 Davis Avenue

**From:** Beth Popovich <bethpopovich@sbcglobal.net>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:52 PM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Cc:** Katie Lowe
**Subject:** Multifamily Housing in Birmingham - Concerned Citizen

Hi Nicholas and Alexandria,

After reading the Birmingham Bloomfield Eagle, I was made aware of the new proposal to allow multifamily housing to be developed across Birmingham. I would like the following questions to be answered so please forward my questions to the planning board.

1. Who is the responsible party for proposing this new master plan and are they current residents of Birmingham or Bloomfield Hills? What are their current credentials and are they credible? If yes, please provide documentation to support.
2. Who has been consulted on this proposal and please share any meeting minutes and documentation to support previous discussions
3. What is the project plan to complete this "new master plan", how much additional money will this cost citizens and how much of our current tax structure will be allocated to support this project?
4. What resources and organization will be participating in this proposal, and was there a proper vetting system to ensure a fair and due process has been followed to participate in the proposal (RFI, RFP, Orals)?
5. What are key benefits of introducing this type of housing into the community, and what are the consequences individuals and business will see as a result?
6. How much time has been factored in for citizens to investigate this proposal?
7. When will citizen vote on this proposal?

I would appreciate a reply to confirm receipt of my questions.

Thank you.

Beth

**From:** Lisa Grenn <lpgrenn735@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 5:07 PM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Multifamily Housing for Birmingham

Dear Andrea;

I would like to express my very strong NEGATIVE OPINION as regards any consideration for multifamily housing in Birmingham. There is simply NO upside to this! It would detract from the natural beauty of our city, cause more pollution, and increase traffic. Please kindly forward this email to the relevant individuals involved in the planning process. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lisa Porter-Grenn, M.D.

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# from Dr .Annis Pratt, pleased re great Master Plan

1 message

**Annis** <avpratt@aol.com> Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 9:30 AM
Reply-To: Annis <avpratt@aol.com>
To: "ndupuis@bhamgov.org" <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

Dear Mr. Dupuis,

I am pleased that the City of Birmingham has come up with a Master Plan to build affordable housing; I have looked through the plan, and I see that it will add more folks to our tax base and also enhance the diversity of people living here.

We are a long-time Birmingham family, having moved here in 1979 to be near our parents, who had built their home in 1958. We live one house up from Lincoln, and would have no trouble welcoming multi-unit apartments to our neighborhood.

Our only problem with Birmingham has been its lack of diversity. The plan will fulfill our desire to live in a neighborhood that has a more vibrant mix of ages, incomes, and ethnicities.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Annis Pratt

Nicholas Dupuis <ndupuis@bhamgov.org>

# Plans

1 message

**Barbara Ritsema** <barbritsema@gmail.com> Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 12:20 PM
To: ndupuis@bhamgov.org

As a Birmingham long-term resident  over the age of 65,  I totally disagree with the plan to create “cottages” and divide lots to create even smaller footprints than we all ready have. This will cause a major loss in property values of homes in the neighborhoods affected.
I vote and voice a resounding “no.”  We had other legislation against dividing lots and that needs legislation to be respected

Barb Ritsema
248-892-8473
165 Puritan Ave Birmingham.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** sellenraad Sellenraad <klsellenraad@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Monday, March 1, 2021 11:42 AM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** City Planning proposal
**Attachments:** This is regarding Multifamily Housing Plan Birmingham as.docx

Alexandria Bingham,

This is in response to the article in the Eagle Newspaper, February 10, 2021 regarding the proposal to replace 800 homes in Birmingham neighborhoods. As was suggested, please forward these comments (attached) to the City Council. Thank you. I hope this helps Birmingham, and I hope I have sent it in time.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Sellenraad, ASID, NCIDQ
FL Registered Interior Designer #ID5262
KLS Interiors and Planning
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
248-622-4894

March 1, 2021

Birmingham, Mich. Planning Department, and City Council,

This is regarding the Multifamily Housing Plan for 800 Single Family Homes in Birmingham as Printed in the Eagle News, February 10, 2021.

A part of this proposal is to increase the density of Birmingham by 2,000 housing units: “higher density multifamily housing would be constructed along Birmingham streets including Quarton Road, N. Old Woodward, West and East Maple Rd., Southfield Road, West and East Lincoln Road, 14 Mile Road, North Adams, Coolidge Hwy, North and South Eaton St.”

These “Seams” of new dense home building is the exact opposite of what should be done during a pandemic. These people apparently are trying a heavy handed proposal that would line only their pocketbooks as the new proposal would be a stress load on existing streets, schools, plumbing and electrical systems, parking areas, and pure enjoyment of the whole community.

1. As far as the value to existing homeowners, home values would go down, but first someone would be kicked out of their home. Most Birmingham residence put a lot of money in their homes to update them and upgrade them and someone will ask them to either leave or build a high rise next to their homes?
2. This developer is focused on his pocketbook, not the city’s best interests because I can tell you everyone in the design and architecture industry is focused on creating healthy happier homes for Wellness, and Quality of Life, new concepts born from the Covid pandemic. This includes Green Space for fresh clean air where kids can throw a ball, and sit outside on the grass with a book, or have a picnic. It includes safe, separate entries, it includes Mature Trees which give off clean oxygen into the air, it includes balconies and porches, for people to connect with nature, it includes places to ride a bike, walk, and take your dog for a run. Lots in Birmingham are already small, what kind of unhealthy density is being planned here?
3. Taking trees down ruins property values, decreases the charm of any community, and it ruins the atmosphere. Eco Friendly design incudes planting trees by roads and intersections where cars idle. A car in “idle” gives off the most carbon monoxide which damages the ozone. Trees can help. Trees give an area charm, good “feeling” ambiance, they help bring biophilic design to any neighborhood. They are easy to chop down, but take many, many years to regrow. In lumber forestation planning the word is “take down one, plant two” so we can keep our precious mature trees and valuable forests.
4. There is the history and charm of older homes. Why would anyone want to deface Birmingham’s beautiful neighborhoods? They have character which can’t be found elsewhere. It is a very mean and naïve thing to do.
5. All this is suppose to increase the tax base? Birmingham residents already have very high taxes. Their schools are very good schools. If you are finding shortages in the city’s tax base, either someone is embezzling, or Birmingham people are quite spoiled, selfish, and bratty people, which I doubt very much. Try walking your dog at Quarton Lake. Everyone enjoys the outdoors and everyone smiles and says hello. This is Birmingham at its best. Anyone trying to ruin this city is not a nice person.

This proposal should not slip through the cracks. It is a distressing, unhealthy, and unpleasant endeavor. I wholly do not support it. The great City Planner, Mr. Haussmann took out dense slums, multiple housing areas in Paris to stop the spread of pandemics and the plague. He widened streets and added Green Spaces and boulevards which to this day has put Paris on the map as one of the most enjoyable and famous cities in the world. Let's rescue Birmingham shall we?

Sincerely,

Karen L. Sellenraad, ASID, NCIDQ
FL Registered Interior Designer #ID5262
KLS Interiors and Planning
248-622-4894

**From:** Stark, Bob <stark@brrice.edu>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:11 PM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** Single family homes are the best

5:02 PM (

I want to express my thoughts on destroying single family homes and building more multifamily units. I think this is not a good idea. I have lived in Birmingham since the 40's almost exclusively. Birmingham has been a great single family home area.
I cannot believe that we are going to risk what we have.

At the same time I find the idea of forcing neighborhoods to curb their streets another bad idea. Since I was very young the city has had a great plan where the residents themselves decide if they want them curbed by having a large percentage of the residents. It appears to me that the government is trying to impose their will on the citizens.

Bob Stark
1020 Chesterfield Ave, Birmingham, MI 48009
--

**Robert Stark**
Transportation Coordinator
Brother Rice High School
248-833-2318 | brrice.edu

**From:** Marc Sunday <marcsunday@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 3:06 PM
**To:** abingham@bhamgov.org
**Cc:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; nsunday_1@yahoo.com
**Subject:** Multi family Housing Project in Birmingham

Nicholas / Alexandria -

Please share my thoughts with the Birmingham planning department. I just found out about this multi family housing project proposal and I am not happy about. My family has been a resident homeowner on South Eton since 2012. We don't want to see the population of Birmingham to grow by 10%.

Thanks,
Marc Sunday

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** PAUL TAROS <tarosassociates@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:23 PM
**To:** ndupuis@bhamgov.org; abingham@bhamgov.org
**Subject:** No more multifamily

There is no need for more multifamily housing in Birmingham. There are other nearby cities where people can live. Birmingham is not the only place where people can live. We do not need more multifamily housing.

Paul Taros MBA CPA President TAROS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Certified Public Accountants

Alexandria Bingham,
City Clerk
City of Birminaham
151 Martin Street
Birmingham, mI 48009

February 9, 2021

Dear Ms Bingham,

I've just recently learned of a proposal in the city's New Master Plan, and to share my comments in a letter to you, to be re-directed to the Planning Board, the City Council, and any other appropriate departments or persons.

The issue of concern is a part of the plan to greatly increase the density of our city by jamming every possible square inch with stacks of multi-family housing.

I've lived in Birmingham for many years. I love the city and I certainly want the best for it. This is certainly NOT.

the Warblers

Surely, we should be able to count on our own Planning Board to recognize the value of our ring of vibrant, desirable neighborhoods. I'd like to feel they regard themselves as responsible stewards of them ... to protect and maintain them, to entertain only suggestions that further enhance their innate character, to encourage and reward thoughtful renovation.

This proposal reeks of a hit-and-run developer's dream scheme, and I'm frankly appalled that it wasn't dismissed at the first mention.

Our Downtown has already surrendered too much of its unique "Birmingham-ness" behind walls of anonymous mid-rise buildings crammed tight to the sidewalks' edges, and those sidewalks cluttered with make-shift add-ons to the ever multiplying bistros. (Good lord, was Royal Oak our role model?) The "gateway" structures could mark the entry to "Anywhere-ville."

These neighborhoods we are so fortunate to have grown over the years are a treasure to be shared, not buried or squandered.

With my most devoted hopes for our future,

Allene Warbler

2185 West Lincoln Road ~ Birmingham, Michigan 48009 ~ (~~313~~) 248 644-6195

**From:** Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:42 AM
**To:** Carol Williams
**Subject:** Re: Master Plan

Received.

On Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 9:38 AM Carol Williams <carol.williams@aon.com> wrote:

> Alexandria,
>
> Please forward the following comments to the City Council.
>
> We strongly object to this proposed plan of increased density through the destruction of our single family homes. Our street, Maryland Blvd, has been arbitrarily chosen and we believe our property values are already impacted. We do not see another street that is similar to ours impacted. This is an extreme proposal without the opportunity for residents to be involved.
>
> We expect the members of the City Counsel to act on behalf of it residents and their wishes.
>
> **Carol A. Williams, CPCU |** Resident Managing Director, CEO
> **Aon** | Central Region
> 3000 Town Center | Suite 3000 | Southfield, MI 48075
>
> t +1 248.936.5291 | m: +1 248.797.3461 | f: +1 312.381.0520

Conference Call Dial-In: 210-795-0493 Access Code: 598 806 036

carol.williams@aon.com

aon.com

Mailing Address: MSC# 17385 PO Box 1447, Lincolnshire, IL 60069

--

**Alexandria D. Bingham**
*City Clerk*
**City of Birmingham**
**151 Martin Street**
**Birmingham, MI 48009**
(248) 530-1802 Office Direct
(248) 530-1080 Fax
abingham@bhamgov.org

***Important Note to Residents***

Let's connect! Join the Citywide Email System to receive important City updates and critical information specific to your neighborhood at www.bhamgov.org/citywideemail.

City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

# MEMORANDUM

**Planning Department**

**DATE:** **March 5, 2021**

**TO:** **Planning Board**

**FROM:** **Jana Ecker, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** **Status Update on Study Session Items**

The Planning Board's study sessions over the past year or two have been spent discussing and reviewing the draft 2040 Plan and soliciting public input. Accordingly, the Planning Board may wish to discuss the status of the following study session topics that the Planning Board had previously studied and determine which topics to restart at the April study session:

1. **Glazing standards** – This matter has been discussed by the board since approximately 2016. Staff conducted research on transparency requirements in other communities in 2016 and again in 2019/2020 to establish revised glazing standards in Birmingham. Representatives from Guardian Glass attended a Planning Board meeting and discussed the different parameters and types of glazing available and their differences. This matter was last discussed at a public hearing conducted in August 2020. No action was taken at this time as the Planning Board requested additional information. Study sessions thereafter were dedicated to a detailed review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan.

2. **Solar panels** – Solar panel standards were added to the Zoning Ordinance in 2009. In 2019, the board began discussing the desire to remove the mandatory design review (for non-historic buildings) for solar panel installation for front, street oriented systems given the changes in technology. The Planning Board discussed this in 2019 and most recently in July 2020 to make ordinance amendments that would assist in removing barriers to the use of alternative energy solutions and encourage viable sustainability efforts. The proposed updates also added requirements for new and emerging technologies such as solar shingles and solar energy storage, as well as adding options and subsequent requirements that were not included in the original language, such as ground-mounted solar electric systems. The Planning Board asked to have a solar panel expert attend a future meeting to assist the board. Study sessions thereafter were dedicated to a detailed review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan.

3. **Dumpster screening** – Back in July 2019, the Planning Board set a public hearing for August 14, 2019 to amend Article 4, section 4.54(B)(8) to amend the permitted materials to be used for the screening of trash enclosures to allow the use of metal and to prohibit

the use of chain link fencing. This public hearing was not scheduled as the Planning Board ended up postponing several site plan items to the August 14, 2019 meeting, and other items, including the master plan update, took priority moving forward.

4. **Outdoor dining enclosures** – In December 2020, the City Commission discussed allowing the use of outdoor dining enclosures as a result of a restaurant's request. The City Commission directed the Planning Board to consider ordinance amendments to Article 4, section 4.44, Outdoor Dining, that would permit outdoor dining enclosures permanently after the temporary COVID-19 resolutions have expired. The City Commission further discussed potentially creating separate standards for outdoor dining enclosures depending on whether or not they served alcohol, the type of liquor license the establishment held an/or whether the enclosure was proposed on public or private property.

5. **Wall art** – The Public Arts Board and the Design Review Board have been discussing the distinction between wall art and commercial signage since the acceptance of the Terminating Vista Plan in August 2020 by the City Commission, which recommended the use of wall art in certain locations. Both the Public Arts Board and the Design Review Board have recently recommended that a definition for wall art be created and added in Article 9, section 9.02, Definitions, of the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, both boards have also recommended the creation of a separate process for the review of wall art through amendments to Article 7, section 7.41 – 7.44, to establish a process for the review and placement of wall art in the City.

6. **Special Land Use Permit review process** – The City Attorney recently recommended that the City consider amending Article 7, section 7.34, Special Land Use Review, to clarify the process for the review of Special Land Use Permit applications and the order of board/commission review.

7. **Medical marijuana regulations** – The City Attorney recently recommended that the City amend Article 5, Use Specific Standards, of the Zoning Ordinance to add requirements to the home occupation regulations to cover medical marijuana caregivers working from home.

8. **Sustainability issues such as EV charging requirements** – The Planning Board may wish to consider requiring electric vehicle charging stations in all private developments to be proactive with emerging and sustainable technology advancements.

**Suggested Action:**

To continue to prioritize the update of the 2040 Plan, and when time allows, to prioritize the Planning Board's study session items thereafter as follows:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

# MEMORANDUM

**Planning Division**

**DATE:** **March 1, 2021**

**TO:** **Planning Board**

**FROM:** **Jana Ecker, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** **Revised Draft of the Planning Board's Action List**

In March of each year the Planning Division prepares an Annual Report to the City Commission outlining the activities of several boards and commissions over the previous year, as well as an action list of identified priority items for the boards for consideration over the coming year. The Planning Board's Action List is included in the Annual Report each year. The Planning Board's Action List is usually reviewed by the board in March prior to being sent to the City Commission. However, due to the cancellation of numerous meetings in March 2020 the list was not reviewed this year by the Planning Board.

In recent years, the City Commission has also updated the Planning Board's Action List after joint City Commission / Planning Board meetings as new planning issues for discussion arise. From this list, the Planning Board and the City Commission have the opportunity to evaluate the Planning Board's goals and objectives, and make any needed amendments based on current priorities.

Accordingly, please find attached a revised draft of the Planning Board's 2021-2022 Action List for discussion and prioritization of the issues.

Updated 3/5/2021

**Planning Board Action List – 2021-2022**

| Topic | General Goals | City Commission Directive? | Quarter | Status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | In Progress | Complete |
| 2040 Master Plan | Adopt a new comprehensive master plan. | ☐ | Ongoing | ☐ | ☐ |
| Solar Panel Ordinance | Simplify and encourage the use of solar panels in Birmingham. | ☐ | 1st (January-March) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Window Standards (Glazing) | Update window standards to help support building renovation and the Energy Code requirements. | ☐ | 2nd (April-June) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Outdoor Dining Enclosures | Study/consider the possibility of allowing outdoor dining enclosures. | ☒ | 2nd (April-June) | ☐ | ☐ |
| SLUP Application Process | Clarify the SLUP process in terms of the order of board/commission review. | ☐ | 3rd (July-September) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Wall Art | Review PAB and DRB recommendations regarding wall art on private buildings. | ☐ | 3rd (July-September) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Medical Marijuana & CBD | Update the Zoning Ordinance to help regulate Medical Marijuana and CBD through ordinance language. | ☒ | 4th (October-December) | ☐ | ☐ |
| Sustainability Initiatives | Prepare a sustainability agenda to increase Birmingham's resilience. | ☐ | 4th (October-December) | ☐ | ☐ |

Updated 3/5/2021

**Next Up…**

| Topic | General Goals | City Commission Directive? | Quarter | Status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | In Progress | Complete |
| Dumpster Enclosures | Expand the materials permitted/not permitted in dumpster enclosures. | ☐ | - | ☐ | ☐ |
| Balcony/Terrace Enclosures | Clarify and add regulations for the enclosure of outdoor living space. | ☐ | - | ☐ | ☐ |
| Lot Combination Process | Review the process for lot combinations to add clarity to approval standards | ☐ | - | ☐ | ☐ |
| Mixed Use Requirements | Consider changing the requirements for the stacking of mixed uses | ☐ | - | ☐ | ☐ |
| Review Processes for Public Projects | Clarify review process for projects on public property. | ☐ | - | ☐ | ☐ |

# Planning Board Action List – 2020 – 2021

| | TOPIC | SPECIFIC DIRECTION/ PROBLEM DEFINITION | STUDY SESSION | PUBLIC HEARING | STATUS | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Master Plan Update** | See RFP. | Charrette May 14-21, 2019<br>Drop-In Clinic July 8-10, 2019 | Review of First Draft of Master Plan 10/19 – 3/20 | In Progress | • Revise review process for Drafts 1-3 of Master Plan |
| 2 | **Solar Panel Review Process** | • Simplify the design review process for solar panel installation | 01/08/20 | | In Progress | • Direction by City Commission on June 17, 2019 |
| 3 | **Glazing Standards** | • Clarify the clear glazing standards | 11/13/19<br>01/08/20 | | In Progress | • |
| 4 | **Balcony / Terrace Enclosures** | • Clarify the review process for enclosing outdoor living space<br>• Develop regulations for materials, character etc. of enclosure systems | 7/10/19 | | In Progress | • Direction by City Commission on June 17, 2019 |
| 5 | **Lot Combination Process** | • Review the process for lot combinations to add clarity to approval standards | | | | • Discussed at Joint Meeting on June 15, 2020 |
| 6 | ~~**Economic Stimulus Options**~~ | ~~• Consider whether to add economic or other incentives to encourage investment in the City~~ | | | | ~~• Discussed at Joint Meeting on June 15, 2020~~ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | **Definition of Retail – Long Term Study** | | 8/10/16<br>3/29/17<br>5/10/17<br>6/14/17<br>1/10/18<br>3/14/18<br>4/11/18<br>5/9/18<br>6/13/18<br>6/18/18<br>7/11/18<br>7/25/18<br>8/3/18 (CC)<br>8/27/18 (CC)<br>10/24/18 | | On Hold Pending Master Plan | • Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |
| 8 | **Parking Issues:**<br><br>• **Shared Parking**<br><br><br><br>• **Parking Requirements** | • Evaluate the success/difficulties encountered in other communities<br>• Require a formal shared parking agreement<br><br>• Review parking requirements for residential uses | 8/10/16<br>2/8/17<br>3/29/17<br>5/10/17<br>7/12/17<br><br>7/11/18<br>7/25/18<br>8/13/18(CC)<br>2/13/19 | | On Hold Pending Master Plan<br><br>On Hold Pending Master Plan | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |
| 9 | **Encourage Housing Options that Young People and Empty Nesters can Afford** | • Study methods and ordinance amendments that could encourage and promote the creation of smaller dwelling units at lower prices | | | Related to Aging in Place | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan Process |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | **Aging in Place** | - Consider ordinance amendments to allow existing homes to be modified for increased accessibility<br>- Consider allowing multi-generational housing stock<br>- Encourage affordable housing opportunities<br>- Enhance public spaces to accommodate an aging population | | | Related to Affordable Housing Options | - As discussed at the joint meeting of the City Commission / Planning Board on 10/15/18 |
| 11 | **South Woodward Gateway** | - Study the area along Woodward from 14 Mile Road to Lincoln to address parking and future development needs | | | | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |
| 12 | **Study Potential D5 Parcels** | - Consider whether to extend the D5 zoning from Hazel to Brown | | | | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **13** | **Study Mixed Use Requirements** | ◦ Consider changing the requirements for the stacking of mixed uses | | | | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |
| **14** | ~~**Consider looking at principal uses allowed and add flexibility ("and other similar uses")**~~ | ◦ ~~Evaluate the current system of listing only permitted uses in each zone district~~<br>◦ ~~Determine whether to continue this system, or switch to broad use categories (ie. retail is permitted, instead of listing drugstore, shoe store, grocery store~~ | | | | |
| **15** | **Potential residential zoning changes; MF & MX garage doors** | ◦ Consider adding garage placement standards and/or garage and garage door size or design standards for mixed use and multi-family residential developments | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **16** | **Sustainable Urbanism (Green building standards, pervious surfaces, geothermal, native plants, low impact development etc.)** | • Incentive option in Triangle District<br>• Guest speakers in LEED<br>• Certification, Pervious Concrete, LED Lighting, Wind Power, Deconstruction<br>• Sustainability website & awards<br>• Native Plant brochure | 2/09/2005<br>7/11/2007<br>8/08/2007<br>9/12/2007<br>1/9/2008<br>9/10/08<br>1/14/09<br>1/28/09<br>2/10/09<br>(LRP)<br>5/13/09<br>8/12/09<br>11/11/09<br>1/23/10<br>(LRP)<br>5/12/10<br>6/9/10 | 2/25/09 (PB - Solar)<br>1/13/10<br>(PB-Wind)<br>2/10/10<br>(PB–Wind)<br>6/14/2010<br>(CC-Wind) | Solar ordinance completed.<br>Wind ordinance completed. | Recommend be considered as part of the Master Plan process |
| **17** | ~~**Additional Items to be Considered during Master Plan Process**~~ | ~~• Woodward Avenue Gateway Plan (Lincoln to 14 Mile Road)~~<br>~~• Parking~~<br>~~• Complete Streets~~<br>~~• Regional Planning~~ | ~~7/12/17~~ | | ~~On Hold~~ | |
| 18 | **Review Process for Public Projects** | • Clarify review process for projects on public property<br>• Consider requiring same site plan review process as that for private projects | | | | |

# Urbanist Scavenger Hunt: Find the “Missing Middle”

By Natalie Bicknell - April 8, 2020

*Look carefully, what appears to be a single family residence here is actually a duplex. (Photo by author)*

## The Urbanist is kicking off its new weekly scavenger hunt series with a call for readers to search out examples of “missing middle” housing in their communities.

Recently as I was walking through the Judkins Park neighborhood near the I-90 greenbelt in Central Seattle, I saw a sign in a house window advertising the Judkins Park Community Council’s neighborhood scavenger hunt. Spoiler alert: I completely failed to locate any other signs or other clues related to said scavenger hunt, but as a result of my blundered search, I found myself paying more attention to neighborhood surrounding me with its quirky mix of traditional and contemporary architecture. I also began thinking about how much we can learn from close observation of places we take for granted.

So I’d like to propose to readers of The Urbanist that we pause and look closer at the urban landscape we inhabit. Let’s use this time to explore, safely and with respect to social distance, the places that are closest to us, and share with others the discoveries we make along the way. As people spend more time hunkered down at home, community scavengers hunts are making a big comeback, not only in Seattle, but across the globe. **Let’s use the framing of the scavenger hunt to better understand our cities with all their greenery, sprawl, messiness, and splendor.**

This article is the beginning of a series of articles in which **I will present an urbanism-focused scavenger hunt theme and invite readers to reach out to me with their discoveries.** Then the following week, I will post an article with photographs and descriptions submitted to me by readers, present a new theme, and so on and so on until a vaccine for COVID-19 is deemed effective and safe for the general public, or until Amazon perfects the art of drone delivery systems so that buyers can get sundry items delivered with optimal social distancing at the touch of a button, but with the new risk of facing concussions and other injuries caused by plummeting packages each time we step outdoors. It’s also distinctly possible that we could run out of themes.

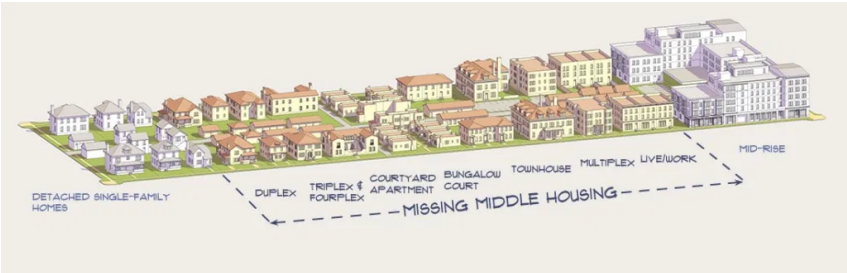
# Urbanist Scavenger Hunt Theme #1: Find the "Missing Middle"

Like most good ideas, the concept of holding a scavenger hunt to find the "missing middle" was stolen. I first saw an announcement for a similar scavenger hunt organized by Laura Loe of Share the Cities about a year or so ago. At the time I thought it was a an super idea, which is why I'm stealing it now to kick off The Urbanist's scavenger hunt.

*At Yesler Mews in the Central District, eight townhomes and two carriage houses share a gated courtyard. (Photo by author)*

Some of you right now might be thinking, aha, a scavenger hunt to find the "missing middle" how clever! While others might be thinking, wait a second, what is the middle and why is it missing?

In short, the "missing middle" is a term that was coined by architect and urban designer Daniel Parolek in 2010 to described the range of smaller residential building types frequently found in pre-1940's American neighborhoods. Although they tend to maintain the scale of single family residences, these buildings, which can include duplexes, triplexes, and courtyard apartments among others, often provide affordable housing choices and help to create walkable neighborhoods.




*Missing Middle housing types ranging from duplexes to small apartment buildings. (Opticos Design)*

Sadly, the broad shift to single family residence zoning that occurred in the mid-20th century led to housing types that existed in the "middle" between single family residences and mid-rise apartment buildings to go "missing."

**Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to locate examples of "missing middle" housing wherever you might be in Seattle or beyond.**



For my own personal quest, I returned to Judkins Park, which is covered by low-rise zoning regulations to find examples to share. I was also interested to see what kind of residential

density currently exists in an area that will be served by Sound Transit Link Light Rail service after the completion of the East Link extension in 2023.

*The Judkins Park Station will provide travelers a short ten minute trip to Westlake Station in Downtown Seattle after East Link is completed. (Photo by author)*

As one of the older residential neighborhoods in Seattle, there are a quite few examples of pre-1940's buildings that fall into the "missing middle" category. Many newer buildings also seem to tick many of the boxes; although personally I have questions about whether or not large townhomes that fall into the $700k-$1 million price range technically qualify as "missing middle" housing. (Maybe I should consult Daniel Parolek.)

*Older Judkins Park fourplex. (Photo by author)*


*Two newer townhouse developments share a central driveway. (Photo by author)*


*Contemporary rowhouse style townhomes. (Photo by author)*

*Even though this robin's egg blue building sticks out in a crowd, it's not so easy to immediately identify that it's a duplex. (Photo by author)*

After about an hour of combing through Judkins Parks' streets, I returned home with new understanding of a neighborhood not so far from my own, and far more photographs of "missing middle" housing than I could share here. Now it's up to you to continue the search. I look forward to seeing what examples of "missing middle housing" you are able to uncover.

*Want to share your scavenger hunt discoveries with other readers of The Urbanist? Email y our photographs with descriptions to natalie@theurbanist.org by Monday, April 13th for consideration.*

*We hope you loved this article. If so, please consider subscribing or donating. The Urbanist is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit that depends on donations from readers like you.*



Natalie Bicknell

Natalie Bicknell is Senior Reporter at The Urbanist. She is a writer and community college instructor who lives in the Central District with her husband and two dogs. In her research and writing, she is always on the lookout for better ways of creating sustainable, diverse, and vibrant cities. Email her at natalie [at] theurbanist [dot] org.



/

# The Great Real Estate Reset

## Modernizing family: America's demographics are transforming, but our housing supply is not

Tracy Hadden Loh and Evan Farrar

Introduction

Modernizing family

The office, reimagined

Separate and unequal

Risky (housing) business

Retail revolution

DECEMBER 16, 2020

The types and distribution of household structures in the United States have been evolving for decades. Consequently, we are now at a tipping point where our households and our housing inventory have become a round peg struggling to fit in a square hole.

Recent media coverage has presented these changes—such record numbers of adult children living with their parents—as the result of the pressures and preferences of the millennial generation. However, the decline of two-parent households with children and the rise of other family structures began with the coming of age of the first baby boomers in the second half of the 1960s, and continues today as that generation retires and seeks new living options.

These changes in the organization of American households have fundamental implications for the real estate industry and policymakers. As households change, so too must industry and public sector leaders by providing a broader range of housing choices that meets new demands—and creates more affordable, stable, and diverse communities in the process.

# The trends

Over the past few decades, several significant demographic shifts have changed how and where Americans live. But the nation's housing supply hasn't kept up with demand.

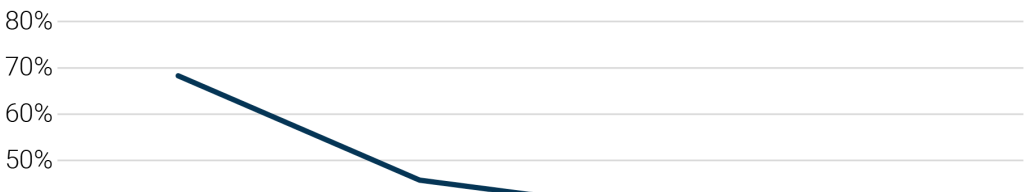
## *The so-called "nuclear family" is no longer the dominant household structure.*

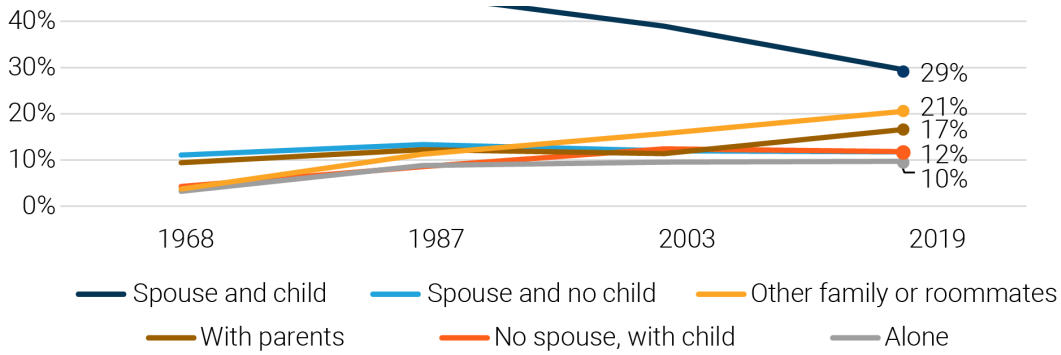
American family life is changing. Marriage rates have been steadily declining since 1980, and in 2018, the nationwide fertility rate hit an all-time low of 1.73 births per woman. As a result, household structures have shifted dramatically. In 1968, married couples with at least one child comprised nearly 70% percent of all households; by 2018, that share had fallen to less than 30%. At the same time, fewer than half of U.S. children are growing up in households led by two married parents in their first marriage. Single-parent households are now 12% of the total, up from only about 5% in the late 1960s.

## *Multigenerational and mixed family households have become more common, as Americans are increasingly "doubling up" to reduce housing costs.*

While the prevalence of the nuclear family may be shrinking, the size of the average U.S. household is actually trending upward for the first time in over a century. From 1968 to 1987, the share of young people ages 23 to 38 living alone tripled, then plateaued at 10%. Meanwhile, the number of people in this age bracket living with siblings or other family members (i.e., not a spouse, children, or parents) or with nonrelated individuals grew steadily, rising from 5% to 21% of all households by 2019. One of the most significant recent trends has been the rising share of young adults moving back home: From 2000 to 2017, the share of nonmarried young adults living with their parents almost doubled, increasing from 12% to 22% due to high housing costs, tight credit, student debt, and other factors.

**Figure 1. Household arrangements of Americans aged 23 to 38**
1968 to 2019






*Source: Brookings analysis of ACS and Census data via IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.*

Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS

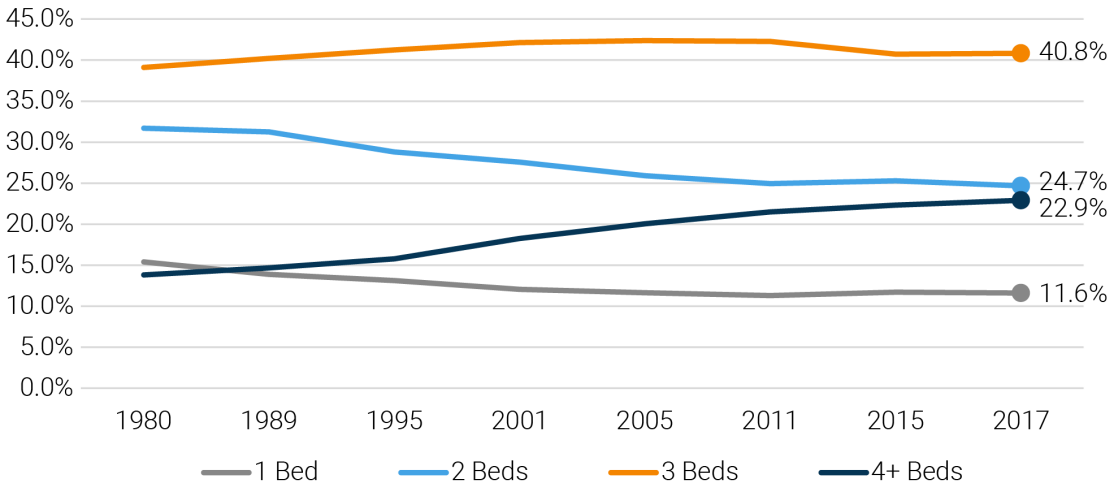
## *Our aging population is aging in place.*

With the youngest baby boomers now 56 years old, the American population is aging rapidly. Americans over age 65 make up 16.2% of the total U.S. population, up from 11.5% in 1980. These numbers will continue to rise, such that households headed by someone over age 65 will comprise 34% of all households by 2038, up from 26% in 2018. Moreover, more than three in four Americans over age 50 express a preference for aging in place, citing affordability concerns and satisfaction with their current neighborhoods. The impacts of COVID-19 on care facilities may very well accelerate that trend.

## *Housing production across U.S. metropolitan areas hasn't kept up with changing demand.*

The decline of nuclear families and the rise of multigenerational or group living arrangements and aging in place are deflating demand for new single-family homes. Yet, the real estate industry—operating under restrictive zoning compacts—is still catering to the traditional nuclear family household by continuing to systematically undersupply small units (particularly one-bedroom units) in favor of constructing large single-family homes. Nationwide, the very largest houses (four or more bedrooms) have grown as a share of inventory while all smaller configurations have stagnated or declined (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Nationwide housing inventory by number of bedrooms**
1980 to 2017

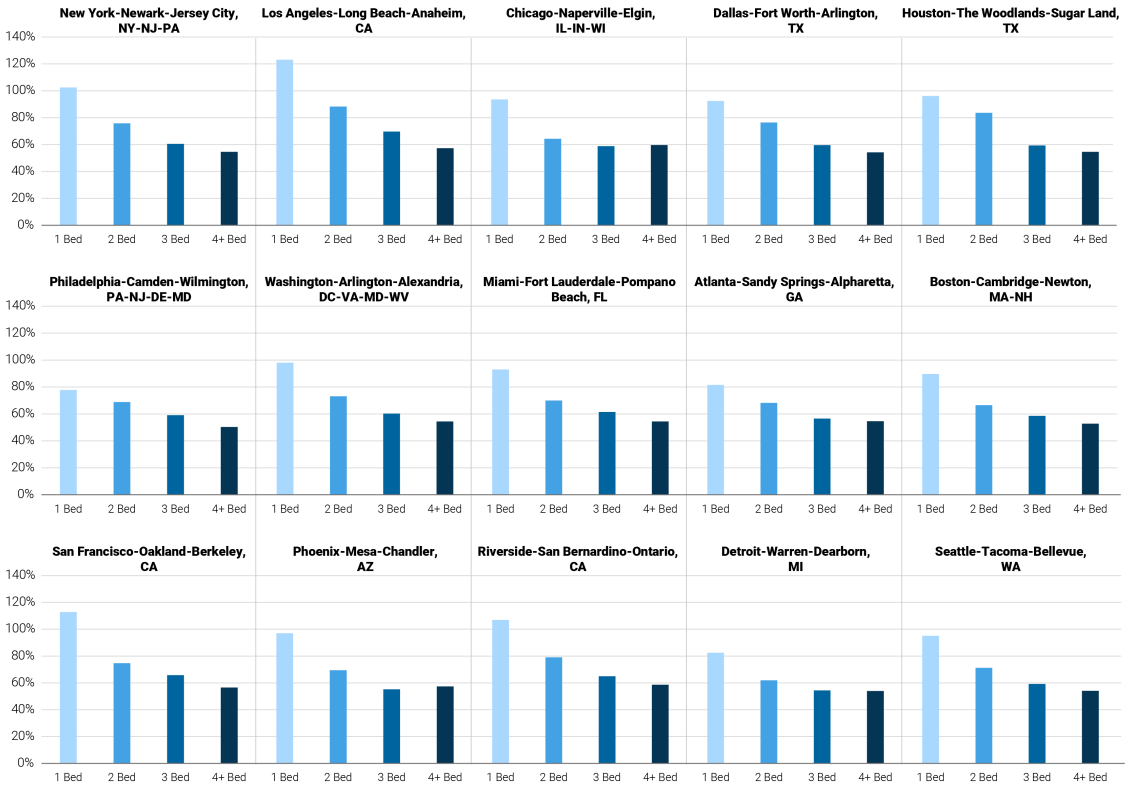



*Source: Brookings analysis of American Housing Survey data.*

Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS

The trends are particularly stark in the nation's largest metro areas. Since 2013, units with four or more bedrooms have comprised almost half of housing inventory growth on average across the 15 biggest regions, while one-bedroom units have accounted for just 16.7% of such growth (Figure 3). Households in these high-cost, high-growth areas need smaller units. Based on HUD's housing unit capacity standard of 1.5 people per bedroom, in all 15 of these metro areas, one-bedroom apartments are within 20% of full capacity on average, while they are *over* capacity in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Riverside, Calif. Meanwhile, units with four or more bedrooms in these areas are at just 55% capacity on average. This means that bedrooms in big houses are sitting empty while households wedge themselves into the smaller units that they can find—a fundamental mismatch between the inventory we have and what households need.

**Figure 3. Percentage capacity filled by number of bedrooms**
Top 15 metropolitan areas, 2017




*Source: Brookings analysis of 2017 American Housing Survey data.*

Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS

# Why these trends matter

Changing demographic and household trends warrant transformative shifts in how the real estate industry approaches the supply of new housing. The industry's response to these trends will have broad implications on housing choice and mobility for both younger and older generations.

Today's under-40 population is a major driver of housing demand, with different needs and preferences than their predecessors. Millennials—those between the ages of 24 and 39 in 2020—are a market-shaping demographic simply by virtue of the fact that they are the largest generation by population. But for the credit-strapped, newly graduated young adult, buying a single-family "starter" home is no longer a financial possibility (nor always an aspiration, for that matter). Even for millennials that can afford to purchase a single-family home, homebuying is likely a bad investment, since the current supply of single-family homes does not match the desires nor the arrangements of millennial households.

does not match the desires for the arrangements of millennial households.

All this means that while young people battle over the few available homes that suit their needs and preferences, older adults will be unable to sell their homes to the emerging generation of would-be homeowners. Even putting aside the generational mismatch in preferences and geographic location, the basic math does not bode well for the housing market: Seniors exiting the market will greatly outnumber young homebuyers, leaving 15 to 18 million surplus homes on the market. Most of the homes left will be large-lot, multi-bedroom homes—precisely the type of housing stock that markets in major metropolitan areas continue to oversupply.

Moreover, in predominantly catering to the traditional nuclear family, the real estate industry is continuing to serve the interests of white households over Black and brown households, for whom the suburban single-family home is often more a symbol of profound exclusion than something attainable. Homeownership among Black and Latino or Hispanic households significantly trails that of white households, and people of color are far more likely to be first-time as opposed to repeat homebuyers than white people. In part, this is because a mass of housing inventory weighted against starter homes disproportionately favors households with higher concentrations of generational wealth to pay bigger down payments. Over 6 million Black and brown millennials would be considered mortgage-ready if there was any attainable product for sale in prime locations.

In short, the business-as-usual approach to homebuilding has a wide range of negative impacts, demanding that real estate professionals and policymakers embrace a new framework and vision focused on providing greater housing options both through retrofits to existing priority neighborhoods and through new developments. This framework must include regulatory, finance, and design tools that create more—and more affordable—choices for people of all ages, races, and family sizes and mixes.

---

*The authors thank William H. Frey for his helpful review of this piece.*

## About the Authors

**Tracy Hadden Loh**

Fellow – Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking

**Evan Farrar**

Research Intern – Metropolitan Policy Program

ANNE T. AND ROBERT M. BASS CENTER FOR

# TRANSFORMATIVE PLACEMAKING

LOCUS | Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# 720N. Old Woodward - Vinewood Bistro

1 message

**Drew Dettling** <dsdettling@comcast.net> Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 10:52 AM
To: jecker@bhamgov.org

Jana

I'm writing to voice my opposition to the Vinewood Bistro, which will be the subject of a Special Land Use Permit and Final Site Plan and Design Review hearing tonight before the Planning Board. I apologize in advance for the tardiness of this letter, but I've been out of town and just received the hearing notice yesterday.

By way of background, I live at 740 Brookside Ave. My home is directly across Parking Lot #6 and the Rouge River from the proposed Bistro. As you know, Brookside Ave is a quiet residential dead-end street of single family homes. I have significant concerns about the hours of operations, light and noise 'pollution' and kitchen odors of the proposed Bistro. The homes on Brookside sit at higher elevations from the street and the foliage along the river provides minimal screening from Lot #6 (even in the summer). The proximity of the proposed Bistro to our homes is roughly equivalent to having your house sitting on the play structure in Booth Park, facing Market Northend. The light, noise and odors from Vinewood will significantly detract from our ability to enjoy the peace and quiet of our homes. It will also significantly detract from the value of our homes. Since the developer / operator of Vinewood has not yet specified the hours of operation, I'm assuming the worst case; they will want to be open until 1am, similar to Luxe. This is not tenable.

Regarding the situation with the dumpsters, the current dumpsters in Lot #6 fill rapidly, requiring collection 2-3 times per week. The dump trucks typically pick up at 6am, further disturbing our peace and quiet. With the addition of Vinewood, either more dumpsters or more frequent collection will be needed. And since the dumpsters sit right next to the river, any overflow of kitchen waste will create a bad environmental situation, not to mention the need for additional pest and rodent control.

I understand the intent of the Bistro Ordinance is to activate the streetscape and promote a more pedestrian oriented environment, by requiring outdoor dining. 'Bistros must have tables located in the storefront space lining any street, or pedestrian passage'. Vinewood's outdoor dining abutting Parking Lot # 6 stretches the definition of street or pedestrian passage to the breaking point. I don't understand the purposed of 'activating' a surface parking lot. If Vinewood wanted to comply with the spirit of the Ordinance, they would find a way to place the Bistro so it's outdoor dining fronted on Old Woodward.

To the best of my knowledge, no Bistro in Birmingham has an entrance, signage and outdoor dining facing single family residential housing. I think that is for a reason; protect and respect the single family neighborhoods. Prior Planning Board and Bistro owner decisions have respected that intent. Approving Vinewood as proposed would break with that precedent and open the possibility for further deterioration of our neighborhoods. I thought the City's recent strategic planning effort was placing more emphasis on the neighborhoods. I don't believe approving Vinewood is honoring the intent of the strategic plan.

Respectfully,

Drew Dettling
740 Brookside Ave.

Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

# Re proposed bistro at 720 N Old Woodward

1 message

**kristen tait** <kristen_tait@hotmail.com> Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 6:31 PM
To: "jecker@bhamgov.org" <jecker@bhamgov.org>

Dear Jana:

Please forward this email and letter to the Planning Board. I apologize in advance if emailing you was not proper procedure. Thank you.

Kristen Tait

Dear members of the Birmingham Planning Board:

I am writing in regard to the proposed bistro “Vinewood Bistro” at 720 N Old Woodward. This is proposed for the back lot of Parking Lot No. 6, behind the Merrillwood building & associated buildings to its north. My properties, 692 and 724 Brookside Ave., are across the Rouge to the east and look directly onto the lot and building. I disagree with the proposal and urge the Commission to deny the application for the following reasons:

1. Increased noise & traffic
2. Increased light pollution
3. Location
4. Restaurant density/saturation, especially with regards to traffic & parking

Attached please find my detailed explanation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Tait

692 Brookside Ave
kristen_tait@hotmail.com

**Kristen Tait to Planning Board re 720 N Old Woodward.pdf**
1183K

Dear members of the Birmingham Planning Board:

I am writing in regard to the proposed bistro “Vinewood Bistro” at 720 N Old Woodward. This is proposed for the back lot of Parking Lot No. 6, behind the Merrillwood building & associated buildings to its north. My properties, 692 and 724 Brookside Ave., are across the Rouge to the east and look directly onto the lot and building. I disagree with the proposal and urge the Board to deny the application for the following reasons:

1. Increased noise & traffic
2. Increased light pollution
3. Location
4. Restaurant density/saturation, especially with regards to traffic & parking

To begin, let me provide some physical context to help support this comment of Nicholas Dupuis’: *“[T[here are single family residences across the river that may be affected by any noise or light emanating from the proposed patio.”* [1]

> Because my properties are on a substantial hill and are much higher than the level of Lot 6, they have a direct view down onto this area. After the 2018 extension of the lot and removal of trees/brush on the west side of the Rouge, which was preceded by the loss of many elm trees due to the emerald ash borer, there is now very little natural shielding. As a result, I can see everything that goes on in the lot and often what happens inside the buildings. This clear sightline is, of course, heightened during winter. From my upstairs windows I have an even more unobstructed view.
>
> The landscaping planted after the 2018 lot extension is not thriving; as I look out of my window, 5 of the 12 evergreens I see are brown and dying/dead. During the spring thaws and large rain events the lot often is partially underwater. While plantings at the south end of the parking lot were chosen with inundation in mind, the remainder of the plantings obviously were not. Thus, shielding from mature evergreens in the landscaping is less likely and is at least several more years into the future. Because of the hill and driveways, I cannot use landscaping on my own properties to shield my view (to cover my upstairs windows, trees need to grow at least 50 feet, something only achieved by three existing 100-year old oaks.

Regarding the bistro itself, I have four main objections:

---

[1] Memorandum of February 24, 2021 from Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner, to Jana Ecker, Planning Director, as included in the Full Agenda of the February 24, 2021 Planning Board meeting, page 81.

1. **INCREASED NOISE POLLUTION & TRAFFIC**

As I stated above, there is very little shielding my properties from Lot 6 and its buildings. Luckily, during the day there is minimal noise, as the lot is used mainly by employees and short-term visitors to the businesses. At night, noise is from patrons of Market North End, Luxe, & Salvatore Scallopine; at times this can get quite raucous, but it is rare that those patrons park directly across from me. Regardless, I hear car doors, engines, the occasional car alarm, and even loud conversations. I can even set my watch by the schedule of the office cleaners, who dispose of their trash in the dumpsters and then idle their engines around midnight Monday-Saturday.

A bigger noise impact is indeed from the dumpsters (at both ends of the lot) which are emptied most days between 6 and 7:30am; the accompanying bangs and wall-shaking thuds are heard and felt quite clearly. More intrusive yet is the Farmer's Market; for 6 months (May to October), every Sunday it often gets loud enough that I cannot drown out the noise with music (played inside my home with the windows closed).[2]

With the exception of petitioning the Farmer's Market organizers to limit/eliminate amplified music (both recorded and live), I have accepted that these noises are part of living in what is now an urban environment. I am no stranger to city life, having lived in various downtowns during my graduate school years, and accept that sounds like dumpsters emptying and car doors are part of the city soundscape. However, with each additional noise source the enjoyment of living in my house diminishes, and I fear the value of my property will drop further. The increased traffic noise from Woodward has already affected the assessment of my property, as evidenced from the bank appraisal done last year during the course of refinancing my home equity loan.[3]

With Vinewood Bistro operating in this location, more noise will be constant all day long, seven days a week. Judging from behavior of diners at the three established night-time restaurants in this city block, patrons will not merely dine inside/on the patio but will also congregate around cars and on the walkways. In addition to the public hours, restaurant staff will be prepping early and cleaning up late – an impact often overlooked by planners. I do not see a staff break room on the plans, so I expect that staff will take breaks in the parking lot, much like they do in the alleys behind other Birmingham restaurants. In addition, also in the early hours deliveries will be made and dumpsters emptied more frequently and/or in greater quantity.

---

[2] An exception was the 2020 season, as the market was drive-through only that year and as a result, was hardly noticeable.

[3] "[A] potentially adverse noise" because the property "is adjacent to a busy road (in the rear)…[T]his has been considered to have an effect on value or marketability". *CoreLogic Valuation of 692 Brookside Ave from March 25 and May 15 2020.*

I take this time to mention the chance for increased vermin. Rats are endemic to cities; I do not expect Birmingham to be exempt. However, we have been fortunate in my neighborhood to escape large-scale infestation.[4] While much of this can be attributed to good garbage handling and yard maintenance, there is also the fact that the majority of the waste deposited in Lot 6's dumpsters is not from food.

2. **INCREASED LIGHT POLLUTION**

As detailed above, a large amount of natural shielding/buffer between Lot 6 and Brookside has been lost in recent years. With the installation of new street lamps in the lot, plus the construction of the Pearl and consequent reduction in mature trees at the north end of Brookside, my properties are now never dark. Blackout curtains in the bedrooms are necessary to block out enough light to allow the rooms to be somewhat conducive to sleep. The twinkling of the red lights from the newer parking meters has also added to the light pollution reaching my properties. We cannot afford to have more light reach us on Brookside – not only from the bistro but from the headlights of the cars of bistro patrons.

3. **LOCATION**

The entire back of Lot 6, and especially the new extension, are in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as designated by FEMA[5] (see also the attached map). In fact, the entire Merrillwood complex and the back half of buildings to its north – **including this proposed bistro location** - are in in the SFHA, with the majority of the back of Lot 6 designated further as Regulatory Floodway. This alone should be enough to dissuade the Planning Board from approving this application.

Natural flooding is common in this area, both from spring thaws and from heavy rain events. Further development/use of the area should be discouraged.

This is the back of 720-790 Woodward in March 2020:

[4] The exception, of course, is Market North End; in recent years I have seen rats on occasion when walking on Ravine at dawn/dusk, and cannot help but think they are the direct result of the dumpsters behind that restaurant.

[5] https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=692%20Brookside%20Ave%2048009#searchresultsanchor . See also: https://msc.fema.gov/arcgis/rest/directories/arcgisjobs/nfhl_print/agolprintb_gpserver/jbd5c654db52c4c2f9477e75f402e1796/scratch/FIRMETTE_31170d74-ed41-47a0-bfdf-8b6c911784e2.pdf

In February of 2019 (as seen from Brookside Ave)

February 2017:

February 2016 (This is a still from a 3-minute video):

4. **RESTAURANT DENSITY/SATURATION**

While the zoning of this portion of Old Woodward does allow for use as a bistro, within 1 block there are already 3 (soon to be 4) dining establishments that are open at night and serve alcohol. Three additional daytime cafes are also open. Had the Planning Board and the City Commissioners really wanted to expand the bistro dining opportunities in this area, there would have been an optimal chance to do so when The Pearl was proposed and built. Instead, there is now concern over the parking impact a 2-table juice bar will have – what will the impact be of a full-service lunch & dinner bistro serving alcohol? Isn't it contradictory to discourage a juice bar with its quick service and short visits at the same time you encourage an establishment that will have lengthier visits and 64 patrons?

The vehicle and pedestrian traffic at the corners of Ravine/Old Woodward and Harmon/Old Woodward is already heavy at night and on the weekends. Rare is the day/night that I use Ravine to exit/access my neighborhood. Between delivery trucks in the morning on Ravine and in the center of Old Woodward, jaywalkers at all times, and drivers who idle waiting for the perfect parking spot, the area has become increasingly risky to drivers. The perennial problem of protecting pedestrians crossing Old Woodward has yet to be solved, and I fear the day a serious (or, god forbid, fatal) accident occurs from a distracted driver. The area is utilized enough and, in my opinion, would not benefit from the additional of yet another bistro.

Based on the October 26, 2020 City Commission meeting minutes, another location in Downtown Birmingham has been also proposed for a similar concept bistro by the same owner. This location is a much more suitable property to consider, especially considering the recent closure of several restaurants in the same area. As the current pandemic continues to ravage the hospitality industry, I believe it would be prudent to encourage redevelopment of empty properties in Downtown, rather than forcing a restaurant onto a new location.

My family has lived on Brookside since 1942, I grew up here, and I moved back more than twenty years ago. I feel lucky to being still living and working here. Part of the attraction of living in my neighborhood is the seclusion from the commercial portion of Birmingham. In fact, Little San Francisco (or The Ravines, the proposed new name) is desirable because it is not just close to Old Woodward and Downtown Birmingham but is uniquely private and intimate as well. The proposed bistro does not enhance these features but instead intrudes unnecessarily into a quiet residential area.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Sincerely,
Kristen Tait

I encourage the Planning Board members to visit my street (and climb up my stairs) to see my view for themselves. However, in case that is not feasible, here are several photos that approximate the right scale: