

Connected Communities Response: Andrew Kiley (Winding Way)

Description

Dear Mayor Aftab Pureval and other Council Member Friends,

As lifelong Cincinnati residents (well, one of us) deeply invested in the future and well-being of Cincinnati, specifically the North Avondale community, we must express our strong opposition to the Connected Communities ordinance currently under consideration.

My husband and I have been proud residents of North Avondale since 2017. We moved to this neighborhood for many good reasons, including but not limited to these two:

1. Diversity – North Avondale is one of Cincinnati's most diverse neighborhoods, with individuals and families of many nationalities, varied political affiliations, a thriving hub of LGBTQIA+ residents and allies, and people from different socioeconomic statuses, backgrounds, and professions. Changes proposed in this ordinance will have adverse effects on this diversity of neighbors. I'd encourage you to consider neighborhoods with little to no diversity at present.
2. History/Charm – North Avondale is a unique neighborhood. The proposal lacks safeguarding of neighborhood character resulting in the destruction of the unique charm of our community. Also, the proposed change in zoning – specifically, the elimination of single-family homes and relaxed height restrictions and setbacks – will inevitably make the single-family parts of this neighborhood less desirable and slowly but surely abandoned.

Our Additional Concerns on the Plan Include:

1. Reduction in parking requirements without a robust public transit system. Reading Road is 1/4 mile from our front doorstep and it looks like a racetrack full of speeding cars, as opposed to a center of ample public transportation. This is a city dependent on cars, then and now, so with more people comes more cars and more congestion along Reading Road and nearby neighborhood streets.
2. An accelerated decision, a lack of a real public engagement process. The proposed ordinance was already drafted and sent to the Mayor on April, 17, 2023. In addition, the original plan was written by the Urban Land Institute on June 22, 2021 therefore, our comments and participation cannot be meaningful.
3. The plan does not consider community-driven development for North Avondale's historic, architectural and cultural preservation.
4. Potential impact on the environment, greenspace, police, fire, sewer, storm water and water mains have not been considered in the plan.

Additionally, we believe the following points need to be addressed prior to any council vote on Connected Communities.

- Unintended Consequences – A more recent Urban Land Institute study found that less

restrictive zoning regulations increased housing supply, but not for renters and low income peoples. Also, detrimental increases in housing density led to less affordability and increased incidents of crime. Though we agree that increased investment in subsidy programs and affordable housing development is necessary, these zoning changes will only exacerbate the problem by further concentrating poverty and promoting higher cost rentals/ increased homeownership costs in the Connected Communities areas by driving out the affordable housing opportunities.

- Fairness â?? Existing homeowners have purchased and invested in their homes under the current zoning regulations. Arbitrarily changing these zoning regulations after the fact to allow multi-family housing in historically single family neighborhoods will decrease their property values and neighborhood dynamics that may have appealed to them when they chose to live in a particular neighborhood.
- Absentee Landlords â?? Unfortunately Cincinnati has a horrible history with out of town investors and landlords. These zoning changes will only exacerbate this issue and increase the potential for out of town investors dividing-up single family homes as investment opportunities. Unless the zoning requires owner-occupancy for an extended period of time, this will occur (unlikely legal to do so).

We ask you to reconsider this plan.

Respectfully yours,
Andrew Kiley and Matt Knotts

North Avondale Residents (Winding Way)

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Author

northavondale