

## Connected Communities response: Anthony and Marla Barone, Redway Avenue

### Description

Dear Mayor Aftab Pureval and Council Members,

As an over 40 year resident of North Avondale deeply invested in the future and well-being of Cincinnati, specifically the North Avondale community, I must express mine and my family's strong opposition to the Connected Communities ordinance currently under consideration. NANA (North Avondale Neighborhood Association) recently voted and published their opinion on the following statement "North Avondale opposes moving forward with the Connected Communities proposed ordinance. The City of Cincinnati must provide the data and impact analyses that will allow for meaningful review, public participation and approval by the community council of the impacted neighborhoods", particularly for long standing, stable, successfully integrated neighborhoods. Neighborhoods have always been an essential element of a residential community.

My Concerns on the Plan Include:

1. The proposed change in zoning. Specifically, the reduction and elimination of single-family homes, and relaxed height restrictions and setbacks.
2. Reduction in parking requirements without a robust public transit system.
3. The proposal lacks safeguarding of neighborhood character resulting in the destruction of the unique charm and historic significance of our community.
4. An accelerated decision, without adequate input from several effected neighborhoods leaves a sham of a 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. You are elected to be working for all residents and taxpayers of Cincinnati, not specific factions or interest groups. It does not have that atmosphere of taking into account what is an existing successful neighborhood.
5. The plan does not consider community-driven development for North Avondale's historic, architectural and cultural preservation.
6. Potential impact on the environment, greenspace, police, fire, sewer, storm water and water mains have not been considered in the plan.

Additionally, I and many of my neighbors believe the following points need to be addressed prior to any council vote on Connected Communities. A real connected community is one that is a supportive group of neighbors who live in close proximity and know each other. Diluting with more population or density is a deteriorating faction for existing successful living areas for the people you serve.

- 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 I 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. It will also reduce the desirability of a smaller connected, stable neighborhood atmosphere and the security of knowing people who can be really neighbors as opposed to occupants.

- Fairness – 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 – 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) creating more transient population less cohesive to a stable neighborhood which has been the case in my 40+ years as a North Avondale resident.

North Avondale stands as an economically, ethnically and socially diverse neighborhood that needs to be protected from a plan that does not consider these values. I hope that the city will respect my loyal concerns and not move forward until my concerns and many other taxpayers concerns are addressed.

Sincerely,

Anthony and Marla Barone

Redway Avenue

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June 3, 2024

**Author**

northavondale