

I have read the [“Stop Bloomington Upzoning Resolution”](#) and I understand that those who have signed onto it are opposed to the city administration’s current proposal for where to place the new R4 Residential Urban zoning district and the proposal to allow duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in the R4 areas by right. I take this feedback seriously and am considering ways to address the concerns of city residents while still allowing some greater residential density in the city. I await the new, revised proposal from the city administration and urge the city staff and Plan Commission to take their time with it, allowing neighbors to understand and discuss the new proposal to be released this month.

Unfortunately, the text of the “Stop Bloomington Upzoning Resolution” is troubling because it is misleading in several respects and makes assumptions without proving them.

- 1) The resolution speaks of allowing “multiplex apartment structures.” Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes are not apartment structures. Buildings with more than four units would not be allowed by right under the current proposal.
- 2) The following assertion in the second paragraph is not supported by data or research: “the nature of rental real estate investing as an industry is such that blanket upzoning will concentrate development...”
- 3) The assertion that “investors can buy properties relatively inexpensively” in core neighborhoods is not supported by data or research.
- 4) What does “overburden the core neighborhoods with new population density” mean? Is there any evidence that the current infrastructure cannot accommodate more residents? Has the author of the petition talked with City of Bloomington Utilities, Duke Energy, Vectren, or the city Streets Department about this? Or is the “overburden” more of a social concern?
- 5) I disagree with the claim that the 2019 UDO discussion “included close examination of claims that densifying the core neighborhoods would generate new affordable housing...and help Bloomington reduce its impact on climate change” and that the conclusion was “upzoning the core will have no foreseeable impact on Bloomington’s affordable housing needs, carbon footprint or economic/racial justice priorities.” I believe there was no such conclusion in 2019. There were lots of opinions on the affordable housing piece, and research both proving and disproving the assertion that upzoning would lead to more affordable housing. As for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, I only heard arguments and read research saying that upzoning would indeed decrease emissions. As for “economic/racial justice priorities,” I recall that individual opponents of upzoning took it personally when proponents pointed out the racist history of single-family zoning in the US. I do not recall any conclusion that economic or racial justice would be better served or ill-served by the upzoning proposal.
- 6) The resolution claims that the proposed upzoning would increase “wealth inequality in the city, by eliminating the affordable home ownership opportunities found in core neighborhoods.” I have seen no evidence to support this. Most homes in core neighborhoods are not affordable, based on the property transfers reported in the newspaper and on Zillow. Of course, I have not done actual research on the matter, which should be done before such claims are made.
- 7) As for the concerns regarding parking, the Urban Land Institute (a nonprofit educational and research institution) has concluded from research that higher density development actually creates fewer traffic and parking problems than lower density development.¹ The resolution says “we believe the UDO-defined standard of 0.5 spaces per unit will create a substantial

¹ https://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/HigherDensity_MythFact.ashx_.pdf

hardship for residents.” Again, it’s just a belief. Others believe that more people will forgo owning a car if they live within walking/biking distance of work, shopping, and school.

- 8) The resolution asserts that “higher density can be expected to reduce permeable surface area on lots.” This is simply not true. Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in the new R4 Urban Residential zoning district must adhere to the same guidelines as single family homes in this district, including building set-backs and maximum impervious surface coverage (50%).
- 9) The claim that the proposed UDO changes would “undermine the historic preservation aims of the City’s Conservation and Historic Districts” is unfounded. I simply don’t understand this argument, as the regulations of conservation and historic districts would apply to a duplex, triplex, or fourplex just as they would to a single family home.

In conclusion, I recognize that there are legitimate concerns raised by the city administration’s proposed placement of R4 zoning and proposed revisions to the UDO. However, I think neither opponents nor proponents of these changes are well served by the inaccuracies promulgated by the Stop Bloomington Upzoning Resolution. Let’s focus on facts and common goals rather than making unfounded suppositions and pointing the finger to blame each other for not wanting the best for our city.