

## **Q&A - Re: Proposed Zoning Text Amendments – Housing**

*The following questions were raised during the City Commission consideration of proposed text amendments recommended by the City's Planning Commission. Answers were prepared by the City's Planning Department in collaboration with Community Development, Code Compliance, City Attorney's Office, Assessing Department and Housing Next.*

### **1. What are the benefits of removing owner occupied requirement from Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations?**

*Owner occupancy requirements speaks directly to one of the greatest benefits of property ownership: the flexibility of choosing how to use the property. When a homeowner buys a single-family home, they have the option of living there for 30 years, selling the home outright, or renting the home and buying another house in the same neighborhood. For decades, this is how many low- and moderate-income households built wealth for their families and climbed the economic ladder.*

*If an owner chooses to build an ADU, that owner can no longer opt to move away from the property without selling it. The owner cannot consider the option of the property serving as a future investment property. Eliminating these options from the possible uses of the property diminishes the flexibility of a property with an ADU.*

*Owner occupancy requirements also make ADUs more difficult to finance. Owner occupancy requirements limit who can purchase the property in the future – or more accurately, who is able to benefit from the potential financial value of the ADU. From the perspective of a bank, this makes an investment in an ADU a higher risk loan. A bank is much less likely to offer competitive financing through a traditional 30-year mortgage at 90% loan-to-value to build an ADU if there are owner occupancy requirements. Instead, the bank will likely require a significant amount of owner equity (40% - 50% or more). This now limits who can afford an ADU and will heavily favor wealthy homeowners. As a result, owner occupancy requirements often have a negative impact on equitable outcomes.*

*Finally, owner-occupancy restrictions also limit non-profit entities from owning property with ADUs and this can have the effect of limiting the ability of the community to provide more affordable housing options in desirable neighborhoods at small-scale.*

### **2. In a low-density neighborhood, what is the likelihood of a 3-4 unit rental unit replacing a single family home. Has this practice been widespread in other cities?**

*The likelihood of a single-family home being replaced by a 3-4 unit building is dependent on several factors.*

*A. The cost to purchase and demolish the single-family home. In Grand Rapids, the minimum cost to purchase an existing home in most neighborhoods is \$200,000 or more. For as long as housing supply remains well below demand, the cost to purchase existing homes will continue to rise.*

*B. The cost to build a new building on the property. In Grand Rapids, the average cost of new construction is around \$275 per square foot before factoring in utilities and land costs. A 2,400 square foot three-unit building would cost roughly \$660,000 to build today. Then add \$200,000 in acquisition and \$25,000 in demolition costs. Now the total cost to build a 3-unit building is roughly \$885,000 (roughly \$295,000 per unit). This is less than the cost per unit to build a single-family home (average of \$360,000), but each unit must rent for around \$2,400 per month if they are not*

*subsidized. At around 750 square feet each, these units are likely to be two-bedrooms. The current average market rate rent for a two-bedroom unit in Grand Rapids is \$1,525 per month.*

- C. There must be potential renters in the market who are willing to pay \$900 per month more than they would pay to rent an existing, older two-bedroom unit in the same neighborhood. This type of rent premium is usually limited to only those neighborhoods with such a high degree of amenity and low availability of supply that residents feel the rent premium is justified. Also, the more housing that is available relative to the number of individuals and families seeking housing, the less likely any individual household is to pay a large premium. In other words, more available supply will bring housing prices down rather than raise them. This is a basic rule of supply and demand economics. If every property owner can add one or two additional housing units, over time, it is highly likely that an adequate amount of supply will be created to ensure that price gouging is not possible.*
- D. The value of the rental income from a three unit building after spending nearly \$900,000 must be greater than the value of the income that would be available if an investor simply rented the existing single-family home. Currently, a typical single-family home with three bedrooms rents for between \$1,600 and \$2,000 per month in the city. If the acquisition cost is only \$200,000, the investor may be able to make more money by executing a minor rehab or renting that home in an as-is condition as opposed to tearing it down and replacing it with an expensive structure. Each property is somewhat unique and the cost/benefit of renting a property as an existing single family home vs removing the home and replacing it with 2, 3 or 4 units will be highly dependent on the condition of the existing home, its location, and the cost of construction compared to the likely rent the new property could earn.*
- E. Private equity and outside investors rarely have the local staff capacity or interest to take on the complicated process of buying a single-family home and tearing it down to replace it with just 3 units. The time and expense of finding the property, having plans drawn up, getting those plans approved, and coordinating construction for a three-unit building is not substantially less than the time and expense of buying commercial property and building a 30-unit or 100-unit building. If the investor is not local, it is very unlikely that they will invest the time and energy to hassle with just 3 or 4 units at a time. It is very likely that most small multi-unit buildings will be created by local investors. And, when paired with targeted economic development incentives, it is possible to ensure that a significant majority of these types of projects include some degree of long-term affordability and local ownership.*

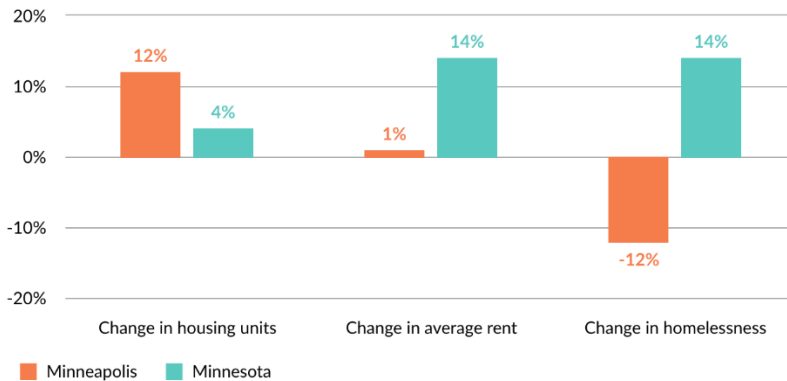
**3. What has been the impact in other cities that have made similar changes to their zoning code? Can we get some good data/information from them about lessons learned?**

*Minneapolis adopted city-wide zoning changes to eliminate single-family only neighborhoods in 2018. The result has been that Minneapolis is the only growing housing market in the State of Minnesota that did not experience significant rent growth over the subsequent five years.*

Figure 2

### Minneapolis' Rent Growth Was Much Lower Than Minnesota's

Percentage change in housing stock, average rent, and homelessness, 2017-22



Note: The Minnesota housing unit data does not include Minneapolis. Homelessness data for Minneapolis reflects data for Hennepin County. Homelessness data for Minnesota excludes Hennepin County.

The [Urban Institute](#) also conducted a multi-city study to evaluate the impact of land use reforms on housing affordability. The study found a statistically significant impact on new housing supply and positive effects on housing affordability across the income spectrum. An important nuance of this research is that the land use reforms did not result in the creation of significantly more housing that was affordable to households earning at or below 30% area median income. However, the mover chains that resulted from new supply being available in high demand neighborhoods did create new vacancies within existing low-income and deeply affordable housing units.

These studies also found that changes to single-family zoning were only responsible for a small share of the new housing that was created in those markets. However, the changes to single family zoning allowed greater access to certain neighborhoods among both renters and local investors who would otherwise have been priced out. The increase in potential new supply across a broad geographic area significantly limited speculation and reduced rent growth (or reversed it some cases).

#### 4. What is the data around parking waivers?

Since 2013, the City Planning Commission has considered approximately 1,100 cases. Of those cases, 87 cases included support for a parking waiver that resulted in 2,944 spaces being waived using the standards of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

#### 5. Does this City have a map identifying the location of existing group living facilities?

No, this is not a map that the Planning Department is able to produce as there is not a single data source that can be referenced. A map of state licensed group living facilities could be created, however, it would not be inclusive of all group living facilities that exist within the City as not all facilities require state licensing.

#### 6. Can additional housing policy changes be made during implementation of the Community Master Plan?

Yes. After the Community Master Plan is adopted, the City will begin the process of implementing the recommendations of the Plan. This implementation process will include a significant amendment of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

**7. Relative to equity, what impacts should we expect if these amendments are adopted? Who stands to financially benefit? Who may be harmed?**

*There is significant empirical evidence to demonstrate that exclusionary zoning (local regulations that limit who is able to live in which neighborhoods based on their income) places artificial constraints on supply, exacerbates residential racial segregation, and contributes to rising housing costs. As described in detail in the 2020 publication, [The Color of Law](#), modern single-family only zoning has perpetuated racial segregation and undermines housing equity. The City of Grand Rapids eliminated exclusive single-family zone districts in 2008.*

*The proposed zoning amendments are unlikely to make neighborhoods or individual housing more equitable on their own. However, pairing greater flexibility of zoning with direct investment programs can help to support more equitable outcomes. It is likely that investments already underway and those being considered by the Economic Development and Community Development departments will have a more significant impact.*

*One of the most important aspects of the proposed zoning amendments is the manner in which they will make small scale, neighborhood-based development opportunities available to regular people. Currently, nearly all development is done by large development firms with access to significant capital. Very few small-scale developments are possible today. With the passage of the proposed amendments, combined with additional tools to support small scale developers, it will become possible for a local family or a young couple to build equity through small scale investments.*

*The economic development team is currently working with Housing Next and Cinnaire to create an equitable development initiative that is designed to provide training, mentorship, and access to capital to small scale and emerging developers. With the proposed zoning changes, new development opportunities will become far more equitable.*

**8. How does increased supply affect housing affordability?**

*A study published in the [Journal of Urban Economics \(2023\)](#) found that new housing supply has a direct and substantial impact on housing affordability across the market, even when the new housing being built was market rate. The study authors describe this impact as follows:*

*“The supply of new market rate units triggers moving chains that quickly reach middle- and low-income neighborhoods and individuals. Thus, new market-rate construction loosens the housing market in middle- and low-income areas even in the short run. Market-rate supply is likely to improve affordability outside the sub-markets where new construction occurs and to benefit low-income people.”*

*This data is consistent with other similar types of commodity pricing in the marketplace. When more supply of a particular good becomes available – whether it be televisions or t-shirts – even when the new supply is expensive, the price of older versions of the same product will moderate or fall – assuming that enough new supply is available to meet or exceed total demand.*

*It is important to remember that the laws of supply and demand still apply. If enough new housing becomes available, prices will moderate and eventually decline. This trend has been seen recently in markets such as Minneapolis MN, Austin TX, and Nashville TN. However, if too little new housing supply becomes available relative to demand, prices will not moderate.*

*An important point to keep in perspective is that new construction is almost always more expensive than preserving or adapting existing housing. New construction will only be affordable to households earning less than median income if it is subsidized in some way. This could be tax increment financing, tax credits, or philanthropy. At the same time, adaptation of existing housing – when that existing housing generally meets modern code requirements in existing state – can be much less expensive and can require much less subsidy to be affordable.*

**9. Will these changes have a disproportionate impact to a historic district?**

*An important element of the proposed zoning changes is that they impact a broad and dispersed segment of the residential housing stock in the city. This approach allows for the impact of the proposed changes to also be broad and dispersed across many neighborhoods. For this reason, many advocates of this style of zoning reform refer to it as ‘gentle density’. A very modest increase in the potential number of new homes does not result in widespread changes to a neighborhood, but rather a gradual ‘thickening’ of potential residential density.*

*Based upon evidence from other communities that have adopted similar zoning reforms in recent years, we can expect between 5% and 15% of new housing supply to occur within established neighborhoods and at a small scale. Most new housing supply (85% - 95%) will continue to come from larger developments on corridors and in commercial zones where the City has already allowed for four stories by right, ground floor residential uses in certain areas, and limited parking requirements.*

*Historic Districts are likely to be least impacted by the proposed zoning changes for a few reasons. The historic districts in Grand Rapids are generally located within the most expensive neighborhoods in the city. The average sale price of a home in Heritage Hill is currently \$650,000 with several homes selling for well over \$1 million. This means that the cost of acquisition is much higher than comparable neighborhoods nearby. Existing homes just two blocks away still sell for \$200,000 to \$250,000.*

*When the cost to purchase an existing building is overly expensive, it will not make financial sense as an investment property unless the potential development yield is high (i.e. a lot of new units can be created to justify the purchase price) or the rent is very high.*

*However, the proposed amendments may in fact make these homes more affordable to homeowners who intend to live in the home and create an additional residential unit or two to help offset the cost of their mortgage. These investments make more financial sense for an owner-occupant in an expensive district because the investment is not entirely about financial gain. It is also about establishing the means to afford to live in a high opportunity neighborhood.*

*It is important to remember, when considering the likely benefits to homeowners, that attempting to limit ownership of multi-unit properties to only owner-occupied buyers has several unintended consequences. The primary negative consequence is the implications to financing these properties. It can be very difficult to finance a property that is overly burdened with restrictions. A bank is often looking for unencumbered properties which can be easily sold if the borrower is unable to make the payments on the loan. If the bank is limited in their ability to sell the property, the bank will likely reduce the value of their loan for the property. This, in turn, limits who can purchase these properties to only those buyers with enough cash to satisfy the bank – usually around 40% - 50% of the cost. In Grand Rapids, an owner-occupancy requirement is likely to impact equity in a negative way because of these financing limitations.*

*Furthermore, an owner-occupancy requirement would limit a buyer's ability to generate wealth over time unless they were living in the property for the entirety of their ownership period. One of the primary ways that existing property owners who live in the Heritage Hill, Cherry Hill, South Town, and Fairmount Square neighborhoods were able to generate wealth for themselves was by purchasing several properties in their neighborhood over time, investing significant time, energy and financial resources into those homes, and reestablishing those neighborhoods as active and thriving places for people of all incomes and generations to share community. These property owners were not limited by owner-occupancy requirements and benefited significantly as a result.*

**10. Do we know how many rental units currently rent to 4 unrelated individuals?**

*The Code Compliance Department does not monitor tenancy. Rental property owners are only required to register the number of rental buildings and the number of dwelling units within each building. There is no requirement to register the number of occupants within each dwelling unit. The current Code Compliance residential rental registry has 16,041 buildings with 40,622 dwellings.*

**11. Do we have any indication that our current rule of 4 results in tenant abuse?**

*Overcrowding complaints are reported to the Code Compliance Department for follow-up with a Notice of Complaint (courtesy notice) is sent to the property owner. Approximately 30 days after the Notice of Complaint is sent, a Code Compliance Officer investigates the complaint. If the Code Compliance Officer verifies a zoning violation, a Notice of Violation is issued along with fees. Enforcement proceeds through various legal actions until compliance is reached. From 2019 through 2023 (five years) Code Compliance received 171 overcrowding complaints, of which 21 (12%) resulted in fees.*

**12. What safeguards are in place to protect tenants?**

*The Code Compliance Department responds to and investigates a variety of complaints from tenants to ensure health and safety. Each complaint is inspected for potential violations of the Zoning Code and Property Maintenance Code. In addition, Code Compliance proactively inspects residential rental properties every 2, 4, or 6 years as part of the Residential Rental Property Certification Program. Inspections include interior and exterior conditions, and mechanical systems, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors.*

**13. What have we learned from other communities that have put some of these tools in place already, especially around displacement, affordability, economic security.**

*Displacement pressure is most pronounced in places where a little bit of new development is allowed, but not nearly enough to satisfy local demand. The new development proves that local renters are willing to pay more to live in a particular neighborhood, but too few units are produced to satisfy everyone who wants to and can afford to live in that neighborhood. The result is more competition for the scarce supply of available housing, which then drives prices upward.*

*The solution to this problem is multi-faceted. The first step is allowing more housing across a broad area rather than in limited pockets. The second step is to proactively pursue affordable housing policies and investment priorities that make affordability a viable option for some of the new development that is now allowed. This can be done with philanthropy, tax credits, incentives, and public financing. The third step is to ensure that existing low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners are connected to available resources in a way that supports their individual needs to allow them to remain in the neighborhood if they desire to do so. This could be home repair services, rental assistance, legal advocacy, and financial investments to preserve existing affordable housing.*



**14. How do these changes intersect with the State Building Code and could the City advocate for change?**

*The proposed changes to the City's zoning ordinance are not in conflict with the Building Code, nor prompt a need for change. The Building Code contains the requirements for construction anywhere within the State of Michigan. The proposed changes in the City of Grand Rapids ordinance will create new opportunities for housing that may not have been permissible under the current Zoning Ordinance. The construction codes only serve to establish minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of safety, health and general welfare through affordability, structural strength, means of egress, stability, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy conservation and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards and to provide a reasonable level of safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency.*

**15. How are short-term rentals (i.e. AirBnB's) currently enforced?**

*The City does not permit whole house short-term rentals. In 2012, the Planning Department convened a workgroup and developed the current regulatory framework for short-term rentals, which allows owner occupied dwellings to rent one room as a short-term vacation rental. A One-Room Rental requires a license from the City Clerk and each application is reviewed for compliance with various applicable codes, including the Zoning Ordinance.*

*Short-term rental complaints follow the same enforcement process as overcrowding. Complaints are reported to the Code Compliance Department and a Notice of Complaint (courtesy notice) is sent to the property owner. Approximately 30 days after the Notice of Complaint is sent, a Code Compliance Officer investigates the complaint. If the Code Compliance Officer verifies a zoning violation, a Notice of Violation is issued along with fees. Enforcement proceeds through escalating legal actions until the property owner is in compliance.*

*From 2019 through 2023 (five years) Code Compliance received approximately 69 complaints regarding short-term rentals, of which 13 (19%) resulted in fees. Enforcement of this portion of the Zoning Code is labor intensive. The courts view advertisements as speculative and hearsay, and require first-hand verification of the violation. Inspectors try to obtain this by speaking directly with renters, which often requires multiple visits to the property. The City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk are convening a group of city departments to evaluate the current ordinance and identify ways to improve enforcement.*

**16. How are vacant and blighted buildings currently regulated?**

*In June 2023, the City Commission approved adoption of the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code along with amendments specific to Grand Rapids. As a part of this code adoption, the City's existing Building Maintenance Code (commercial properties) was replaced with the Property Maintenance Code. In 2024, Code Compliance expanded the residential Blight Monitoring Program to include commercial buildings. Properties deemed vacant and abandoned by City code are routinely monitored for unsafe or hazardous conditions, nuisances, and the status of improvement.*

*Through the Blight Monitoring Program, Code Compliance Officers conduct an inspection every 30 days. If progress is being made on bringing the property into compliance, no fees are charged to the property owner. Once the property is in compliance, it is removed from the blighted property list. There currently are 141 residential properties on the blight list and 21 open enforcement cases for commercial properties that are being reviewed for transition to the Blight Monitoring Program.*

**17. Can the City implement a vacant property tax?**

*Real property taxes exceed the City's authority under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and therefore cannot be implemented through the Zoning Code. Levying new taxes generally implicates the Headlee amendment and approval of the majority of electors.*

**18. Can the City implement any policies to limit out-of-state investors?**

*The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act authorizes municipalities to regulate uses, not ownership, of land thus the City lacks authority to implement such a policy through the Zoning Ordinance. Such a policy would also implicate constitutional concerns, including equal protection and the dormant commerce clause.*

**19. Will these Zoning changes have a negative impact on home ownership?**

*The rate of homeownership is highly dependent on a number of factors. The primary factor that influences homeownership is the average cost to purchase and own a home compared to the average wage/income of local households in the market. This includes not only the purchase price but also the cost of financing (interest rates), the cost of maintenance and repairs, and the cost of property taxes and insurance.*

*As shown in the newly released [dashboard from Housing Kent](#), the disparity between local household income and median housing costs has grown significantly in recent years. This disparity is largely due to the lack of available homes for sale and significant growth in the number of households seeking to buy a home in the Grand Rapids and broader Kent County housing market. Once again, these are the basic rules of supply and demand impacting price. Because there are very few homes available for sale and a lot of households looking to buy, this competition raises home prices quickly. Furthermore, regional investment groups seized the opportunity to purchase single family homes during the great recession and have rented those homes profitably over the intervening decade.*

*Investment groups are often very willing to purchase single family homes in established neighborhoods and in known growth markets when supply is limited. This is because these markets are considered very safe investment opportunities given local constraints on adding more housing supply (i.e. zoning) paired with high demand and limited supply. However, as more housing is created in these markets, the investment opportunity becomes less attractive. Many investors refer to this as 'saturation'. When there is enough supply to meet demand investors are much less likely to buy property because the likelihood that they will be able to raise rents or benefit from double digit appreciation is less likely. These markets are much more friendly to local homeownership.*

*However, this pattern creates an unfortunate paradox. One of the reasons that we glorify homeownership in North America is because of its ability to produce rapid appreciation of wealth for homeowners. And yet, rapid appreciation is only possible when there is a scarcity of supply. If many more people are able to become homeowners because there are an adequate number of homes available for sale at reasonable price points, then appreciation will occur much more slowly.*

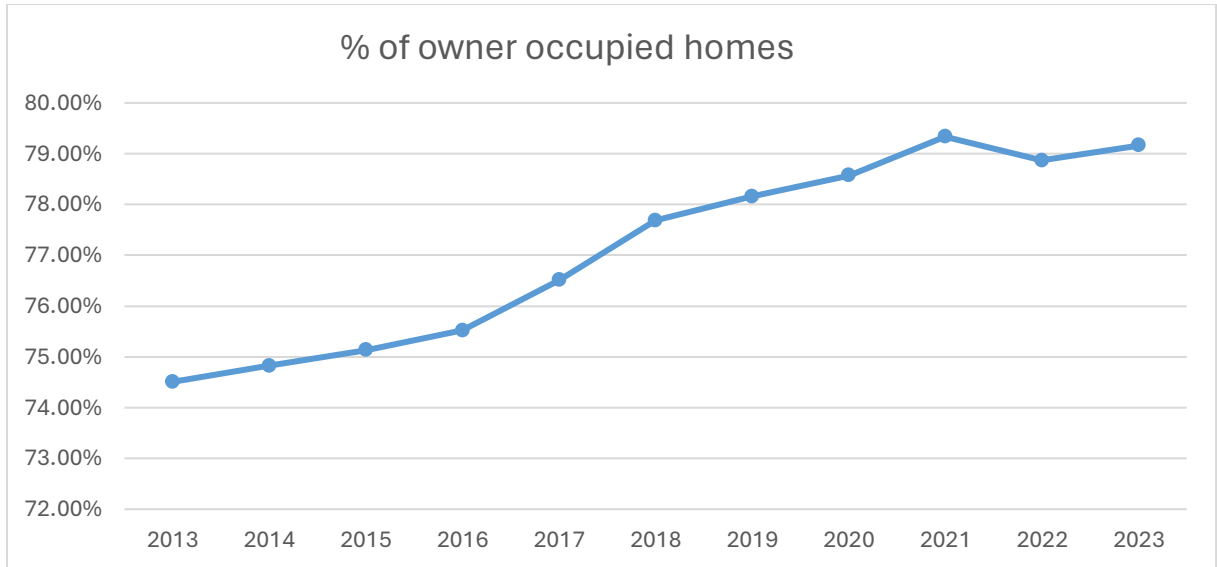
**20. Do these proposed changes violate Fair Housing Law?**

*The proposed changes do not violate the Fair Housing Act. See, e.g., 42 USC 3607(b)(1). Village of Belle Terre v. Borass, 416 US 1 (1974); City of Edmonds v. Oxford House, Inc., 514 US 725 (1995); Stegeman v. City of Ann Arbor, 213 Mich App 487 (1995).*



**21. Over the past ten years, has the City experienced an increase or decrease in the number of Principal Residence Exemptions?**

Since 2013, the City has experienced an increase in the % of owner occupied homes, increasing from 74.51% to 79.16%.



**22. For one-unit single family homes that do not have 100% Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) is there a way to compile a list based upon owner of record, grouping them so as to identify patterns of certain entities being owner of record for significant numbers of properties?**

*For one-unit single family homes that do not have 100% PRE, there are 10,668 properties.*

*Typically, owners of rental property do not use the same owner name for all of their rental properties. Instead, the properties are put into limited liability companies (LLC), which have different names. So it is not possible to accurately group properties by owner name. We are able to isolate the number of properties with the same mailing addresses from this group of 10,668 properties. While this is the most relevant data the City has related to this request, it is not exactly on-point as some owners use a management company to handle the mailing for property tax purposes and an out-of-state investor may own properties through an in-state LLC. Also, this list includes owners of apartment style condominiums that are being leased like an apartment building.*

*Here are relevant statistics related to these one-unit single family properties:*

- *There are 50,230 one-unit single family properties*
  - *Of these 50,230 properties, 10,688 are not 100% PRE*
    - *Of these 10,688 properties, 1,816 list an owner mailing address that is shared by at least 10 other one-unit single family properties, characterized by the following:*
      - *There are 75 distinct owner mailing addresses across this group of 1,816 properties*
      - *The largest number of these 1,816 properties shared by a single mailing address is 170*
      - *984 of these 1,816 properties have a Grand Rapids mailing address*

- 681 of these 1,816 properties have a Michigan mailing address outside of Grand Rapids
- 151 of these 1,816 properties have a non-Michigan mailing address

**23. For 2-4 unit properties, wondering about the same information as single family properties regarding owners of record. Curious if there are similar patterns or owners of record that are or are not controlling property in GR.**

*For residentially classed properties that have 2-4 units, there are 5,855 properties.*

*Again, it is not possible to isolate properties by owner name, because of the use of different LLC names and entities. We are able to isolate the number of properties with the same mailing addresses from this group of 5,855 properties. While this is the most relevant data the City has related to this request, it is not exactly on-point as some owners use a management company to handle the mailing for property tax purposes and an out-of-state investor may own properties through an in-state LLC.*

*Here are relevant statistics for these 2-4 unit residentially classed properties:*

- 5,855 properties
  - Of these 5,855 properties, 930 list an owner mailing address that is shared by at least 7 other 2-4 unit properties
    - There are 73 distinct owner mailing addresses across this group of 930 properties
    - The largest number of these 930 properties shared by a single mailing address is 61
    - 633 of these 930 properties have a Grand Rapids mailing address
    - 289 of these 930 properties have a Michigan mailing address outside of Grand Rapids
    - 8 of these 930 properties have a non-Michigan mailing address

**24. For 2-4 unit properties, is there is a way to categorize them by number and percentage of PRE?**

*Of the 5,855 residentially classed properties that have 2-4 units, there are 1,106 that claim a Principal Residence Exemption greater than 0%, which is 18.9%.*

**Additional resources:**

*The following articles speak to questions/concerns about exclusionary zoning, red-lining, gentrification and displacement:*

- [Color of Law, NYTimes Review](#)
- [Arbitrary Lines, Book Review](#)
- [White House Summary of Exclusionary Zoning](#)
- [The New Exclusionary Zoning](#)

**Additional Q&A From 4/9/2024 Commission Discussion**

**25. Can the owner of an occupied detached single-family home that has an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) located on the property, use the ADU as a Short Term Rental (STR)?**

*No. The City's Zoning Ordinance doesn't allow whole house or ADU short term rentals. The owner is required to occupy the dwelling in which a single room, couch or sleeping area is rented to not more than two adult guests overnight and shall be on the premise when rental activity is occurring.*

**26. What programs are in place to support existing renters and prevent eviction of those renters?**

*For tenants with an eviction case for nonpayment of rent in the 61<sup>st</sup> District Court, the Eviction Prevention Program (EPP) may be able to provide financial assistance. The EPP is a collaboration among The Salvation Army, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the City, and the 61<sup>st</sup> District Court. If the tenant cannot be assisted by the EPP, they may be referred to another homelessness prevention program. Other homelessness prevention programs include, but are not limited to, those operated by the Grand Rapids Urban League, Community Rebuilders, the 61<sup>st</sup> District Court Eviction Diversion Initiative, Family Promise of West Michigan, Access of West Michigan, Mel Trotter Ministries, and Kent County Community Action. Many of these programs can be accessed by calling 2-1-1 or The Salvation Army Housing Assessment Program at 616-454-5840.*

*Different programs may have different requirements. In general, most programs require the household be under a certain income threshold and be at imminent risk of homelessness. Some programs may also require that the rent meet affordability criteria (e.g. rent is lower than the Fair Market Rent and/or under a certain percentage of the tenant’s income). It should be noted that resources remain limited for eviction prevention and diversion. These programs do not address issues such as:*

- *The tenant has no current eviction case against them, but rent increased and they cannot afford the current unit long term.*
- *The landlord has opted not to renew a tenant’s current lease and they will need to vacate in a month.*
- *The tenant is facing an eviction case for a lease violation/termination.*

**27. How are occupancy limits determined to ensure quality and safety of housing?**

*Occupancy limits are determined by square footage requirements established in the Building Code for new construction and the Property Maintenance Code for existing residential structures. Below is information from the Property Maintenance Code, which is based on the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC).*

**404.4.1 Room area.** Every living room shall contain at least 120 square feet (11.2 m2) and every bedroom shall contain a minimum of 70 square feet (6.5 m2) and every bedroom occupied by more than one person shall contain a minimum of 50 square feet (4.6 m2) of floor area for each occupant thereof.

<b>TABLE 404.5 MINIMUM AREA REQUIREMENTS</b>			
SPACE	MINIMUM AREA IN SQUARE FEET		
	1 - 2 Occupants	3 - 5 Occupants	6 or more Occupants
Living room (a, b)	120	120	150
Dining room (a, b)	No requirement	80	100
Bedrooms	Shall comply with Section 404.4.1		

**404.5.1 Sleeping area.** The minimum occupancy area required by Table 404.5 shall not be included as a sleeping area in determining the minimum occupancy area for sleeping purposes. All sleeping areas shall comply with Section 404.4.

**404.5.2 Combined spaces.** Combined living room and dining room spaces shall comply with the requirements of Table 404.5 if the total area is equal to that required for separate rooms and if the space is located so as to function as a combination living room/dining room.

**28. When would the zoning text amendments go into effect? What is the implementation and communication plan?**

*If adopted, the zoning text amendments would go into effect 30 days after publication in the Grand Rapids Press (approximately 35 days after adoption).*

*The zoning changes included in the text amendments would be summarized promptly in a post-adoption media release, distributed to community partner organizations in addition to media organizations. Those changes would be incorporated into relevant Planning and Development Center guides and other online resources. They would be discussed with customers during consultations about relevant project types.*

**29. How would the effectiveness of the zoning text amendments be measured, in terms of achieving their intended outcomes?**

*The zoning text amendments would allow more flexible land and building use, but various requirements like permitting, construction inspections, and/or occupancy certification still would apply. Resulting changes are anticipated to be experienced over a period of years – not necessarily weeks or months. Applicable metrics (e.g, number and type of housing units, etc.) would be tracked and incorporated in the Planning Commission’s annual report, which will be shared with the City Commission and public. A 6 month progress update will be shared at an upcoming Economic Development Project Team (EDPT) meeting.*