



FAYETTE ALLIANCE

603 W. Short Street
Lexington, Kentucky 40508
info@fayettealliance.com
fayettealliance.com

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Brittany M. Roethemeier, J.D.

July 21, 2020

Dear Chairman and Planning Commission Members,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Fayette Alliance with respect to PLN-ZOTA-20-00003: ARTICLE 8 and 16, a petition for a Zoning Ordinance text amendment to revise parking requirements for mixed-income housing developments.

Founded in 2006, Fayette Alliance is a coalition of citizens dedicated to achieving sustainable growth in Lexington-Fayette County through land use advocacy, education, and research. We believe that preserving our unique and productive Bluegrass farmland, advancing smart, equitable growth, innovative development and improving our infrastructure are all essential to Lexington's continued success.

In furtherance of this mission, we respectfully submit the following with regard to our support for ZOTA 20-00003.

One of the key issues facing Lexington, along with many other cities across our country, is the lack of housing diversity and affordability. Removing regulatory obstacles to remedying these issues is critical to our success in housing our citizens, as well as providing an equitable and inclusive community for all, and parking regulations have been identified nationwide as policies which can relieve the pressures cities and developers face in doing so.¹ Parking requirements negatively impact multi-family housing, namely affordable projects, as the significant expense of parking infrastructure increases the overall costs of the project, often by 20% or more, and is passed on to tenants in increased rents to recoup these costs.² Affordable projects

¹ See e.g., People Over Parking, American Planning Association, October 2018, <https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking/>.

² Parking Requirements Impacts on Housing Affordability, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, June 2020, <https://www.vtpi.org/park-hou.pdf>.



can already be more difficult to finance, and a shift towards building housing for people, and not cars, can make a meaningful difference in what types of housing options Lexington can make feasible for our community.

ZOTA 20-00003, which reduces parking requirements to a flat requirement of one space per dwelling unit for mixed-income housing development in *any* zone, is another example (on the heels of the updates to the Floor Area Ratio Requirements) of the type of updates to our ordinance we must implement to remove barriers to the type of growth we are trying to achieve. Reducing costs associated with parking, promoting flexibility as it relates to affordable housing development, and encouraging a more efficient use of our land must be a key focus of implementing our infill and re-development growth strategy.³ We must continue to encourage equity as we grow and revisions to our policies which promote diverse and affordable housing options has never been more important. If we treat "...parking as a resource to be managed, and not a mandate to be met, [we] can apply the savings from reduced parking spaces to building communities with a better mix of housing, transportation and amenities." (Id.).⁴ Dedicating more space to *people* can help us create a more efficient, connected and affordable community.

The revisions proposed by Staff, on their face, are consistent with Theme A, Goal # 1 of Imagine Lexington; supporting the expansion of housing choices by removing barriers for, incentivizing and supporting policies to improve availability of, affordable housing.⁵ Continuing to streamline regulatory hurdles can help deliver more affordable housing, and promote equity at this most foundational level, with greater efficiency. Our City's work towards implementation of Imagine Lexington is evident in these types of updates to our zoning code and we applaud Planning Staff for their hard work in making this vision a reality.

Fayette Alliance appreciates the Planning Staff's and Planning Commission's leadership and foresight in moving forward with the proposed amendments. We respectfully recommend the approval of the ZOTA as outlined.

I know how committed each of you are to Lexington. On behalf of the Fayette Alliance, I sincerely thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Brittany M. Roethemeier

³ Stalled Out, How Empty Parking Spaces Diminish Neighborhood Affordability, The Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2016, <https://www.cnt.org/publications/stalled-out-how-empty-parking-spaces-diminish-neighborhood-affordability>.

⁴ Id. at pg. 2.

⁵ Theme A, Goal 1, 2018 Comprehensive Plan Goals & Objectives, adopted November 16, 2017.

Executive Director