



August 1, 2019

Members of the Cambridge City Council-

I come tonight to again testify in support of the Affordable Housing Overlay on behalf of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition, and communicate the support of more than 30 nonprofit leaders serving Cambridge who have signed this letter.

The concerns that were raised at the multiple Housing Committee hearings and the previous Ordinance Committee meeting should be put forward in specific amendments so that they can be reviewed, discussed and voted upon within the very limited time that this process allows. We are concerned that without specific deadlines for amendment submission by City Councilors, the process can expire without any action taken on the Overlay, thus delaying an important intervention for barriers limiting the development of affordable housing.

Not moving forward on the Overlay negatively impacts Cambridge's ability to address its affordable housing crisis. To those who say we have done enough, we remind them that since the elimination of rent control in 1995, the city's affordable housing has decreased from 15.45% to 14.7% between 1997 and 2016. Home prices of single-family housing rose 84%, two-family home prices by 77% and condominium prices by 44%. Rents rose by 65% for one-bedroom apartments, 70% for two bedroom apartments, and 90% for three family households.

Without the Overlay, non-profit developers will continue to be priced out of the market, as will the thousands of low and moderate-income tenants on waiting lists for an affordable rent. The Overlay is a reasonable solution that the city has the authority to implement, without having to wait for other home rule petitions to pass at the State House. The Overlay proposes low-density development, community input for design review and citywide access for affordable housing.

The Overlay is an important addition to the city's affordable housing toolbox. It is not intended to solve Cambridge's housing crisis but does address the current major zoning barrier that negatively impacts the ability to build affordable housing in Cambridge. **On behalf of Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition, I urge you to move forward on the Overlay so that it can be approved this year.**

Sincerely,

Elena Sokolow-Kaufman  
Managing Director, Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition

### CNC Member Organizations

Maria LaPage, Agassiz Baldwin Community  
Rouwenna Altemose, All in Energy  
Gina Scaramella, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center  
Elissa Spelman, Breakthrough Greater Boston  
Sharon Zimmerman, Cambridge Camping Association  
Darrin Korte, Cambridge Community Center  
Tina Alu, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee  
Bob Gittens, Cambridge Family and Children's Service  
Jennifer Fries, Cambridge School Volunteers  
Jane Hirschi, CitySprouts  
David Gibbs, Community Action Agency of Somerville  
Eryn Johnson, Community Art Center  
Gail Packer, Community Dispute Settlement Center  
Michael Delia, East End House  
Ben Clark, Enroot (formerly Cambridge Community Services)  
Laurent Adamowicz, Eradicate Childhood Obesity Foundation (EChO)  
Jessica Taubner, FII- Greater Boston  
Sasha Purpura, Food for Free  
Shiela Moore, Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center  
Peter Daly, Homeowner's Rehab  
Michael Dawson, Innovators for Purpose  
Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Just-A-Start Corporation  
Selvin Chambers, Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House  
Paulo Pinto, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers  
Martha Sandler, On the Rise  
Sarah Gyorog, Transition House  
Kathryn Fenneman, Tutoring Plus of Cambridge  
Bruce Bird, Vinfen  
Jessye Kass, The Women's Center  
Joan Squeri, The Union Partnership for a Whole Community  
Eva Martin Blythe, YWCA Cambridge

(CNC Member Abstentions: CCTV, The Loop Lab, Charles River Conservancy,  
Cambridge Local First, Cambridge Volunteer Clearinghouse)