

From: [Stephen Calkins](#)
To: [Dianne Massa](#)
Subject: RE: Letter to Planning Commission
Date: Friday, March 18, 2022 5:56:21 PM

To the Planning Commission:

Gosh what a hearing – and I could stay only for the in-person speakers. I'm so glad that none of you need to sleep. Thanks for all you do.

I've ruminated a bit about what I heard and could not resist sending some reactions along to you. My basic point is the obvious one: stick to facts. (And, no, I see no need to have my letter summarized (smile).)

So:

(1) Don't worry about whether this or that person calls the river to be daylighted a "river" – just go down to Ford Field and walk along it and decide for yourself whether it a blessing or something to be buried. Seamus and I love it, but maybe you don't. You can decide for yourself. (And, yes, ideally you've visited it various times of the year. You can presumably recall its starring roll in the annual Duck Race)

(2) Don't worry about whether Google Maps calls Hutton Street between Main and Cady a Street (it does), or whether anyone else does. Just walk there, as Seamus and I do, and see all the cars driving on it and decide for yourself if it is a street for relevant purposes.

(3) Think with specificity and facts about traffic. Is there a lot of traffic in downtown Northville? Seamus and I walk there more than just about anyone and we've never seen significant traffic other than special events or during the high school rush hour, but we don't regard two or three cars at an intersection as a lot of traffic. Presumably you commissioned a traffic study to have data.

Now, ARE there places and times around Northville with traffic? Yes. For instance, and most notably, massive numbers of cars converge on the high school each morning and leave each afternoon. Maybe lots of cars come down Randolph in the morning, I don't know. (Data)

Then one question is what the Downs Development would do respecting any traffic hot spots. It's not clear to me that the Downs residents would be driving south on Randolph in the morning. But presumably some of the residents would be in high school, so adding some high school students would, by definition, increase high school students. I LIKE high school students, but if others do not then they are a negative.

Another question is whether the project should be blocked because there might be some high school students driving to the high school. Isn't there another option? For instance: (a) our Mayor could use his bully pulpit to remind us when the high school rush hours are, so we can plan accordingly (many trips are not time-sensitive); (b) we could work with the high school to encourage walking, biking, e-biking, and bus-riding, all of which are more environmentally friendly and inexpensive; and (c) we could work to improve biking access from the township to the city, further to encourage alternatives to driving. But more high school students will inevitably mean more high school students.

(4) Think with specificity and facts about parking. (Note, by the way, that improved bicycle access from the township to the city would reduce the need for parking.) My view is that it is better to err on the side of too little parking than too much. If there's too little, folks can just park on the side streets during peak times, whereas if there is too much we've harmed walkability and the environment in a way that can't be undone. But the good news is that with most of the Downs residents being on the north side of the development, they would have no need to use current city parking places. My point is to think with specificity about just where parking is a problem and how seriously would the Downs exacerbate it. (Of course. \$5 gasoline might also help solve the problem) And, again, encourage walking and biking.

(5) Think with specificity and facts about sidewalks. One speaker referenced that scary sidewalk on the west side of North Center—a skinny sidewalk flush against the road and even sloping down to the road. But I presume you will require a safe sidewalk. You could do that with a wider sidewalk as on East Cady Street, or by space between the sidewalk and the road, or by parking places – there are several ways to achieve safety and I assume that someone will cause one to be chosen.

Sidewalk safety is unrelated to setbacks for home and rowhouses/townhouses. THOSE setbacks are about appearance, not safety. I personally see no reason especially for townhouses and rowhouses to be set back far away from a sidewalk – rowhouses and townhouses actually look better closer to the sidewalk -- but people disagree about appearances.

(6) Learn the facts about the developers' alleged reputation for irresponsible behavior. That was quite dramatic when a speaker – not from Northville, as I recall – called one of the developer's representatives a liar. We don't usually see that. I have a guess as to the truth but it's only a guess. You should neither put a thumb on the scale against the developer based on unproven accusations nor ignore serious charges. Somehow Northville needs someone – I'd nominate the city manager or the planning commission chair – to make some phone calls and learn the facts. You can't collectively do this, as a board, but you shouldn't not do it, either. It's not enough to sit there and listen to insults and then read supportive letters. (Of course, you've been on this project so long that you probably are already on top of this, but I mention the issue because sometimes it is hard for boards to deal with something needing some investigating.)

Bottom line: Facts.

Thanks for all you do.

Stephen Calkins
317 West Dunlap Street
Northville, MI 48167-1404
(248) 946-9313 (mobile)

JAMES M. KOSTER
204 ST. LAWRENCE
NORTHVILLE, MICHIGAN
EMAIL: jimkoster@charter.net
PHONE: 248-974-8584

March 19, 2022

Northville Planning Commission
215 W. Main St.
Northville, MI 48167

Re: Northville Downs Project

Dear Planning Commission,

Having attended the February 1, February 15 and March 15 public hearings regarding the aforementioned project, where do we go from here? What next?

The audience responded. Some were in favor of the project *as presented* (with some minor adjustments) and some were opposed with the project *as presented*. However, the consensus is that a development must occur; it is just a matter of what type and will it be "consistent with the character of the community". It is my opinion that the current development is NOT appropriate and does not reflect our community.

There are numerous issues yet to be resolved. A few that come to mind are listed below:

1) Traffic.

What is the effect of a large volume of cars on our existing roads, many of which cannot be widened? Should there be a roundabout at 7 Mile and Sheldon?

2) Farmers Market.

What is the status; where does it go, how is it funded?

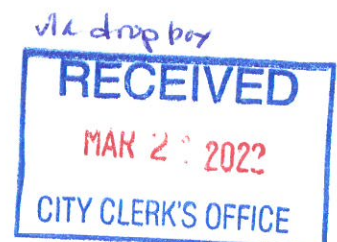
3) Retail.

How much retail shall there be and what type. Would it conflict with our current downtown? Is there going to be two downtowns as the Gibbs Planning Group suggested. (I find this an absolute disgrace!)

4) Density.

With an estimated 464 housing units and an excess of 800 people in this small area, what is the overall effect of this massive influx?

5) Public Benefit.



Does the plan specifically delineate those area deemed "public benefit", and, if so, how are these funded?

I am sure there are other detailed issues as well, and they must all be considered when making your final decision. I have faith in you as a commission that the final decision will be appropriate.

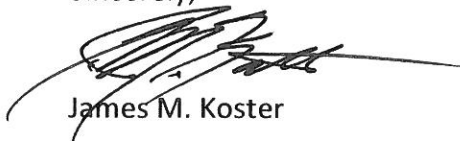
But, looking ahead I see two scenarios:

- 1) The developer must have a return on his investment. I do not know what the purchase price is, but it is obvious that the developer must sell so many units to achieve a profit. The problem is the purchase price is too high for the development to have fewer units. The only way to have fewer units is to have higher priced units. The developer has probably computed that this may not be feasible from a marketing standpoint. So, in essence, the developer will continue to advocate his plan with a large number of units. I foresee more negotiations and compromise ahead to resolve this. But, I believe the situation is at impasse; the number of units will remain high. The Planning Commission must decide if this large unit density is "consistent with the character of the community"
- 2) The other scenario is rejection of the developer's plan which would result in the developer exercising his option not to purchase the property. Instead, the developer should renegotiate the purchase price which would allow him to make a profit on fewer units. The seller should realize this fact since a future buyer would have the same problem if the purchase price remained as it is. A lower price would enable the developer to present a plan more conducive to our community's desires, and he could still have a return on his investment.

In summary, I quote from my January 10, 2021 letter addressed to Mayor Turnbull (copy attached.):

"The racetrack area presents a challenging problem: how to transform this property into a development that is conducive and reflects the attributes and characteristics of the community. One error, one wrong decision could alter what many of us adore. The city must be vigilant in reaching their final decision and not be persuaded by the developer's pleas or succumb to current social and political trends."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Koster", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James M. Koster

James M. Koster
204 St. Lawrence Blvd.
Northville, MI 48168
Tel: 248-974-8584; Email: jimkoster@charter.net

January 10, 2021

Mr. Brian Turnbull
Mayor, City of Northville
215 W. Main
Northville, Michigan 48167

Copy

Re: Northville Downs Development

Dear Mr. Turnbull,

We have been in receipt of the survey of what is to be done with the race track area. We have reviewed, analyzed, and studied the scenarios presented, and have found flaws in each. Therefore we have decided to present our own thoughts on what should be done with this property based upon our fifty years of living here, raising three children, observations of the community's changes, and our love of the city.

After an exhaustive search of area communities, we selected Northville as the place where we would reside and raise our family. The deciding factors were many: the quaintness, the "small town" atmosphere, the friendliness, the community spirit, the farmers market, the awareness of its history, the architectural designs of its buildings and homes, the feeling of being safe, the schools, the public amenities (library, mill race, nearby parks), and what the downtown offered its citizens.

Over the fifty years we have seen many of these attributes alter somewhat, but, in our opinion, they are substantially the same, and we must hold on and preserve them. It is still a town that is friendly and has maintained its quaintness. The depth and importance of its history has made a much needed awareness thanks to you. However, the downtown has really seen a change. No longer are there the retail stores that offered everything you wanted which made this community totally self-contained. The evolution and transformation of "retail" is an ever changing dynamic which has certainly been magnified by the recent pandemic.

Northville has shifted from a retail environment to a social environment. The predominance of restaurants, bistros, and coffee houses is the current outcome of this transformation.

Downtown is not where one goes to buy clothes, shoes, new furniture, household items, or to attend the movies. Instead, the town has migrated to a social gathering location where the focus is eating, drinking and comradeship. The decision as to where one attends is based on what type of food and drink is served and where one's friends will gather. Retail has taken the "back seat".

The race track area presents a challenging problem: how to transform this property into a development that is conducive and reflects the attributes and characteristics of the community. One error, one bad decision could alter what many of us adore. The city must be vigilant in reaching their final decision and not be persuaded by the developers' pleas or succumb to current social and political trends.

It is an undeniable truth, but one that is politically explosive and therefore not often expressed: our community is composed of a certain socio-economic class that has certain values and culture, both of which enhances, maintains, and strengthens our characteristics. To deny this fact is unrealistic.

The race track area is the northern door to our city. As such, it should immediately reflect our characteristics. Therefore, this is what we would like to see:

- 1) Upon crossing Seven Mile Road, there should be landscaped green space on both sides of Sheldon Road with a beautiful welcoming sign.
- 2) The Farmers Market should remain where it is.
- 3) Our preference would be that the race track area would be only single family residences with lot sizes similar to the historic district. The homes and street layout should also mirror the historic district with the Victorian look.
- 4) The river should be exposed and may or may not be incorporated to a park zone. If not, the single family homes would be adjacent to the river only on the south side with the north side left as landscaped green space.
- 5) The only other acceptable viable option would be low density condominiums with ample landscaped greenspace. They should be designed as single family residences similar in footprint to those in St. Lawrence Estates but with Victorian style.
- 6) There should not be any townhouses or apartments.
- 7) Along Cady Street, we would cautiously recommend low density commercial/retail; no more than two stories high and with Victorian architecture. Our preferences is offices. This area presents a real challenge. This type of development would necessitate the blending with Main Street via Hutten and Center Streets. What would not be good to have two separate downtown areas-they must appear as one. Of course, the real issue is could this type of development sustain itself. Retail is in a downward spiral, and offices may not be in demand because of the rise in virtual employment at home. Additional restaurants only exacerbates what already exists (there are over 22 places in the immediate downtown area that serve food). Our neighboring city to the North, Novi, tried to create a downtown and it resulted in an abject failure.

- 8) In summary, the entire area should be seen as something that was “always here”; not something that stands out or is peculiar to its surroundings. We have seen in Northville what “stands out” and is “peculiar”-the atrocious design and location of the condominiums on Center Street where Ely’s once stood. We do not want to see more of this.

We hope that this correspondence is helpful. It reflects our feelings of being a part of this great community. We live here, and do not want to see what we love compromised. Northville is a city that people want to live in and be a part of. We have to maintain that feeling.

Please provide copies of this letter to the members of the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

James M. and Carol A. Koster

From: John Roby
To: Dianne Massa
Subject: Typo-Fix3 =>FW: Walled Lake Branch "Normal LOW" Water Level
Date: Thursday, March 17, 2022 11:11:23 AM

*** if you can catch it, there was an extra phrase hanging around the pictures confusing the new-line format – thanks if you can, no emergency if not ***
*** 'took me THREE tries to fix it...SORRY!...'hope you caught up on emails top-down. ***

Dianne:

Please forward to PC with Sally.

No rush, just info.

Best of...

John R.
(248)348-7047

From: John Roby <johnrobby@luxsci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2022 9:44 AM
To: Planning Commission and Consultant

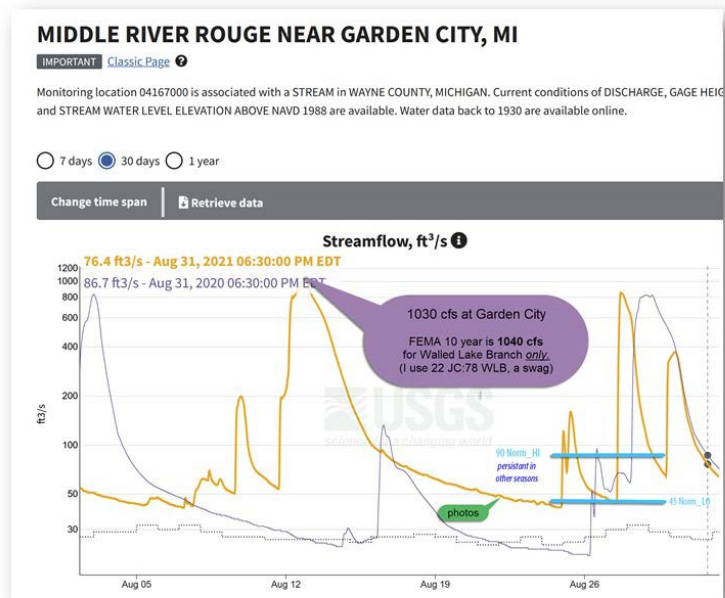
Subject: Walled Lake Branch 'Normal LOW' Water Level

Dear Planning Commission and Consultant:

This one's easy...just info.

Amplifying my remarks at your March 15 Public Hearing, here is some info about the size of the Middle Rouge River Walled Lake Branch. This is the stream that runs through a ~20x8 foot culvert under the present racetrack utility lots to the east of the oval.

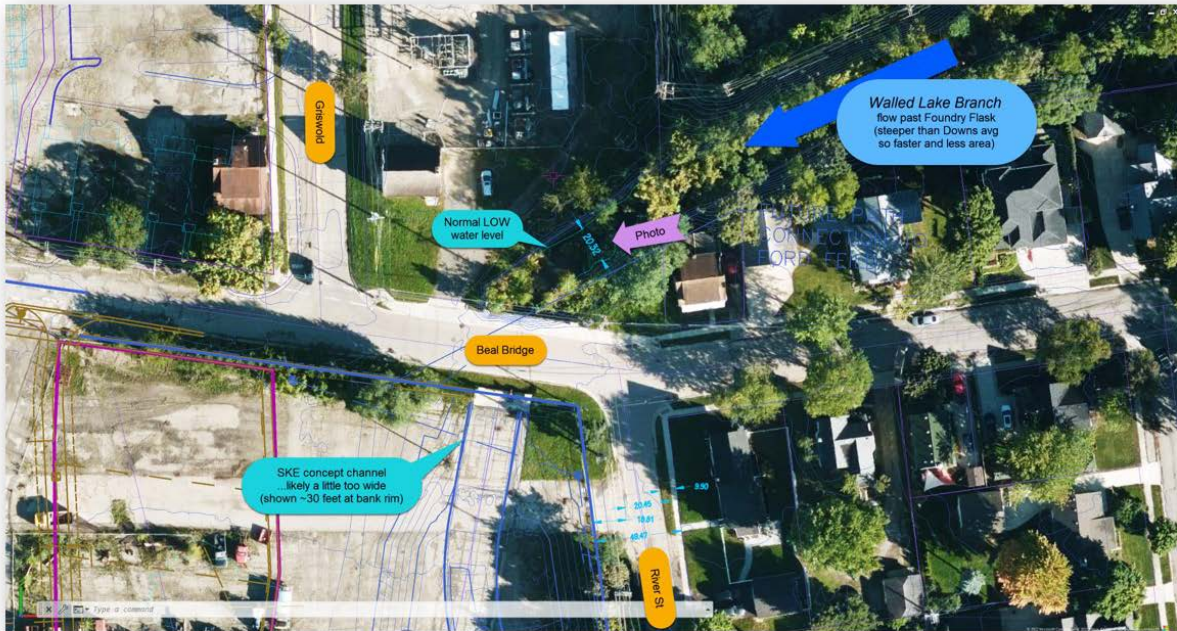
Here's the only nearby gauge of flow for the Middle Rouge...



The sky blue Norm_HI and Norm_LO are the estimates I've used to model the potential daylighted river park in 3D. There is a little windage in my estimates of both 'normal'...maybe +/- an inch or two of water level near lows, depending on channel shape. The larger flood flows I use are FEMA/SKE 'standards'. Interestingly, the lowest of these, the 10-year expectation, is a little worse than the worst we had last summer...a serious problem for storm drainage around town.

It's a different story, but please know that as stated by SKE and comfortably confirmed by my unofficial 3d modelling, neither Bealtown nor New Downs are threatened for flood benchmarks. Daylighting improves the margin of safety compared to recently corrected official FEMA current conditions.

Next, please consider a plan view at Beal Bridge of SKE site drawing plus present contours layered on overhead photography...



That sets up this photo from August at 'Normal Lows' along the mauve arrow marked 'Photo' in the above...



The lump in the middle is not a curious brown trout, but a rag on a stick. I should have moved it for the picture, but would have gotten a soaker in my fancy Eight Inch Gore-Tex boots. Which I guess is the point...it's a plenty good enough little river to me.

FYI, here's a similar looksee for Johnson Creek taken at the culvert under Seven Mile between Sheldon and Hines, perhaps a skinny quarter of the combined Middle Rouge water volume flow south of Seven (an estimate)...



Again, this is LOWS. It's still a real stream as you can confirm walking along Seven from Wing to this bridgelet any time of year.

Best of...
John R.
(248)348-7047

From: [Susan Walsh](#)
To: [Dianne Massa](#)
Subject: Public meeting re Northville Downs
Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 3:04:26 PM

Good afternoon,

Could you please add this to the public comments regarding the proposed re-envisioning of the Downs area. I have taken both Master Plan surveys and I joined in the game board meeting. I have also listened to several meetings about this issue. Although I liked many things in the proposal, I wanted to voice my opposition to the 4 and/or 5 story buildings that have been proposed. I believe that any new buildings should not be any taller than 3 stories. There is simply no need for taller buildings in Northville. "Savor Small Town Charm" is the first thing that you read on the Northville website. I am really hoping that the commission members can stand firm on that ideal.

I would also like to voice my opposition to the "Lego block" apartments proposed that look to be similar to the apartments on Center Street across from the Kroger. The fact that those apartments were ever built in this town just breaks my heart every time I drive by. PLEASE, do not let these developers build more of the same or anything resembling them.

Donna Tinberg has worked so hard on this project as well as many others and I have been so impressed with the work done so far. I have also been so impressed with the way that this city has reacted to the Pandemic and by the fact that the city passed the .36 FAR. Thanks to all of this hard work we do have an unbelievably charming town that many people wish to live in. These developers will almost certainly make a lot of money thanks in large part to the hard work of these people. Please don't let these developers tarnish what has been achieved so far. At the least, these developers should respect the goals of the people who have made this a town where they can make so much money.

Sincerely,

Susan K Walsh
512 Baseline Rd.

STRONG TOWNS

[Articles](#)[Podcasts](#) [Learn](#) [Local-Motive](#) [Tour](#) [Academy](#) [Action Lab](#) [Book](#) [Events](#)[About](#)
[Become a Member](#)

Making Room for Missing Middle: 4 Recommended Resources



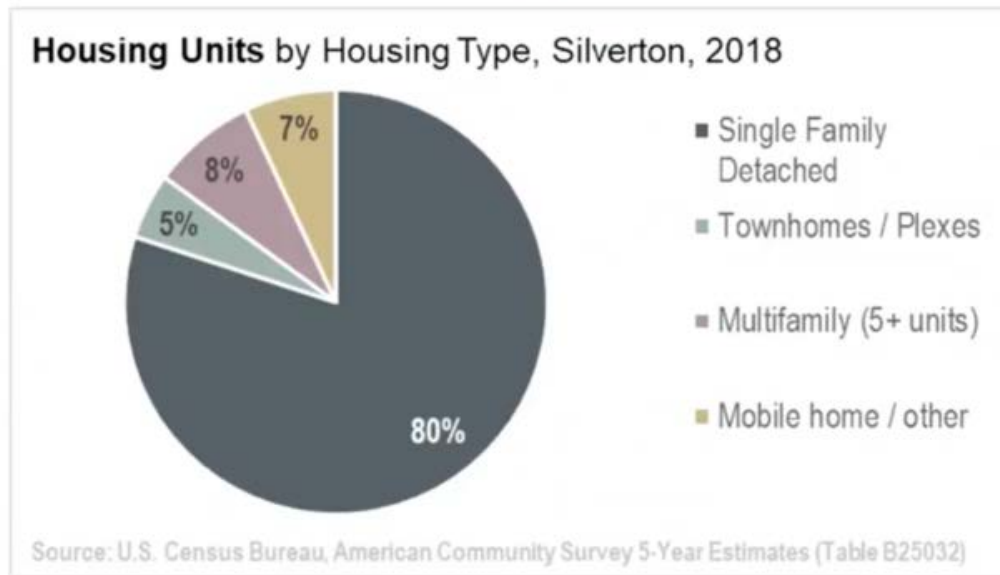
The central path through [Evans Oaks](#), a new cohousing community in Silverton, Oregon. Image by Jen Rahn.

Strong and financially resilient communities are comprised of a variety of housing types. Not just single-family detached homes on one end of the spectrum and huge apartment complexes on the other, but a wide range of “middle housing” options in-between: duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, courtyard cottages, bungalow apartments, and more. Yet these middle housing types—so familiar to our grandparents and great-grandparents—are rarely built today.

Dan Parolek of [Opticos Design](#) coined the term “missing middle housing” to describe middle housing options that are in high-demand (across all age groups) but getting harder and harder to find. All too often, the market isn’t even given a chance to meet demand. Among other barriers, middle housing types have been zoned almost out of existence in many communities. Just how *missing* is missing middle housing? In a [recent Strong Towns webcast](#), Parolek said that middle housing’s share of all housing produced dropped from more than 25% a century ago to less than 10% today. In the meantime, more than a quarter of all Baby Boomers and nearly 60% of Millennials say they are looking for walkable living and missing middle housing. Parolek didn’t share stats for my fellow Gen Xers—the missing middle of generations?—but, [as Robert Steuteville wrote last year in *Public Square*](#), tens of millions of us will be downsizing in the next two decades.

Happily, my own town of Silverton, Oregon has begun a community-wide conversation about middle housing. The City will be updating its zoning code standards to encourage more middle housing and provide greater housing choice. These changes were prompted in part by the 2019 passage of Oregon’s HB 2001, which requires communities of 10,000 or more to allow duplexes on any lot zoned for single-family residential, and communities of 25,000 or more to also allow triplexes and fourplexes. (Silverton is just over the 10,000 threshold.) The bill, which our senior editor Daniel Herriges [wrote about here](#), was championed by a [diverse coalition](#)—including AARP of Oregon, the NAACP, Portland Public Schools, and transit advocates, among others—and passed with bipartisan support.

What is Silverton's Current Housing Mix?



Screenshot from the City of Silverton's virtual town hall on middle housing.

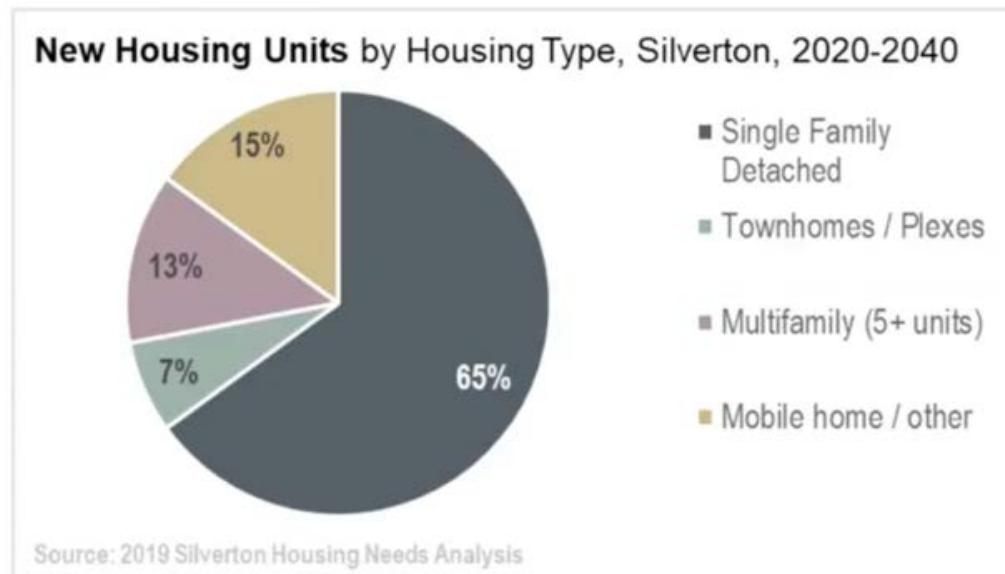
Another reason Silverton is having this conversation now is in response to a recently-completed Housing Needs Analysis (HNA). According to the [final HNA report](#), the median housing price jumped 72% between 2016 and 2019, from \$250,000 to \$429,000. Rental housing is scarce and cost burdens for renters are going up. The report confirmed with data what Silvertonians were already seeing: housing affordability, variety, and flexibility are major problems here. A pastor friend told me a couple years ago that, in a recent gathering of ministers, the majority of clergy identified affordable housing as the number one issue facing our town. Many young people who grew up in Silverton and would prefer to resettle here after college can't afford to buy and can't find a place to rent. Other friends who work with Silverton's unhoused population tell stories of neighbors, including families with children, who find themselves suddenly homeless. They're living in cars now, sleeping on the street, couch-hopping, or, in non-COVID times, spending cold winter nights in the [local warming shelter](#).

Looking ahead, Silverton is expected to add another 3,000 residents over the next 20 years. Aging Baby Boomers and Xers, as well as Millennials starting households, will put additional pressure on the available housing stock. Silverton needs more multifamily housing, but the HNA concluded that we can't accommodate demand based on existing zoning.

Thus, Silverton is considering changes to its zoning codes that would encourage duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, cottage clusters, and townhomes. In January, the City facilitated a

virtual open house to talk about middle housing and answer questions. Then they asked residents to give input via a survey. Some of the questions:

What will New Housing in Silverton Look Like?



Screenshot from the City of Silverton's virtual town hall on middle housing.

What should be the top policy goals for introducing middle housing zoning standards?

Goals included managing the impacts of parking, supporting more affordable housing, encouraging walkable neighborhoods, and several others. We were asked to rate them from not important to very important.

Knowing that standards must be applied equally to duplexes and single family detached dwellings, how important are the following duplex code standards? We were asked to rate the importance of the following standards:

- Adding a requirement for a garage or carport
- Allowing attached and detached configurations
- Modifying setbacks and lot coverage standards to allow for more units
- Reducing minimum lot sizes to allow for more duplexes
- Creating physical/ visual connections between dwellings and the street
- Limiting overall size of buildings

How important are the following cottage cluster code standards? Again, we were asked to rate:

- Limiting overall size of the cottages
- Orienting cottages around a shared courtyard area
- Modifying setbacks and lot coverage standards to allow for more units
- Creating physical/visual connections between dwellings and the street
- Providing options for shared parking or parking close to each cottage

Similar questions were asked about townhouses, triplexes, and quadplexes.

The survey was short. It also included good illustrations, which I appreciated. Still, I received texts and Facebook messages from friends and family about the survey. Not because I'm an expert, but because Strong Towns [talks a lot about missing middle housing](#) and I talk a lot about Strong Towns. I answered questions as best I could. I also shared some of our best, most accessible resources on the topic.

It occurred to me to share some of those recommended resources here too. If *your* town or city is having a much-needed conversation about missing middle housing, or if you want to [help start one](#), these four resources can help.

Thinking Big About Building Small

Our friend Daniel Parolek, the planner who coined the term “missing middle,” joined Strong Towns for a public webcast where he shared from the wisdom in his new book, [*Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis*](#), and talked about how to bring affordability back into your community. Catch that webcast recording at right. And don't miss the [follow-up Q&A webcast as well](#); he answers a ton of important and detailed questions about how to advocate for and build missing middle housing in your community.

[Read more...](#)

5 Ways To Make the Missing Middle Less Missing



Missing Middle development is an indispensable piece of the Strong Towns vision for cities that are resilient, adaptable, and can pay their bills. We need to revive a culture of building this way, and we need institutions that will allow it.

Some of the biggest barriers to Missing Middle construction have to do with [financing and federal regulation](#). A lot of city governments see this as outside their domain. But there's plenty that cities can do, too. Here are five things your city should be doing, if it isn't already, to help the Missing Middle get found again.

1. Legalize It. Everywhere.

The single biggest reason the Missing Middle has declined is that it is literally illegal in most places. This can be true even in urban neighborhoods that *have* a lot of duplexes or small apartment buildings: in many of these neighborhoods, zoning codes were changed in the 1960s or 1970s to prohibit the new construction of anything other than single-family homes. The older

apartments that are part of the neighborhood's fabric are grandfathered in, but can't be replaced or imitated.

Fortunately, there's a movement to re-legalize the kind of eclectic neighborhoods, with a variety of home types for ownership and rental, that we used to build nearly everywhere.

[Read more...](#)

8 Things Your Town Can Do to Add More Housing (Without Spending a Dime)



[Image source.](#)

Housing affordability is often treated as a “big city” problem. The reality is that housing affordability is a [nationwide issue](#), affecting big cities, suburbs, and small towns alike. What’s a Strong Town to do? As with transportation, some like to write off housing affordability as a problem of insufficient funding. “If only we spent more money,” the thinking goes, “we could tackle housing affordability.” Indeed, more funding is needed for homeless shelters and housing vouchers for low-income families.

But this argument belies two key points: First, we realistically need [far more new housing](#) than subsidies could ever possibly provide. Second, policymakers already have a buffet of policies they could adopt that would increase housing affordability and accessibility without spending a dime of taxpayer dollars. If your town is serious about tackling the housing affordability crisis, consider adopting one or more of the following policies.

[Read more...](#)

[Making Normal Neighborhoods Legal Again](#)



An unobtrusive duplex sits alongside single-family homes. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

All over the U.S., duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, ADUs, even small apartment buildings quietly exist in supposedly "single-family detached" neighborhoods. They're normal. They belong. They fill a vital need. But if you applied for a permit to build another one just like them today, you'd be denied.

All over America in cities big and small, the on-the-ground reality belies the legal fiction of “single-family neighborhoods.” There are [10,000 or so](#) multi-unit homes hiding in plain sight in single-family districts in Seattle alone. You can find “illegal neighborhoods”—as in illegal to replicate today, despite that many are stable and prosperous and well-loved places—in [Portland](#) and [Somerville](#) and [Lexington](#) and [Milwaukee](#) and pretty much anywhere you could throw a dart at a map.

What's going on here?

[Read more...](#)

You May Also Like



[“How Can My Town *Not* Be Wealthy When There’s Been So Much Growth?”](#)

Let's talk about some core Strong Towns concepts: complexity, incrementalism, fragility, and more!

Mar 7, 2022

[Strong Towns](#)



[Bringing Gentle Density to Memphis](#)

These brothers are pushing for incremental infill development in Memphis, Tennessee, with a community they're building just north of downtown.

Feb 16, 2022

[Daniel Herriges](#)



[How Big Is an Incremental Step? Let's #DoTheMath](#)

For our real-estate markets to allow incremental development to be economically viable, there are some challenges we need to confront.

Jan 20, 2022

[Seth Zeren](#)



[John Pattison](#)

John Pattison is the **Community Builder** for Strong Towns. He is the author of two books, most recently [Slow Church](#) (IVP, 2014), which takes inspiration from Slow Food and the other Slow movements to help faith communities reimagine how they are living life together in the neighborhood. John also cohosts [The Membership](#), a podcast about Wendell Berry, the Kentucky writer, farmer, and activist. John and his family live in Silverton, Oregon. You can connect with him on Twitter at [@johnepattison](#).

Want to start a Local Conversation, or implement the Strong Towns approach in your community? [Email John.](#)

[John Pattison](#) February 2, 2021

[Previous](#)

[El caso clásico](#)

[Next](#)

[**Our Students Were Learning Remotely Before the Pandemic**](#)

[**Become a Member**](#) | [**Sign Up for Email**](#)
[**Staff**](#) | [**Advisory Board**](#) | [**Blog Roll**](#) | [**Employment**](#)
[**FAQ**](#) | [**Pitch a Story**](#) | [**Action Lab**](#) | [**Strong Towns Book**](#)
[**Privacy Policy**](#) | [**Comment Policy**](#) | [**Shop**](#) | [**RSS Feed**](#) | [**Contact Us**](#)



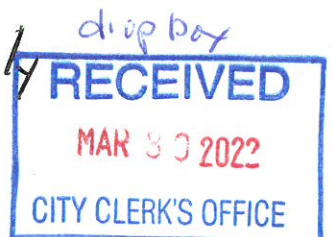
[Strong Towns is a 501\(c\)3 non-profit organization. Our work is performed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. Please share with others to use for good.](#)

I just want to say Thankyou, Thankyou, Thankyou
for your dedication and service to the community. I don't
know how you do it.

I'm writing this letter from my heart as a 60yr. Northville
City resident. I've been blessed to have grown up in this town,
which has allowed me a unique perspective, as there aren't too
many of me, left in the city. Not only did I grow up here
and go to Northville schools I married a Northville teacher who
has taught in the district for 36 years.

Northville means so much to us. We got married at the
Miller church in 1983. We helped construct the playscape
at the southeast corner of Ford Field, in an all out Northville
community effort. We joined Marc Gans in helping to create the
"Friends of Northville Parks Recreation," and obviously too many to
name fundraisers, to count.

I say these things because I want you to know that
Northville is just not another city. Northville is a feel of
community, tradition, great schools, churches and organizations,
and that was back then. We feel a sense of obligation
as long time residents, to preserve our history of a family
friendly historic small town. That is everything.



The city of Livonia could only dream of having a downtown like ours. The city of Novi went to great lengths to replicate a downtown and we all know how that turned out.

A downtown like ours is a keeper, if we can keep it. For the people who say we must get this deal done now as presented, I have to wonder what small historic town did you move here from?

This town has been growing just fine organically for two or three decades. All you have to do is just drive around to see it. What we have here is a plan to put 474 homes and upwards of a 1000 cars in a $2\frac{1}{2}$ square mile area. I have never known the sky to be falling in the 48167 Zipcode, until now. Over a period of 60 yrs. we have our property values rise, our schools become the flagship of education in the state, low crime rate and great city services.

This project as presented is too big for our small historic gem. Over stuffing the box with traffic, parking challenges and pedestrians everywhere, is one way to get on the path, that the sky is falling. Has anyone tried to get a parking spot at noon, in Northville, on any day of the week? I'm not sure adding 1000 more cars to the mix is going to preserve our small town feel. The project minimally should be scaled back.

Thankyou for your time
David Gail Zima
375 First St.
Northville 48167