

**Gainesville Neighborhood Voices Position Statement re: Commissioner Eastman's Upzoning Proposal
Scheduled for General Policy Committee Consideration on January 11, 2024**

The Board of Directors of Gainesville Neighborhood Voices (GNVoices) does not support the multi-faceted proposal put forward by Commissioner Bryan Eastman to 1) change residential zoning across the City to allow 35'-wide, 3500 square foot lots, 2) reduce lot setbacks, 3) allow cottage neighborhoods, while 4) maintaining the ordinance that allows two accessory dwelling units on any residential lot in the City.

Instead, GNVoices proposes two ways to strategically add residential density to the City, consistent with the spirit of Commissioner Eastman's proposal.

GNVoices' process, leading to our recommendation, included research, listening, and extensive communication:

Over the past year, members of the GNVoices Board have had lengthy personal conversations with Commissioner Eastman, attended both City-hosted information sessions and a session hosted by the YIMBY.org affiliated local group "Gainesville is for People." GNVoices also hosted a meeting at the Blount Center, where Commissioner Eastman spoke with a group of more than 50 attendees. We have carefully read his proposal, posted on Substack. We have listened to participants' questions and concerns at each public session.

We note that, despite hearing challenges, questions, concerns and suggestions raised by many participants, including our Board members, Commissioner Eastman has made no changes to his recommendations and has incorporated none of the suggestions.

The rationale for our objection:

- 1) The City has not provided evidence, in the form of a map, showing which lots/neighborhoods would be impacted by this proposal. Such a map would include lots over 70' wide that could be subdivided, and highlight vacant lots.
- 2) There is no evidence that subdividing lots randomly will lead to a substantial number of "starter homes" since the cost of a home is largely dependent on the cost of labor, materials, fees, and permits. This approach will not achieve Commissioner Eastman's stated goal of helping young families buy their first homes.
- 3) It is unfair to rezone all residential property in the City without *individually* informing all impacted residents and property owners.
- 4) In aggregate, the vast majority of those in attendance at public sessions did not support the proposal as presented. Because we believe our City's residents' voices should be heard, we support their positions.

Two alternatives, to add residential density strategically:

- 1) Commissioner Eastman has used his own neighborhood, Oak View, as an example of a neighborhood that would benefit from lot splits and related zoning changes. With his leadership, his neighborhood could serve as a prototype. Other neighborhoods with lots wider than 70' (whether vacant or not) might also choose to "opt in" at the same time, or once Oak View leads the way.
- 2) Some of Gainesville's major roads include single-family zoning that has perhaps outlived its usefulness. Residential lots adjoining these arterial roads could be upzoned, consistent with best

practices of transit-oriented design. This would likely increase bus usage, supporting the multi-modal transportation transition many in our community seek.