

Mr. Mayor and members of the Honorable Board, for the record, my name is Richard Girard and I live at 283 Orange St.

As you consider these zoning changes, it seems fitting that the Manchester Police Department has published an interactive crime dashboard which shows where crime occurs in this city. Having spent some time reviewing the data, it's clear that our city's most crime troubled areas are those with the highest density which, coincidentally, happen to be those with the lowest incomes.

This is not a unique Manchester phenomenon.

In two thousand seventeen, professors Joshua Battin and Justin Crow of Mansfield University in Pennsylvania published a study on the relationship between urban crime and housing density. They used data from the two thousand and two thousand ten US Census and Uniform Crime Reports from one hundred and forty two municipalities. Their conclusion was quote "Population density was found to have a significant negative relationship with property crime."

In two thousand eighteen, Professor Elizabeth Griffiths from the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, published a study about public housing and crime patterns. Her research showed, quote "a moderately strong positive relationship between the location of public housing projects and crime hotspots in urban centers." She went on to say that the further away from these developments, the lower the crime. The M P D crime map bears out this conclusion.

In 2009, professors Thomas Stucky and John Ottensmann of the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

published a study in which they concluded that rates of murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault are generally higher in areas with high density residential developments and commercial property. Quoting from an article on Indiana University's web site, quote "The study found higher rates of all types of violent crime in areas of high-density residential land use, even after controlling for overall population. The correlation was more pronounced in disadvantaged areas but held true in other areas as well....There seems to be something about (high-density residential) units that is associated with all types of serious violent crime...Apparently, high-density housing units promote serious violent crime."

Crime aside, there are other concerns with these proposals. Increasing density while reducing off street parking requirements is a double disaster for neighborhoods already incapable of handling their current vehicle load, especially given all of the garages that will, no doubt, prove to be tempting targets for absentee property owners and their managers looking to maximize revenue from properties, no matter the broader impact on the neighborhoods, thanks to the removal of just about any oversight on Accessory Dwelling Units as proposed. This will make low income neighborhoods less desirable and, therefore, lower income, which will worsen the conditions for crime.

The likely impacts of these changes are consequential in very negative ways. Instead of fast tracking these changes, why not refer them to the zoning rewrite that will undergo a full public presentation and vetting once it's finally brought forward. If nothing else, they should be considered as part of the whole and not singled out for special treatment. These are big changes and due care and consideration, in full context of the overall zoning rewrite, should be given.