

5 February 2026

Dear Council Members,

My name is Alāna Wilson. My husband and I have been renters in Ditmas Park West for five years and we both work in the public sector. I am a member of Brooklyn CB14 but speaking for myself.

I want to start by asking everyone to summon a mental image of your neighborhood. Think about the sidewalk and crosswalks you travel every day, the familiar faces, the flowers and trees and things that spark joy. Much of what comes to mind for many of us are the experiences and relationships on our block because much of our lives are lived at the block scale.

Anecdotally, I've seen folks find friendship, love, jobs, and resilience to life's unexpected events on their block. Why? Because these neighbors are the ones we are most likely to build social bonds with. Examples of when I've found or offered help on my block include flooding, blackouts, emergency childcare, an elderly neighbor stranded on a ladder and more.

Intentionally or not, these two proposed historic district designations are a way for ~7 of the most well-resourced blocks in Community District 14 to functionally opt out of not just the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, but the possibility of connection with new neighbors who may be different. These blocks include ~253 residential parcels of which 98% are single family homes with residents that are 70% more white and 75% less likely to be renters, than the rest of our district. All parcels are between a 0 and 10 minute walk to a Q station. If designated, these would be in addition to the ~30 well-resourced single-family blocks in CD14 that are already historic districts. Finally, only 17 of the parcels, about 7%, are even subject to updated zoning for 3 story multi-family based on City of Yes. To me, this 7% is our neighborhood doing our small part to simply be open to modest change.

I understand the fear of change. I also see a bigger picture and a longer time horizon. I see a future where I can age in place in an ADU that used to be a garage, where a more diverse mix of block neighbors become our friends, where a quaint cluster of corner apartments enable my husband and I to achieve our dream of owning a home with a bit of outdoor space.

This year our community board is asking DCP for help enabling more middle income housing. This proposed designation is in direct conflict with that. Instead, we need to find ways to encourage more intentional design while allowing the creation of housing. An example is form based code at the district scale. If you freeze these blocks, it will perpetuate the segregation of our neighborhood. We know that segregation ultimately fails everyone.

Commissioners, I urge you to reject the designation in its current form - because of the depth of our housing crisis, our desperate need to give people the opportunity to live near transit, and the precedent it could set. If approved, it sends a message that well-resourced blocks may opt-out

of the evolution of our built environment, even as that evolution is essential for our city to solve the most pressing challenges of our time. Thank you.

-Alāna Wilson, PhD, AICP; renter at [REDACTED], Brooklyn; [REDACTED]