

## Alyssa R White

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**From:** Pamela Broom <pamela@newcorpinc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 16, 2025 7:01 PM  
**To:** CPCINFO  
**Subject:** Support for an improved land use policy regarding urban agriculture in New Orleans

To Whom It May Concern:

I am offering this comment in support of the Land Use Barriers Study to identify barriers to permitting, zoning constraints, and land use that hinder the creation of enhanced public/community access to properties for urban agriculture.

I have been an urban cultivator, farm business consultant, and advocate for 25+ years in the City of New Orleans, across the State of Louisiana, and nationally. The City of New Orleans has an incredible opportunity to serve as a model for creating an urban agriculture infrastructure that supports a more viable community food system, environmentally responsible land use, and opportunities for the establishment of revenue generating agripreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

## Pamela A. Broom

Neighborhood Innovation &  
Agripreneurship Director



504-208-1700

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2533 Columbus Street Suite 204 New Orleans, LA 70119

Funding Entrepreneurs. Building Communities.

## **Urban Agriculture Considerations for the Land Use Barrier Study**

*Prepared by Grace Treffinger in the Office of Resilience & Sustainability*

*May 2025*

As the City Planning Commission begins its Land Use Barrier Study and reviews the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO), the Office of Resilience & Sustainability encourages close attention to opportunities to improve land use policy in support of urban agriculture. A more supportive policy environment for farmers and gardeners will directly advance the City's goals for a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable local food system as well as increase climate resilience.

### **Benefits of Urban Agriculture**

*Urban agriculture—including community gardens, small-scale farms, and food-producing landscapes—offers measurable public benefits. National and local research shows:*

- **Food Access:** *Households participating in community gardening consume 37.5% more fruits and vegetables than non-participants (Alaimo et al., 2008). In New Orleans, food insecurity remains above the national average, particularly in low-income and BIPOC neighborhoods.*
- **Vacant Land Activation:** *New Orleans has over 20,000 vacant lots. Repurposing even a fraction for urban agriculture could reduce blight, lower maintenance costs, and increase neighborhood cohesion (Trust for Public Land, 2022).*
- **Economic Opportunity:** *Urban farms can generate income and jobs. A 2023 report from the National Young Farmers Coalition found that urban farms can gross \$10–\$20 per square foot annually, depending on crop mix and market access.*
- **Environmental Resilience:** *Urban gardens improve stormwater retention, reduce urban heat island effects, and increase pollinator habitat.*

### **Key Considerations:**

#### **1. Zoning Flexibility for Urban Agriculture Uses**

Urban agriculture—including community gardens, market farms, rooftop growing, hydroponic systems, and educational gardens—should be encouraged in more zoning districts. Current limitations or ambiguity in permitted uses may discourage or delay beneficial projects. Consider:

- Reducing barriers such as conditional use permits that may deter growers.

- Including clearer language defining urban agriculture and emphasizing that it is a permitted use by right in all zoning districts to encourage garden and farm development.
- Clarify process and necessity of change in use to agricultural use as principal use for urban farmers and gardeners.

## **2. Access to Underutilized and Vacant Land**

Vacant lots present an opportunity to support food access, neighborhood vitality, and green infrastructure. The CZO and land use process should:

- Identify mechanisms to prioritize vacant public land for agricultural use.
- Support zoning overlays or urban agriculture incentive zones in high-vacancy neighborhoods to encourage growing activities.
- Address soil remediation needs, especially in post-industrial or historically disinvested areas.

## **3. Supportive Infrastructure and Ancillary Uses**

Urban growers need more than growing space—they need access to supportive infrastructure. The CZO should remove barriers for accessory structures and streamline permits for:

- Accessory structures like tool sheds, hoopouses, greenhouses, wash stations, and cold storage. For example, Detroit does not require residents to get building permits for hoopouses ([City of Detroit, Plot Plan Guide, Pg. 11](#)).
- On-site composting, rainwater harvesting, and pollinator-friendly practices.
  - This may require reviewing and updating municipal code to be supportive of regenerative agriculture practices, such as cover cropping, native plant landscaping, and sheet mulching.
- Consider zoning incentives for integrating agriculture into new developments.

## **4. Equity and Community Engagement**

Zoning reform should support food justice and protect longstanding community growers from displacement or regulatory burdens. Consider:

- Protect existing legacy gardens and growers from displacement or zoning violations.
- Engaging community stakeholders in identifying barriers and co-designing solutions.

- Ensuring zoning changes do not inadvertently lead to land speculation or loss of access for low-income residents.

### **Next Steps**

We recommend a thorough review of current zoning barriers related to urban agriculture and an inclusive process to update the CZO with the input of growers, residents, and food system stakeholders. A more supportive regulatory environment will bolster resilience, food access, and neighborhood well-being across New Orleans.

## M-25-255 Comments for 5/19 public hearing about City Permitting Process

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From Nathalie Jordi <nathalie.jordi@gmail.com>

Date Mon 5/5/2025 8:28 AM

To CPCINFO <CPCINFO@nola.gov>

To whom it may concern:

In September, I applied for an EV sidewalk charging permit for my house. According to the city's [website](#), 1 sidewalk EV charging permit is supposed to cost \$400. My experience: I had to obtain 4 permits, pay \$820, and spend 6 months sending dozens of emails and showing up at City Hall multiple times.

The good news: on the whole, the dozens of City employees I interacted with were responsive, professional and clearly cared about doing a good job. The bad news: the dozens of hours spent on getting one person's charger approved felt like a poor use of their time and the City's resources, and will be difficult for members of the public with less patience and fewer resources. A City employee said as much time had been spent on my charger as in getting a \$10 million renovation in the Vieux Carré approved.

This process could really use some improvement. I'd be happy to give further details.

Best  
Nathalie

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Nathalie Jordi  
504.715.7142  
Book a meeting on my Calendly [here](#)

## Haley H Webb

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**From:** Maryann Miller <maryann@staylocal.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 19, 2025 3:06 PM  
**To:** CPCINFO  
**Cc:** Sayde F. Finkel  
**Subject:** Land Use Barriers Study and Locally Owned Businesses

Hon. Councilmember Moreno and City Planning Commission:

Pursuant to the direction City Council has given to City Planning to conduct the Land Use Barriers Study to identify hurdles in the land use process which unnecessarily complicate and prolong the permitting and licensing process, as well as potential paths for removing these hurdles and provide clarity to applicants that prevent draining of City resources and facilitate development where appropriate, StayLocal, New Orleans' Independent Business Alliance, would like to submit the following comments for consideration.

The following priorities are the result of our frequent interviews of many New Orleans small business owners, many of whom help build strong neighborhoods by sustaining communities, linking neighbors and supporting local causes and contributing in additional ways that improve the experience of living, visiting, studying and resting here.

- Business owners who hold an occupational license for brick and mortar or home based business already are seeking clarification as to whether they need to obtain a special events occupational license additionally.
- Occupational license rates (see tax table [here](#)) do not include all business types. For example, for nonprofit, construction or services such as bookkeeping, the correct license fee cannot be identified. Other types such as restaurants, salons, etc it is difficult to figure out which category they fall under, meaning businesses can't fill out the license form and mail it in and pay the correct amount because the schedule isn't clear what the proper fee is. Can efforts be made to provide clarification and or provide guidance as to how to read this table?
- Most businesses cannot file a renewal for the occupational license fee through [nola.gov](http://nola.gov). Since it is unclear why, is there anything a business owner can be doing to keep their account eligible for online renewal?
- If a home based business changes their address the process often requires an extra layer of approval. Can a business owner's address change be approved as a matter of routine, perhaps with Safety & Permits' extra layer of approval pending, so that important communications mailed by Revenue are not missed?
- Business owners apply for a regular occupational license at the beginning of each year, and are seeking clarification as to why in the case of many festivals in which the business owner is participating, the business owner is required to purchase a special event occupational license per event.
- Business owners are seeking a single webpage with FAQs that answer seemingly straightforward questions. (i.e. Does a special event occupational license expire? What is a temporary permit to do business, and when would a business need one?)

- Business owners vending at the events where a sales tax collection is set up at a festival would like the option to either pay there, or retain the option to make a payment within ten days of that festival.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions regarding these points. Thank you!

Maryann Miller

StayLocal Program Manager

504-252-1259

StayLocal is an Initiative of Urban Conservancy

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

## Laura B. Bryan

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**From:** CPCINFO  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 16, 2025 2:21 PM  
**To:** Haley H Webb; Laura B. Bryan  
**Subject:** FW: Feedback for Council Motion M-225

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**From:** Sayde F. Finkel <Sayde.Finkel@nola.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 16, 2025 1:30 PM  
**To:** CPCINFO <CPCINFO@nola.gov>  
**Cc:** tcabirac@signlite.com  
**Subject:** Feedback for Council Motion M-225

CPC Staff:

I am passing along the below feedback with respect to **City Council Motion M-225**. Please include this information in any study review.

Thank you!

Sayde Faraday Finkel, JD

Chief of Staff

Office of City Council Vice President Helena Moreno

1300 Perdido Street | Suite 2W40

New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

[sayde.finkel@nola.gov](mailto:sayde.finkel@nola.gov)

o: (504) 658.1063



Please be advised that communications to and from this e-mail address are subject to provisions of the State of Louisiana Public Records Act.

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**From:** [tcabirac@signlite.com](mailto:tcabirac@signlite.com) <[tcabirac@signlite.com](mailto:tcabirac@signlite.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025 9:54 AM

To: Sayde F. Finkel <[Sayde.Finkel@nola.gov](mailto:Sayde.Finkel@nola.gov)>; Helena N. Moreno <[Helena.Moreno@nola.gov](mailto:Helena.Moreno@nola.gov)>; Josett L. Thompson <[Josett.Thompson@nola.gov](mailto:Josett.Thompson@nola.gov)>

Subject: RE: HELPING WITH PERMITS

I am looking forward to our meeting tomorrow. It is extremely easy to fix the chaos that lies with permitting.

# Ideas for a Streamlined Permitting Process

## Ensuring Efficiency and Clarity

Creating an easier permitting process is essential for both applicants and regulators. Here are some ideas to streamline the system and enhance user experience.

### 1. Simplify the Rules

Ensuring that the rules governing the permitting process are straightforward and accessible is crucial. Clear, concise guidelines should be provided to avoid confusion and facilitate compliance:

- **Easy to Follow:** Rules should be written in plain language, free from technical jargon, making them understandable for anyone, regardless of their background.
- **Easy to Find:** The rules should be readily available online and in print. A dedicated section on the website and clear navigation paths can help users locate the information quickly.

### 2. Improve Communication Channels

Effective communication is key to a smooth permitting process. Applicants should have access to support whenever they need assistance:

- **Rapid Response:** Designate staff members to respond promptly to emails and phone calls. This ensures that applicants receive timely help, preventing delays in the permitting process.
- **Dedicated Support:** Create a dedicated helpline or email address for permit-related inquiries, staffed by knowledgeable personnel who can provide accurate information and guidance.

### 3. Keep It Simple

The principle of simplicity should be at the core of the permitting process. Complex procedures and unnecessary steps can deter applicants and lead to errors:

- Streamlined Procedures: Minimize the number of forms and required documents by consolidating and simplifying steps wherever possible.
- Clear Instructions: Provide step-by-step instructions for each stage of the permitting process, ensuring that applicants know exactly what is required of them.

I truly believe that the main issue is not disagreement with the rules themselves but rather the difficulty in understanding them. By implementing these strategies, the permitting process can be made more efficient and user-friendly, reducing frustration and ensuring compliance.

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Outlook

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## Land Use Barriers Study comment

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From Anthony Of New Orleans <neworleanscandles@gmail.com>

Date Mon 5/19/2025 3:14 PM

To CPCINFO <CPCINFO@nola.gov>

Comments on Land Use Barriers in New Orleans.

The Barriers to Land Use in many parts of the city fall into three major obstacles.

- The "Master Plan"
- The Zoning Code
- "Preservation" Mechanisms like the HDLC and VCC

The "Master Plan" has been an impediment to land use since it was enacted in the early 2010s. Dreamed up by old money preservationists who attempted to make the case that it was a tragedy for a long standing pharmacy to have a parking lot it attempted to make all projects that didn't meet the expectations of the out of town planning group nearly impossible. It was promoted as a 'slow growth' mechanism in a city that desperately needed more growth to stem population and economic stagnation.

The necessity of having to go through years long process to amend the Future Land Use Map to build a project that the planners didn't anticipate has probably cost the city billions in development and the attendant jobs and tax revenue from those. And as was the fashion in urban planning in the early 2010s the map decimated pure commercial uses in favor of "mixed use". A developer that wanted to build a pure commercial development was already behind schedule having to deal with FLUM changes.

The "Master Plan" also ushered in the Neighborhood Planning Process (NPP) in which someone who wanted any changes to a property the zoning code didn't anticipate had to go through a lengthy process of hosting meetings *before* applying for the changes. It was a way to give those reflexively opposed to any changes a leg up in throwing sand in the gears.

The entire "Master Plan" impetus was to throw sand into the gears of progress by people comfortable with the population and economic decline of the city.

But, since the "Master Plan" has the 'force of law' it might useful to have an amendment to it that says it doesn't and that the FLUM is purely advisory.

The Zoning Code-

The Zoning Code is 600 plus pages of property micro-management of every parcel in the city. And in places they are contradictory. The "Use Standards" chapters are better placed into municipal code, if we want to have them at all. The Overlays are excessive, contradictory and laden with so many nit-picking regulations that it would be better to rid ourselves of them entirely.

Historically, the Zoning Code has wrought economic destruction on neighborhoods, turning venues for potentially profitable and community serving businesses into bad apartments. I was heartened to see that the "Marigny-Bywater" overlay, which allowed the placement of new businesses in former business locations, had been extended to other parts of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Ward. Hopefully it will spur investment and development of businesses in those underserved areas. We need to take the Marigny-Bywater overlay citywide. Particularly in those areas that are food deserts.

We need to rewrite the zoning code to provide more flexibility. Write it with ranges instead of strict proscriptions. And with an understanding of the landscape. Writing in unrealistic side yard requirements on 33 foot lots are going to unnecessarily send people into the BZA process, delaying the project.

We should also not, as a city, be in the business of design review, except in limited cases. A place where design review is appropriate is a city owned building on a main street. It is not appropriate in a single family house. We only need to look at egregious cases, like city officials telling Deutches Haus that their design was 'too Germanic' to realize that it's a problem to trade an owners designs for a city officials desires, particularly when the owner has to pay for the project and the changes. Design Review adds both expense and time which discourages people from pursuing projects in the city.

In Summary – the Zoning Code needs to be written with more flexibility. The Overlays and Design Reviews need to be either eliminated or severely curtailed.

- "Preservation" Mechanisms like the HDLC and VCC

The HDLC is definitely a barrier to efficient land use. The HDLC process can add MONTHS or YEARS to a project as any change needs to be 'approved' by staff. The HDLC can also add excessive costs to a project, to be born by the family or builder. There are cases of HDLC pricing a family out of their renovation, and ultimately their homes, with their 'recommendations'.

Since many people have ended up in HDLC zones without any input from them, resulting in increased costs of compliance, I propose the 4 following reforms to right-size 'preservation' mechanisms in New Orleans.

- 1- The HDLC should be subject to a vote of the people in the impacted area. Like Security Districts and their increased costs of Compliance, every 5 years the people in a given 'Historic District' should be given the opportunity to vote if they want to be subject to HDLC control. (And it's kinda interesting that we call it 'control')
- 2- HDLC 'recommendations' shouldn't raise the costs of any project by more than 10% as calculated by standard contracting software.
- 3- The turn around time for any changes necessary by the homeowner or developer shouldn't take more than 48 hours for the HDLC to give their approvals or denials.
- 4- The HDLC shouldn't be able to make any comments on security, solar or HVAC systems.

The HDLC adds excessive time and costs to projects in the city of New Orleans and too many people simply found themselves in a district due to the efforts of preservationist activists without a thorough consideration of the majority's opinion. It is a barrier.

I'm heartened that the City Planning Commission is taking up barriers in Land Use, but it seemed fairly obvious to me what they were. Anyone who the staff has had to see over the course of months can tell you what the barriers are. Anyone who has had months of contact with an HDLC staff member can tell you about construction delays and increased costs of compliance. Anyone who had to wait for months for their 2' variance to be approved by the BZA can tell you what the barriers are.

We have a system that is designed with a reflexive "No" built in, in which the 'standard' project the zoning code anticipated is difficult or impossible to accomplish in the landscape. We need more flexibility to a system that makes delays rare and prioritizes the designs of the owner rather than the fears of the opposition to growth and development.

Anthony Favre

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It's better to light a candle  
Than curse the darkness..

<http://aliveneworleans.com>

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**Re: S & P problems and study**

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**From** Winston C Fiore <Winston.Fiore@nola.gov>

**Date** Fri 5/2/2025 2:58 PM

**To** Rachael Berg <rberg@nola.gov>

**Cc** Peter Gardner <peter@petergardner.com>

 1 attachment (323 KB)

Substantial Renovation cases.pdf;

Hi Rachael, do you know which planner is taking the lead on the Land Use Barrier Study? We would like to share the email below and attached for consideration. Thank you for your time and guidance,

## Winston Fiore

Land Use, East Bank Constituent Services

Freddie King, III, City Council District C

New Orleans, Louisiana

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**From:** Peter Gardner <peter@petergardner.com>

**Sent:** Friday, May 2, 2025 2:38 PM

**To:** CPCINFO <CPCINFO@nola.gov>; Winston C Fiore <Winston.Fiore@nola.gov>; Charles E Toney <Charles.Toney@nola.gov>; Sayde F. Finkel <Sayde.Finkel@nola.gov>; opba3md <opba3md@bellsouth.net>; Helena N. Moreno <Helena.Moreno@nola.gov>; Freddie King <Freddie.King@nola.gov>

**Subject:** S & P problems and study

Good afternoon. I wanted to share this old email I sent to the leaders at S & P 4 years ago as well as this attached graphic. Some of the rules or policies used by S & P are discriminatory and potentially harm the poorer areas of New Orleans because they make it more difficult to repair properties in those areas. The issue lies in what triggers a substantial improvement. The City mainly uses assessors' valuations as its metric to evaluate what is a substantial improvement and what is not. The problem is that the assessor values structures more highly in expensive neighborhoods than it does in poorer communities, even though it is generally not the building itself that is what creates the value but it is the land.

I have attached a picture of a graphic of 2 houses on Second street Uptown from 2021. One is clearly in worse condition than the other but it is valued more highly because it is in the Irish Channel and the other is in central city. As a result the house in the Irish Channel can pull a more expensive permit without the City calling it a substantial improvement and the house in central city can do almost no work without triggering that. As a result the house in central city has to jump through more hoops in order to be renovated even though economically it is already more difficult to justify and the area needs more investment. If you imagine an elderly black homeowner in central city who wants to fix up their house at half the cost being asked to jump through more hoops than a white person who bought

a fixer upper in the trendy irish channel, you would be really upset, but that is what is happening every day!!!!

The City actually has 3 methods that they will accept in order to get out of them calling a renovation a substantial improvement, but they only tell you about 2 of them. They will tell you about the assessor, or getting an appraisal, but they will not tell you about getting the components of the building valued, even though they will accept it, and in some cases, that may be the only way to get around the substantial improvement requirement.

If you are sophisticated enough to work through that, like I am, then you run into the problems below in that when it comes to stormwater management. They will not allow you to value the components of your building, only get an appraisal or go by what the assessor says, so one arm of S & P will say it is not a substantial improvement, while the other arm will say it is.

The bottom line is that the basic metric that the City uses to determine whether you have to jump through tons of hoops is discriminatory and unfair and disincentivizes investment in lower income areas. Please read the attached graphic and the email below to get more technical.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Peter Gardner** <[peter@petergardner.com](mailto:peter@petergardner.com)>

Date: Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 2:31 PM

Subject: 13880 Hayne issues and bigger picture problem that needs resolving

To: Tammie T. Jackson <[ttjackson@nola.gov](mailto:ttjackson@nola.gov)>, [zrsmith@nola.gov](mailto:zrsmith@nola.gov) <[zrsmith@nola.gov](mailto:zrsmith@nola.gov)>, Peter Bowen <[Peter.Bowen@nola.gov](mailto:Peter.Bowen@nola.gov)>

Peter, Tammie, and Zach,

Please read this draft email below and offer any critiques.

Good afternoon. I met with Peter Bowen, Tammie Jackson, and Zach Smith last week regarding 13880 Hayne. I laid out my issues surrounding the substantial renovation policy that the City has and how it is potentially racist and discriminatory towards people who live in lower income neighborhoods, or in other words, most of District E, and they agreed.

As it was laid out to me, the problem they say is in the law, not their administration of the law, and it needs to be changed. They said that the only way to do so is through City Council action.

According to Peter, Tammie, and Zach, when trying to find a way to navigate the substantial improvement rules, for the purposes of building elevation heights, they must refer to the FEMA and flood insurance regulations, which allow 3 valuation methods: Assessor, market appraisal, and valuation of components. This is in chapter 78 of the code under Floods as well as FEMA regs.

According to Peter, Tammie, and Zach, when trying to find a way to navigate the substantial improvement rules, for the purposes of stormwater management, they must refer to Section 26-15, Section 121.4 of the building code under definitions, and which only allows 2 valuation methods: Assessor, and market appraisal. As you can see the 3rd option is missing for valuation of components.

So, in the case of my project at 13880 Hayne, they are able to say it is not a substantial improvement for the sake of elevating and floodproofing the property, but they are not able to say that for stormwater management. So even though I am right next to an undeveloped swampy forest, I still must comply with stormwater management as if I am a substantial improvement because I can't get a market appraisal to prove otherwise.

They suggested that I bring this to your attention, and request that you and the council work to alter the rules to be more equitable. that may be as simple as changing language to permit the 3rd option of valuing components or finding another metric that takes into account the financial realities of your district.

I would also suggest some other metric for the fee in lieu on the stormwater management side. Since properties in the East are much larger, permit less density, and worth less, the \$44 per cubic ton fee is not fair in comparison to a property in the CBD or Uptown which has much more density per square foot. A property in the east may be 10,000 square feet but only permit a 1500sf drive through, while a 10k square foot property Uptown may permit a 20,000sf condo building on the same site. I would suggest an amendment of this that reduces the fee in certain census tracts or developmental priority areas, or is based not on the size of the lot, but on the size of the development. I would also argue that the infrastructure is far superior in the East and with all of the undeveloped and wetland areas, retaining stormwater may not be as vital. this should be considered to make things more equitable and encourage development.

Please reach out to Peter, Tammie, and Zach to see if they can add more to this conversation so hopefully we can enact change that makes it easier to do business in New Orleans East

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Thanks,

Peter Gardner  
Gardner Development LLC  
Keller Williams Realty New Orleans  
504-782-7574



July 15, 2025

Mr. Robert Rivers  
Executive Director  
New Orleans City Planning Commission  
1300 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

**RE: LAND USE BARRIERS STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Dear Mr. Rivers:

We are writing to express our support for the Land Use Barriers Study being completed by the New Orleans City Planning Commission. We have provided our recommendations as follows:

1. Removing or reducing off street parking mandates to reduce barriers for affordable housing developments where studies show less car ownership,
2. Permitting mother-in-law cottages to support families aging-in-place and to provide additional housing opportunities for our community,
3. Permitting affordable housing planned developments by right as a way to expedite the construction of new affordable homes and to address our housing crisis and homelessness issues in New Orleans,
4. Consider streamlining the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) process or providing Administrative Review in lieu of DAC review as a way to reduce red tape for new homes and neighborhood serving uses. We do support all utilities and public safety being a part of design reviews.
5. Consider revision to the permit process to include a 30-minute virtual meeting to address issues and questions, with a city employee clearing resolved items in coordination with the Architect/Developer/General Contractor before permit issuance.
6. Consider increasing the current height restrictions by 10 feet by right create more affordable units and require less discretionary reviews.

We appreciate you and your staff's hard work on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily May".

Emily May  
Director of Real Estate Development  
Providence Community Housing

Cc: Ryan Herringshaw, COO  
Wesley Gillen, Project Manager





Outlook

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## Land Use Barriers Study

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**From** Devin Wright <devin@sproutnola.org>

**Date** Mon 5/19/2025 6:15 PM

**To** CPCINFO <CPCINFO@nola.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

I am reaching out on behalf of Sprout. I am Sprout's Deputy Director of Producers & Sustainability. We, as an organization, support farmers and gardeners throughout New Orleans in order to create a sustainable and thriving local food system. In completing our work, we have often interfaced with the CZO and fielded countless questions regarding zoning for farms and gardens in the city. Agriculture, inclusive of many varied types of farms and gardens, has always been part of New Orleans landscape. Unfortunately, this is not well-reflected in the present CZO. There has been slow progress, pushed by community members that we have worked with over the last 20 years, and we hope that this study will create momentum to continue building meaningful recognition of agriculture into the CZO. Present code lacks clarity or is completely absent when it comes to agricultural guidelines. What this ultimately leads to is a landscape where requests for clarification are often slow and unclear themselves— with different city staff interpreting code differently. When permits are necessary (e.g. accessory structures, processing facilities) these processes are particularly slow due to, again, a lack of clarity around how to proceed, what is the correct process, etc. The end result is a disincentivization of agriculture because folks are worried about getting in trouble and get burnt out trying to find the right way forward. There is a real opportunity to celebrate agriculture as a permitted use by right in our city, but there is still more work to be done in the CZO to reduce barriers to agricultural land use.

Aside from definitional/process clarity and streamlined permitting systems, we would love to see thoughtful work proceed in how to turn vacant/underutilized land into agricultural or other greenspace. Our city population is not growing— so we have an opportunity to think creatively about how to use land use regulation and the CZO to encourage bringing land back into circulation/commerce/community in ways that are safe, healthy, and adequate myriad challenges we face here (e.g. blight, flooding, climate risks, lack of food access, etc.).

We are happy to engage directly in further conversations or act as an outreach partner to ensure that New Orleans gardeners and farmers are part of this process.

Lastly, we were given a copy of the Urban Agriculture Liaison's recommendations and we echo everything stated therein. It would be great progress to see those considerations integrated into the study and our city's land use approach.

Thank you for your time and work,

Devin

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Devin Wright

Deputy Director of Producers & Sustainability, Sprout

*Join my Policy Office Hours every Wednesday, 9-10am CST, at <https://meet.google.com/udg-vrnb-ytk>  
This is a time for producers and food system people of all kinds of ask questions about policy,  
government actions, etc.!*