



## EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE

How residential zoning reform can improve equitable access to affordable housing and economic opportunity.

Wednesday, August 4, 2021 9:30 – 11:15 a.m. | Forum to be broadcast live on Facebook, Twitter & YouTube

Single-family residential zoning first began in 1916 as an effort to keep minorities out of white neighborhoods. The US Supreme Court's 1917 ruling declared explicit race-based zoning statutes unconstitutional. But the same court ruled less than a decade later that zoning to prevent apartment buildings from being built in single-family neighborhoods was a legitimate prohibition. Over time, widely used single-family zoning restricted the development of accessory dwelling units, duplexes, townhomes, and apartments, thereby inhibiting housing supply; and it has been an instrument of both widening income inequality and racial segregation for more than a century.

A recent report from the University of California Berkeley's Othering & Belonging Institute finds that 81% of large metropolitan areas are more segregated now than they were 30 years ago. In many of these cities, townhomes, duplexes and apartments are effectively banned. In Sandy Springs, 85% of land zoned for residential is zoned single-family only (for comparison: 75% for Los Angeles, 79% in Chicago, and 84% in Charlotte).

Given the growing disparities in access to affordable housing, wealth creation, and economic opportunity, metro Atlanta is facing a crisis. Ranked as one of the ten largest metro regions of the United States, we rank 316th in population density. The region's population is expected to grow dramatically in the next couple of decades. How will we meet the growing demand for affordable housing – and the need for a more equitable city and region?

As the Atlanta Regional Housing Forum continues to examine issues of racial equity and systemic racism in the housing sector, our next Forum will explore single-family zoning and address several key questions: What changes to zoning are being proposed? How will zoning changes result in more affordable housing? What will be the fiscal and environmental impacts of such changes? Do proposed changes to zoning provide a market-based solution to our housing shortage? How effective are zoning policy changes in places like Portland, Minneapolis, Berkley, and Charlotte?

Lastly, we will talk with developers and others in the YIMBY movement about how best to move the dialogue forward to produce more affordable housing by the private sector, right historic injustices, and preserve the beloved community.

Join us Wednesday, August 4 at 9:30 a.m. for our virtual Atlanta Regional Housing Forum as we discuss these important issues. Register Now at [www.AtlantaRegionalHousingForum.org](http://www.AtlantaRegionalHousingForum.org)

### Our Presenters



**Bill Bolling**  
Moderator &  
Founder  
Housing Forum



**James Alexander**  
Mercy Housing  
Southeast



**Ernest Brown**  
YIMBY Action



**Melanie Couchman**  
Sandy Springs  
Together



**Joel Dixon**  
Urban Oasis  
Development



**Eric Kronberg**  
Kronberg  
Urbanists +  
Architects



**Braxton Winston**  
Council Member  
City of Charlotte,  
North Carolina



**Elizabeth Ward**  
Kronberg  
Urbanists +  
Architects

*The Atlanta Regional Housing Forum is planned by a committee of regional affordable housing stakeholders and presented by:*



NOTE: IN 2021 THE HOUSING FORUM 2021 is moving from four quarterly to six bi-monthly events. Mark your calendars for these additional dates: August 4, October 6, and December 1. Until further notice, all Forums will take place virtually, from 9:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. We will continue to broadcast the forum live on YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. There is no charge to view the Atlanta Regional Housing Forum. We ask attendees to consider making a gift to frontline responders like [Atlanta Community Food Bank](#) and the [COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund of United Way of Greater Atlanta](#) and the [Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta](#).

## Atlanta Regional Housing Forum: Presenter Bios for Wednesday, August 4, 2021



**BILL BOLLING** is the founder and moderator of the Atlanta Regional Housing Forum. Bill served as executive director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank since founding the organization in 1979 until June 2015. Over the span of 36 years, he led the Food Bank's distribution of more than half a billion pounds of food and grocery products through a network of more than 600 local and regional partner nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry across 29 Georgia counties. As a charter member of Feeding America, the national network of food banks, Bill was instrumental in the start-up of food banks across the country. He is a frequent speaker on topics related to hunger, poverty, regionalism, affordable housing and public policy reform.



**JAMES ALEXANDER** has served as the President of Mercy Housing Southeast (MHSE) since October 2017. MHSE develops affordable housing and owns over 3,000 units in Atlanta, Savannah, and other Southeastern metropolitan areas. He has worked in various leadership and project management roles in affordable housing, community development, and real estate for over 15 years, focused on creating quality, stable foundations for families and communities with a variety of incomes.



**ERNEST BROWN** is board chair of the national advocacy group YIMBY Action and a local leader with Neighbors for More Neighbors - Metro Atlanta. He began getting civically active at school board meetings growing up and participated in the ARC Millennial Advisory Panel in 2015. During his time in the Bay Area he organized his neighbors to knock over 10,000 doors in support of pro-housing champions and helped grow the housing advocacy movement from a regional organization to a national force. He hopes to bring the same people power energy to the issue in Atlanta. He is a South Dekalb native and graduate of Emory University.



**MELANIE COUCHMAN** and her husband David, former software company founders and local philanthropers created Sandy Springs Together in 2019 to engage, educate and empower Sandy Springs residents about the need to preserve and create more affordable housing. Sandy Springs Together fosters important community discussions through an informative website with a resource library, an active Facebook page with 2,000 follower and regular emails to a 3,000-person audience with the objective to give those living in potentially impacted neighborhoods a voice in their future. The goal of the community education initiatives is to empower residents so they can work more closely with elected officials to help shape decisions on zoning, public policy and affordable housing in Sandy Springs.



**JOEL DIXON** is Principal of Urban Oasis Development. Urban Oasis is a real estate development company focused on residential and commercial projects intown Atlanta. He oversees Business Development & Community Development along with Investor Relations. Joel has been involved in both market rate and affordable housing development with strong community-based support. Prior to launching Urban Oasis, Mr. Dixon had over 15 years of sales and business development experience in high technology and real estate with deep ties to the burgeoning Technology Venture community in Atlanta. Joel is a graduate of Stanford University.



**ERIC KRONBERG** is a zoning whisperer. He specializes in examining and demystifying zoning ordinances to find ways to make great projects possible and help others navigate through the zoning swamp. He uses his skills for the force of good as a principal at Kronberg Urbanists + Architects, leading the firm's pre-development efforts by combining skills in planning, development, architecture, and zoning. His work with Kronberg Urbanists + Architects, the Incremental Development Alliance, the Congress for the New Urbanism, the Georgia Conservancy, and the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition has solidified his stance as an advocate for walkable and bikable communities. Eric has also been deeply committed to community redevelopment for the past several decades. He has served as a community leader in roles of Vice-President, President, Zoning Chair, and Zoning Guru Emeritus for the Edgewood Neighborhood in Atlanta, GA.



**ELIZABETH WARD** is an architect and city planner, with master's degrees from Georgia Tech in both fields. She leads urban design and thought leadership efforts at Kronberg Urbanists + Architects. Elizabeth's background allows her to wear many hats throughout the design and planning processes, with a talent for graphic communication and big-picture thinking. Elizabeth develops projects, research and curricula that highlight the critical links between design, policy and quality of life. Her work always seeks innovation by pushing against prevailing systems and standards. She is a faculty member of the Incremental Development Alliance, teaches a course on zoning at Georgia Tech, and serves on Atlanta's Tree Conservation Commission and her neighborhood planning board.



**BRAXTON WINSTON**, a democrat, was elected in 2017 as an at-large member and is serving his second term as Council Member City of Charlotte North Carolina. Winston is a stagehand and grip and a member of Charlotte's thriving sports television and entertainment production community. He is a proud member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Union. Winston is also an influential citizen-journalist, producing stories not covered by traditional media outlets and employing new models of citizen engagement. Winston holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Davidson College, where he was a two-time letterman on the football team.