

Creedon, Paul

From: Saul Tannenbaum <saul@tannenbaum.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 1:20 PM
To: City Council; Lopez, Donna
Subject: Correcting the record: Confusing Cambridge and Manhattan
Attachments: Innumeracy.pdf

To the Honorable, The City Council:

Attached, please find a letter correcting an error in a communication from the Cambridge Residents Alliance in which they assert, wrongly, that if Cambridge's population were to increase to 180,000, we would be as dense as Manhattan.

- Saul Tannenbaum
16 Cottage St.

cc: Donna Lopez, for inclusion in the Council record

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Read CambridgeHappenings.org, a daily Cambridge news summary, curated from fresh, local sources.

September 15, 2015

To The Honorable, The City Council:

The record of your August 10th meeting includes a communication from the Cambridge Residents Alliance that has the following preposterous statement:

"[Cambridge] would hit Manhattan's density at 180,000 residents"

(see: http://www2.cambridgema.gov/CityOfCambridge_Content/documents/150810%20ferris_1.PDF)

This assertion is startling to anyone who's ever seen pictures of Manhattan. Cambridge and Manhattan simply do not look alike. It's hard to imagine Cambridge's urban form would transform into Manhattan's with the addition of 70,000 residents. But appearances can be deceiving, so it's worth reviewing the facts.

Residents/square mile according to 2010 Census	
Cambridge	16,470
Manhattan	69,467

(Sources: United States Census QuickFacts for Cambridge <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25/2511000.html> and Manhattan <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36061.html>)

Manhattan's density is four times that of Cambridge. Cambridge would have to a population of approximately 450,000 to have the density of Manhattan, adding hundreds of thousand of people.

This is no small error. The specter of "Manhattan" is used repeatedly to argue against building housing for those who wish to reside in Cambridge. We shouldn't build tall buildings, we're told, because we're turning into Manhattan. We are far, far away from "turning into Manhattan." The Council would be well-advised to greet with skepticism planning policy opinions from organizations that can't differentiate between the two communities.

Saul Tannenbaum
16 Cottage St.

cc: Donna Lopez, City Clerk, for inclusion in the Council record