

Cc: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; Dohoney Jr., Milton <Taylor, Christopher (Mayor) < Ghazi Edwin, Ayesha < Radina, Travis  
Subject: Re: Comprehensive Planning Exercise for the Planning Commission - Needs to Acknowledge U-M's Continued Growth

Meeting: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB COMMITTEE (of the Planning Commission)

Date and Time: Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 7:00 pm

**Agenda Items:**

Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Update and Discussion - [\[link to packet materials\]](#)

Brian

On 05/27/2024 4:52 PM EDT BRIAN [CHAMBERS](#) wrote:

Brett, CM Disch, Stacey and Carolyn:

I really like the overview of the community updates for the Comprehensive Plan in the deck posted for tomorrow's Planning Commission meeting. Great work by Planning and the Comprehensive Plan project team!

You may recall that I provided feedback to Stacey on the exercise given to the Steering Committee. While the exercise is good as an exercise, there was no acknowledgement of the continued growth of the University of Michigan and the likely growth of commuters and housing demand pressure, as described in the exercises. On that basis, it is incomplete in the information provided for Comprehensive Plan purposes.

For example, in the first challenge question:

01: What if... we aim to build housing for 50% of commuters (and their families) which would be about ~35k to 40k households?

I believe these figures are based on a 2019 historical estimate of the commuting population used for the Ann Arbor Transportation Plan update.

I'm not suggesting a change to the exercise, as it is a thought exercise to get people to put their arms around some of the key questions and is good on that basis. However, I am asking that the expectation of continued U-M growth be at least acknowledged in the working session.

The U-M Campus 2050 Plan clearly reflects a significant increase to students, faculty and staff over that time period, with a number of large campus development projects portrayed. They are not committing to growth targets, but continued growth is clearly represented in their plan.

See: <https://campusplan2050.umich.edu/#overview> and click on the 5 area plans to see each of them.

As we all know by now, since 2000 U-M grew its Ann Arbor campus student population by around 13,000 students, as well as its employment by around 22,000, so about 35,000 people were added to their Ann Arbor and Medical Campuses over this time period. This amounted to nearly a 2% compounded growth rate over this period (1.9% to be more exact).

Due to the high cost of housing, both students and employees are likely a significant part of the commuter population referenced in this exercise. My son commuted from Ypsilanti for his last year at U-M over the last year, for example.

If continued growth by the U-M is only the toss of a coin (50:50), expected continued growth at 50% of the prior compounded growth rate, will yield an additional student population of about 11,500, and an additional employee population of around 21,500 for an expected increase of about 33,000 students and employees. If growth continues, at the previous rate of growth the total increase of U-M would be over 73,000 total additional students and employees.

I understand that U-M owns more land on the east side of 23, than covers all of the current North Campus. One can certainly expect additional land purchases by U-M of properties in and around the City of Ann Arbor to support their growth.

The Comprehensive Plan exercises that make the reference of 50% of the commuters and their families being about ~35K to 40K households is a severe under-estimate for a comprehensive plan that is to carry Ann Arbor forward for 20 to 40 years.

BTW, when I did my analysis on Ann Arbor's capacity for additional housing through zoning reform, I estimated that the downtown core and TC1 Districts can support over 28,000 housing units to meet the housing scale requirements for walkability, and mixed-use transit oriented development objectives. The rezoning of exclusionary single family districts for 2-plex, 3-plex and 4-plex units I estimated to support an additional 26,000+ units of housing. So, on that basis, Ann Arbor can support a total addition of 54,000 housing units that would likely double our population.

My recommendation is to prioritize the down-town core with two regional transit centers, as well as the TC1 Districts for additional density based housing development. The rezoning of single family zoning, while appropriate, will not reach similar results. There is research to support this conclusion based on the other cities around the country that have removed exclusionary single family zoning.

I am a fan and supporter of U-M, having multiple grad degrees that carried me through my professional life and afforded me the ability to send both my children through U-M, and so I support their growth objectives. However, it is vitaly important that Ann Arbor's Comprehensive Land Use Plan explicitly acknowledge the impact of the continued growth of the University.

My apologies for the long note on this, but I believe it warranted an explanation.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. On this basis, I request that you share this communication with the Planning Commission.

Best regards,