

Bowden (King), Anissa

From: Kathy Boris [kbor@isr.umich.edu]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2008 1:32 PM
To: Bowden (King), Anissa
Subject: A2D2 comments

November 29, 2008

Ms Anissa Bowden:

I am not convinced that Ann Arborites generally have been clamoring for rezoning, especially the sort of rezoning which will loosen constraints on developers rather than tighten them. If we want to protect our city's unique character we need to be careful to preserve those elements in our built environment which make us the bike and pedestrian-friendly "tree city" of cafes, small shops, and bookstores that we have been until very recently. Over-sized and overly-tall buildings must not be allowed to dominate and degrade the grid of older buildings that have survived many occupants and updates and served us well over the decades. Mixing new buildings with old is nothing new of course, but it should be done with care because those who come after us will have to put up with what we have built, or allowed to be built. New buildings which offer only a view of cars and utility pipes on their street level (Denali, for instance) add nothing, and, in fact, subtract quite a lot from our pedestrian environment. Rezoning, then, should provide an opportunity to make sure that Ann Arbor will continue to be a city that primarily values people and their interactions rather than cars and "big-box" buildings.

Therefore I urge the Planning Commission and City Council to specifically limit the height of buildings in the D1 and D2 areas, to provide wider sidewalks and setbacks so that there are additional places for people to meet and talk, to provide more adequate and sheltered bike parking to encourage people to come and go without cars, to provide more green spaces for everyone's enjoyment, and most importantly, to specify that street levels of new buildings be for shops, businesses, restaurants, cafes, banks, post offices, small grocery stores, but definitely not for parking cars!

Kathy Boris
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P.S. Would it be possible for you to add these comments to City Council's next agenda packet? If so, I thank you in advance.