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To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

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Subject: Proposed TC-1 Zoning

I am writing to voice my opinion regarding the proposed TC-1 zoning along the Stadium/Maple corridor. I am a longtime resident of Ann Arbor and have owned a home on the west side, not far from the corridor in question for over 25 years.

First, I am very supportive of denser, mixed-use developments that are designed to encourage more affordable housing, especially when placed along major transportation corridors. This kind of development would be far superior to the single-story retail buildings that are surrounded by mammoth parking lots that currently exist in the zone.

However, I am convinced that the proposed zoning, as it is written, will not achieve those goals. As written, the TC-1 zoning merely substitutes the goals and incentives of developers for those of the zoning board and the community at large. By "un-zoning", many of the decisions on what and where a project is to be built, will be made by developers and individual property owners. What are their incentives? If a profit motive plays any role, one can imagine that whatever the community might envision, it will take a backseat to a project that is more lucrative and profitable to the owner/developer.

The simple truth is that absent restrictions, the goals and incentives of developers simply do not align well with those of the community at large. That is why we have zoning in the first place. It seems to me that if you give much wider latitude to a developer to choose what is to be built, you will wind up with many more lucrative and profitable projects; not necessarily the ones that we all want. For example, there are currently three grocery stores that would fall under the new zoning rules. Two characteristics of grocery stores are that they require a large footprint and that they compete in a low margin business. What incentive will there be for them to stay?

It seems to me that we have a great strategy but very poor execution. The strategy of encouraging high-density, mixed used developments designed to encourage more affordable housing is a laudable one. However, in my opinion, the plan to execute that strategy by implementing TC-1 zoning will be an abject failure. We need more than just a great strategy. We need tactics and methods that will effectively execute that strategy. The existing plan simply turns much of the decision making over to a segment of the population that has a very different set of incentives than we as a community do. Moreover, this plan is likely to result in significant changes to the community that we will have to live with for many years to come.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Mike Zinn
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