

**Ann Arbor Center of the City-Council of the Commons
2023-2028 PROS Plan Recommendations**

Section A, Geographic Boundary Areas (p1)

- Recommendation: please include language that aligns with prior city PROS plan area descriptions (see PROS plans in 2016-2020 for reference) pertaining to ratios of population-to-acreage of open space.
- Recommendation: please note that the majority of the parks enumerated are on the edges of the central planning area and require users to cross several major roadways to get to them.

Section C, Social Characteristics of Planning Areas (p2-3)

- Recommendation: please include descriptions of population density changes per planning area, as well as inclusion of population density per planning area in the chart on page 3. This will help readers understand where the city is growing and cross reference that per planning area.

Section 5, Park and Facility Advisory Boards and Commissions (p19)

- Recommendation: please include language that indicates the boundaries of the center of the city space - enumerating the city-owned public land bounded by Fifth avenue, William, Division and Liberty streets including the Library parking structure surface, Library Lane, the Kempf house and Liberty Plaza.

Section B, Park and Open Space Classification (subsection 5: Urban Parks, Plazas, p30)

- Recommendation: please include greater enumeration of details as it pertains to urban plazas, indicating that there are differences in spaces that fall into this classification, noting things like the differences between the Farmer's Market and Liberty Plaza, as well as large variations within the properties that currently make up the Center of the City.

Section V, Land Use Planning and Acquisition (Sub F, Alternative Methods, p63)

- Recommendation: add a subsection 5 under the Alternative Methods subsection that indicates acquisition of land for park use via ballot proposal.

Section 4, Open Space, Parks and Development Contributions within the Urban Core (p66)

- Recommendation: this section seems to indicate that the city's intent with increasing density downtown is in conflict with open space use, aside from defined urban plazas for

outdoor eating. This language should probably be significantly reworded or deleted altogether, as it reflects only one policy argument when there are many solutions that increase housing density in downtowns and also include open space that is not plaza-focused, as is evident in local communities such as Detroit, Plymouth, Royal Oak, etc and many other communities across the country.

- Recommendation: similar to the prior note, the suggestion that a separate formula be used to calculate ratios of population density-to-parks is a very slippery slope that if done, could easily disenfranchise residents who live in the urban center by denying them opportunities to open spaces as close to their homes as residents who live in other neighborhoods. Please delete this language.
- Recommendation: please include a description of the Center of the City space, similar to the Diag, as an item for note within this section, as this is currently designated for park use.
- Recommendation: please indicate more details on timeframes, etc for when developers or the Downtown Development Authority have contributed to improvements to plazas, urban parks or streetscapes. It would be helpful to readers to better understand how and when improvements to these areas are being funded.

Section 5, Credit for Private Open Space and Recreation Areas (p66-67)

- Recommendation: please indicate some examples or include descriptions of areas where developers have created open spaces as part of agreements with the city on development projects, as well as indications of which are for private use and which are for public use.

Section IV, Planning Process for the PROS Plan (p77-89)

- Recommendation: please note in question 3 (first sentence) that the support levels are related to the respondents prioritization of the use of their taxpayer dollars for park improvements.
- Recommendation: please include a description noting the differences in responses from residents who chose 'unsure' as a response in question 3, especially noting that there are varying degrees of 'unsure' responses on priorities throughout the question.
- Recommendation: it may be helpful to keep high level result summaries on questions like 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc consistent - focusing summary statements more neutrally than positive or negative.
- Recommendation: please include some descriptions highlighting the variations, and in some cases, conflicts, between responses to survey questions 3, 4 and even 5, 6, 7, 10,

11, etc. There is not insignificant variation in responses between these questions; variations that affect the placement of participants' priorities for spending existing (or any new) taxpayer dollars on parks. These variations affect top priorities, mid-level priorities and lower priorities of improvements or purchases.

Subsection d, Downtown Parks Focus Group (p95)

- Recommendation: please alter the sentence starting with "Additionally, the City of Detroit..." to indicate that Detroit's plan is based on intentionally engaging with all park users - including those experiencing homelessness - to ensure that no one is pushed out of parks and that those who are interested in receiving public services (that they qualify for) can receive them.

Subsection b, Center of the City Task Force and Council of the Commons (p98-99)

- Recommendation: please include notes that the Parks Advisory Commission, Parks Department staff and the Council of the Commons are working together to support recommendations for the area designated as the Center of the City block, including any alterations and activation/use.

Section VII, Goals and Objectives (starting p102)

- Recommendation: please include goals (or sub-goals) pertaining to park activation, maintenance, and planning - including how to do so through the use of public and private partnerships in order to reduce cost to taxpayers. The Council of the Commons would be happy to assist in helping staff create these goals.

Section F, Neighborhood Parks and Urban Plazas (p118)

- Recommendation: delete the sentence "Focusing resources on one urban park will just re-locate issues to neighboring parks", as it could be misinterpreted.
- Recommendation: enumerate city advisory bodies (such as the DDA, Council of the Commons, Parks Advisory Commission) and city staff in the planning and programming work that is to be done in conjunction with the Downtown Park and Open Space Subcommittee report. Additionally, enumerate the Center of the City Task Force report.

Several sections throughout:

- Recommendation: the Council of the Commons recognizes that the city's Parks Department is likely very tightly staffed and supports a PROS plan that includes ensuring there are sufficient staff, support of community volunteers, and resources to build, activate and maintain a city parks system that enhances and reflects the vibrancy, diversity and uniqueness of the Ann Arbor community.