

January 16, 2018

City of Ann Arbor  
Planning Commission  
301 E Huron Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
[planning@a2gov.org](mailto:planning@a2gov.org)

Re: **ZORO** (Zoning Ordinance ReOrganization project) / Proposed **Unified Development Code**

Dear City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission,

I understand there is a proposal which will effectively decrease the buildable square feet for new development in the City of Ann Arbor. Currently the City does not include area dedicated to vertical circulation in buildings as part of the Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Things like stair towers, elevator shafts, ventilation shafts (things that would not be included in a building's occupancy load calculations under the building code) are not part of the FAR calculations for a project/building. Under the proposed new UDC/ZORO these vertical circulation spaces would be included in the FAR. This will have the effect of reducing the amount of leasable/salable square footage in any proposed new project compared to what could be built today.

As someone who lives and works in Ann Arbor, I am writing in opposition to this proposal and recommend keeping the code as it currently is (with vertical circulation space not included in FAR). I am not clear on the reason for proposing the change and I believe this is unfair to buyers and sellers who have purchased or are purchasing properties based on the current code and current property values for investment or improvement purposes. These individuals will be negatively affected by this change.

I am also concerned about this change because of the negative effect it will have on affordable housing. A couple of weeks ago, I read an article about people moving out of Hawaii. This state has the lowest unemployment in the country, fantastic weather, wonderful culture and very friendly people. The reason that people are leaving, however, is because of increased regulation on building and development, which has reduced density and ultimately driven the cost of housing up so high that most people cannot afford to buy or even rent homes there.

This change to the current FAR calculation will cause the same type of problem in the City of Ann Arbor. We love the diversity of Ann Arbor, which is why we live in Water Hill; a very diverse neighborhood that is close to the farmer's market, restaurants and shopping in downtown Ann Arbor. These types of regulations will reduce density and ultimately cause the cost of housing to escalate and make it more difficult for all people to be able to affordably live in the City limits.

I believe the Planning Commission should not support this proposal as it does not seem to be in the best interests of the City of Ann Arbor. If the Commission votes in favor of the proposal, I would request that it not be effective until 2019 when it will not adversely affect people who have already made buying or selling decisions based on the code as it is currently written.

Sincerely,

Honor Belew  
Ann Arbor Resident  
615 Felch St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103