



**Washtenaw County**  
**Department of Planning & Environment**

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May 30, 2008

Ann Arbor City Council  
100 N 5th Ave  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 994-3313

RE: Proposed Amendments to Area, Height and Placement Standards

Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment finds the proposed changes to the City of Ann Arbor's Area, Height & Placement standards as well as corresponding text amendments to Chapter 55 (Zoning) and Chapter 59 (Off-Street Parking) to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County Landscapes Goal to "Promote an efficient pattern of development that maintains our sense of place, preserves our natural resources and reduces the effects of sprawl."

Ann Arbor is unique in its access to world-class university and cultural resources, health care and recreational opportunities. However current zoning standards requiring large setbacks, strict height regulations and small floor area ratios encourage segregation of land uses and continued auto-dependency for movement throughout the area. These factors discourage sustainable and vibrant land use patterns in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County's largest city. Suburban development patterns consume a significant amount of land while doing little to reduce congestion, create a sense of place, connect to surrounding communities or improve tax base.

By encouraging mixed use development with sustainable densities in urban areas while setting parameters for ensuring new developments are sensitive to surrounding land uses, the City of Ann Arbor can use existing infrastructure more efficiently, provide greater choice of transportation modes, attract high quality urban redevelopment, and better protect regional open spaces. Adopting such standards would also encourage the redevelopment of auto-dependent uses into mixed-use, pedestrian friendly projects at densities that support transit, and contribute to a more vibrant community.

Sincerely,

Patricia Denig, Director of Planning Services  
Washtenaw County

Cc: Jeff Kahan, AICP, City Planner