

Subject: Clarifying my land use survey answers

From: Bethany

Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2025 9:35 PM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Subject: Clarifying my land use survey answers

Dear city planners,

I submitted answers to parts of the comprehensive land use plan survey. I later realized that I probably I used terminology differently than what you meant by that terminology. I am sending this follow up message to try to clarify some of the preferences, concerns and opinions that I submitted.

One of the quotes in the *Ann Arbor for All* April 2025 draft report (page 64) indicated that it was not desirable to be only a “suburb with a university.” For me, those are actually two things that make Ann Arbor a city where I want to be. The report talks about increasing density. In my survey response to that, I mentioned that I would rather build up than out. I was talking about each lot, not the city in its entirety. With its generous set-backs, retention ponds, grass, trees, and flowers in so many of its lots, Ann Arbor provides an overall sense of openness and life that is key for how livable and inviting this city is to me. I also appreciate how Ann Arbor provides the opportunity to attend local sports events, lectures, concerts, political events, and more when we want, but that we also have lots of lower density spaces to go to decompress for mental, physical, and emotional well being. Ann Arbor is nicely located for those who want the big city experiences to travel to Chicago and Detroit, and then return to Ann Arbor to escape the big city downsides like congestion and harsh surroundings of stone, glass, metal and noise. As you look to the future and how to address the needs and challenges that Ann Arbor faces, I hope that you will preserve as much of this open, life-filled, peaceful character of the city as possible.

My other concerns (and I admit that I did not read through all of the materials and existing city ordinances to see if you have already addressed them) are

1) The ideals of equity, a robust economy, and caring for our environment are important. My hope is that you have involved professional, trained, and experienced urban planners and developers for their knowledge about how successful the proposed plan might be in actually bringing about these desired results in a city like Ann Arbor with the citizens who live here.

2) If Ann Arbor does reduce its ratio of single-family dwellings, does the city have the mechanisms in place to make the other forms of housing satisfying and to support the well-being of the residents? For example, does it have building codes to ensure that shared buildings are comfortably sound-proofed and that proper fire stops are in place? Does Ann Arbor have resources to help the owners of multi-/duplexes successfully navigate shared responsibilities like replacing a roof or maintaining parking spaces? Does it have solid ordinances and oversight bodies in place to enforce landlords to keep the residences safe, in good repair, and free of pests and to prevent them from unjustly hiking rents? How much of the denser housing is intended to be rented, and how much will be able to be owned by those who live there, and what ratio will best meet the city’s needs?

I would dearly love if Ann Arbor can maintain its current mix of small-town peacefulness and larger-city activities and opportunities. My hope is that your plan will try to preserve what makes Ann Arbor such a wonderful place to work and live, while addressing the concerns of affordability and sustainability and the other challenges raised in your report. I suspect it is not easy to make plans for thousands of citizens. Thank you for the work that you do.

Sincerely,
Bethany Huseman