

**Subject:** A Welcoming City (until you try and move here)

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**From:** Carla Bayha  
**Sent:** Monday, May 5, 2025 5:44 AM  
**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>  
**Subject:** A Welcoming City (until you try and move here)

My 50 years in Ann Arbor, 35 of them in the same neighborhood of small single family tract houses, has shown me that Ann Arbor is not building enough affordable housing. I worked with almost all younger people for the past ten years, who could not afford to buy or rent in Ann Arbor. I've stood at my bus stop with people, who have come to our area for school, a job, or a new start in a new country. Any that I have talked to more than several times, will mention their frustration. I've talked to close neighbors who all want more affordable housing, but yes, many of them want it somewhere else.

I believe we can fit more housing in Ann Arbor without turning it into this mythical beast of home to "the other."

The first place that I lived in, when I got married, was a small complex of maybe 100 apartments, only a mile from where I live now. That was in the 1980s. Naive person that I was, I didn't think particularly about why I only saw one black tenant, a female psychologist. Not until the 1990s, from a lawsuit covered in the Ann Arbor News, did I learn that the "kindly old" building manager deliberately excluded black people from renting in these apartments. I assume now the same happened in the surrounding housing developments (1000 to 1500 square foot houses).

I lived there for two years after my son was born. The apartment faced a courtyard, and my son had more children to play with, then he would the next 15 years in our neighborhood of single family houses, after a divorce forced us to move. Many of my new neighbors had raised their children by then, and had become empty nesters.

Riding the bus has been a great way to meet people that I would not otherwise have met. I am glad that fully working transit corridors will allow a greater mingling of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti residents, and particularly older residents with younger people and people who moved here from other countries. I support the rezoning of Ann Arbor neighborhoods, to allow more diversity in housing and in the people who live here.

I am disappointed that most of the opposition is from older, retired people like me, who see themselves as progressive, but are very much change averse. They look back to well known failures in other cities, but don't look to others, particularly in other countries, that have been able to build affordable housing.

Thank you

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