

From: Kirk Westphal
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2022 4:54 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Cc: Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>
Subject: Feedback on Work Plan

Dear Commission:

Thank you for collecting feedback on the work plan. I have a few different categories of feedback below.

I am refraining from any suggestions that aren't supported by the current comprehensive plan and would likely need to wait for the comprehensive planning process (e.g. changes to R1-R4 zoning, with the exception of one item below).

Thank you for your consideration!
Kirk

Work plan logistics

Assign an approximate **duration** to each work plan project **before** prioritizing it, then assign an actual start and end date and staff member once it is prioritized. Some smaller projects perennially get kicked to the end of the line because individually they're not as "important" as bigger items, but some could reasonably be completed with a few hours of staff time and two commission meetings (e.g. banning drive-throughs). Also having an idea of available staff capacity would be helpful—which planners are available to work on these projects?

Have a separate line item and timeline for the Comprehensive Plan update. I believe the consultant RFP was supposed to be completed this summer with selection this fall, which means community engagement and scoping exercises should begin soon?

Support/detail on current proposals

Accelerate the TC1 process by running rezonings concurrently. Consider Washtenaw late summer or fall of this year immediately after the Stadium public notice. Don't wait until 2023 and 2024 to do Washtenaw and Stadium.

Eliminate the affordable housing premium downtown. It is actively stopping projects in the most developable area, and we have since passed an affordable housing millage (the best available way to subsidize housing). Consider substituting a premium that does not add significant cost and will help achieve sustainability goals, such as geothermal, electric-only, etc.

Institute a citywide parking maximum in all commercial and multifamily zones. Consider limiting vehicular use areas to no more than usable interior space. This will be a stopgap measure to prevent the most egregious suburban development in the city. (This equates to 3 parking spaces @333sf for 1000sf of interior space, which is the current TC1 parking maximum.)

Change the TC1 parking regulations.

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- If you maintain a “combined use” maximum, please lower it to 2 spaces/1000 sf. This provides plenty of space for retail during the day and because many units may be car-free anyway.
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- If you opt for regulating residential separately, please limit residential to 0.5 space per dwelling unit and allow commercial at 2.5/1000. The current maximum caters to 100% drivable developments.
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- Either way, the “footprint” criteria currently in place needs to be modified as it’s currently unworkable for anything other than a small surface lot. What parking configurations should be allowed, in addition to discrete structures? Structured parking as floors of a building? Or as a large shallow area below grade? Should there be a “footprint” restriction not on total area but on top-down aerial footprint only?
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Requested additions/refinements

Expand the proposed lengths and definition of TC1.

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- Plymouth should not stop at Traverwood but run westbound all the way to Lowertown and the Broadway bridge.
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- The Washtenaw district should include the Stadium split area (like Trader Joe’s) because it is such a short walk to Washtenaw.
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- Expand State north to Packard.
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- Change the ordinance language so that TC1 parcels do not need to be “completely surrounded” by commercial parcels. This doesn’t accurately describe current and future proactively-zoned TC1 parcels, and reactive TC1 rezoning requests shouldn’t be held to this standard either.
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Reform on-street parking outside downtown. Cheap residential parking permits are a giveaway to wealthier residents, subsidize car owners to live downtown, cause people to park more because they've "already bought" a year-long pass, decrease needed public parking for downtown businesses (especially Kerrytown), add to residents' false sense of ownership of parking in front of their homes, and therefore will hurt the upzoning process because of being challenged for their "right" to these spaces. Recommend to council to stop adding residential parking permit (RPP) districts and begin replacing RPP districts with meters in high-demand locations outside the DDA.

Remove the unrelated-person occupancy limits and let rental inspection codes dictate safety. If there's a problem with the rental inspection rules, then change them. Restricting living arrangements raises rents and imposes counterproductive American-centric values about "space" and "crowding."

Parking unbundling requirements for residential, for example residential management must charge at least 7% of the rent of the median apartment in the building per month per parking space. Most apartment buildings in and near downtown already charge market rates for car storage; making sure that parking spaces in new developments further toward the fringe don't punish non-drivers is important.

Move forward with some of the North Main St plan and Huron River Impoundment Management Plan (HRIMP) recommendations. We should expect to own N Main Street at some point. There are major opportunities to urbanize that corridor and IIRC there are also some city infrastructure needs that are hampering redevelopment of this corridor (like upsizing a water main?). Relatedly, HRIMP recommends looking at commercial uses in the parks along the river (beer gardens, limited private leasing for greater use of river front); not sure if this last part is in CPC purview.

Upzone unbuilt single-family zoning areas, so we don't get more single-family developments like Concord Pines. (The property behind Arborland is probably up next for single-family if nothing is done.) There is comprehensive plan documentation recommending this.

Adopt a downtown "active use" ordinance and apply it to the critical core nighttime entertainment districts to prevent the further erosion of activity due to new office and bank businesses at street level. This was first discussed 15 years ago and is in city planning's files.

Eliminate height and FAR limits downtown. A height limit was never recommended by CPC; it was added by city council. Also, I think it's reasonable to challenge the assumption that density limits downtown are desirable.

Regarding the Comprehensive Plan list and reference documents

Add the A2 Zero plan and recent Transportation plan, and eliminate their outdated counterparts. Consider eliminating all reference documents over 20 years old.