

From: [Mary Durfee](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: The soul of Ann Arbor
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 3:48:29 PM

Dear Planning Commission members,

I understand your interest in densifying Ann Arbor. Using huge plots of land for single family homes is not sustainable and not in the overall interest of the city.

My concerns are the following:

1. Gentrification. This is exemplified by the MLive headline that read "Boutique hotel meets student housing". We repeatedly discuss moderately priced housing. I hope that this means for students as well as non-students.
2. Small local businesses. I recently received my monthly newsletter from Literati. Perhaps some of you have seen it.

Letters from Literati

Downtowns are like people: No two should be the same.

But I fear Ann Arbor is over-scalpeled—too perfect, too similar to other downtowns. With each closure and erasure of a locally-owned, unique business, our downtown is starting to look like Everywhere Else.

We likely couldn't open Literati in today's downtown. Rent is prohibitively expensive; the risk is high. Look at State Street: Not many new, non-formulaic businesses opening. Policies could help — to review and reject formulaic businesses from moving in, for example — but it appears we're comfortable exchanging our one-of-a-kind downtown for a downtown of 7-Elevens and Buffalo Wild Wings.

Recently, a friend visiting Ann Arbor asked, "What should I do downtown?"

I almost responded, jokingly, "Check out this place called Dunkin'! Great little coffee spot around the corner."

Then I realized many of my actual Must See Recommendations are going, or gone.

And I began to miss Ann Arbor's freckles.

-Mike, Hilary, and Literati

You know best what is within the purview of your responsibilities. I would ask you to consider how best to do this as we lose yet another AA stalwart - Downtown Home and Garden.

Thank you

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