

Subject: Comprehensive Plan and Implementation

From: Kris Olsson

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 6:06 PM

To: City Council <CityCouncil@a2gov.org>; Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

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Dear members of the Planning Commission, City Council, and City Staff,

Washtenaw Climate Reality is a local chapter of the international Climate Reality Project, which mobilizes people to work for just climate solutions that speed energy transition. We are pleased to see the comprehensive plan survive its long review process with most of its sustainable goals intact.

Now comes the implementation! While realizing a comprehensive plan's goals through zoning changes can take years, time is of the essence. We agree with local planning experts at More Neighbors A2: start by addressing the areas with the most potential for new housing and commercial space. We believe that rapid progress on rezoning is both possible and desirable, particularly if the initial focus is on Hub and Transition. More Neighbors A2 proposes two possible packages of zoning changes that build on more general suggestions [presented](#) to the Planning Commission last November. We agree with their proposals.

Both options target the Hub and Transition categories, and neither includes R1 parcels. Either of these options could be proposed, debated, revised, and adopted this year, without the need for a multi-year consultant-led process.

[Option 1](#): Create one new mixed-use district for Hub and key Transition areas.

[Option 2](#): Create two new mixed-use districts, one for Hub and another for key Transition areas.

We prefer Option 1, because a self-adjusting height limit makes a two-tier approach unnecessary, but Option 2 would also work. Both options implement the [zoning recommendations](#) of the Comprehensive Plan.

The new district(s) would allow a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses but not [heavy industrial](#) uses. They would also have self-adjusting [height limits](#) that taper down near Residential districts.

We recommend applying the new district(s) to at least the following Hub and Transition areas:

1. Downtown
2. Commercial and Industrial Corridors
3. R2B and R4 areas next to Central Campus and Michigan Medicine

It is particularly important to rezone Transition areas quickly, because most Hub areas are already zoned to allow dense mixed-use development, whereas Transition areas are not.

We suggest that when City Council adopts the Comprehensive Plan, it should also send a [companion resolution](#) to the Planning Commission requesting a first package of zoning reforms with some high-level guidance on what those reforms should be.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact us at any time.

Best wishes,

Kris Olsson

David Gurk

Kris Olsson | Watershed Ecologist | climate activist | Environmental Council | she/her/hers



(retired)



"Density = Healthy Climate, Clean Water"