

Subject:

****PLEASE READ: Comprehensive Plan Thoughts****

From: Ina Gjoka

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 6:00 AM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Subject: ****PLEASE READ: Comprehensive Plan Thoughts****

Hi,

I'm a renter who has lived in Ann Arbor for the last 8 years. I am writing to advocate for **no restrictions on housing or building heights** because the housing crisis is out of control and getting noticeably worse every year. Nothing should come at the expense of our residents having their basic needs met. To reiterate, please:

- **allow high-rises everywhere, particularly downtown / in the transition district**. We cannot afford to be conservative with heights when the housing problem is as bad as it is.

- **remove the flex district**, since it will discourage housing construction. Areas like South Industrial are ideal for housing, as they are near campus and near stores and on major bus routes that residents like me frequent.

Renters are suffering *completely unnecessarily* due to artificial limits on housing, and I think making adjustments to this plan is the best opportunity to help people.

If you would like to know more about my experiences to understand why I am fighting for these changes, please read below:

I can't express enough how terrible it is to be a renter here. The vulnerability and exploitation, the molding rotting houses, having to move every year due to rent going up, being homeless during the lease gaps every year, still having to pay rent even on the days when we're homeless because no one prorates rent here...I have years worth of appalling housing situations I could share. Here is a snapshot.

For context, I have a graduate degree and a full-time job. I currently live in a crumbling 120-year-old attic, and I'm moving soon -- not because of how terrible it is, but because my rent went up **by \$400**. To find my next place, I spent the last three months scouring the internet daily, keeping my email open 24/7 because some landlords explicitly only give you a few hours to sign a lease before they'll just send it to the next person. That's how much power they have. I would call landlords the minute a unit was posted, offering to sign immediately without touring — and I would *still* lose that unit to someone who got to it before me. These are the kinds of stunts we have to pull to get housing. **We fight tooth and nail to live in complete slums that aren't fit for humans to live in and cost thousands of dollars a month.**

These conditions aren't normal -- this is intentional, a result of having artificially strangled the housing market by restricting new construction. The only solution is to eliminate the barriers to building. Given the severity of the crisis, it's too late in the game for gradual zoning reforms to be impactful; we need aggressive action in order to make a dent.

I hope you take housing into consideration. Ann Arbor has turned into this transitional place where people just come here to go to work or school and then they leave -- *nobody actually lives here*. Almost every other renter I've known has already left. With strategic housing-centered reform, I think this can change.

Thank you for reading.