

Subject:

Comp Plan

From: Jonathan Levine**Sent:** Friday, May 2, 2025 10:06 AM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Comp Plan

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The Planning Commission's decision to reduce height limits in the Residential District from four floors to three significantly diminishes housing production potential by over 25 percent. This reduction occurs because fewer development projects will be financially viable or "pencil out." The resulting developments will be smaller in scale, and fewer projects will move forward overall.

This change heightens the importance of adopting policies to realize the potential of housing development in other areas. I believe that three points are vital:

- Transition District: Uncapping the height of the transition zone away from the residential district. I believe that this is already in the draft plan with language like "building heights may be limited based on their proximity to nearby homes" (p. 105) but wanted to emphasize the importance of clarity regarding this move.
- Transition District: Not requiring "active first floor commercial on arterials." (p. 103) Mixed-use development is great but ground floor retail is challenging and suffers from vacancies. If this phrase becomes a requirement in a future zoning ordinance, it could reduce the residential productivity of the Transition District.
- Flex District: This district contains some of the most housing-productive areas of town. Its ambiguous language, e.g., "allows for a future transition to mixed-use development, including housing" (p. 116) fails to provide clarity to potential developers of higher-density housing. New development will need to be charged for needed infrastructure in any case, so current infrastructure deficiencies are surmountable. The easiest solution would be to designate these areas as "Transition." Alternatively: adopt clearer housing-friendly language for the Flex District.

Thanks for your work on the plan!

Jonathan Levine