

**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan (CP) concerns

---

**From:** MICHAEL SAROSI sarosi  
**Sent:** Monday, June 30, 2025 12:52 AM  
**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan (CP) concerns

To the Planning Commission:

Below is the email I sent to our two 2nd Ward City council members. I also spoke to both of them and they recommended I forward the email to the Planning Commission as well.

Mr Watson,

First off I want to thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts on the CP and listening to my concerns. If I recall correctly your top 3 thoughts supporting the CP were to: increase "more affordable housing; align City Planning; and you never got to your 3rd point. I appreciate our discussion and you listening to my and my neighbors on Tuomy Road concerns.

Not to be a NIMBY and seeking an acceptable answer to the concern of "affordable" housing in A2, I could consider a compromise solution that I will suggest below.

But I must share with you my profound concerns with the CP (and I am not certainly NOT alone)!

All my neighbors on Tuomy, fellow Physicians at St. Joe's Hospital, and friends at Liberty Athletic Club were aghast when I informed them of what I learned at the Burns Park forum a few weeks ago, where Mayor Taylor and one of Ward 3 council members as well as a Planning Commission representative outlined the CP and took questions. The vast majority of questions and concerns were against the CP at that meeting.

My objective concerns:

1-Achieving "Densification" by eliminating single-family residential housing in every single neighborhood is not just a bridge too far, it is anathema to myself and my neighbors! If you, your City Council colleagues, and the Planning Commission, push this through, you will be responsible for destroying the very character of all the diverse neighborhoods, such as Burns Park, Water Hill, Old West Side, or Ann Arbor Hills, that make A2 one of the most friendly, neighborly, welcoming, and greatest small cities, not just in MI, but in the USA.

2-"Densification" with the goal of adding 30,000-70,000 new residents and housing by 2050 as discussed, is simply a non-starter (I am struggling to be diplomatic here). A 20%-50% in populations will destroy the very character of Ann Arbor as a manageable, desirable, small city. No one desires A2 to become a mini-Manhattan with all its ills e.g. lack of affordability, high taxes, crowding, gridlock, hassles, unfriendliness, etc.

Not only that, but who will pay for infrastructure? Mayor Taylor said "developers will pay for it". I and many others found that not just disingenuous, but insulting to our intelligence. Yes some new citizen taxpayers will ameliorate some of the cost, but the current citizen taxpayers will bear the brunt of huge costs involved as this goal will result in a massive increases in: water and sewage uses and construction that will disrupt A2 for decades; road construction and parking that will do the same; police/fire/waste/recycling/snow removal/general maintenance/ and city bureaucracy that have to increase commensurately. Developers ain't paying that. I will! So will my children and other City of Ann Arbor taxpayers!

3-I have recently become aware that now our City Parks and even jewels such as Leslie Park Golf Course are under threat of development. Do the good people of the Planning Commission not like their jobs? Are they trying to get fired? (excuse the snark). On one hand, they talk of preserving/extending Greenspaces, but then remove many acres of those Greenspaces from protected park land designation in the CP, including Leslie Park and Huron Hills?

My subjective concerns:

I am part of the University of Michigan Medical School Admissions program as an interviewer of prospective Medical School candidates. I proudly extol the current virtues of A2 to those candidates unfamiliar with A2. Those students all ask what it's like to live in A2. The positive aspects I outlined above are big selling points. You will make my "recruitment" more difficult by supporting the CP. Eventually a number of these future Physicians will finish training at UMMS and want to live in the wonderful neighborhoods of A2. Those may no longer exist if the CP is implemented as is.

When I hear the word "densification", my brain hears the words "money" i.e. not just billions of dollars of construction and development, but millions of dollars in new taxes and more bureaucratic costs. Developers must be licking their chops at the prospects of the CP. I wonder how "affordable" their new housing will be?

I will be a bit cynical here and try to be as respectful as possible, but when any governmental unit (not just A2) fundamentally alters their functioning guardrails that have been in place for decades, in a less-than-transparent fashion, resulting in billions of dollars of development, and millions of dollars of profit to those developers, one has to wonder if there have been any conflicts of interest of inducements, financial or otherwise? I am not accusing, but just noting that this process, at best, is making many of us suspicious.

I grew up in a "mixed use" residential area in Southwest Detroit and I will tell you it was dysfunctional. Neighborhood "party stores" abounded. Parking was abysmal even though homes had garages, with both sides of the street taken up by parked cars and literally fights breaking out over parking, especially with winter snowfalls. You could see the homes deteriorate the closer they got to the apartment buildings on the corners. Living next to a frat house, student housing, an apartment building/condo complex or commercial business is not desirable and will impact home values. Washtenaw Dairy and Jefferson Market are one-offs. You will not be able to replicate them at scale.

My studies have taken me from Detroit, to Ann Arbor, then Madison, WI, and Charlottesville, VA. Not one of those college towns have Ann Arbor cachet. They are all lovely communities, but none have the big-town amenities while maintaining that small town feel. Don't turn A2 into an Austin TX.

My suggestion:

When reviewing the approximately 163 page 2nd draft of the CP, I see that major traffic corridors are being considered for change of zoning/development. I understand the need for more affordable housing and to increase the tax base given the UM impact on taxable city land. The best compromise I can think of is to allow multi-family dwellings, 3 story apartments/condos, small commercial shops and markets to be developed along those major traffic corridors such as Washtenaw, Jackson, Packard etc., not on streets like Tuomy, Devonshire, 7th Avenue, Lincoln, Cambridge, Fair, Golden, or Easy.

I would also investigate how other college towns are dealing with their tax base being eroded by University land removal off the tax rolls such as user fees, or even restricting services to the University due to lack of tax revenue? Mayor Taylor simply threw up his hands and said we can't do anything. There are smart people in City Hall. If the rules truly prevent A2 from preventing the loss of tax dollars or recouping moneys from the UM, than I'd suggest the City fight to change the rules at the State level rather than change the City of Ann Arbor, for the worse!

Finally, I have never been politically active til now. Please be very judicious and limited in your scope. Don't try to mollify us with "this is just a draft" and then go on to approve this as a fait accompli or hidden in some faceless Planning Commission agenda. Please don't make me and my neighbors want to vote against you, your City Council colleagues, and the Mayor by supporting this plan, that will forever negatively impact the neighborhoods of A2 and the very City of Ann Arbor itself. I fervently hope you will take this constructively and reject discarding R1 single family residential zoning for A2 and toxic overdevelopment of Ann Arbor as well.

Michael Sarosi MD  
2109 Tuomy Road  
734.355.2663