

Subject: Comprehensive Plan

From: Amby Gallagher
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 2:47 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
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To the Planning Commission:

I write today in partial support of the Comprehensive Plan. However, I still have some concerns after watching the last meetings, reading the updated draft and attending the library briefings.

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- 2.
3. The transition area: The exact boundaries of the transition area were a little hard to
4. figure out on the map, but in general I am concerned about the impact of the Transition area on current small businesses in the area, such as the Washtenaw Dairy and some of the places on Stadium like Bell's and Stadium Hardware. Some of these also serve as
5. walkable destinations (eg the Dairy, perhaps Bells) for our west side neighborhoods. I have previously expressed my concerns about the loss of walkable destinations such as the South Main Market when high-rise buildings go up that claim to be mixed-use but
6. do not fulfill their promise (I still don't understand why South Main Market - truly an "accessible amenity" couldn't have been incorporated into that plan).
7.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. Along those lines, I am concerned that overzealous developers may come in and decide
 - d. that a multiple story condo (or "mixed use" building) should replace a small, successful business. This may enrich an individual or company, but it doesn't enhance the neighborhood, and may not add to the objectives of reducing VMTs (if the people who work
 - e. here still can't afford to live here) or affordable housing (while I realize that that does not seem to be a main goal).
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i. And of course, any threat to The Washtenaw Dairy is just unconscionable!
 - j.

- k.
- l.
- m. I do understand the importance of having higher density housing along transit routes
- n. and support the ideas of the Transition area. I would just feel more confident in it if I had seen it work better on South Main, where I used to walk regularly but which has become far less walker-friendly.
- o.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10. I am not seeing any modifications to the Comp Plan despite discussions at the last planning
- 11. commission meeting that I attended earlier this summer that implied that certain changes were being made, such as changing parts of Miller Rd from Transition to Residential, so I am wondering what the timeline for those changes is.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15. I also feel strongly - and I know this is a big sticking point for many neighbors - that
- 16. there should be a no tear-down rule in residential areas. I believe this is already the case in one of the neighborhoods frequently cited in the plan as walkable and vibrant - the Old West Side. Many are afraid that developers will come into neighborhoods,
- 17. buy a house and put up a large apartment building. This will change the character of neighborhoods that are already walkable and accessible. These neighborhoods can accommodate growth - and small businesses - in other ways, such as ADUs, additional living
- 18. spaces within their structures, small neighborhood businesses (with some caveats related to pedestrian safety - especially that of schoolchildren.) But I believe that plopping down apartment buildings in the middle of a neighborhood is not the answer, and
- 19. I do hope that that is not the intent of this plan or commission. And I have nothing against apartment buildings in general (I spent a good chunk of my childhood in them).
- 20.

I appreciate the responses of the commission and the city council member at the last meeting to some of the questions raised - and misinformation shared - by the audience. I don't believe all of the concerns have been addressed, but appreciate the efforts. And while I am in general supportive of the ideas behind this plan, after reading, talking with neighbors and watching the last Planning Commission meeting, I do think some consideration should be given to "pausing the plan", even if it is decided not to do so. Despite obvious efforts to include a multitude of voices in the planning, it is clear that some people felt left out of the process. And I think it is truly unhelpful to cast this as young v old, or progressive v stodgy, or willing to change v fear of anything new. These are not particularly helpful and can lead to stereotypes that stymy communication. There are certainly reasons to question details of the plan, not based on fear

of the future, but based on concerns about whether this plan indeed addresses some of its stated goals, such as reduction in gas emissions, or improved affordability (even if it is modest) of the area. I believe that this plan is very much on the right track, but that we need to not be afraid to talk about these details.

Thank you.

Nancy Ambrose Gallagher