



Driving Smart Economic Growth in Service of Prosperity for All
Acceleration • Growth • Talent • Community

August 16, 2024

Ann Arbor City Council
301 E. Huron St,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Members of the Ann Arbor City Council,

I am writing on behalf of Ann Arbor SPARK to express our strong support for the resolution to consider allowing more flexibility for Home Occupations in residential neighborhoods. We believe that this initiative aligns with the broader economic goals of our community by fostering entrepreneurship, reducing barriers to small business growth, and enhancing the vibrancy of our neighborhoods.


As an organization dedicated to driving economic development in the greater Ann Arbor region, Ann Arbor SPARK recognizes the significant shifts in work patterns and the increasing overlap between home and workplace environments. The proposal to allow greater flexibility in the City’s requirements for Home Occupations, including Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs), is a forward-thinking approach that responds to these changes and promotes local economic resilience.

In particular, we wish to highlight the critical connection between this resolution and the ongoing efforts to address child care challenges in our community. At Ann Arbor SPARK, we have been actively involved in initiatives to improve access to affordable and high-quality child care, understanding that this is a key factor in enabling more residents to participate fully in the workforce. By offering more flexible zoning that accommodates diverse uses, such as home-based child care facilities or other small businesses that cater to families, we can create a more supportive environment for working parents. This flexibility will not only empower entrepreneurs but also enhance workforce participation, which is essential for the continued growth and sustainability of our local economy.

Furthermore, allowing greater flexibility for Home Occupations can stimulate small business development, increase neighborhood walkability, and reduce carbon emissions by minimizing the need for commuting. These benefits are closely aligned with Ann

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Arbor SPARK's mission to promote economic innovation while maintaining the environmental and social integrity of our region.

We commend the City Council for its commitment to preserving the stability of residential neighborhoods while also fostering economic opportunities that benefit all residents. We encourage the Council to proceed with this initiative, ensuring that community engagement is a central part of the process. We believe that with thoughtful consideration and input from residents, the proposed ordinance amendments can serve as a model for other communities seeking to balance residential character with economic vitality.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Ann Arbor SPARK stands ready to support this effort and collaborate with the City to create a more flexible and inclusive framework for Home Occupations in Ann Arbor.

Regards,



Paul Krutko

President and Chief Executive Officer, Ann Arbor SPARK

