

Subject: the Plan risks harm to vulnerable neighborhoods

From: John Godfrey

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To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; City Council <CityCouncil@a2gov.org>

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Members of the Planning Commission and City Council:

Ann Arbor's housing market is increasingly unaffordable for working- and middle-class families, and the draft Plan risks making this worse—especially in our most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The city's housing market serves the affluent, pushing out working- and middle-class families. Even the Plan's own Housing Report admits this, yet it still prioritizes expensive market-rate development over housing accessible to those who've been priced out.

The proposed **Transition District** will accelerate this trend—especially in the south side—by allowing denser, taller buildings and new uses such as short-term rentals and industrial activity that promote higher-cost housing and threaten the stability of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The District will extend through:

- **Packard to S. Industrial**, where 39–47% of households are low- to moderate-income.
- **East of Stone School**, where that number climbs to 63–99%.
- **Pittsfield Village and nearby areas**, where 50–60% of households could be affected.

These are places of diverse, close-knit communities where working families are holding on. Ann Arbor's race to affluence makes them a target for speculative developers who see an opportunity in the new Transition Districts.

We need **real strategies now** to counter speculation and gentrification in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. That means:

- Prioritizing family-sized, permanently affordable homes for those priced out by investing in land trusts, co-ops, and non-profit housing **now**—not in 4–6 years as the Plan projects.
- Strictly **limiting short-term rentals** and requiring **buffers for industrial uses near homes**.
- Adopting a **Community Benefits Ordinance**, like Detroit's, so residents can identify and negotiate real benefits when developers receive public subsidies for larger projects in their neighborhood.

The Plan celebrates “missing middle housing,” but what about our **missing middle residents**?

Ann Arbor can still choose equity and affordability—but only if this Plan has effective strategies and actions to protect residents most at risk from predatory speculation. As written, it does not.

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