

Subject:

Planning Commission Comment Regarding Zoning Process

From: Timothy Rhoades**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026 11:56 AM**To:** Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>; Bennett, Michelle <MBennett@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Planning Commission Comment Regarding Zoning Process

Brett and Michelle,

The CLUP classifications were based on a rubric that considered existing zoning, proximity to transportation, a desire for increased housing density, and opinions of urban planning students and academics, but did not give much weight to neighborhood organizations or consider well local concerns related to flooding, traffic, and other impacts. It is now time to fix some the omissions of the CLUP drafting process. This is not a call for a neighborhood “veto,” but it is a reminder that the public was assured that the the zoning process would be detailed with block by block and even parcel by parcel analysis and public input at the neighborhood level.

Unfortunately, the proposed public engagement plan appears to prioritize speed of implementation over authentic public engagement. Is this to be another “check the box” engagement approach that addresses the public only superficially?

A key advantage of a detailed block by block approach is that localized conditions can be considered. Using my block as an example, the parcel at the SE corner of 1st and William is in an floodway and that intersection has previously experienced major flooding. Designating this parcel (and many others within floodways) as “hub” is clearly inconsistent with the goals of sustainability and resiliency. The CLUP drafting process/rubric discounted these concerns - now is the time to fix the problem.

The CLUP rubric also ignored that most parcels in the Old West Side with R4C zoning are less than 30’ in height and residential. Designating large areas of the Old West Side from R4C to “transition” was an aggressive interpretation of the rubric and ignores “facts on the ground.” The Planning Commission made no effort to align its plan with Historic District requirements and failed to identify any benefit in having such incongruence in the CLUP. Now is the time to align zoning and historic district height requirement. With few exceptions, historic district are should be zoned “residential” so height limitations are more closely aligned.

Yet another example of nearby facts on the ground is related to the old train station on Ashley, which also has been designated as “hub.” This historic building that could play an important role if a north south passenger route even returns to Ann Arbor. This parcel does not have historic district protections, so zoning this as high rise endangers the future of this landmark building. Note that Ashley Mews already serves as transition type housing. To zone for high rises west of Ashley Mews severely impacts the Old West Side Historic District and is simply not necessary. Let’s really try for comfortable transitions.

The zoning process must not be rushed if it is to be legitimate. Please redraft the plan to include detailed citizen input.

Please forward these comments to the Planning Commission.

Best regards,

Tim Rhoades