

Subject:

The Comprehensive Plan

From: Laura Strowe**Sent:** Tuesday, July 1, 2025 10:27 AM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>**Subject:** The Comprehensive Plan

To the Planning Commission:

I read with alarm the plans for the new Comprehensive Plan, which, if it succeeds, will considerably change the face of the city, its livability, and the quality of life here.

In developing the plan, the planners are supposedly responding to a need for more housing, in particular, more affordable housing. But the provisions in this plan will not supply it, because developers want to make money and will charge the highest rents they can get, and the paltry number of "affordable" units that the city will require of them will not make a dent. People who build more units on their properties will be doing it to make money, not to supply needed housing. This is the reality.

Why do people want to live in Ann Arbor? Because it combines the elements of big city culture (restaurants, events, interesting retail) with the feel of an attractive small town. But this new plan will, eventually, destroy the very elements that make the city attractive. The new high-rises that will line our thoroughfares will be an unwelcoming sign to newcomers that this is a city that has been co-opted by moneyed interests. And then, looking for homes in the former charming neighborhoods, people will be appalled at the prices, at the crowding, at the characterless new residences that have replaced the tree cover and the old gardens. Who will live here then? People who are here for temporary new technology jobs on their way to better jobs in big cities, leaving neighborhoods bereft of long-term residents who care about their neighbors and about "their" city.

Who will benefit from the new plan? The developers, as always. And, at least, temporarily, the city, with the increased revenue from property taxes. But eventually, all this new building will destroy the attractiveness of the city and all those desirable amenities will whither away. Interesting restaurants will be replaced by corporate feeding stations, creative people who make the city "interesting" will go elsewhere to live, and small business owners will not be able to afford the new rents that have to be charged to recover the costs of the new high-rises. Or worse: the new buildings will remain empty (because, after all, they are merely investments and not meant for actual use) and turn the city into a ghost town.

You are deluded if you think that more housing will automatically result in competitive, lower rents or buying prices. It doesn't happen. More housing merely puts more money in the pockets of the people who build them, and more property tax revenue for the city. Spare us the claptrap about people needing housing. This is just a smoke screen for the city getting more revenue, and this plan will ultimately fail, by making Ann Arbor less attractive.

Sincerely,
Laura Strowe

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