

Subject: Jeff Kahan Comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan

From: Jeff Kahan

Sent: Sunday, July 13, 2025 8:59:21 PM

To: Bennett, Michelle <MBennett@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>; Jeff Kahan

Subject: Jeff Kahan Comments on Draft Comprehensive Plan

Hi Michelle and Brett.

Would you mind forwarding this email to the CPC.

Thanks!

Jeff

Dear Brett, Michelle and Planning Commissioners

I think the draft Plan is heading in the right direction in terms of moving the dial toward sustainable land use practices. The Plan provides tons of opportunities for additional dwelling units by expanding downtown, creating HUB and Transition Districts, recommends multiple types of dwelling units in existing SF neighborhoods and promotes non-motorized transportation. Nice job!

I have one suggestion: Please consider replacing the Transition District with the Residential District for the neighborhood along Miller Road and the Kerrytown neighborhood (north of E. Kingsley, east of N. Main; west of Detroit). There are 3 reasons why I'm asking for this change:

1) Because the draft plan is making land use recommendations that substantially increase opportunities for new dwelling units, I think that decision makers can be more selective about which neighborhoods get included in the Transition District. It's my opinion that Ann Arbor can meet its housing and sustainability goals without including these two small, historic, unique, and sustainable neighborhoods in the Transition District.

2) Every great American City has been able to accommodate tremendous growth while at the same time caring for a handful of older neighborhoods: Seattle has accommodated enormous growth while protecting unique neighborhoods like Queen Anne which is not in an historic district but is mostly protected by a zoning district called, "Neighborhood Residential". Like Kerrytown, the Queen Anne neighborhood has a significant diversity of housing units that are configured in a fairly dense manner. The density of Kerrytown north of Kingsley is substantially higher than any single-family neighborhood in town. The Kerrytown neighborhood was platted in 1838 and includes a few tiny SF homes, duplexes, triplexes, 4-plexes, townhomes, a former African American church from 1891 that has been converted to residential, a brick brewery that was constructed in 1858 and has been converted to 7 dwelling units and sits next to the brewmaster's home which was constructed in 1873. It also has the Tuttle House (605 N. Fifth) which was built in 1835 and is one of the oldest homes in AA. The neighborhood includes rentals and owner occupied homes. Short setbacks help create a fairly dense neighborhood. Front porches provide opportunities for social connection and the neighborhood's walk score is very high. In other words, the Kerrytown neighborhood is already pretty dense and sustainable.

Like Kerrytown, residential development in the Miller Road neighborhood began in the 1830's. By 1853, more than a dozen homes had been constructed along Miller Road; some of which still exist including

the Jacob Shultz home at 809 Miller (c. late 1830's); 813 Miller (c. late 1830's); the G.W. Smith home 825 Miller; and 616 Miller. Additional mid-19th century homes include 806 Miller, 837 Miller and 628 Miller. The north side of the Miller corridor was platted in 1859 and still includes dozens of 19th and early 20th century homes including a 1909 church converted to residential, small and modest sized single-family homes, duplexes triplexes, and an 18 unit apartment community and includes rentals and owner-occupied homes. The draft plan suggests that the Transition District would extend at least 300 feet (length of a football field) into the Miller Road neighborhood.

3) Every recent private sector development project in the Miller Road/Kerrytown area have been expensive condos. I don't sense a groundswell of community support to gradually convert these historic, diverse and sustainable neighborhoods into million dollar condos but that is essentially what the draft plan is recommending. It's my opinion that this recommendation is inconsistent with a number of goals of the plan including housing affordability and housing diversity. Additionally, page 39 of the draft plan (Summary of Key Themes and Takeaways) includes: "A Balanced Approach: Participants called for a balanced approach between development and preserving what makes Ann Arbor a great place to live. While there was general agreement that increased density is necessary to achieve the city's goals for more housing, more walkable (rather than car-dependent) neighborhoods and preserved open space, many also emphasized the need to ensure community amenities, green spaces, historic districts and the scale of new development is considered." It's my opinion that the recommendation for the Transition District along Miller Road and in the Kerrytown neighborhood (north of Kingsley) is inconsistent with these of goals of the plan.

Thanks and best wishes.

Jeff Kahan