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City of Ann Arbor's

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

2050

CITY OF ANN ARBOR
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City Council and Planning Commission Resolutions

All resolutions by City Council and the Planning Commission to be included in future iterations of this plan.

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Acknowledgments

The acknowledgments page will be further refined in future iterations of this plan.

City Council

- Christopher Taylor - Mayor
- Lisa Disch - Ward 1
- Cynthia Harrison - Ward 1
- Jon Mallek- Ward 2
- Chris Watson - Ward 2
- Travis Radina - Ward 3
- Ayesha Ghazi Edwin - Ward 3
- Jen Eyer - Ward 4
- Dharma Akmon - Ward 4
- Erica Briggs - Ward 5
- Jenn Cornell - Ward 5

City Planning Commission

- Donnell Wyche - Chair
- Ellie Abrons - Vice Chair
- Sara Hammerschmidt - Secretary
- Lisa Disch - City Council Representative
- Daniel Adams
- Wonwoo Lee - former Chair
- Sarah Mills
- Richard Norton
- Julie Weatherbee

Steering Committee

- Sandy Aldrich
- Ben Connor Barrie
- Rebecca Barrington
- Dandan Chen
- Commissioner Sadira Clarke
- Nolan Earl
- Commissioner Sara Hammerschmidt
- Bea Kaskie
- Vanessa Punal
- Wendy Rampson-Gage
- ChiTuyen Richmond
- Kiera Saltz
- Mark Scerbo
- Yasien Taher
- Wendy Ann Woods
- Commissioner Donnell Wyche

Community Members

Thank you to all the community members who participated in the Comprehensive Plan process. Your input, ideas, and continued engagement have been invaluable in shaping a shared vision for the future of Ann Arbor.

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Executive Summary

If you're unfamiliar with what a Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Comp Plan) is, it's probably because cities typically only go through this process every 10 to 20 years. Ann Arbor's last land use "element" was adopted in 2009. The world is different today than the early aughts. Our land use strategies should be, too.

The world, the U.S., and Michigan are urbanizing. As a city, it is not a question of whether we grow or not, but how. A Comp Plan is an examination of how to manage that growth within our city limits. It is an inventory of our existing city plans, demographic and economic changes, development patterns, community input, municipal systems, and values. With that, a visionary document is created that outlines how Ann Arbor will accommodate and coordinate residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational uses to make the city more affordable, sustainable, equitable, and dynamic for 2050.

Ann Arbor Snapshot

- The city's population is growing, aging, and diversifying. This leads to many divergent views when visioning for 2050. (See "Population Trends", Page 14)
- Like much of the nation, renters and prospective homeowners are experiencing the impacts of increasing housing challenges (lack of supply and variety of housing options) through an expensive and limited housing stock. (See Housing Appendix)
- Property taxes are among the highest in the state, contributing to the housing crisis. (See "Tax Revenue and the Economy", Page 21)
- The lack of housing options means many workers must commute into town. Projected employment growth rates would make increased commutes unsustainable as the city aims to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 50%. (See "Commuting Patterns", Page 19)
- The university is growing physically and by student enrollment. The state constitution exempts the university from paying property tax, which creates land use tensions and city revenue impediments with the city's largest landowner. (See "Tax Revenue and the Economy", Page 21)
- Commercial space has very low vacancy rates, making it difficult to afford and operate a storefront or business. (See "Retail Characteristics", Page 76)
- Without the option to grow out, the city must grow up and look for infill development opportunities. This can create conflict in established neighborhoods. (See "Housing Development", Page 52)
- Parkland and natural features are cherished features of a high quality of life. Their preservation must be balanced with growth. (See "Resilience and Natural Features", Page 85)
- Walkability, bikeability, and public transit are important components that bring about mutually beneficial outcomes when coordinated with land use. (See "Transportation", Page 92)
- The city recognizes that we are in a climate crisis and that resilience planning is an essential part of land use planning. (See "Resilience and Natural Features", Page 86)
- Some utility infrastructure is nearing capacity. Growth will require long-range infrastructure planning and investment to ensure quality levels of service. (See "Infrastructure", Page 90)

Goals, Strategies, and Future Land Use

Housing and Neighborhoods

To address the housing shortage, greater density is called for citywide, with an emphasis on promoting "missing middle" housing with universal design. The intent is to increase and diversify housing supply to create more options at different price points for households of different ages, incomes, and abilities in all neighborhoods, corridors, and hubs. The goals recognize a greater need for income-eligible housing and the need to protect lower-valued market rate housing to mitigate displacement of vulnerable households. On the neighborhood-level, access to parkland, quality natural areas, and daily goods and services are a priority. Bringing destinations closer to residences encourages walking and biking, and more dynamic neighborhoods.

Economy and Opportunity

The Comp Plan embraces a diversified economic profile. To start, it notes that the city can take advantage of University of Michigan investments in start-ups by creating mechanisms for them to stay in Ann Arbor as they scale up. To align with sustainability goals, the plan makes room for businesses related to an emerging economy from the A²ZERO Plan: the circular economy. This would support businesses like reuse centers that help to reduce consumption and waste. Other goals take on the conversion of auto-centric shopping centers to enable more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use, "mini downtowns." In addition to land use, financial strategies that support local entrepreneurs through training, workforce development, and technical assistance are described.

Infrastructure and Services

These strategies include social and physical infrastructure for improved resilience in the face of major stressors. These goals support programming for neighborhood connection and resilience hubs to help residents when in need. Transportation infrastructure is a priority as it goes hand in hand with land use planning. Increased density along TheRide's bus service and transit hubs, along with improved nonmotorized infrastructure, improve public safety. There is continued support for strategies that give households options in how they travel, particularly a shift from motorized to nonmotorized modes. Utility infrastructure planning is happening concurrently to this process – while the city's water and sanitary systems are constrained, the city can use that information to invest in upgrades that achieve the land use vision.

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source: City of Ann Arbor

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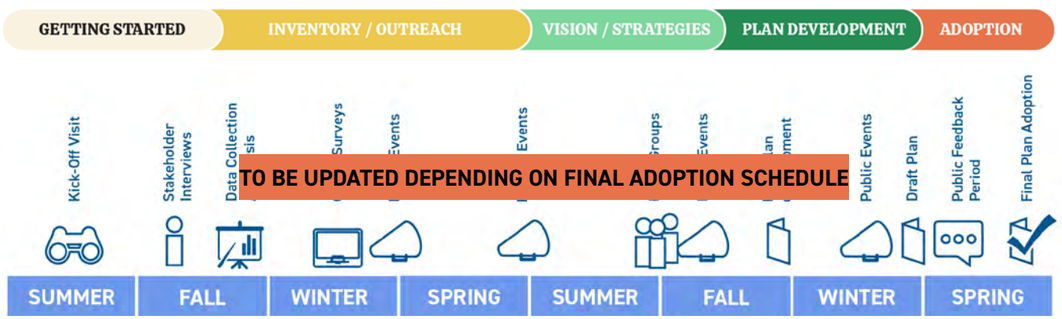
About the Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Planning Commission and the City Council, is a document that sets out the city's future vision and priorities, guiding its development for decades. The plan includes decisions on land use, policy changes and priorities for public projects over the next 25 years, taking us to 2050.

The Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan was developed over a two-year period, which included research on existing conditions, data collection, and community engagement. These activities informed the development of a collective vision and strategies that would guide the plan's creation.



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Why is it important? What can the Comprehensive Plan do?

It ensures that land use and development decisions are **guided by both data and shared community values**.

It can help **balance competing interests and determine how best to allocate and leverage resources**.

What are its limitations? What can't the Comprehensive Plan do?

It is not a law, and its adoption does not change any laws, regulations, or requirements that apply to the physical development of the city. Rather, it provides strategic direction on how regulations should evolve to achieve our goals.

It is not set in stone, but a living document that is revisited and adjusted as needed. The city will regularly assess progress and determine if, how, and when updates are necessary to respond to emerging trends and challenges. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that this review occur at least every five years following the plan's adoption.

It is not a cure-all. While it is comprehensive in name and scope, many other factors influence change in the city, such as federal and state policies, private ownership, market forces, financing, business trends, among others.

How does the city influence development?

The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document. Future Land Use is aspirational and provides a vision.
What it does: plans for growth and development through land use and infrastructure, providing guidance for the unified development code and public investment.

The Unified Development Code is a regulatory ordinance, a legal framework for implementing land use vision.
What it does: controls height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises; zoning districts relate to land use categories but are not synonymous.

Significant public investment in infrastructure will also be required. Water, sanitary sewers, stormwater, electrical transmission, public safety, public transit, etc. and the staffing required to accommodate growth.

**Changes to the UDC and infrastructure are outside the scope of this plan*

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About the Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan was not developed in a vacuum. It was guided by a Steering Committee of community stakeholders who provided input on key issues and analysis, shaped the engagement process, identified potential partnerships to implement the plan's ideas, and ultimately helped to shape the vision and plan with the Planning Commission.

Two important steps in the process are the plan's adoption and implementation. The former grants the plan official status and allows city resources to be allocated, while the latter identifies leading agencies, stakeholders, and organizations to turn the plan's strategies into action.

We plan so as to create an orderly development of the city that is coordinated with available and necessary infrastructure and services. This plan is a living document that will continue to reflect best practices and ever-evolving community needs. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states that at least every five years, a municipality shall review its plan to determine if it needs to be amended.

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Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan Resolution

City Council identified the following as key components to include in the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Carefully consider and implement those portions of the A²ZERO Living Carbon Neutrality Plan applicable to land use and development activity in the city.
2. In the context of a largely developed city, make recommendations for adding new homes and densification in single-family zoned areas, and other areas and zoning districts.
3. Develop recommendations and policies that promote fewer zoning districts or categories, that contain more flexibility for re-use and adaptability over time.
4. A proposed land use framework that seeks to emphasize values over specified land use limitations where possible.
5. Recommendations and policies that undo and/or seek to repair past land use policies and regulations that resulted in exclusion of people based on race, income or other characteristics and other inequities.

Past Plans

In an effort to streamline and simplify, the updated Comprehensive Plan will replace five existing plans into one unified document.

- **2004** Natural Features Master Plan
- **2009** Ann Arbor Land Use Plan
- **2009** Ann Arbor Downtown Plan
- **2013** Ann Arbor Sustainability Framework
- **2013** S State Street Corridor Plan

The Comprehensive Plan will incorporate three existing plans:

- **2017** Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan
- **2021** Ann Arbor Moving Together Towards Vision Zero (Moving Together)
- **2023-2027** Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan

The Comprehensive Plan aligns with these existing plans:

- **2020** A²ZERO - Ann Arbor's Living Carbon Neutrality Plan
- **2022** TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan
- **2024** A New Approach to Economic Development

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Plans to Incorporate and Align With

Summary of major themes from city plans developed by the consultant team .

Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Plan (2017)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Continuity: Minimize Stops And Breaks
- Safety: Prioritize Off-Street Alignment
- Accessibility: Serve Users Of All Abilities
- Connectivity: Access Points And Direct Links
- Sustainable: Stormwater Management
- Transformative: Promote Economic Investment, Tourism, And Community Identity

A² ZERO Ann Arbor's Carbon Neutrality Plan (2020)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Carbon Neutrality By 2030
- Equity: Community-Led, Inclusive, Targeted
- Sustainability: Adaptable And Iterative
- Transparency: Failure-Positive, Accessible
- All-Encompassing: Public Health, Resiliency, Economy, Biodiversity

Ann Arbor Moving Together Towards Vision Zero (2021)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Safety And Accessibility For All
- Healthy People & Sustainable Places
- Mobility And Regional Connectivity
- Vision Zero: Zero Traffic Deaths Or Serious Injuries
- Carbon Neutrality
- Engaging With Underrepresented Voices

TheRide 2045 Long-term Range Plan (2022)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Increase Social Equity, Access To Jobs, Education, And Housing
- Help The Environment And Reduce Air Pollution
- Support Existing And New Businesses
- Build A Robust Public Transportation System That Adapts To The Area's Evolving Needs, Environment, And Quality Of Life.
- Provide High Quality Service And User Experience.

A New Approach to Economic Development (2024)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Prioritize Housing Development
- Acquisition Of Real Property
- Protection Of Tax Base
- Sustainable Built Environment

Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (2023-2027)

MAJOR THEMES:
- Exceptional User Experience
- Diverse, Equitable, & Inclusive Park System
- Comprehensive, Distinctive, & Innovative Park System
- Financially Sustainable
- Environmental Stewardship
- Protection Of Natural Resources

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A History of Ann Arbor and its Development

The City of Ann Arbor was founded in 1824 and incorporated as a city in 1851. After an unsuccessful bid to become the state capital, city leaders successfully persuaded the University of Michigan to relocate from Detroit to Ann Arbor in 1837. This move set the city on a trajectory of growth, shaping it into the thriving hub for living, learning, and business that it is today.

The city's growth can be broadly divided into four distinct eras:

01 Indigenous History

The first people to inhabit and shape the landscape of present-day Ann Arbor were the Anishinaabe, including the Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi tribes, as well as the Fox, Wyandot and Sauk peoples. These communities lived, traveled and traded along trails that followed natural features—many of which later influenced Ann Arbor's modern roadways and park system.

Between 1807 and 1855, a series of treaties between the United States and various Tribal Nations resulted in tribes ceding most of their land in Michigan, including Ann Arbor, for minimal compensation. Many Indigenous people were then forcibly removed to reservations. This displacement paved the way for significant settler expansion in the early 19th century.[1]

02 Founding & Formative Years (1824-1939)

Ann Arbor as a city began taking shape during this period with the original land platting, the relocation of the University of Michigan from Detroit to Ann Arbor and the introduction of policies and infrastructure that laid the foundation for future growth. The city's early development was concentrated around the Huron River, Downtown, and Central Campus.

03 Growth & Automobile Era (1940-1979)

This era was marked by explosive postwar expansion, major infrastructure realignments and an eventual shift from growth to preservation. The city's rapid development and urban renewal policies led to a backlash, resulting in efforts to protect the built environment in its existing form—a trend that would shape Ann Arbor's next phase.

04 Urban Consolidation & Policy Shifts (1980-Today)

This era marked the buildout of the city's last remaining greenfield sites at its edges, shifting the focus toward infill development within existing urban area, particularly downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. It also reflected a changing mindset around infrastructure: instead of prioritizing large-scale projects like new highways, the city began reimagining existing systems, such as adding bike lanes to established streets. Additionally, zoning changes laid the foundation for a new chapter in Ann Arbor's evolution.

1 *Michigan History Center, Michiganology.org*

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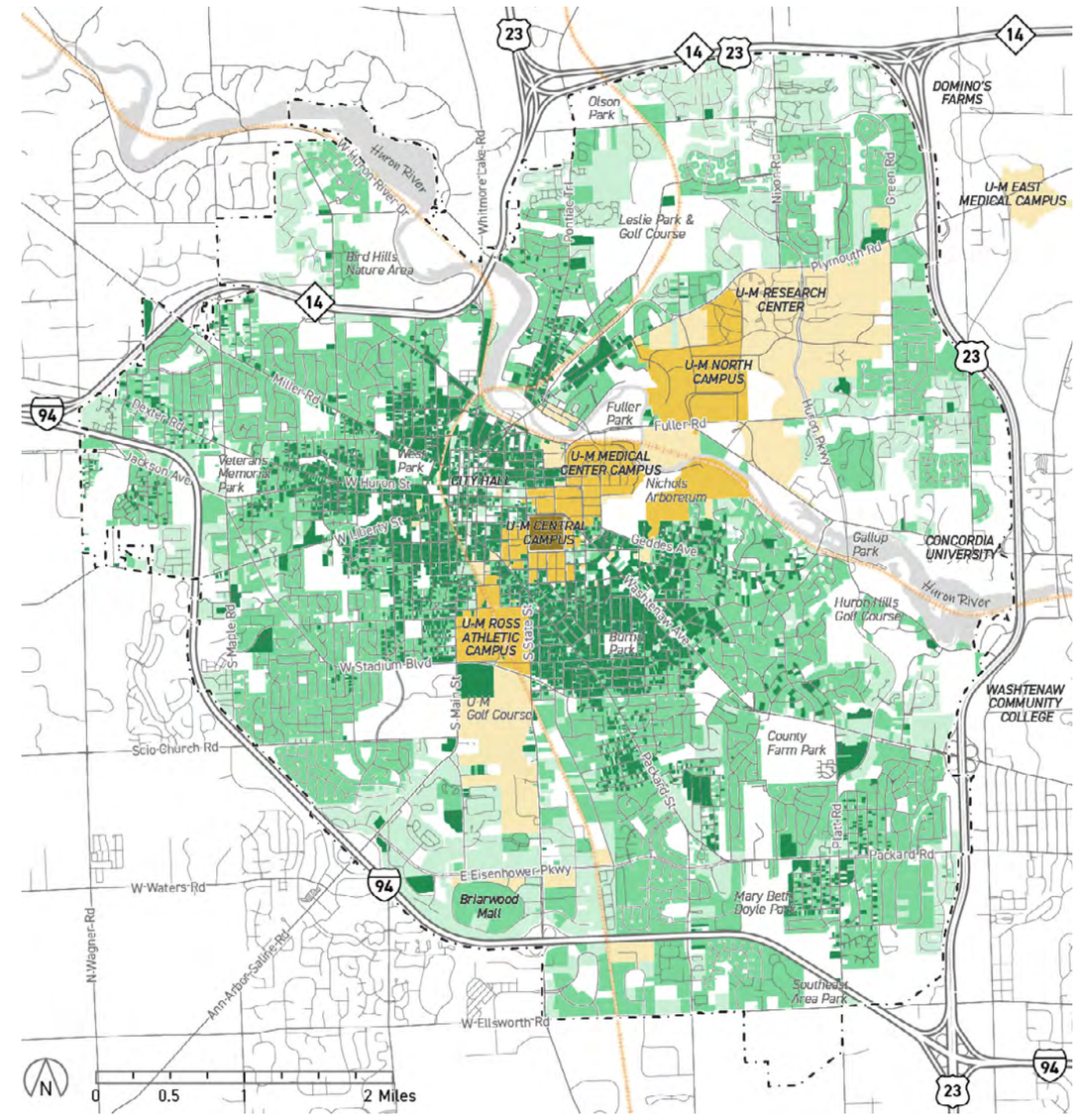

Map
Ann Arbor's Growth Over Time

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, City of Ann Arbor - Assessors data, 1874 Map of Ann Arbor, 1965 Map of Ann Arbor, 2023 Map of Ann Arbor

Founding & Formative Years
1824-1939
- *Properties (Built before 1940)*
- *U-M Campus (As of 1874 Map of Ann Arbor)*

Growth & Automobile Era
1940-1979
- *Properties (Built 1940-1979)*
- *U-M Campus (As of 1965 Map of Ann Arbor)*

Urban Consolidation & Policy Shifts
1980-Today
- *Properties (Built 1980-Today)*
- *U-M Campus (As of 2023 Assessors Ownership Data)*

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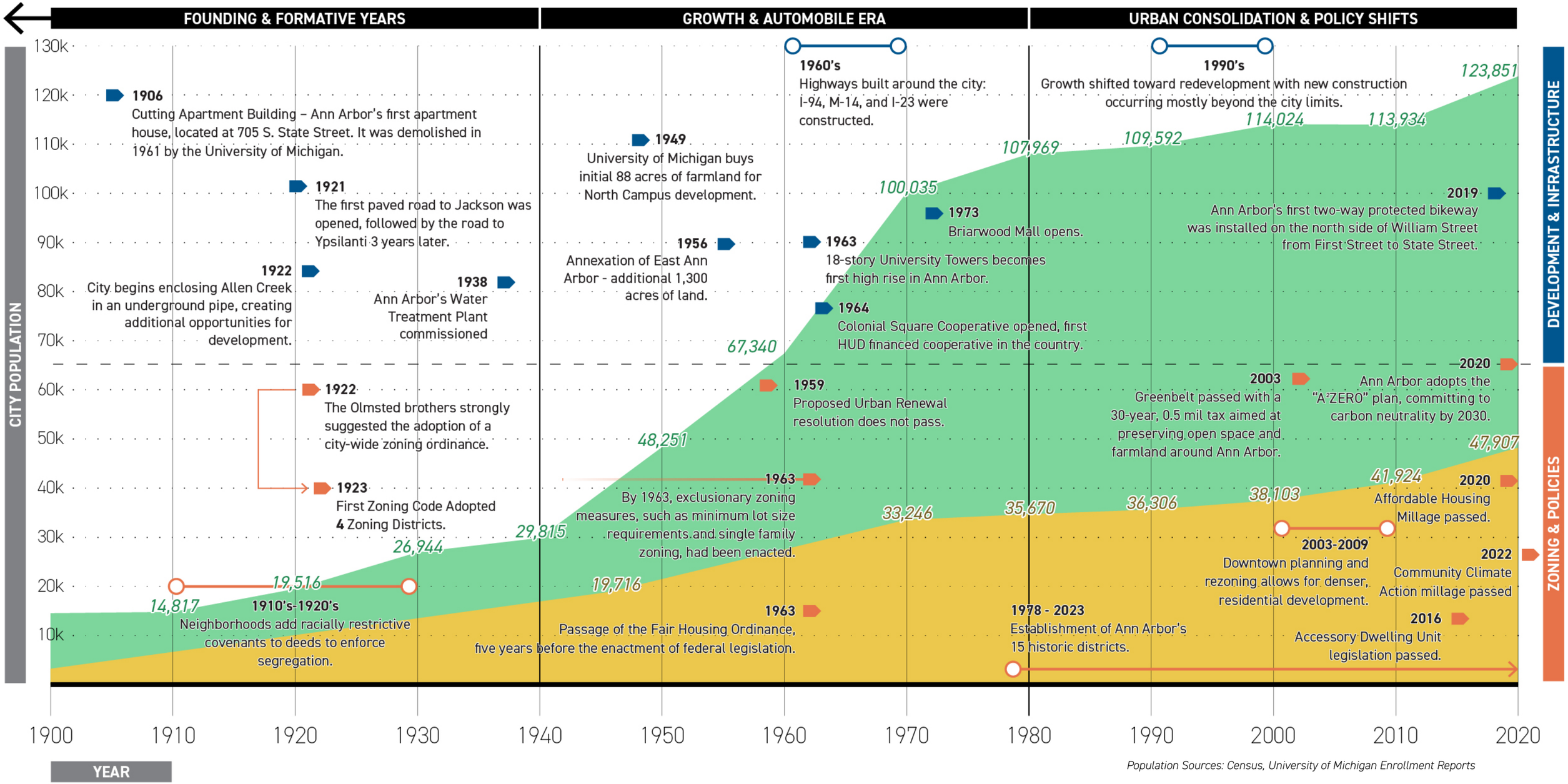
Major Events That Impacted Ann Arbor's Development in Relation to the City's Population Growth

This chart presents a selection of policies and developments that had a lasting impact on shaping Ann Arbor, though it is not an exhaustive list of all influential factors.

University of Michigan Population
Total City Population



Population Sources: Census, University of Michigan Enrollment Reports

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Additional Detail On The Major Events That Impacted Ann Arbor's Development

Founding & Formative Years
(1824-1939)

Foundations are set for the city and university:

1824: John Allen and Elisha Rumsey laid out the original plot of land.

1837: University of Michigan opened in Ann Arbor, relocating from Detroit.

1839-1878: Major railroads connect Ann Arbor to Detroit, Chicago, & Toledo.

1899-1919: U-M population triples and cements its role as the dominant driver of the economy.

1906: Ann Arbor's first apartment building - Cutting Apartment Building is built.

New policies set the stage for future growth (& exclusion):

1910's-1920's: Neighborhoods add racially restrictive covenants to deeds to enforce segregation.

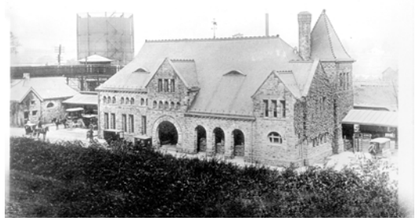
1921: The first paved road to Jackson was opened, followed by the road to Ypsilanti 3 years later.

1922: Olmsted brothers created a park plan and strongly suggested the adoption of a city-wide zoning ordinance.

1922: City begins enclosing Allen Creek in an underground pipe, creating additional opportunities for development.

1923: Ann Arbor's first zoning ordinance was adopted with 4 districts.

1938: Ann Arbor's Water Treatment Plant commissioned.

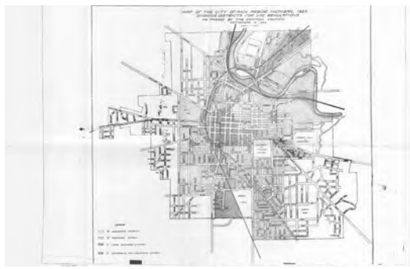


Left: Michigan Central Station - 1886

source: Ann Arbor District Library

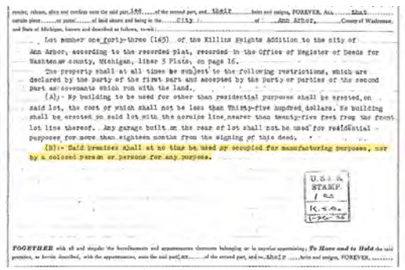
Left: Cutting Apartment Building - 1906

source: Ann Arbor District Library



Left: Ann Arbors first zoning map - 1923

source: University of Michigan Library



Left: Killins Subdivision, Restrictive Covenant - 1925

source: Justice InDeed

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Growth & Automobile Era (1940-1979)

The city moves beyond downtown:

1952: Construction begins on U-M North Campus.

1956: East Ann Arbor was annexed, adding 1,300 acres to the city.

By 1963: Exclusionary zoning measures, such as minimum lot size requirements and single family zoning, had been enacted.

1960s: Highways built around the city.

1961: Cutting Apartment Building demolished by the University of Michigan for parking.

1964: Colonial Square Cooperative opened, first HUD financed cooperative in the country.

1973: Briarwood mall opens.

Urban renewal fails but impact occurs:

1959: Proposed Urban Renewal resolution does not pass.

1970s: Packard-Beakes bypass rejected - Ann Arbor's Black community still experienced significant displacement impacts.

1978: Ann Arbor passes a historic preservation ordinance, creating its first historic district in the Old West Side.

source: University of Michigan

source: Ann Arbor District Library

source: Ann Arbor District Library

Top Left: UM North Campus Model, 1952

Top Right: M14 construction, 1965

Left: Proposed Packard-Beakes bypass route, 1972

Below: Newly built Briarwood Mall, 1974

source: University of Michigan Library

Urban Consolidation & Policy Shifts (1980-Today)

The city looks inward, shifting development focus to the core:

Gentrification displaces residents from historically Black neighborhoods - See page 24 for more detail.

1982: Downtown Development Authority (DDA) created.

2003: Greenbelt passed, aimed at preserving open space and farmland around Ann Arbor.

2003-2009: Downtown updates zoning and design guidelines, making way for denser, residential development.

Rethinking of infrastructure & how the city develops:

2016: Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance adopted.

2019: Ann Arbor's first two-way protected bikeway was installed on the north side of William St. from First St. to State St.

2020: Ann Arbor adopts the "A²ZERO" plan, committing to carbon neutrality by 2030.

2021: New Transit Corridor (TC1) zoning district created to add density outside of downtown.

2022: Parking minimums removed across the city.

Left: Updated zoning (2003-2009) ushers in a new era of hi-rise development downtown.

Below: William Street bikeway.

source: Ann Arbor News

source: Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority

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Ann Arbor Today

Population Trends

Ann Arbor's population growth over the last few decades has plateaued as Washtenaw County picks up demand for housing.

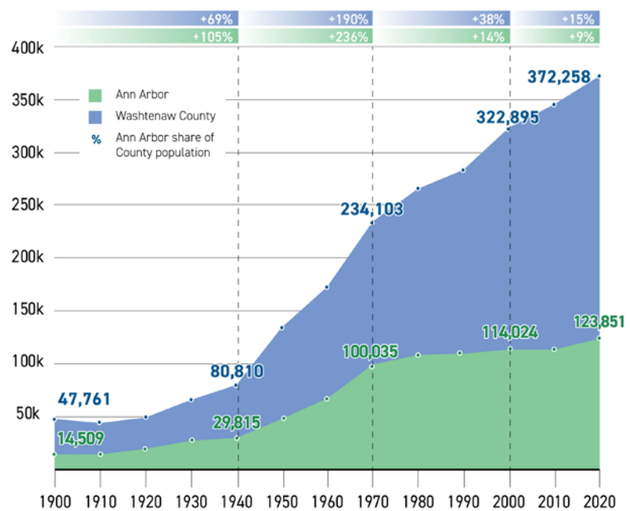
Since the 1970s, Ann Arbor's population growth has slowed, even as the surrounding Washtenaw County continued to expand significantly. This trend is closely correlated with and was caused by the depletion of the city's inventory of previously undeveloped land and the impact of legal constraints on new housing production within city limits. Ann Arbor grew 24% between 1970 and 2020 compared to Washtenaw County that grew by 59% during the same period. Since 1970, Ann Arbor's share of the Washtenaw County population has declined every decade to a low of 33% in 2020.[1]

Most of the city's growth since the 1970s can be attributed to the growth in the student population. Between 1970 and 2020, incoming University of Michigan students accounted for 62% of the city's population growth, making up 14,661 of the total 23,816 increase.[2] In recent years the University's enrollment has continued to rise, reaching a record enrollment in 2024. This trend tracks with the population growth by age group from 2000-2020 which shows that the student-aged group has grown 17%.[3]

1 U.S. Census 1920-2020
2 University of Michigan Enrollment Reports
3 U.S. Census 2000-2020

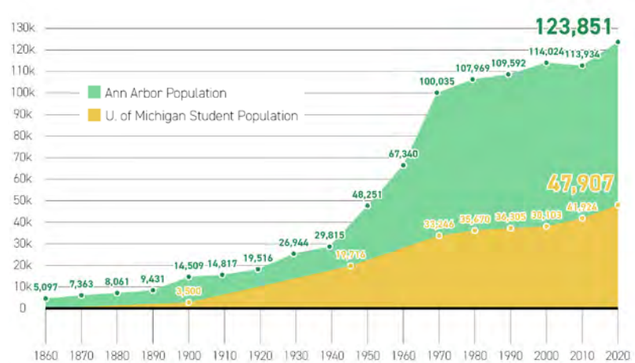
Population trend, Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County

source: U.S. Census 1920-2020, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) 2050 Forecasts



Population trend, Ann Arbor and University of Michigan

source: U.S. Census 1860-2020, University of Michigan Enrollment Reports

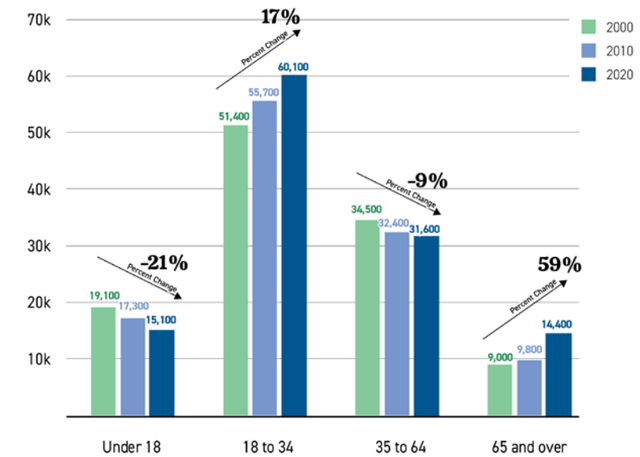


In general, the population is aging and family-aged residents (both under 18 and 35-64 cohorts) are decreasing. Between 2000 and 2020, the population age 65 and over increased 59%, while the population 35-64 decreased by 9% and the population under 18 decreased by 21%.[4] Family households (defined as consisting of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption) are a smaller share of Ann Arbor's households (43% of all households) compared with Washtenaw County (56% of all households).[5]

4 U.S. Census 2000-2020
5 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data, 2018-2022

Age trend

source: U.S. Census, 2000-2020



Housing Trends

Ann Arbor's pace of new construction has slowed in recent decades and demand for new housing has outpaced supply, impacting affordability.[1] The flattening population growth is a symptom of a lacking housing supply; people cannot move here unless there are units to house them.

Ann Arbor's housing market has struggled to keep pace with growing demand for decades, creating affordability challenges and straining sustainability efforts. The pace of housing construction has slowed in recent decades, according to an analysis of both census data and the city's Assessor's Office data. Housing development is also shifting from single family housing to apartment building construction. An analysis of the city's Assessor's Office data shows that the peak of construction of all structures (commercial and residential) occurred between 1940-1969, and that the type of construction has shifted since 2000 from mostly single family development to commercial development (which includes larger multifamily developments of 5 or more units). With regard to housing units, census data shows a similar peak occurring in the 1960s with decreases in subsequent decades (see charts on p. 16). Short term rental uses have also reduced permanent resident housing opportunities in certain neighborhoods.

1 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.

Ann Arbor's current zoning ordinance, the UDC, has 3 different districts:
Residential Districts: **53.2%** of total area
Mixed Use Districts: **4.1%** of total area
Non Residential & Special Purpose Districts: **42.7%**

On their own, all the single family districts (R1) account for **34.8%** of parcel land area

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Ann Arbor has developed over time as most cities have by building on undeveloped land within city limits, but as such land has diminished, construction has slowed significantly. This trend has been incrementally accelerated by the city's greenbelt millage, which places constraints on some surrounding properties. At the same time, rising development costs have made new projects increasingly expensive or unfeasible. This imbalance between supply and demand has put cost burdens on many residents, changed the composition of the city's households (with fewer family households than the county), and priced potential residents out of the city,[2] meaning many people commute in and out of the city for work, services or recreation.

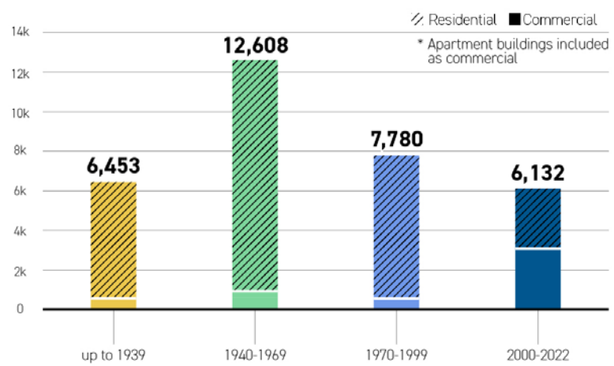
Ann Arbor residents are more cost-burdened than the region (cost-burdened households are defined as spending over 30% of their income on housing costs): 38% of owner-occupied households and 53% of renter-occupied households are cost-burdened. However, 51% of the cost-burdened renters are in the student-aged cohort, householders 15 to 24 year old.[3]

2 In the 2024 Comprehensive Plan survey, 55% of people who do not live in Ann Arbor would like to, but cost was cited as a major factor

3 ACS 5-year estimates, 2018-2022

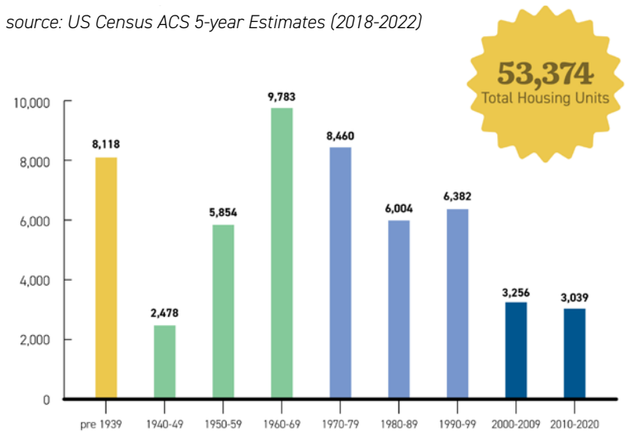
Year structure built by use (pre-1939 - 2022)

source: City of Ann Arbor Assessor's Office



Number of housing units by year built (pre 1939 - 2020)

source: US Census ACS 5-year Estimates (2018-2022)



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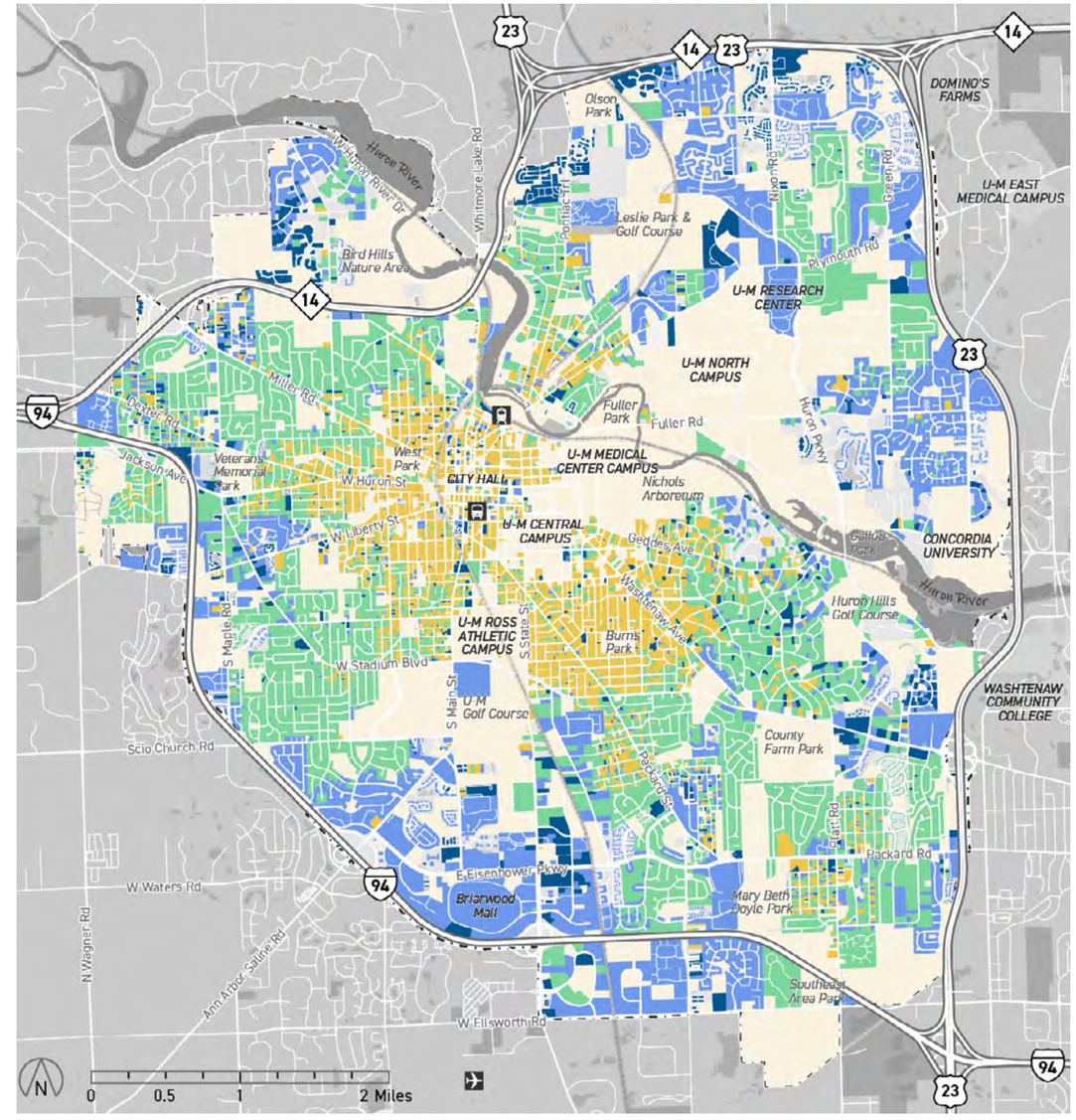

Map

Year Structure Built - By Property

- *N/A (includes tax exempt)*
- *Up to 1939*
- *1940-1969*
- *1970-1999*
- *2000-2022*

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS, City of Ann Arbor Assessor's Office

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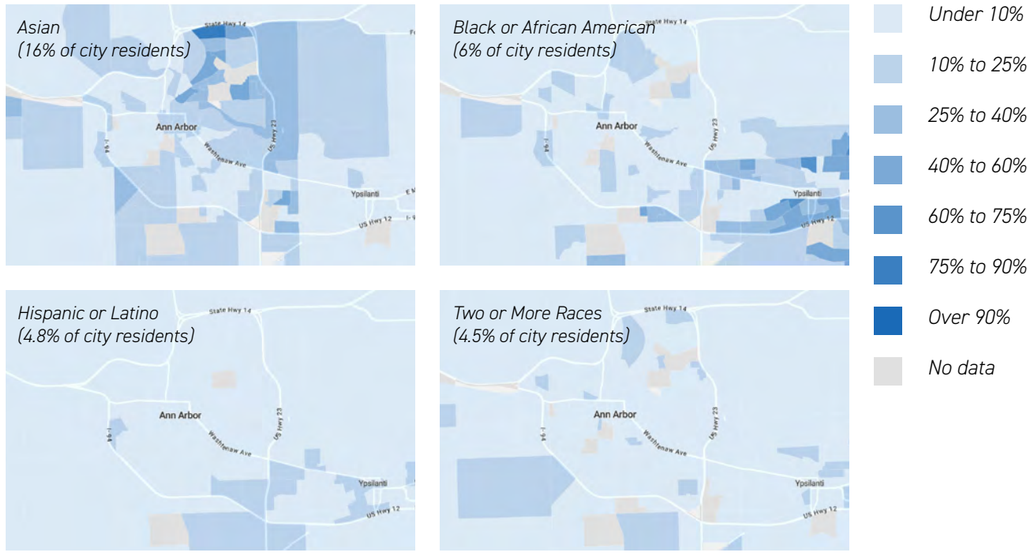
Population by Race or Ethnicity

source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2018-2022 via Social Explorer



Proximity to Amenities

Access to essential destinations is crucial for quality of life, but people of color are more likely to reside in neighborhoods with limited access to groceries, parks, and schools.

Retail is concentrated downtown, around anchor institutions and in auto-oriented shopping centers along corridors, but there are limited neighborhood-serving shops and services in many parts of the city. There are spatial inequities regarding who has access to walkable retail, particularly for residents without a car. Aside from downtown, most residents do not live within a 10-minute walk of commercial corridors and hubs. Parks are another key amenity. Ann Arbor boasts a strong park system, with a higher ratio of park acres to residents than comparably-sized cities. According to the Trust for Public Land, a vast majority of Ann Arborites (92%) live within a 10-minute walk of a park, compared to 55% in all U.S. urban cities and towns.[1] Nevertheless, not all parks are equal with regard to size and amenities, and some areas of the city have less park access.

1 *Trust for Public Land ParkServe*

Sustainability

Buildings in 2024 accounted for roughly two-thirds of community emissions, and transportation one-third.

Building emissions were split between direct emissions, mostly from fossil gas consumption, and electricity, from the fossil fuel origin of much of our purchased electricity.[2]

2 *https://analytics.a2gov.org/superset/dashboard/osi-performance-metrics/?standalone=2*

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Commuting Patterns

Ann Arbor residents and workers commute daily to access services and destinations, and while downtown areas are walkable and bikeable, cars are the dominant way people get around the city.

Many of Ann Arbor's vehicle miles traveled are by people going to work. Over half of Ann Arbor residents who work commute by car.[1] Additionally, a large number of workers who do not live in Ann Arbor, commute in. Based on 2021 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employment-Housing Dynamics (LEHD) data, there were 93,760 primary jobs in Ann Arbor. Only 18% of Ann Arbor employees live in the city, meaning 82% of the people who work in Ann Arbor commute in from elsewhere (over 76,000 people) and over half of them travel from more than 10 miles away.[2] Using 2019 LEHD employment figures (which are used in SEMCOG projections to account for pre-pandemic conditions), there were 109,697 people who work in Ann Arbor; 22% lived in Ann Arbor, while 78% commuted in from elsewhere.[3] In a 2018 survey of individuals commuting into Ann Arbor, a lack of affordable housing was '[t]he reason most often given for preferring to commute from a distance in spite of preferring a shorter commute.[4]

While the city's A²ZERO plan outlines a goal to cut vehicle miles traveled in half by 2030, achieving that goal depends on making it easier for residents to choose other ways to get around instead of driving. This could include making room for some of the commuters to live in the city and reduce their commutes. At the same time, investments in more efficient and connected transit will require increased density to support ridership, in accordance with TheRide's 2045 Long-Range Plan.

1 *ACS 5-year estimates, 2018-2022*
2 *U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, OnTheMap Application, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov - Primary Jobs 2021*
3 *U.S. Census Bureau LEHD data, OnTheMap Application, Primary Jobs 2019*
4 *https://www.getdowntown.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/GetDowntown%20Commuter-employee%20and%20Decision-Maker%20Report%2C%202018.pdf*

Beloved neighborhood commercial spaces, like Jefferson Market, are rare within Ann Arbor's residential fabric.

source: Current Magazine

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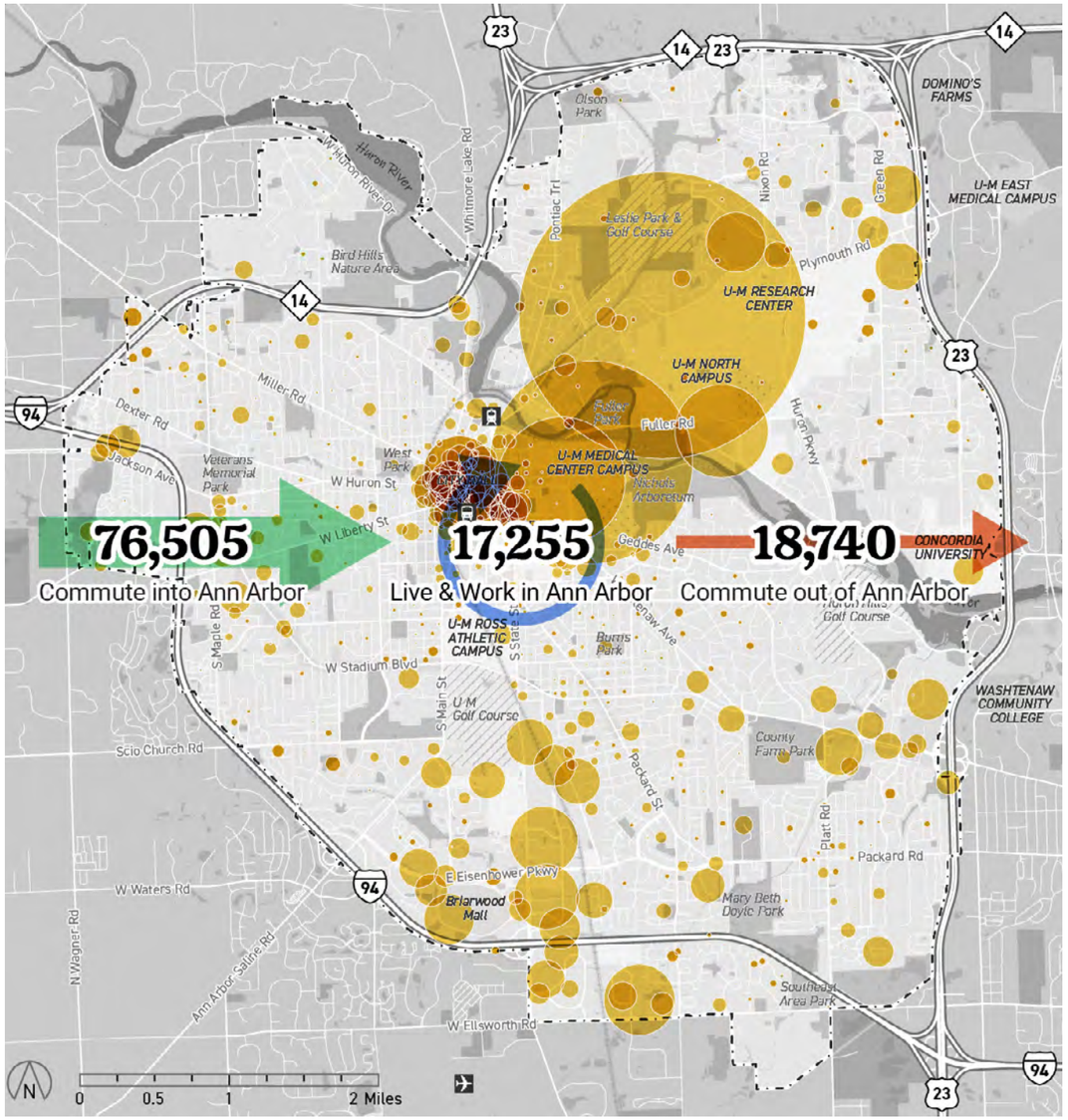
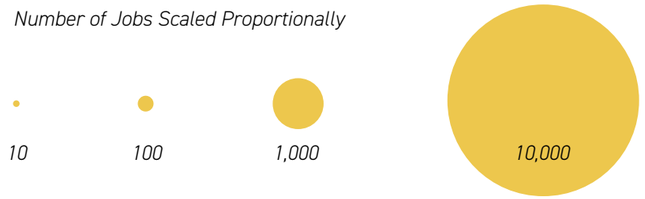


Map
All Primary Jobs - 2021

Number of Jobs Scaled Proportionally



source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS, Census LEHD - On The Map data - Primary Jobs 2021

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Tax Revenue and the Economy

Ann Arbor relies on property taxes generated from residential uses

Ann Arbor has a high property tax rate, but comparable with other cities of similar population in Michigan, and is heavily reliant on property taxes generated from residential uses. More than half of the city's budget (52%) is funded by property taxes.[1] Unlike cities such as Detroit, Lansing, and Grand Rapids, which have more diverse tax bases[2], the burden to support city services in Ann Arbor falls primarily on residential property taxpayers. Smaller scale residential properties (four units or fewer) generate 63% of property tax revenue. When broken down across all revenue sources, they represent the single largest share of the city's tax base at 33%. High property values and high property taxes contribute to an unaffordable housing stock. This combination is especially impactful on first time homebuyers trying to enter the market.

Large multifamily properties, classified as commercial by the city's Assessor's Office, make up 6% of the total tax base and 12% of property tax revenue.[3] From 2014 to 2023, residential taxable values were the primary driver of growth, contributing $1.5 billion of the $2.6 billion increase. However, commercial values (including large multifamily development) have grown at a faster rate, rising 67% over the same period compared to 47% for residential.[4]

1 *Michigan Community Financial Dashboard, Michigan Dept of Treasury, https://micommunityfinancials.michigan.gov*
2 *MI Community Financial Dashboard, https://micommunityfinancials.michigan.gov/*
3 *2023 CAFR, Ann Arbor Municipal Disclosure form downloaded from MSRB EMMA database*
4 *2023 CAFR, Washtenaw County Taxable Values report (various years)*

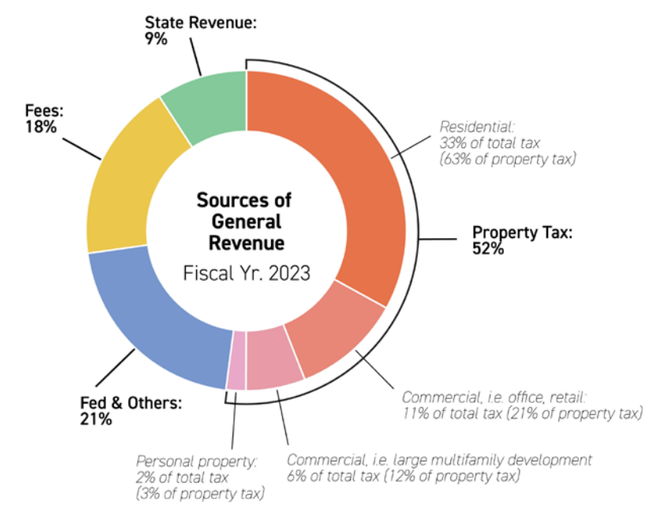
Ann Arbor's economy is heavily dependent on the university

Ann Arbor's economy is heavily dependent on the University of Michigan, the fourth most reliant region on anchor institutions in the country.[5] Anchor institutions (such as universities and hospitals) contribute 27% of employment-related economic activity in the Ann Arbor region, compared to just 9% nationwide.[6]

The city's ability to expand its tax base is limited because 42% of the land area in Ann Arbor is tax-exempt. Most of the city is already developed and less than 13% of the city's land is available for redevelopment under current regulations.[7] How Ann Arbor utilizes its land will be crucial in shaping its future and strengthening its financial health.

5 *Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Anchor Economy Dashboard - Anchor Economy Full Data Set, https://www.philadelphiafed.org/surveys-and-data/community-development-data/anchor-economy-dashboard*
6 *Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Economic Reliance on Anchor Institutions, May 2024*
7 *City of Ann Arbor's Assessor's Office*

Ann Arbor Budget Revenue



source: NP analysis 2023 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Ann Arbor Municipal Disclosure form downloaded from Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRF) EMMA database

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Identifying Sources of Demand

SEMCOG 2050 projections are based on historic trends that have been determined by policy decisions of the past that have constrained housing production.

Over the last 100 years (1920–2020), Ann Arbor's share of the Washtenaw County population has averaged 38%. After peaking at 43% in 1970, that share declined each decade to a low of 33% in 2020. This decline corresponds to the city's undeveloped land being largely built out, leading to reduced housing production. The SEMCOG population projections extend this trend to 2050, forecasting Ann Arbor's share to fall further to 32%, with a total population of 135,800. Had Ann Arbor maintained its historic average share of 38%, its population in 2020 would already have exceeded SEMCOG's projection for 2050. However, these projections do not reflect the actual demand for more housing in Ann Arbor. Instead, they implicitly assume that existing zoning constraints on new development will remain in place. At the same time, commuting projections from multiple sources, though varying in details, consistently show that the number of daily commuters into Ann Arbor will continue to be substantial. This further underscores the demand for housing opportunities within the city.

This plan, under the direction of the City Council, is undertaking an effort to remove some of the constraints on building new housing so that population is not constrained by our housing supply. The strategies in this plan present an opportunity for the city to have influence to shape these trends in the coming decades.

Ann Arbor population as a share of Washtenaw County population, 1920-2020 [1]

source: U.S. Census, 1920-2020

	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Washtenaw County	49,520	65,530	80,810	134,606	172,440	234,103	264,740	282,937	322,895	344,791	372,258
Ann Arbor	19,516	26,944	29,815	48,251	67,340	100,035	107,969	109,592	114,024	113,934	123,851
Ann Arbor % of County Population	39%	41%	37%	36%	39%	43%	41%	39%	35%	33%	33%
Potential Ann Arbor Population if constant 40% of Washtenaw County	19,808	26,212	32,324	53,842	68,976	93,641	105,896	113,175	129,158	137,916	148,903

Ann Arbor population as a share of Washtenaw County population, projected 2030-2050

source: SEMCOG 2050 Forecast

	2030	2040	2050
Washtenaw County	384,851	409,072	421,412
Ann Arbor	128,646	134,448	135,800
Ann Arbor % of County Population	33%	33%	32%
Potential Ann Arbor Population if constant 40% of Washtenaw County	153,940	163,629	168,565

1 SEMCOG's regional and county forecasts are based on extensive analysis of Southeast Michigan's competitiveness relative to other regions throughout the country, given each region's unique socio-economic characteristics. SEMCOG's community forecasts are informed by small area demographic and economic trends, and local data collected from communities, including adopted land use policies and future planned development projects. As such, SEMCOG's forecast reflects both local development priorities and broader trends shaping Southeast Michigan's economic and demographic growth.

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Ann Arbor is a job center that is projected to grow, but commuting patterns are unsustainable.

SEMCOG projections for 2050 employment use 2019 for the base year as 2020 employment was artificially low due to the COVID recession. Using 2019 employment data to match SEMCOG's base year, 78% of Ann Arbor workers commuted into the city from elsewhere, which differs from the 2021 rate of 82% of Ann Arbor workers commuting into the city from elsewhere.[1] Using the SEMCOG 2050 employment projection of 154,545 jobs in Ann Arbor and a commute rate of 78-82% would mean over 120,000 workers would be commuting into the city.[2] A goal of this plan is to reduce the number of workers commuting into the city by making room for some of the commuters to live in the city in closer proximity to jobs and amenities.

Over the last decade, the University of Michigan has steadily increased enrollment.

The enrollment growth of the University of Michigan has created housing market pressure. Since 2015, the University of Michigan has added 9,208 students, averaging an additional 1,000 students per year.[3] A record number of applications were received for fall 2025. While the university is building a new residence hall on the former Elbel Field site, most students still must find housing off-campus.

Housing gaps outstrip housing production

The 2022 Michigan State Housing Development Authority Statewide Housing Plan identified a housing gap of 313 owner units and 2,262 renter units to meet 2030 goals, which would amount to a need for 322 units total per year in the years 2023-2030.[4] The Statewide Housing Plan targets simply apportion the state's five-year housing target--75,000 housing units—proportionally across Michigan cities and regions. These aspirational numbers do not attempt to quantify actual housing demand or needs in Ann Arbor and do not account for long-term shortfalls in local market rate housing construction. The DDA's 2020 Housing Needs Assessment for Downtown Ann Arbor provides a better indicator of the extent of Ann Arbor's housing shortage, which is acute. It identifies demand for 2,500-2,750 rental units between 2020-2025, which would amount to 417-458 units per year just downtown.[5] According to the city's certificate of occupancy data for the last 5 years, the 5-year average for housing production has been 520 units per year citywide. While this rate of housing production could cover the housing gap for downtown alone, it is not enough to cover the whole city. Downtowns typically absorb 30-40% of a city's housing so the housing gap citywide would be expected to be considerably higher than the 2022 Statewide Housing Plan. Furthermore, in preparing for growth, the city should take into consideration Ann Arbor's lag in share of county population, expected continued growth in jobs, and expected continued growth in University of Michigan enrollment.

Housing gaps

source: Michigan's Statewide Housing Plan, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 2022; Housing Needs Assessment: Downtown Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, 2020; City of Ann Arbor Certificate of Occupancy data

Statewide Housing Plan	
Citywide rental and owner units needed for 2030 target	2,575
Citywide rental and owner units needed per year	322
Downtown Housing Needs Assessment	
Downtown rental units needed (2020-2025)	2,500 - 2,750
Downtown rental units needed per year	417 - 458
Average citywide housing production per year (over last 5 years)	520

1 U.S. Census Bureau LEHD data, OnTheMap Application, Primary Jobs 2019 and 2021
2 SEMCOG 2050 Forecasts
3 University of Michigan Enrollment Reports
4 Michigan's Statewide Housing Plan, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 2022
5 Housing Needs Assessment: Downtown Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, 2020

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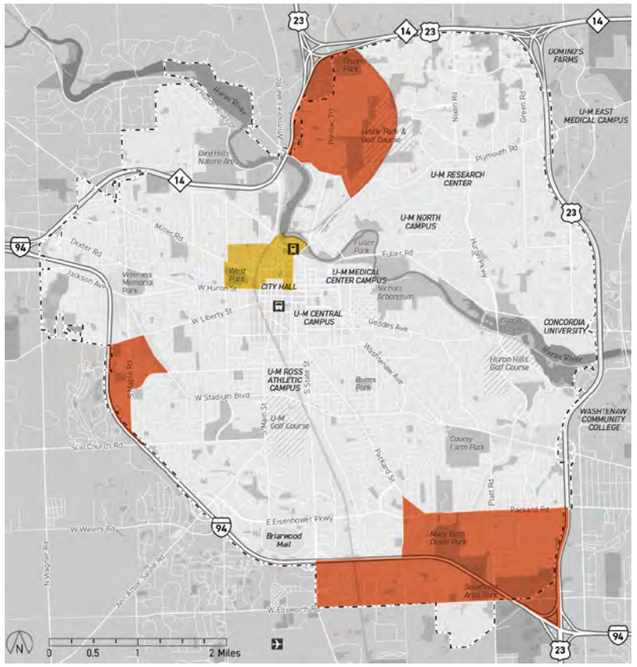
Positioning This Plan In History

As Ann Arbor enters a new era of growth and development, it is essential to position this plan within a historical context and learn from the past. The evolution of its historically Black neighborhoods serves as a microcosm for how various city policies have not only displaced communities but also reshaped the fabric of urban life—including zoning, housing affordability, social cohesion, and transportation infrastructure, and offers as a learning experience for a new path forward. Historically, Black residents were excluded from living in other parts of the city and were limited to the West Side, Old Fourth Ward, and Kerrytown (shown on the map to the right), parts of which were located near the city's few industrial sites such as a slaughterhouse and a junkyard.[1] Ongoing discrimination persisted through mechanisms such as restrictive covenants (until 1948),[2] realtor and mortgage lender bias,[3] and exclusionary zoning laws that codified single-family zoning and later policies that increased minimum lot sizes.[4] Today, few Black families remain in these neighborhoods, and the concentration of Black residents has shifted from the center to the periphery of the city.[5]



Census Tracts where Black residents account for 20% or more of the population.

1960
2020

source: Social Explorer, US Census 1960 Tracts Only, US Census 2020 - PL94, , MLive

The share of the Black population living in Ann Arbor's historically Black neighborhoods (Old West Side, Kerrytown, Old Fourth Ward) peaked at **45%** in 1970, but declined to **8%** by the 2020 census.

1 *Ann Arbor News, "Changes Urged in R4 Housing Study", (October 9, 1968). MLive, "Old neighborhood residents recall life in Ann Arbor in the 50's and 60's" (September 12, 2018).*
2 *Justice InDeed project.*
3 *Ann Arbor News, "City's blacks: still a long way to go", (January 27, 1980).*
4 *Ann Arbor Zoning code up to 1963*
5 *Decennial Census, Census Tract Level (1960-2020) - Ann Arbor News, "City's Black Neighborhoods Disappearing" (October 20, 1986).*

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Picture 01: Dunbar Community Center - 1951, Bentley Historical Library

Picture 02: Packard-Beakes Bypass - 1972, Ann Arbor Sun

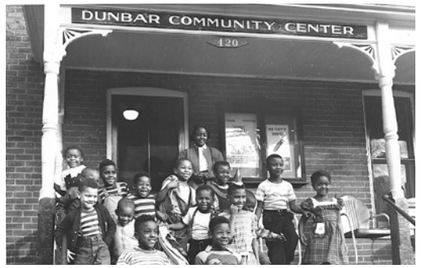
Picture 03: City's Black Neighborhood Disappearing -1986, Ann Arbor News

Picture 04: Delong's BBQ Closing - 2001, Ann Arbor News

Unlike in other cities where displacement is often attributed to redlining, large-scale urban renewal, or highway projects, Ann Arbor's experience stems from a series of smaller-scale events and policies that collectively produced similar adverse outcomes.

Key factors contributing to the disintegration of these Black neighborhoods include concentrated code enforcement in the 1960s that disproportionately affected Black homeowners and rising property taxes that forced many residents to sell homes they could no longer afford.[6] Urban Renewal initiatives—such as the Packard-Beakes bypass buyouts—displaced families in the name of proposed expansion,[7] while the closure of vital community institutions, like neighborhood schools, further disrupted social cohesion.[8] Ultimately gentrification,[9] the proximity to downtown, and increased property values priced out long-time residents.[10]

The passage of the City's Fair Housing Ordinance in 1963, approved five years before the federal law, marked the official end of formal segregation, theoretically opening up new opportunities for Black residents to live in a broader range of neighborhoods. However, many Black families were effectively pushed to the periphery of the city, where they lacked the walkable access to amenities and opportunities that central neighborhoods once provided. Consequently, families not only lost the chance to build generational wealth as these once-vibrant neighborhoods became among the most expensive in the city, but they also lost the close-knit community connections that proximity to downtown once fostered.



City Council's Iron-Triangle To Choke Black Community
Packard-Beakes Bypass Approved

City's black neighborhoods disappearing

DeLong's to close doors after 37 barbecue years

6 *Ann Arbor News, "City's Black Neighborhoods Disappearing" (October 20, 1986).*
7 *Ann Arbor Sun, "City Council's Iron-Triangle To Choke Black Community", (1972). MLive, "Old neighborhood residents recall life in Ann Arbor in the 50's and 60's", (September 12, 2018).*
8 *Ann Arbor District Library, 7 Cylinders Studio, "There Went the Neighborhood: the Closing of Jones School" documentary film (2022).*
9 *For definition see Glossary of Terms.*
10 *Ann Arbor News, "City's Black Neighborhoods Disappearing", (Oct. 20, 1986).*

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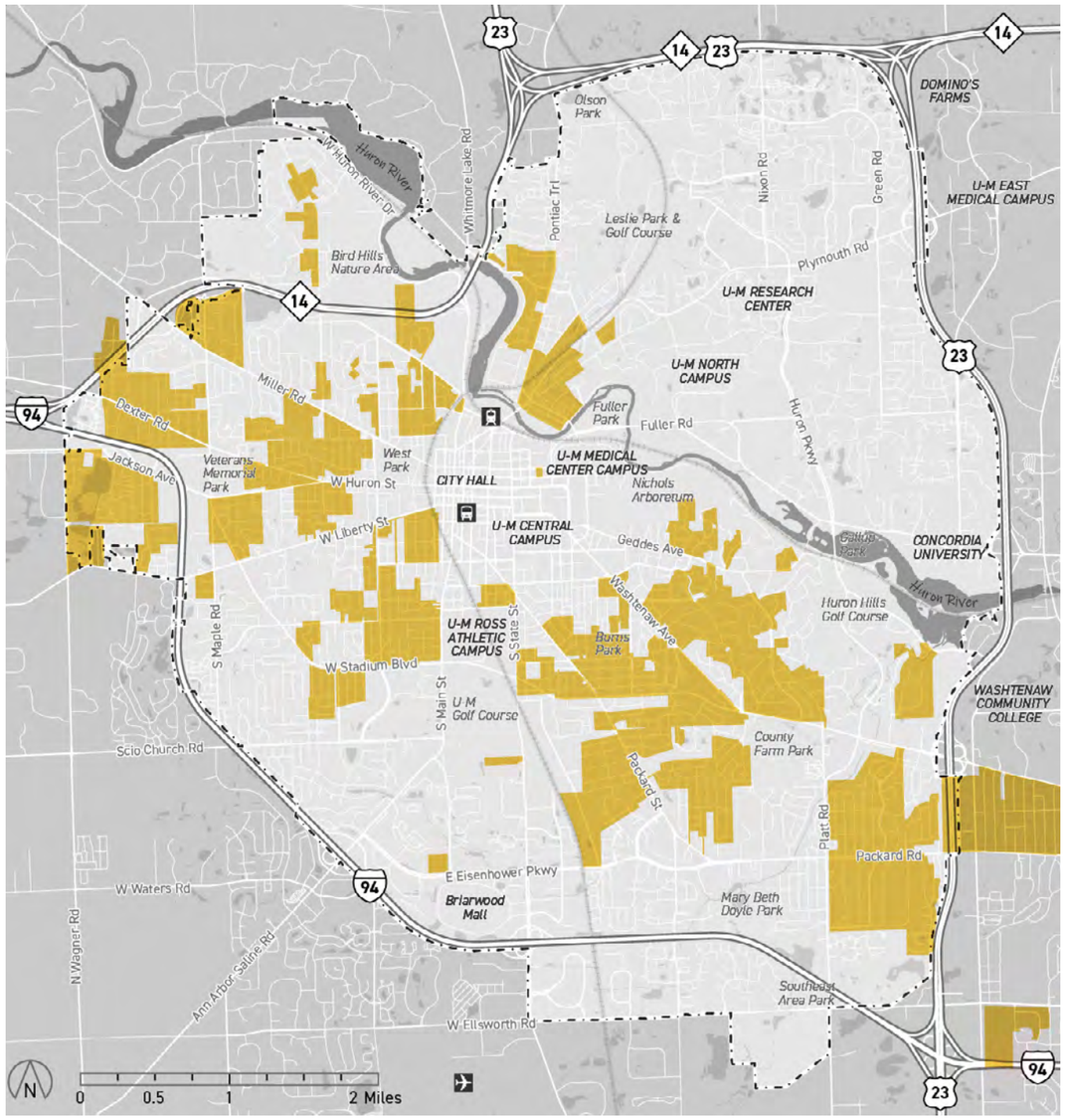

Map
Racially Restrictive Covenants

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Justice InDeed Project

Subdivisions Containing Racially Restrictive Covenants

This map shows subdivisions containing at least one property where Justice InDeed volunteers have identified a racially restrictive covenant. These provisions, which were used primarily in the first half of the 20th century, prohibited primarily Black, but also other individuals from living or purchasing certain properties based on their race, ethnicity, or religion. Our most updated, parcel-level map is available at our website: JusticeInDeedMI.org.

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What can we learn from this history? The city's move toward exclusionary zoning—most notably the widespread adoption of single-family zoning and increased minimum lot sizes—has driven up housing costs while failing to meet the diverse needs of residents. This shift, coupled with the transformation of Ann Arbor from a compact, walkable city into an auto-centric one composed of single-use districts, has deepened social and economic disparities and made the city less sustainable in an ever-changing environment. A return to walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods aims to enhance social cohesion and better serve community needs while promoting environmental sustainability.

Moreover, the city must focus on reparative actions that promote equity across all neighborhoods. Rather than focusing on preserving the status quo and solely protecting the existing character and natural environment, future policies should aim to distribute the benefits of increased housing and commercial opportunities more equitably, ensuring the flexibility needed for sustainable growth.

This plan embraces the values of Affordability, Equity, Sustainability, and Dynamism to guide Ann Arbor into the future. Like many cities, Ann Arbor faces the challenge of balancing growth with climate action, housing accessibility and infrastructure resilience. By integrating these principles, the city can create policies that not only prevent the mistakes of the past but also actively work to repair them.

Meeting the challenges of this new era requires a holistic approach—one that acknowledges the past, adapts to the present, and builds a city that is truly for everyone. This is the vision of an Ann Arbor for All.

"The conditions in north central Ann Arbor did not just happen. Custom and skillful planning created the situation, and it will take skillful planning to find solutions to the problems facing citizens of this city."

- City Planning Commissioner David R. Byrd - 1968.

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source: City of Ann Arbor

Public Engagement

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Community Engagement and Outreach Process

Engagement Approach

Over the course of two years, the Comprehensive Plan team sought to gather a wide range of voices to help shape the city's future. To achieve this, the public was engaged through various formats designed to collect input from a diverse cross-section of residents, explore specific topics in depth, and ensure that many voices and experiences were represented. These formats ranged from individual surveys and one-on-one conversations to neighborhood meetings and large citywide events.

Open houses were held at public library locations across the city to maximize accessibility and encourage public participation. Additionally, targeted outreach and small group meetings were organized in collaboration with neighborhood partners to engage underrepresented communities. Depending on the preferences of each organization, these meetings included tabling, interactive activities, and group discussions.

All public meetings were facilitated by city staff, project consultants, and other stakeholders, who moderated activities, engaged in one-on-one conversations with residents, and answered questions about the process.

March 2024 Open House at the Ann Arbor District Library.

October 2024 Open House at the Ann Arbor District Library.

top and bottom image source: Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority

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source: City of Ann Arbor

Participants and city staff chat at a 2024 Greenfair pop-up event. *source: City of Ann Arbor*

The City of Ann Arbor promoted the plan through a dedicated website, print advertisements, postcards, flyers, and informational tables at events. As part of this effort, interactive materials were adapted into portable formats, such as the Meeting in a Box activities, to facilitate transportation and use at events.

Marketing materials.

Meeting in a Box activities.

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Under the direction of the Planning Commission and City Council, the process began with the understanding that the city must grow and evolve to address underlying issues related to affordability and to support its stated sustainability goals.

Building on that foundation, a series of values-driven questions were developed and presented in a variety of formats to guide the community engagement process. As conversations unfolded, new questions emerged, leading to additional activities and discussions. This evolving approach supported a dynamic and responsive process that informed the plan. Through this work, a new core value was identified, and the goals and strategies were refined to reflect public input.

A series of values-driven questions were developed and presented to guide the community engagement process

Are we heading in the right direction?

In-depth conversations were held with the city to identify gaps and priorities, and align with current initiatives

What is your vision for the future of Ann Arbor?

Help us define values in the context of the city and downtown

How and where should Ann Arbor change?

What does density mean in Ann Arbor, and what kind of density is appropriate?

What are your main concerns or priorities?

Topic-focused discussions
(Future Land Use and zoning, existing conditions findings, emerging themes from the engagement)

Planning process updates

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Outreach by the Numbers:

Numbers as of September 2025.
Please refer to the Engagement Appendix for more details.

NOTE: The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires only a 63-day review period for engagement. The city chose to take a more expansive approach, reaching a broader range of residents through a variety of formats.

- **11** Public Open Houses at public library branches
- **30+** participants in **7** Small group discussions & targeted outreach
- **200+** responses in a collaborative map activity about growth
- **13+** Pop-up events with informational boards and activities
- **3,100+** resident surveys, both in paper and online[1]
- **20+** interviews with individuals, city agencies and institutions
- **55,000+** visits to the Comprehensive Plan project website
- **750+** emails to the Planning Commission
- **19** City Council and City Planning Commission meetings
- **6** Steering Committee meetings with community stakeholders

1. *The resident survey was not designed to be statistically representative and should not be interpreted as such. Its purpose was to gather general input and perspectives from community members, rather than to serve as a scientifically valid sample of the entire population.*

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Defining the Vision and Values

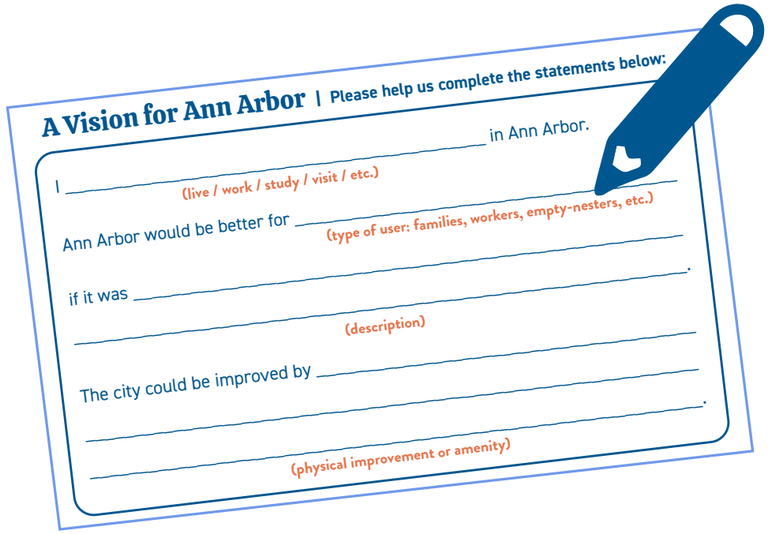
At the onset of the process, City Council identified affordability, equity, and sustainability as core values. A key outcome of the engagement process was having the public define these core values and envision Ann Arbor's future.

A Vision for the City

Participants were asked to complete Mad Lib-style cards to share their vision for the city. Key themes that emerged included a dynamic and growing population, a vibrant economy that fosters entrepreneurship and opportunity, and public spaces that strengthen community cohesion and sense of place. All of this, participants envisioned, should be supported by social, economic, and infrastructure systems that can adapt to these changes in the coming years.

March 2024 Open House at the Ann Arbor District Library.

source: Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority



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What does having a more Affordable, Equitable, and Sustainable Ann Arbor mean?

Participants were asked to write their own definitions for each value. Summaries of their responses were generated with assistance from the Atlas.ti conversational tool and are listed below.

Affordable

A range of housing types to accommodate diverse income levels, household structures, and age groups.

Density increase in and around downtown and campuses

Affordable transportation and food

Diverse and welcoming community

Desire for land trusts and public housing

Need for the city to take an active role in affordable housing

Equitable

Access to amenities such as parks and basic necessities regardless of transportation mode

Diverse housing options, including for older adults and lower income individuals

Comfortable public spaces for all

Opportunities for underrepresented businesses

Diverse & welcoming community

Support for disinvested communities

Fair access to essential services and resources

Engagement with diverse community members

Transportation equity and access to public transit

Sustainable

More housing density to support increased public transit, allowing access to daily needs with less car dependence

Increase nature-based solutions

Balancing growth with protection of natural features

More pedestrian and bike infrastructure

Sustainable energy and building efficiency

Carbon neutrality and renewable energy use

Multimodal transportation and complete neighborhoods

Mixed-income, mixed-use developments

Potential negative impacts on affordability

During the engagement process, a fourth value emerged that acknowledged the creativity of Ann Arbor's people and businesses, and recognized that the city is not static but continually evolving to embrace that creativity. This dynamic quality captured those aspects.

and

Dynamic

A people-centered approach to growth

Creating vibrant spaces through placemaking and economic development

Preparing the city to adapt for future changes

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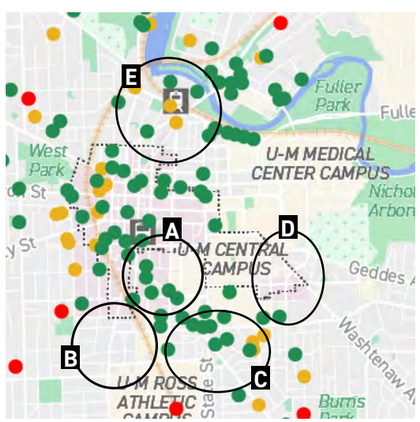
About Density, Growth, and Future Housing

What is the right amount of density?

As housing availability and affordability emerged as top priorities, participants were asked at events from the summer of 2023 to the fall of 2024 to identify areas of the city suitable for new housing and to indicate the appropriate level of density:

- 79% of respondents favored "building up a lot" in certain areas of the city (green dots - map on page 37).
- Preferred areas for increased density included Downtown, Briarwood Mall and its adjacent areas, and main corridors such as Stadium Boulevard, Plymouth Road, Washtenaw Avenue to the east, and North Main Street.
- At the downtown level, 67% of responses supported "building up a lot". Participants believe that increasing density downtown can improve housing affordability and enhance commercial offerings.
- 73% of participants at events from 2023-2024 supported allowing up to four units citywide, including in areas currently zoned for single-family homes. Participants at later events were more hesitant of change in neighborhoods.

How would you like to see the highlighted neighborhoods change (or not change) in the future? (216 total votes in downtown neighborhoods)



Downtown zoom-in with highlighted neighborhoods that offered the best potential for future residential or mixed use development.

	Stay about THE SAME	Build up A LITTLE	Build up A LOT
A	9	2	30
B	7	8	29
C	7	7	28
D	10	5	34
E	7	9	24
#	**40**	**31**	**145**
	19%	**14%**	**67%**

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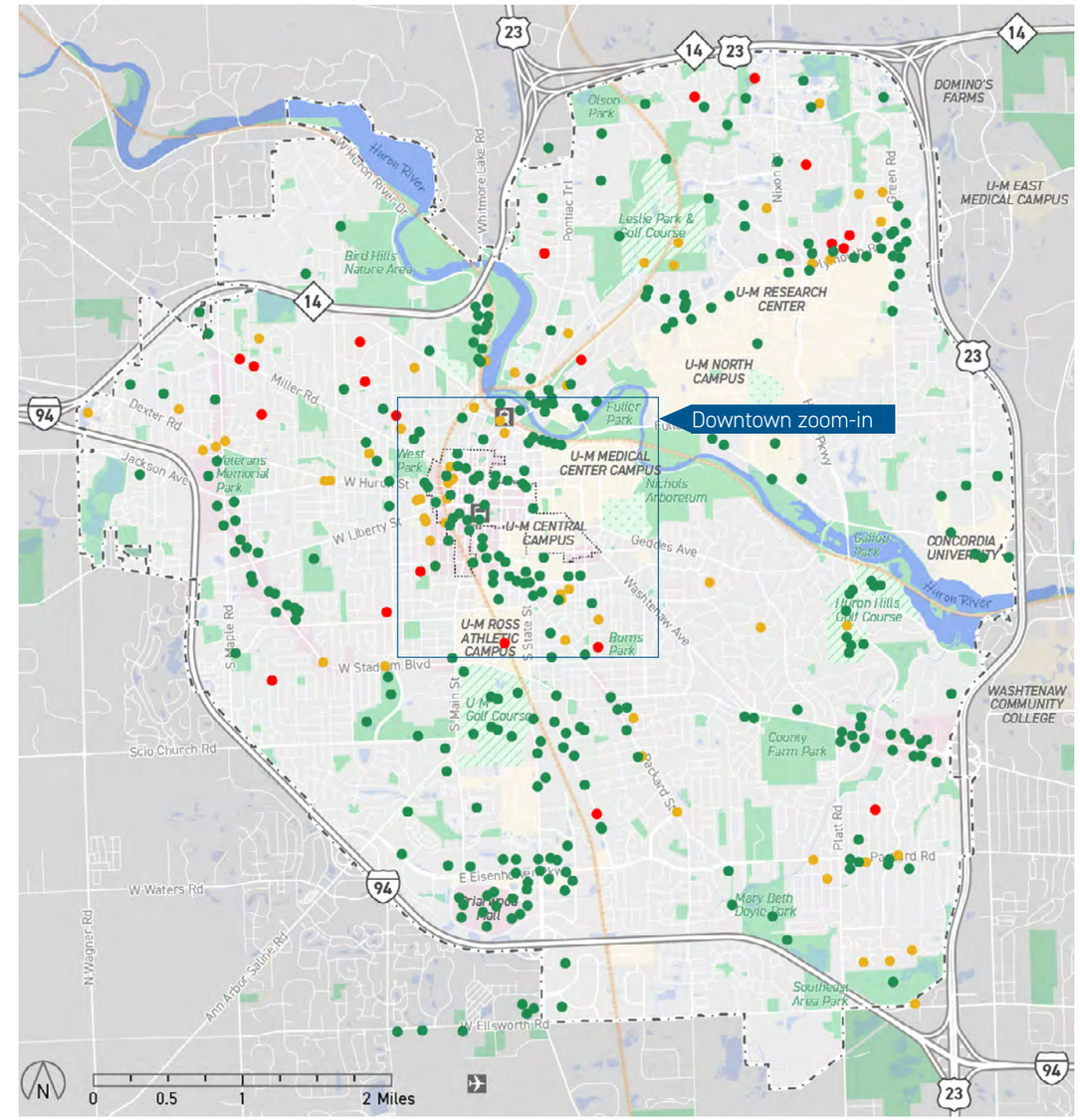

Activity

Public Input About Future Growth Areas

source: A2 Comprehensive Plan public engagement events and online activities, City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS

How and where do you think Ann Arbor should change? (390 total votes)

Build up A LITTLE	Build up MODERATELY	Build up A LOT
21	59	310
5%	**15%**	**79%**

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Summary of Key Themes and Takeaways

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The major themes and specific takeaways described in this spread were summarized and tallied from multiple engagement events conducted as part of the Ann Arbor Comprehensive Planning process, from summer 2023 to early 2025. Public input includes comments and activity entries from the public Open Houses and targeted outreach events; open-ended comments shared via email, the project website, and the resident survey; as well as input from the online collaborative map, the Meeting in a Box and Mad Libs activities.

Initial themes were identified with AI assistance based on raw activity responses; these were then validated, further analyzed, and developed into main takeaways manually.

Summary of themes from the public engagement process.

Natural Features (p. 98-101)

Ann Arbor is a Tree Town and residents are very proud of the city's expansive tree canopy. Management of natural features is important because it is a part of the city's heritage and remains a strong desire to be a part of its legacy to the next generation.

A Balanced Approach

(p. 96-97, 104-105)

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.

Housing and Affordability (p. 60-65)

Housing was the No. 1 topic of conversation and many shared a desire for additional housing opportunities in all neighborhoods, particularly to provide more "missing middle" housing. Affordability, more housing options for different family sizes and income levels, increased housing density and mixed-use development were among the themes mentioned during the engagement. There was support for focusing higher density on an expanded Downtown and new mixed use corridors and hubs around the city, but there are also some concerns about potential gentrification.

Economic Development (p. 78-83)

There is support for mixed-use development, but also concern about its impact on small, local businesses. Residents want to see more retail options and see new development as supportive of this, but also fear losing diverse small businesses. Regarding growth, some raised concerns about the impact of the University of Michigan's growth on affordability and economic diversity. Residents emphasized the need to create more jobs that pay livable wages and anti-displacement work for existing businesses as an equitable approach.

Quality of Life (p. 66-69)

Residents consistently expressed appreciation for the strong quality of life that Ann Arbor offers—through its vibrant neighborhoods, abundant parks and recreational spaces, employment opportunities, and other valued amenities. However, there is concern that as the city grows and evolves, the very characteristics that make Ann Arbor special could be at risk of being lost.

Transportation and Infrastructure (p. 96-97)

There is broad consensus that increasing density must be paired with improved transit infrastructure. Residents emphasized the need to align new development with transit access in order to reduce reliance on cars and promote more sustainable, walkable neighborhoods.

Public Spaces and Amenities (p. 66-67)

Participants greatly value public spaces, parks, and natural areas as places for community interaction. In addition to preserving these spaces, there was support for more arts and cultural programming, activating the waterfront, as well as a focus on public space maintenance, safety, and accessibility for all.

Sustainability (p. 94-95, p. 102-103)

Residents expressed support for sustainable development and climate resilience through the use of nature based solutions, energy-efficient building practices, and infrastructure to accommodate future growth.

Equitable Access (p. 64-65, p. 68-69)

Residents emphasized the need to address racial and economic segregation by improving equitable access to essential services and amenities. They called for all residents to have access to safe neighborhoods, quality schools, income-eligible affordable housing, reliable public transportation and recreational opportunities, all key steps toward building a more inclusive and resilient community.

Community Engagement

There is a desire for more public involvement and education about how to participate in the city's decision-making process. Creating opportunities for diverse voices to be heard will help foster a stronger sense of community ownership and agency.

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source: City of Ann Arbor

Vision and Values

03

Plan Components
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A Vision for the City
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Values Framework
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DRAFT

Plan Components

The following chapters comprise the main components of the Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 3: Vision and Values

The Vision and Values serve as the north star of the plan and were synthesized from community input. The VISION is an aspirational statement that describes a desired future outcome. The VALUES are the guiding principles that provide direction to decision-makers and community leaders across all the plan goals and strategies. As the north star, the vision and values are broad and high-level, meant to point the way without getting too detailed.

Chapter 4: Goals and Strategies

The GOALS are statements designed to help achieve the vision and provide a policy framework for strategies and land use decisions. The STRATEGIES provide more specific direction on how to fulfill the goals and vision. The goals and strategies are organized into three main focus areas: 1) Housing & Neighborhoods, 2) Economy & Opportunity, and 3) Infrastructure & Services.

Chapter 5: Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map embodies the city's goals and provides guidance on how land is used and developed. It identifies the various land use categories and the corresponding levels of use and development intensity.

Chapter 6: Implementation

Implementation actions are more specific and define how a goal will be achieved by providing the steps needed. These specific actions may change over time, due to changing funding opportunities and the political and economic climate, to achieve the higher-level goals and strategies and align with the vision and values.

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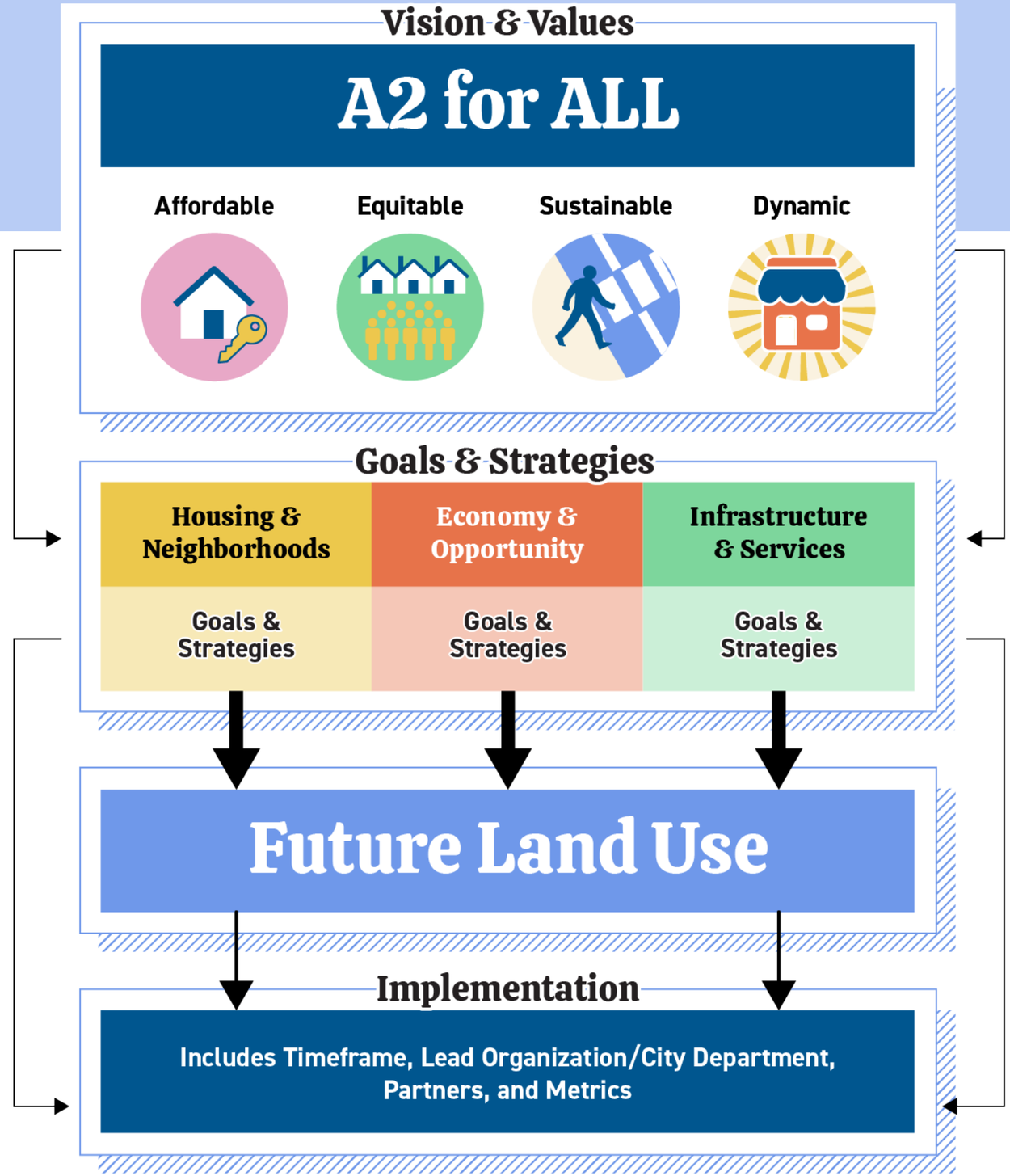

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A Vision for the City

A2 for ALL

As we look to 2050, Ann Arbor wants to grow as a means to offer an increased variety and supply of housing options, businesses, and services in compact areas. This will bring more people closer to jobs and amenities, provide more transportation choices, use land more efficiently, and protect important natural areas to build an affordable, equitable, sustainable, and dynamic city for ALL, now and in the future.

A2 is for...

people from **ALL** backgrounds.

housing of **ALL** different types and price points.

providing mobility options of **ALL** different kinds.

promoting businesses of **ALL** types, big and small.

protecting natural features and biodiversity so **ALL** can benefit from ecosystem health.

ensuring **ALL** Ann Arborites, present and future, have access to the services, amenities, and opportunities the city has to offer.

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Values Framework

Four core values serve as the guiding principles of the plan:

Affordable

We believe that **ALL** should have the opportunity to call Ann Arbor home and thrive, residents and businesses alike.

Equitable

We aim to ensure community health, safety, and equal access to essential services and amenities for **ALL**, with additional resources for disinvested communities.

Sustainable

We are committed to promoting balance between **ALL** of our natural and human systems to support a healthy and biodiverse ecosystem, today and into the future.

Dynamic

We aim to be a vibrant, continuously evolving city to meet the changing needs of **ALL** its people and communities.

The values are interrelated. While trade-offs are inevitable when making decisions guided by these values, increasing housing through density within the city rather than expanding outward and overcoming inequities embedded in existing land use and policy are essential to making Ann Arbor more affordable, equitable, sustainable, and dynamic by 2050.

To that end, it is important for the plan to recognize that prioritizing housing development may require an easing of certain restrictions and constraints. Placing too many conditions on housing production makes it more difficult to build in a cost-effective manner and undermines the actual development of housing. For example, requiring any individual housing development project meet 100% of each and every metric – whether it is related to carbon neutrality or natural features mitigation – increases the cost of construction, making it cost prohibitive to build or making the resulting housing more expensive. At the same time, this does not mean accepting poor-quality housing that will quickly fall into disrepair. The goal is to support the creation of housing that is healthy, affordable, accessible, and sustainable that will stand the test of time.

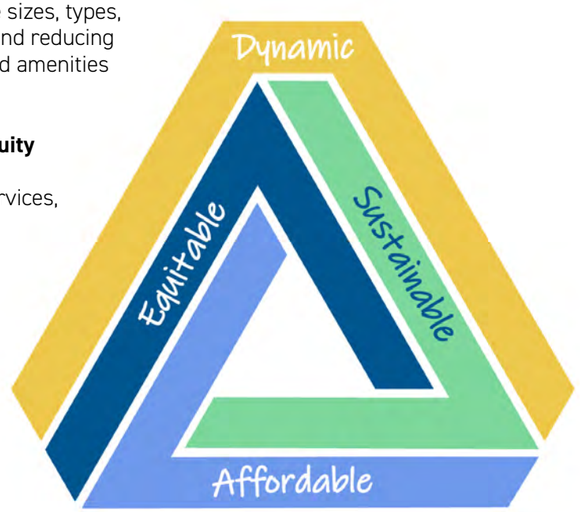
This plan seeks to ensure Ann Arbor can grow in a way that balances housing, sustainability, and employment needs within the city to achieve key goals such as economic diversification, better connections and transportation options, quality city services and amenities, resilience, transition to clean energy, and long-term fiscal health.

In cities that are highly sought after as employment centers and for their high quality of life, building more housing supports **affordability** in the long run by easing pressure on supply; providing a range of home sizes, types, and prices; contributing to the affordable housing fund; and reducing transportation costs by bringing people closer to jobs and amenities (see Housing Appendix).

More housing and jobs in all neighborhoods supports **equity** by offering more diverse housing options across the city, supporting local businesses, and improving access to services, amenities, and economic opportunity.

Denser, more compact development with a transition to clean energy supports **sustainability** by using land more efficiently to create economies of scale for energy and resources, better preserve natural features, bring people closer to services and jobs, and enable better transportation options that reduce the city's carbon footprint and significantly impact regional sustainability.

More housing and economic diversification means new residents and new businesses which support a **dynamic**, evolving city that is welcoming to all.



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source: City of Ann Arbor

Goals and Strategies

04

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Infrastructure and Services
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Chapter 04

Housing and Neighborhoods

The goals in this chapter include:

Goal 1: Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels.

Goal 2 : Support all residents in accessing quality housing and mitigate displacement.

Goal 3: Provide high-quality, accessible parks, trails, and recreation areas.

Goal 4: Encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods with access to basic needs and amenities.

These goals make Ann Arbor more:

Affordable

by increasing housing to stabilize prices, adding more housing types for all household types, generating income-eligible affordable housing funds, reducing transportation costs.

Equitable

by providing diverse housing options across the city and improving access to services, amenities, and economic opportunity, not reinforcing existing, often exclusionary policies.

Sustainable

by bringing people closer to services and jobs, enabling better transportation options to reduce the city's carbon footprint, and protecting natural features.

Dynamic

by bringing new people and businesses to the city, and encouraging complete neighborhoods that are more walkable.

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Rationale

What We've Heard:

Housing:

- Affordability and a lack of different housing types are major concerns, with participants citing the need for more housing options, concern about the cost of rent/mortgage, and concern that housing geared toward students have high bedroom counts that are not suitable or convertible for other household types.
- There is support for increasing housing options in all residential areas with public interest in seeing more "missing middle" housing types (such as townhouses, duplexes, and triplexes) integrated into neighborhoods. This approach aligns with zoning adopted by other cities that have made changes to their single-family districts. After the first draft of the plan was released in April 2025, the city has continued to do neighborhood-level engagement where sentiment toward density was more mixed.
- People expressed concern over the impact of increased density on green spaces and the built form. Some do not want to see any change to single-family neighborhoods, but most are comfortable with increased density as long as the buildings are not a big change in scale from what exists in neighborhoods now.
- Adequate housing and support services for low-income individuals, retirees, and those on fixed incomes, are needed to be a more inclusive and resilient community.

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Housing development:

- Population growth in Ann Arbor has been largely driven by students at the University of Michigan. When students are excluded, the city's population growth has remained relatively stagnant in recent decades. Growth slowed significantly around 1970: over the past 50 years, Washtenaw County's population has increased by 59%, while Ann Arbor's has grown by only 24%.[1] However, the stagnant growth in non-student households does not mean that there is no demand.
- Too little housing is being built in Ann Arbor. Vacancy rates have remained extremely low for several years, indicating an unhealthy imbalance between supply and demand.[2] To restore balance, new construction will be needed to achieve a healthier vacancy rate, typically considered to be between 5% and 8%.[3]
- Population trends reflecting an aging population and smaller household sizes suggest a shift in both the types and number of housing units needed. Between 2000 and 2020, the population aged 65 and older increased by 59%, while the number of residents under 18 and those aged 35 to 64 (typically those who would make up a family household with children) decreased by 21% and 9% respectively.[4]
- Close to 80,000 people commute into the city, contributing to congestion and carbon emissions.[5] Providing housing for many of these commuters would be needed to reduce vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions.
- Adding housing offers additional benefits that residents across the city value, including reducing transportation costs by encouraging alternative modes of travel, helping transit agencies meet service improvement goals, and supporting local businesses by expanding the city's customer base.
- As shown in the map on page 53, most land suitable for development that is not protected as natural area has already been built upon. Under current regulations, only 13% (or 2,438 acres) remains available for redevelopment that could increase the number of housing units. As a result, future growth will need to focus on infill and redevelopment opportunities within the existing urban fabric.

1 U.S. Census 1970-2020 for Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County, University of Michigan Enrollment Reports
2 U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year and 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022.
3 https://www.nccor.org/tools-econindicators/healthy-economies/vacancy-rate-residential/
4 U.S. Census 2000-2020
5 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamic (LEHD) On The Map data, (Primary Jobs 2021)

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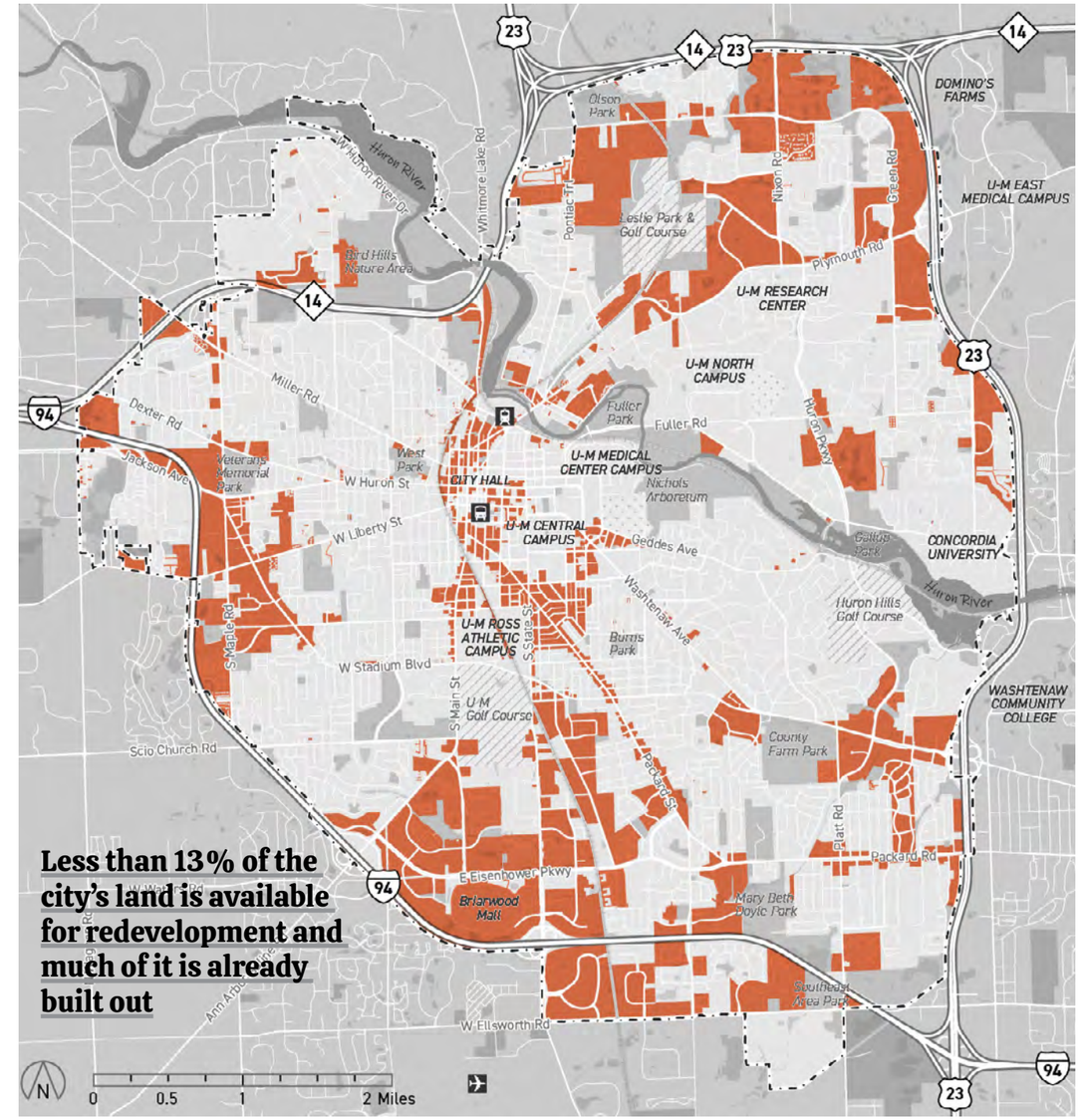

Map
Developable Land Under Existing Regulations

Developable Land

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS, Assessor's Office

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY: The amount of developable land was calculated by subtracting Public Right-of-ways, Township Islands, Public Land, Floodplains, Historic Districts, and R1 and R2 Zoning Districts from the city's total land area to highlight where new housing units could be added under current regulations.

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Housing affordability:

- Housing costs in Ann Arbor exceed what the median household income can afford. Based on 2022–2023 data, the affordable rent for a household earning the median wage was $2,188, and the affordable home price was $262,500. In reality, median rents in 2023 were higher at $2,399, and the median home sales price reached $299,950.[1] Since then, prices have continued to climb amid tight supply, with the median home price rising to $440,900 in Q1 2024.[2] Combined with higher interest rates, this trend has made homeownership even less attainable.[3]
- Ann Arbor is more housing cost burdened than the region (cost burdened households are defined as spending more than 30% of their income on housing): 18.3% of owner households were cost burdened and 50% of renter households were cost burdened. However, 51% of cost burdened renters are in the student-age cohort, 15 to 24 years of age.[4]
- The student population impacts both the rental and for-sale market as some for-sale properties are bought and converted to student housing, especially close to the university. [5]
- Over the next 20 to 30 years single-family homes will go through generational turnover as 54% of homeowners are over the age of 55.[6] Currently, property tax caps impact the ability of these homeowners to downsize, thus worsening supply as it slows generational housing turnover. When housing does turn over, uncapping property taxes plays a significant role in the cost.
- Adding more housing can stabilize prices and provide opportunities for housing that accommodates people with different needs.[7]
- Short-term rentals impact the housing supply by taking units off the market. The city will explore the extent to which this has affected Ann Arbor's housing stock.
- Homelessness is an outcome of housing scarcity, rising costs, and displacement pressures, and must be addressed as a land-use and affordability issue

Existing City Programs

Affordable Housing Millage:
Ann Arbor voters approved Proposal C in November 2020 for an affordable housing millage. The millage generates funds to develop housing for Ann Arbor residents earning less than 60% of the Area Median Income by assessing a 1-mill tax over 20 years.

Did You Know?

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)
refers to housing units that are unsubsidized, market-rate housing units that are still affordable to low- and middle-income households due to low market values. These units may be low-cost for a variety of reasons, such as location (i.e., being located in low-cost areas), or age (i.e., older structures that lack premium amenities, such as dishwashers). Many of these units fall into the "missing middle" category and are owned and operated by small developers.

source: Institute for Housing Studies

1 ACS 5-yr estimates, 2018-22, S1901, 2023 Zillow Housing Rent Market Study, Ann Arbor Board of Realtors Market Statistics for October 2023
2 National Association of Realtors, Ann Arbor Area, First Quarter 2024
3, 5, 7 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.
4, 6 ACS 5-yr estimates, 2018-22

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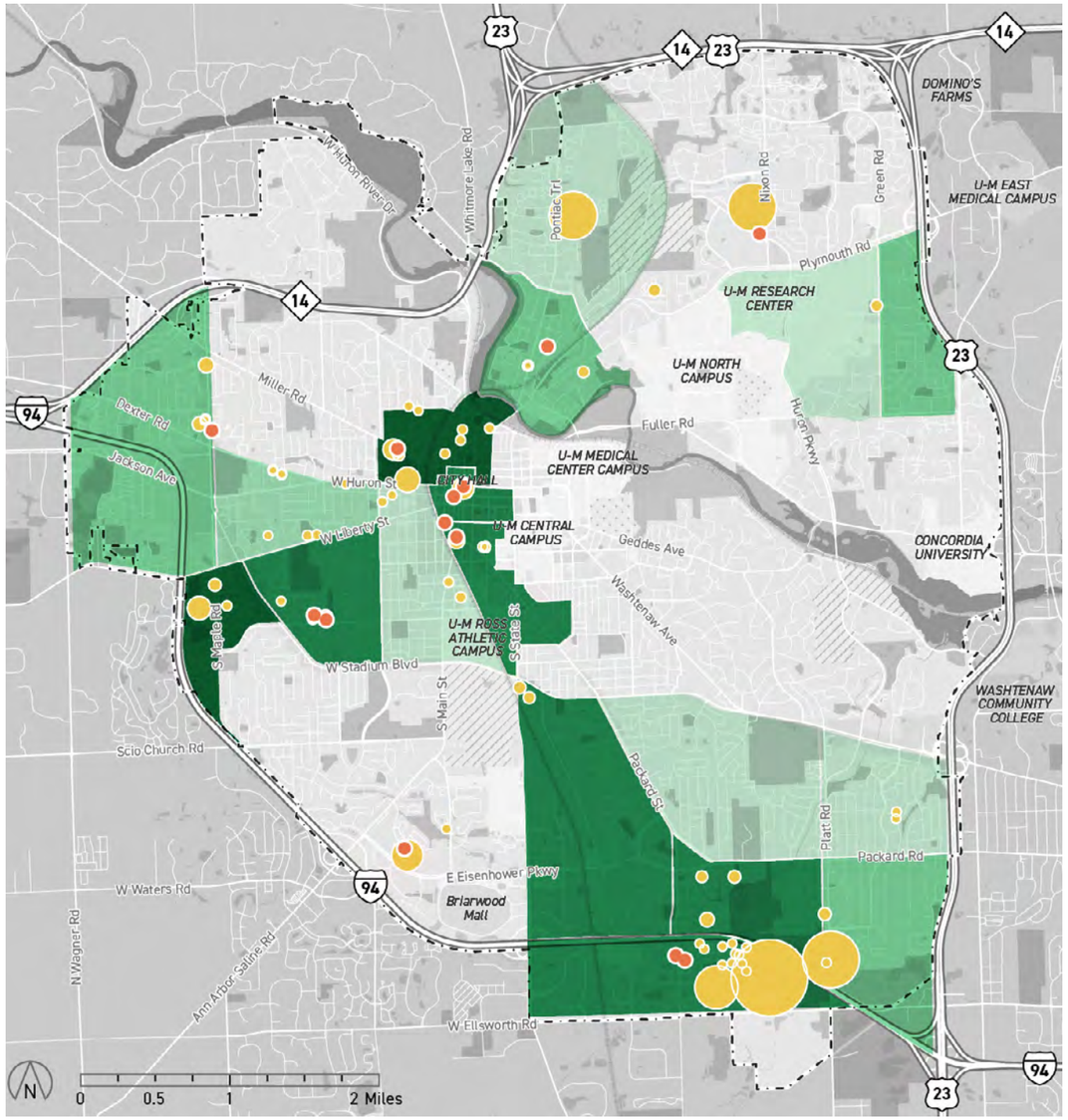

Map
Existing Income-Eligible Subsidized Housing

source: Ann Arbor Housing Commission, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Units

Housing Choice Voucher Units (Census Tract):
94-156 *47-93* *34-46* *24-33* *13-23*

Ann Arbor Housing Commission Units (scaled by number of units)
1 *10* *50* *100* *1,000*

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Neighborhoods:

- Parks are widely regarded as essential neighborhood amenities for residents, especially within walking distance of their homes.
- There is support for aligning growth with transit to create mixed use, walkable neighborhoods: new centers of activity near transit corridors with a mix of housing, office, retail, and entertainment would bring amenities closer to other parts of the city.
- Residents would like to see more walkable and accessible retail amenities in all neighborhoods, particularly small-scale mom and pop businesses, so they don't have to drive for everything.
- Increasing density by building up rather than building out is necessary to preserve green spaces, create walkable neighborhoods, and reduce car dependency.
- While increased density can bring benefits, it must be balanced with the need for green spaces and community amenities.

Did You Know?

Historic Districts

The city currently has 15 designated historic districts. Each district was established pursuant to Michigan Local Historic Districts Act of 1970, state law distinct from Michigan's planning and zoning enabling laws, following extensive public input and deliberation required by that act. Historic districts serve to recognize and conserve structures within distinct areas that provide significant historical meaning and heritage reflecting the city's origins and early development. Any modifications to existing districts would require following similarly extensive public input and deliberation procedures. While not part of a local zoning code, historic districts function essentially as overlay districts, where the more restrictive requirements applicable through either zoning or historic preservation control.

The city's historic districts are all located close to downtown. They are also predominantly if not entirely zoned for uses and densities greater than single family residential development alone, and duplexes and smaller multifamily housing units can be found throughout and immediately adjacent to them. In addition, because all were built prior to the city's shift toward larger minimum lot size requirements, the historic districts are some of the most densely developed and walkable neighborhoods in the city.

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Key Considerations:

Parks:

- Ann Arbor has a high ratio of parks to population: 17.96 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, compared to a median of 9.2 acres per 1,000 residents for cities of a comparable population.[1] According to the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe mapping tool, 91% of Ann Arbor residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.[2] The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)'s 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review indicates a national median of one park for every 2,411 residents. The City of Ann Arbor has one park for approximately every 755 residents – three times the national median.
- Given the large quantity of public owned land and aging facilities, maintenance and capital improvements are a challenge for existing parks and protected natural features. Over the next 30 years, the Parks Department has identified $19M in park system ADA barriers that need to be addressed and $200M+ in capital assets that have an expected end of life within the 30 year time span. The parks millage supports between $2-2.5M annually for capital projects, which over 30 years amounts to between $60-75M compared to the $219M+ in identified capital improvements needed.
- Equitable access to parks and recreational spaces is an important part of the city's land use planning and considerations for acquisition and capital improvements. As the city grows, it will be an important consideration for new development.
- The PROS Plan has been retained as a part of this planning process and is updated every five years with detailed park data, trends, and strategies. As such, land use planning and decision-making that relates to parks or recreation will consult the PROS Plan, as amended, to stay consistent and supportive of its goals.

1 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan 2023-2027 (2023)*
2 *Trust for Public Land ParkServe*

Existing City Programs

Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage
Also known as the Greenbelt Millage, this was approved in 2003 and is a 30-year, 0.5 mil tax levy to provide funds for the preservation and protection of open space, natural habitats, agricultural lands, and the city's source waters outside of city limits, and the purchase of parkland within city limits.

Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage
Ann Arbor voters renewed the 2025-2044 Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage in November 2024 for the next 20 years. The annual millage funds support city park maintenance activities and city park capital (larger-scale) improvements.

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Retail amenities:

- Many neighborhoods lack access to walkable retail and in those that have access, it is often dangerous or unpleasant to walk, as shown in the map on page 59.
- To support the neighborhood amenities residents want, greater density is needed. Increasing the number of people living in an area helps sustain nearby businesses and essential services, while also making active and public transportation more viable and accessible. (See Economy and Opportunity – Goal 5 for more details.)

Did You Know?

Complete Neighborhoods

Ann Arbor's Moving Together Towards Vision Zero transportation plan defines "complete communities" (20 minute neighborhoods) as:

"A 20-minute neighborhood is a place where residents can meet most of their daily, nonwork needs (like shopping, groceries, parks, and schools) within a safe, convenient 20-minute walk... By bringing people and the destinations they need to reach closer together, 20-minute neighborhoods offer residents a host of benefits: improved access, more opportunities for physical activity, lower transportation costs, and reduced emissions and air pollution. Ann Arbor residents who live in neighborhoods with poor access to daily essentials spend 8% more on household transportation costs and emit 15% more carbon dioxide each year. 20-minute neighborhoods also enable older adults to age in place, so that losing access to a vehicle does not result in losing independence."

The Trust for Public Land, National Recreation and Park Association, Urban Land Institute, and Mayor's Institute on City Design utilize a 10-minute standard for park access. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, a 10-minute walk is used as a more inclusive measurement that accounts for the average distance most people are willing to walk to reach a destination. A 10-minute walk is approximately a half-mile for an able-bodied person.

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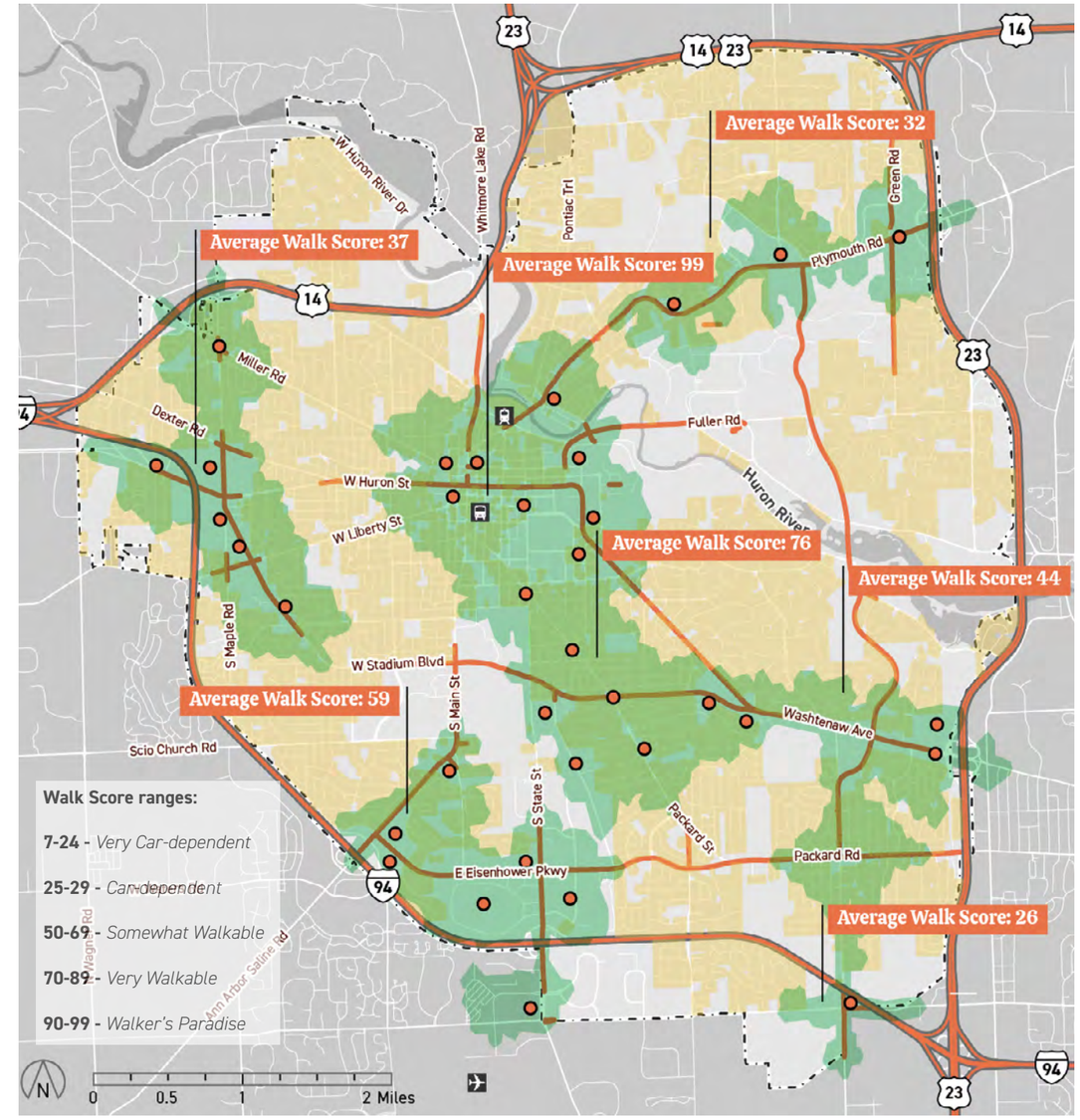

Map

Access to Commercial Amenities & Walk Score

source: Walk Score, City of Ann Arbor GIS

Major walking barriers (thoroughfares of at least four lanes)

Shopping Center / Major Commercial Node

10 Minute Walkshed from Shopping Center/ Node

Zoned Residential Areas

WALKSCORE: Walk Score is commonly used as a high-level indicator of access to daily needs, reflecting proximity to amenities such as retail, services, parks, and schools. Please see the Glossary of Terms on Page 167 for more detail.

SHOPPING CENTER/ NODE DESIGNATION: Shopping centers and major commercial nodes were identified based on key intersections located within city-designated commercial areas, as well as the presence of larger shopping centers.

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Goal 01:

Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels

Strategies:

1.1
Change dimensional standards to allow for more density in all residential districts and encourage denser multi-family housing in places with public infrastructure

Growth should be directed into places where it can benefit from other public investments, particularly in transit and other multimodal facilities, sewer and water capacity, and park space. To fulfill City Council's directive to add new homes in single-family zoned areas, the city should allow more housing units by right and reduce minimum lot size requirements across all residential districts. Duplexes and triplexes will be permitted citywide, and greater density will be allowed when consistent with the surroundings.

Dimensional standards can be used to ensure that new development remains low-rise and consistent with the existing neighborhood scale. Medium and high density multi-family transit-oriented development can be encouraged along transit corridors and hubs, and in proximity to community amenities and assets to encourage walkable, mixed-use development. The city will need to review and rewrite the zoning code and also streamline the development review process to support affordability goals and more easily develop "missing middle" housing, whose production has declined over the past decade. One way to do this is to encourage alternative approaches to land use such as community land trusts.

This plan takes no position on the potential modification of existing historic districts or the creation of new historic districts. Historic district boundaries and requirements within them will continue to follow the standards and guidelines established by the Historic District Commission (HDC). The current multi-unit residences and mixed-use developments within the existing historic districts provide evidence of their compatibility within those districts. The city should support opportunities for increased missing-middle housing density within existing historic districts when and where appropriate, consistent with the goal of increasing such density throughout the city, and consistent with HDC standards and guidelines for modifications to existing structures and the development of new structures within historic districts.

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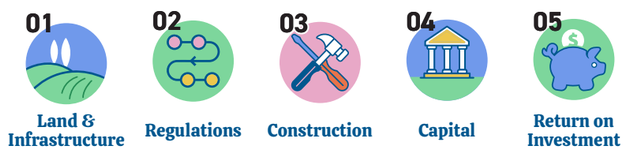
How can city policies affect city growth potential?

Five costs associated with development



CITY LAND USE & ZONING POLICY

Simplify and streamline the development process.
Fewer, simpler districts and quicker processes.

Give flexibility to districts throughout the city.
Allow more types of housing in different parts of the city to respond to changing demands & markets.

Manage transitions between & within districts
Be responsive to neighborhood context, livability, and scale.

Duplex housing on Baldwin Avenue that fits into the context of the Burns Park neighborhood.

source: Interface Studio

Did You Know?

Zoning Reform Toolkit
Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA)

15 Tools to Expand Housing Choice & Supply
*(**BOLD** indicates a tool Ann Arbor already uses)*

Zoning Districts
- *Collapse Zone Districts*
- ***Rezone for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in Commercial Districts***
- ***Expand Allowable Uses***
- ***Performance Standards for Uses***

Form and Context
- *Reduce Minimum Lot Width and Area*
- ***Reduce or Eliminate Minimum Dwelling Unit Size***
- ***Reduce or Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements***
- *Missing Middle Housing (Including ADUs)*
- ***Density / Height Bonuses***

Processes
- ***Eliminate or Reduce Elected Body Approval***
- ***Expand Administrative Review***
- *Pre-approved Plans*
- *More Flexible Approach to Nonconformities*
- ***Police Power Ordinances for Nuisance***

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1.2
Diversify the types of housing through a "missing middle" housing strategy and universal design

Ann Arbor's housing stock is mainly composed of single family homes and multifamily apartment and condo buildings. The "missing" housing type is "middle" or medium-density housing such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and cottage court housing. These types of housing fit well into existing neighborhoods and provide density that helps to support walkability, local-serving retail and transit.

To support gradual and affordable infill, especially in Residential areas, future zoning implementation should explore expedited permitting pathways for small-scale multifamily housing—especially duplexes and triplexes. Removing unnecessary barriers to these housing types can help ensure that new homes are added steadily, without delay or disproportionate administrative burden. Additionally, as part of aligning zoning with land use categories, existing height exceptions in the Unified Development Code (UDC) should be reviewed and reconsidered for removal in the Residential category, where 3-story form is intended to be the general maximum. The applicability of height bonuses—such as those tied to sustainability incentives—should be carefully evaluated during the zoning phase, and may be more appropriately confined to designated Hub and Transition areas. However, zoning reform alone is insufficient to spur the development of "missing middle" housing; in addition to streamlining the development review process, the city needs to be willing to use available financial and other incentives to stimulate this type of construction, and to support the efforts of nonprofit housing developers (e.g. mission-based affordable housing, land trusts, etc.).

Another important outcome of providing diverse housing types is to support independent living for residents of all ages and abilities. Universal design for accessibility and "missing middle" housing supports residents of all ages and abilities over their lifetime, allowing for families to grow and also for aging in place and downsizing.

Did You Know?

"Missing Middle" Housing

"Missing middle" is a term to describe the housing types that are found less often in communities, located in the middle of the housing types spectrum. Prior to zoning that separated residential districts into single-unit from multi-unit, more smaller scale attached units like duplexes, triplexes, courtyard apartments, and townhouses were integrated into neighborhoods. Many municipalities and housing developers are more familiar with single-unit houses and apartment buildings, but are reclaiming that "missing" part of the housing type spectrum to help fill the demand for housing.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. Universal Design Standards are based on the following principles: (1) Equitable, (2) Flexible, (3) Simple/Intuitive, (4) Communicative, (5) Hazard Minimizing, (6) Low Physical Effort, (7) Size and Space for Approach/Use

source: EPSMG JKR

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1.3
Support and preserve existing subsidized income-eligible housing and non-subsidized housing and make it more sustainable

Affordability remains a top concern for community members, with preserving and expanding subsidized income-eligible affordable housing identified as a major priority. Existing income-eligible subsidized units are a critical resource to be protected, not only to maintain housing affordability for residents, but also to support sustainability by preserving embodied carbon in existing buildings.

To address both affordability and environmental goals, the city should explore innovative strategies to reduce the cost of building permits as well as grants and other incentives that assist low- and moderate-income homeowners and housing developers with the costs of maintenance and repair. The Office of Sustainability and Innovation (OSI) manages a home energy rebate program where at least half of sustainability-related rebates go to income qualified households. These programs can also promote the adoption of sustainable building practices, which can lead to long-term savings through improved energy efficiency, lower utility bills, and reduced maintenance needs over time. As an example, Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) and OSI have collaborated to secure funding to bring geothermal to a new housing site at Catherine Street, solar to nearly a dozen AAHC sites, and to make energy efficiency improvements in multiple units – demonstrating that affordable housing and sustainability can work seamlessly together.

1.4
Prioritize and expedite process for subsidized affordable housing development for income-eligible residents across the city

Building more subsidized, income-eligible affordable housing will require coordinated efforts across financing, site selection, and multiple partners. To advance equitable development and address the harms of past policies, the city is already enhancing its Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) scoring potential by supporting affordable housing in areas well served by transit, public assets such as parks, libraries, and schools, and essential commercial amenities like grocery stores. Additional strategies the city can pursue to expand subsidized, income-eligible affordable housing include leveraging publicly owned land, preserving naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), relaxing development standards, offsetting certain sustainability requirements, and waiving or reducing development fees.

1.5
Coordinate housing implementation strategy across local and regional partners

Meeting the community's housing needs extends beyond the city's authority and will require strong coordination with local and regional partners to address both key priorities and implementation barriers, including the prevention and reduction of homelessness. While zoning plays a role, other factors—such as development economics, state and local building codes, and the capacity of developers and construction trades—also shape outcomes. At the local level, the city should regularly track housing and student population goals in relation to University of Michigan enrollment and employment trends, as well as indicators related to housing stability and homelessness. Partnerships with community land trusts, co-operatives, and other non-profit mission-driven housing providers can further expand housing options and support housing stability for vulnerable populations. Regionally, workforce development in the skilled trades will be essential to expanding construction capacity (see Economy & Opportunity Strategy 7.3 for details on contractor development programs).

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Goal 02:

Support all residents in accessing quality housing and mitigate displacement

Strategies:

2.1
Provide supports for low- and moderate-income residents to mitigate displacement

As more investment occurs in the city, vulnerable residents must be protected to ensure they are not displaced. The city should prioritize keeping residents in their homes and helping them age in place through home repair and retrofit programs for low- to moderate-income residents and work with the county on eviction prevention and early intervention programs such as emergency rental assistance. The city can also use an education first approach that connects residents with available programs to help address code violations and code use enforcement to help identify at-risk properties and bad actor landlords and prevent displacement and poor health outcomes due to property condition.

Additionally, the city can target home and building owners for engagement with the Sustainable Energy Utility and other energy programs to reduce operational costs for residents. Finally, the city should continue to increase awareness and accessibility of income-eligible affordable housing and homeownership support programs and work with non-profits and the county to support unhoused residents with connections to housing and social services to increase housing security.

2.2
Advocate for county- and state-level policy and legislation

Protecting residents and mitigating displacement require coordination and advocacy at the local, county, and state level, and is a key component of the City Council directive to repair past policies and regulations that resulted in exclusion of people based on race, income or other inequities. The city can adopt a suite of anti-displacement strategies (described below), but implementation will also necessitate advocating for county- and state-level action.

Anti-displacement policy solutions address housing supply and renter protections and can be viewed broadly as:

- **Neighborhood stabilization** to keep residents in their homes through tenant opportunity to purchase and renter protections (Housing and Neighborhoods Strategy 2.1)
- **Production** to increase all housing (market-rate as well as subsidized income-eligible affordable) through zoning changes (Housing and Neighborhoods Strategy 1.1) and funding (Housing and Neighborhoods Strategy 1.4)
- **Preservation** to maintain current subsidized and unsubsidized affordable housing (Housing and Neighborhoods Strategy 1.3)

Existing Programs

Income-Eligible Affordable Housing and Homeownership:
Individual programs change, however the funding sources of local programs include:

- *Ann Arbor Affordable Housing Millage*
- *Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development*
- *Michigan State Housing Development Authority*
- *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*
- *Michigan Economic Development Corporation*
- *Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)*
- *Philanthropic Entities*

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Goal 03:

Provide high-quality, accessible parks, trails, and recreation areas

Strategies:

3.1
Continue to maintain high-quality parks and recreation areas and align with land use patterns

The city has a high ratio of parks per resident and most residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, which is an essential neighborhood amenity. Nevertheless, not all parks are equal with regard to size and amenities, and park access is not evenly distributed across the city. Some of the densest areas of the city, such as downtown, have limited park and recreational space, highlighting the need to strengthen activity hubs and connections along the Huron River Corridor as both a downtown asset and a citywide destination. Recent investments, such as the Border to Border Trail tunnel and the proposed Treeline Trail, are important steps toward improving these connections.

From a regional perspective, density can be seen as a tool for ecological and recreation preservation. Building more densely within a city helps to protect natural open spaces in the region that would otherwise be developed through sprawl.

As the city continues to grow, it will be essential to align parks and recreation planning with evolving land use patterns. Maintenance and capital improvements also present a challenge due to the large amount of publicly owned land and the aging condition of many facilities. The city will need to prioritize quality of amenities and maintenance over quantity. This may include identifying and redistributing land and facilities to better serve neighborhoods. Utilizing recreation trends should be considered when evaluating the quality, equity, and ecological benefit of new or existing park spaces.

3.2
Focus on quality, equity, and ecological benefit in the development of new open space

As the city grows, it will also need to ensure open space can meet the needs of new residents, particularly in higher density areas that do not currently have park space. While larger parks or natural areas may not be feasible in areas identified for growth, such as downtown and transit corridors, reimagining the definition of parks and open spaces to include non-traditional spaces and public-private partnerships can help expand the opportunities to provide open space.

New open space can be created through targeted acquisition as well as through private development. The city should consider recreation trends, high priority natural features, and adjacencies to existing open space, parks, and neighborhood connections in the targeted acquisition of new open space and the creation of greenways [see also Infrastructure and Services 10.1]. For new development, the city should incentivize quality, rather than quantity, in open space requirements within the zoning code to encourage private development, maintenance, and management of high quality open space that is publicly accessible.

Plans To Retain

This plan does not replace the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan and the Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan. As regular updates are made to those plans, there should be coordination with strategies of this plan to ensure alignment.

Parks and Recreation Open Space PROS Plan:
The Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (PROS) is the city's vision for parks and recreation in Ann Arbor and is officially part of the City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan. The PROS Plan provides an overview of the park system, including a physical description of the city, administrative structure and budget information, and a detailed inventory of existing parks, facilities, and programs. It identifies parks and recreation needs and deficiencies, proposes major capital park projects for existing and new parks, and develops goals and objectives for future planning guided by public input. The plan is updated every 5 years, as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to be eligible for grants.

Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan:
The 2017 Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan is a planned urban trail through the heart of Ann Arbor that aims to connect people and places across Ann Arbor. The Treeline plans to connect city-owned properties, neighborhoods, and downtown businesses while linking to the Huron River and the regional Border-to-Border trail (B2B Trail). The project extent connects to the B2B Trail along the Huron River at the north end of the study area and connects to the South State Street and Stimson Street intersection on the south end.

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Goal 04:

Encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods with access to basic needs and amenities

Strategies:

4.1
Leverage public and institutional land to accommodate growth in walkable neighborhoods and historically underinvested neighborhoods

The city has an opportunity to repurpose underutilized public and institutional land to support plan goals for creating complete, walkable neighborhoods that are well-served by transit and community amenities. To do so, the city should evaluate its public land in alignment with land use priorities and focus on underutilized spaces, such as parking lots, school and institutional grounds, and open areas that require maintenance but provide little ecological benefit. This evaluation should explore alternative uses such as housing development as well as the public assets needed to serve a growing population, including city services, public safety facilities, libraries, and schools.

4.2
Promote "complete neighborhoods" with neighborhood-level retail and service hubs

While the plan identifies transit corridors and hubs as areas of the city that have the most opportunity for dense mixed-use development, all neighborhoods can move toward "complete neighborhoods" that are able to meet basic needs without a car. This will entail allowing for small-scale commercial space in residential areas and improved mobility options for neighborhoods where commercial amenities are unlikely.

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Argus Farm Stop is an example of neighborhood serving commercial.

source: Argus Farm Stop

Did You Know?

Neighborhood Commercial

To develop a thoughtful and community-responsive policy for integrating small-scale commercial uses into residential areas, it is important to begin with a clear set of questions that identify where these uses belong, what types are appropriate, and how they can align with neighborhood priorities. Some questions to consider:

- *What types of small-scale commercial uses are appropriate within residential areas, and how can they support neighborhood vitality without disrupting the quality and livability of the neighborhood?*
- *Where within residential areas are commercial uses most suitable?*
- *How can use restrictions be shaped to reflect the desires and needs of the surrounding community?*
- *What safeguards or design standards are necessary to ensure compatibility between commercial activity and nearby homes?*
- *How can equity be built into the process to ensure access for local entrepreneurs and underserved neighborhoods?*
- *What are the loading, delivery, lighting, and operational needs of these businesses, and how can they be managed to minimize neighborhood disruption?*

Chapter 04

Economy and Opportunity

The goals in this chapter include:

Goal 5: **Diversify the economy to grow the non-residential tax base.**

Goal 6: **Create and enhance walkable mixed-use hubs that appeal to a broad range of residents, employers, and employees.**

Goal 7: **Support entrepreneurs across different industries to launch, scale, and mature in the city.**

These goals make Ann Arbor more:

Affordable

by preserving affordable commercial space and diversifying the tax base

Equitable

by improving access to economic opportunity across the city with a focus on disadvantaged groups

Sustainable

by bringing people closer to services and jobs in mixed use centers, enabling better transportation options, and supporting a circular economy to reduce the city's carbon footprint

Dynamic

by diversifying the economy and tax base, supporting new businesses, and creating great places

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Rationale

What We've Heard:

- There is support for significant new development within the downtown area, as well as for its expansion. Community members also broadly support aligning growth with transit to create walkable, mixed-use communities. Establishing new activity centers along transit corridors—with housing, offices, retail, and entertainment—would bring amenities closer to more parts of the city.
- Residents value the city's small businesses and the services they provide. However, there is concern about business displacement, particularly with ongoing downtown development and the introduction of new mixed-use areas. Many community members want growth to be accompanied by anti-displacement efforts that support legacy businesses, preserve affordable commercial spaces, and ensure a continued mix of businesses that serve a range of incomes. There is particular concern for protecting local minority- and immigrant-owned storefronts. These efforts are seen as essential to maintaining a city that is both affordable and equitable.
- Residents would like to see more walkable and accessible neighborhood-serving retail amenities, particularly small-scale mom and pop businesses, so they don't have to rely on driving for everyday needs.
- The influence of the University of Michigan (U-M) on the city's housing market and tax base is a recurring theme, with concern centered on its expansion and its impact on affordability for residents and small businesses. More diversity in economic opportunities and increasing the commercial tax base is important.

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Economy & Opportunity

Rationale

Key Considerations:

Economic diversification

- The Ann Arbor region is the 4th most economically dependent on anchor institutions in the country, more than 3 times the national average.[1]
- Ann Arbor is already one of the highest taxed cities in the state and overly dependent on the residential tax base.[2]
- 42% of the parcel area in the city is tax exempt and taxable land continues to shrink as U-M acquires more taxable property, increasing the tax burden on the residential tax base further.[3]
- The city's economic development strategy, A New Approach to Economic Development, supports economic growth, expansion of the tax base and revenue, and a strategic land acquisition strategy.

Top Employers in Ann Arbor Area

sources:
U-M Faculty & Staff Numbers (Ann Arbor Campus & Hospital): University of Michigan Faculty and Staff Headcount Summary

Non U-M Employee Counts:
City of Ann Arbor Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Ann Arbor Spark 2023

Principal Employers - 2023	Employees
University of Michigan Faculty & Staff	*31,987*
University of Michigan Medicine	*21,475*
Trinity Health System	*5,900*
Veterans Administration	*3,500*
Ann Arbor Public Schools	*2,500*
Integrated Health Associates	*1,600*
Toyota	*1,400*
Washtenaw County Government	*1,200*
Domino's Pizza	*1,100*
Thompson-Reuters	*1,100*
City of Ann Arbor	*700*

1 *Economic Reliance on Anchor Institutions by Patrick T. Harker, Deborah Diamond, Theresa Dunne & Sisi Zhang, 14 May 2024, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (https://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/workforce-and-economic-development/economic-reliance-on-anchor-institutions)*
2 *SmartAsset Second Annual Study - U.S. Census Bureau for 2023, 2023 CAFR, Ann Arbor Financial Disclosure Form.*
3 *City of Ann Arbor Assessor's Office Data.*

Key Considerations:

Opportunities for new companies with U-M investment

- U-M has adopted a new approach with an increased emphasis on creating companies versus traditional licensing and startup launch programs. With MCity, the university's mobility research and development hub, and the growth of biomedical research, U-M has begun investing in its technology changing the trajectory of local company formation. Since 2021, U-M has been averaging 23 startups per year. In 2024, 28 startups launched and $514m in venture capital raised.
- Without available space within the city, these emerging companies may be forced to relocate to nearby townships or even outside the county to remain in the region. Of the 28 startups launched in 2024, only 10 have located in Ann Arbor, 7 have moved elsewhere in Michigan, and 11 have left the state.[1] Startups that succeed will need space outside of university labs and incubators to scale up. Inexpensive space is critical to manage the "burn rate," or the rate at which a company burns through its cash on hand, of venture capital.

University of Michigan Funding:

source: University of Michigan

- *2016 - Biomedical Venture Fund launched*
- *2019 - Accelerate Blue Fund (internal venture capital fund for UM startups) launched*
- *2021 - Climate Venture Fund launched*
- *2024 - Michigan University Innovation Capital Fund (pre-seed venture capital fund) launched and Accelerate Blue Foundry program launched*

1 *University of Michigan, https://innovationpartnerships.umich.edu/portfolio/, NP Analysis of U-M data plus individual company research.*

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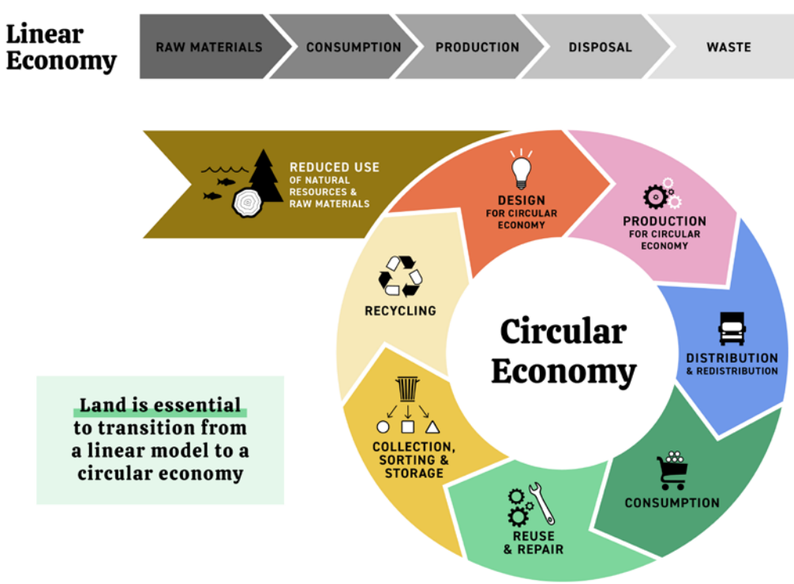
Rationale

Job diversity, equity, and sustainability

- Jobs in manufacturing, construction, warehousing, industrial trades, and repair or circular economy sectors typically use industrial-type spaces, offer higher wages, and do not require advanced degrees. These industries also provide significant employment opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) workers.[2]
- A²ZERO calls for a circular economy which entails responsible resource use, recycling, and repair to give goods and resources a new life or extend the useful life of an item, including materials repair, recycling, and redistribution.
- There are relatively few places in Ann Arbor to locate any substantial jobs particularly those that require certain types of locations and facilities as very little of the land is zoned for industrial use.
- The incentive zones shown on the map on page 75 include the **SmartZone**, which provides capital to support the commercialization of research products developed at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, as well as the growth of private high-tech enterprises that might otherwise be delayed or located outside the SmartZone area. Also shown are **Opportunity Zones**, which offer preferential IRS tax treatment to encourage private and public investment in underserved communities, as defined by census tracts.

2 *Appendix - Economic Development, page 74*



Whereas a linear economy utilizes raw materials and ends in waste, a circular economy is an economic system that generates value by reclaiming and reusing material resources.

For more information about the circular economy, see the A²ZERO Circular Economy Page

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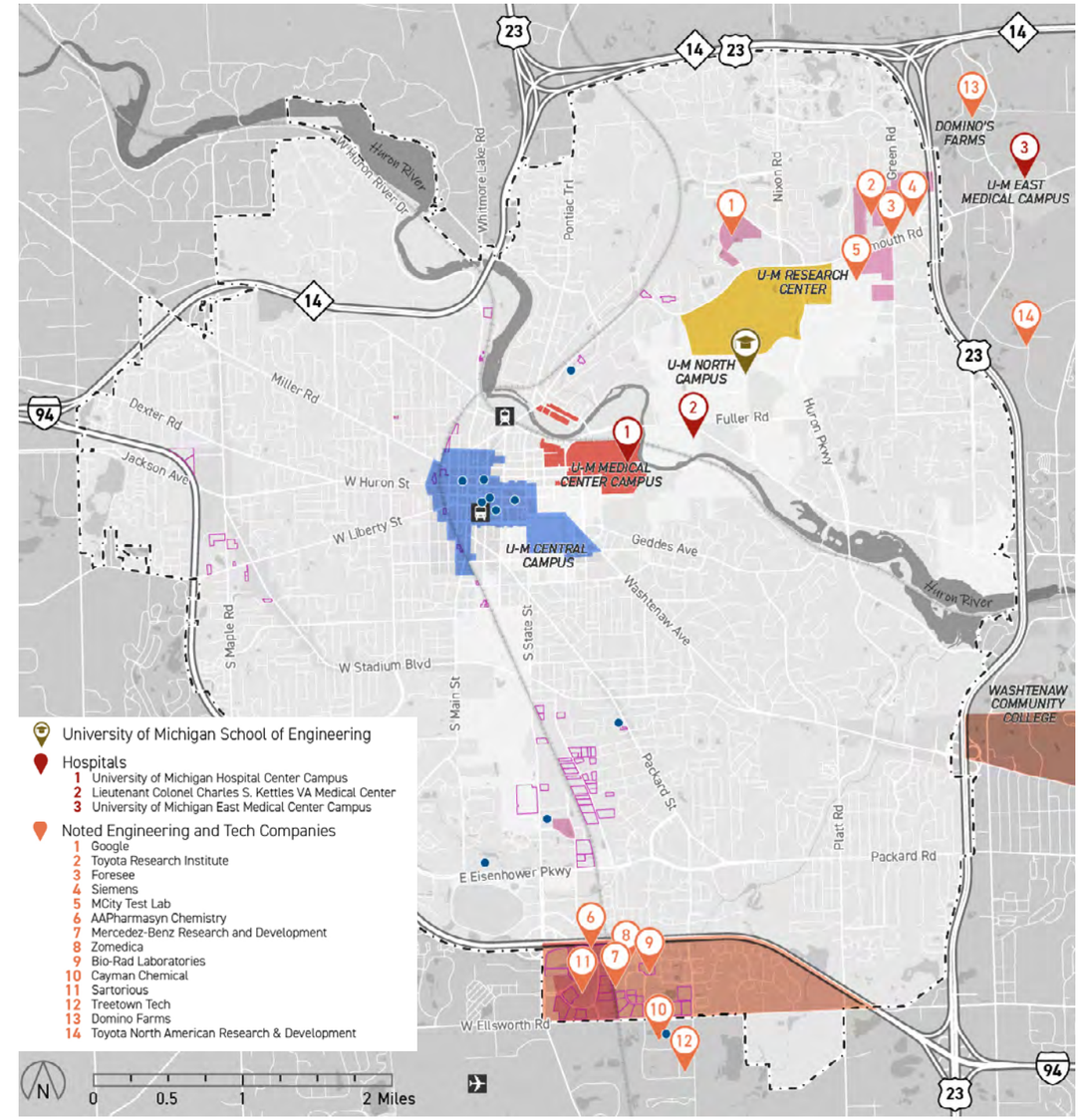

Map
Technology Development Locations

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS, University of Michigan Campus Plan 2050, DDA, Assessor's Office

- *SmartZone Incentive District*
- *Land Zoned for Research*
- *Incubators, Accelerators, Coworking Spaces*
- *Future U-M Innovation District (In Active Planning)*
- *U-M Hospital Center Campus & Medical Area*
- *Opportunity Zones*
- *Parcels with Industrial Buildings (by Use Code)*

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Retail characteristics

- Ann Arbor is a highly desirable market for both small, locally owned businesses and national retailers. These businesses are woven throughout neighborhoods, providing essential goods, services, and gathering spaces.
- Ann Arbor's retail serves the region and are major contributors to the tax base. Visitors and residents originating outside of Ann Arbor contribute to the viability of retail space. Arborland and Briarwood are among the city's major taxpayers.[1]
- However, small businesses are increasingly at risk as neighborhood shopping centers are redeveloped to support the city's housing production goals—often without intentional strategies to preserve commercial space or retain existing tenants.
- Retail space vacancy rates are low - 3.9% as of Q2 2023 - resulting in significant rental rate growth of 39.6% between 2013 and 2023.[2] This tight market creates high barriers to entry for entrepreneurs seeking brick-and-mortar locations, limiting opportunities for new businesses to establish themselves.

Retail types

- Neighborhood Goods and Services: This category includes establishments that heavily depend on the patronage of residents. Business types include: grocery stores, drugstores, florists, bakeries, specialty food stores, dry cleaner/ laundromats, hair and nail salons, printers, pet salons, machine repair shop, and similar uses.
- Food and Beverage: This category includes establishments that serve food and/or alcohol consumed on-premises, serving a range of customers and trip purposes. Business types include: sit-down restaurants, cafes, bars, coffee shops, sandwich shops, ice cream shops, quick-bite establishments, fast-food restaurants, and similar uses.
- General Merchandise: Customers are often comparison shoppers in this category, seeking best quality, price, or overall value to meet their need. Business types include: clothing stores, furniture stores, bookstores, jewelry stores, gift boutiques, pet stores, sporting goods stores, home goods stores, craft stores, antique shops, electronics stores, auto parts stores, and similar uses.

Supporting new retail

- Additional residential development helps to sustainably offer new retail in the city. On average, each resident supports 46 sq.ft. of retail space. The following outlines the number of households required to support a business in each of the following categories and based on 100% capture of average expenditures:
  - Grocery store - typical format of 40,000 sq.ft.: 3,065 households / small format of 10,000 sq.ft.: 766 households
  - Hardware store - typical format of 10,000 sq.ft.: 4.641 households / small format of 5,000 sq.ft.: 2,320 households
  - Restaurant of 3,500 sq.ft.: 616 households

1 City 2023 Bond Disclosure sourced from EMMA
2 Costar, 2023

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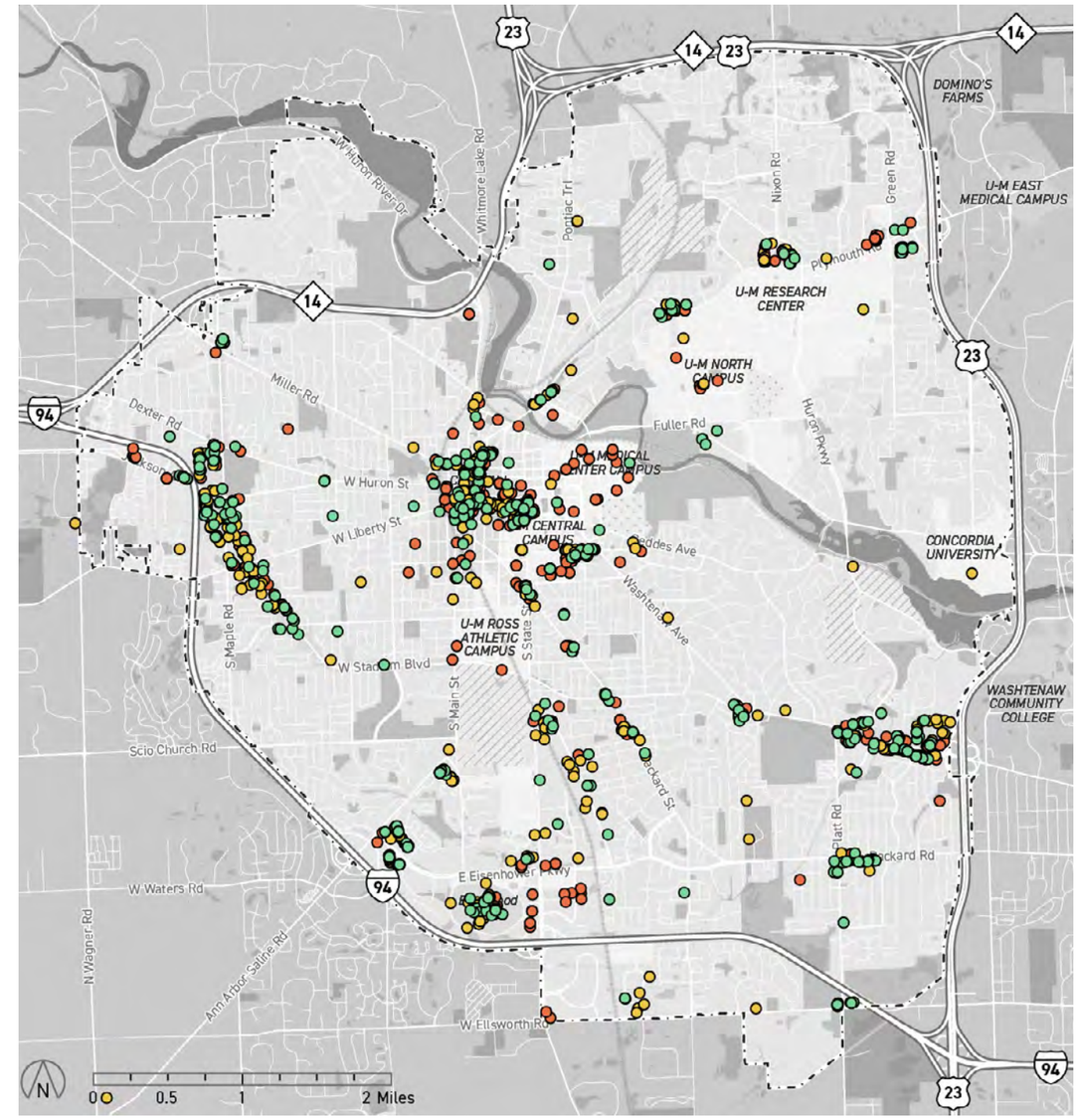

Map
Existing Retail

- *Food & Beverage (646 businesses)*
- *General Merchandise (493 businesses)*
- *Neighborhood Goods & Services (373 businesses)*

source: Google, &Access, June 2023

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Goal 05:

Diversify the economy to grow the non-residential tax base

Strategies:

5.1
Secure a share of the companies that grow out of universities

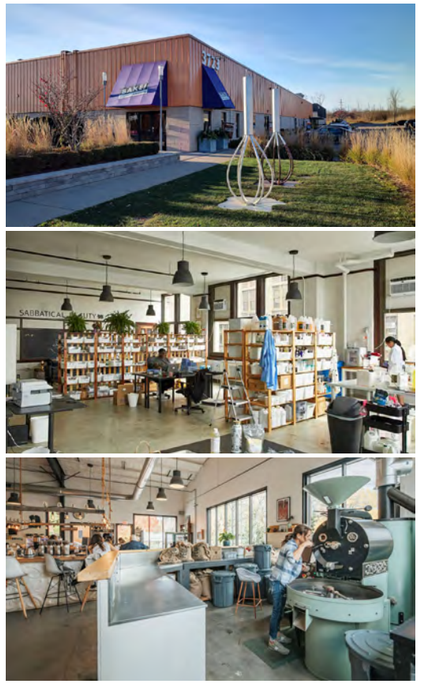
In order to achieve the goals of the city's economic development strategy to attract and grow businesses and diversify the economy and tax base, successful commercialization of university-originated technology, inventions, and innovations will be needed. For example, the University of Michigan's shift in approach to creating companies will create more opportunities for start-ups and capturing a share of these start-ups in Ann Arbor will be important. In 2024, 28 start-ups launched, of which only 10 have located in Ann Arbor.[1] Helping these start-ups succeed in Ann Arbor and moving them out of university labs and incubators will need a combination of partnerships, commercial space, and incentive models.

1 University of Michigan, https://innovationpartnerships.umich.edu/portfolio/, NP Analysis of U-M data plus individual company research.

5.2
Encourage a wide-range of businesses by offering flexibility in land use and regulations in key locations

Land is a necessary component for supporting a diverse range of businesses, especially those with larger footprints or hybrid operations. For example, advancing the city's A²ZERO circular economy goals may require industrial-scale facilities for activities such as recycling and repair, returnable container washing, or storage for thrift stores. Hybrid businesses, responding to a changing retail landscape, may sell consumer products while also requiring space for distribution or simple manufacturing. Another example is coffee shops that incorporate co-working, event, or meeting spaces. With greater land use flexibility, there is more potential to integrate a variety of jobs into the local economy, many of which do not require an advanced degree.

Because residential uses will be allowed near higher-intensity uses, nuisance regulations should be reviewed to reduce potential conflicts. At the same time, flexibility for hybrid businesses and industrial facilities should remain a priority. When well-coordinated, this type of land use flexibility can support sustainability initiatives and create jobs across a wide range of skill levels.



Examples of hybrid businesses that combine consumer products with facility uses such as distribution, simple manufacturing, showroom/retail in one location.

image sources: (top) William Case, (middle) Mike Persico, (bottom) Treeline Coffee Roasters

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Goal 06:

Create and enhance walkable mixed-use hubs that appeal to a broad range of residents, employers, and employees.

Strategies:

6.1
Strengthen downtown as the economic, cultural, and civic heart of the community

While the goal is to create walkable, mixed-use hubs throughout the city, downtown has a specific role to play as it is already established with existing public assets, infrastructure, and transit investment, as well as organizational and implementation support in the form of the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority. To capitalize on these significant advantages, the city should expand the downtown district for greater density and intensity of uses, accompanied by investment in associated infrastructure and services to support additional people, making downtown more welcoming, affordable, and inviting for all people. This includes broadening the range of activities and amenities, enhancing the pedestrian environment to connect key destinations, applying curb management strategies to support the needs of competing users, and ensuring city services can meet the increase in demand.

Plan Alignment

Downtown Development Authority Development Plan:
Ann Arbor's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is updating its strategic plan and considering the first expansion of its boundary since the 1980s. This update is being closely coordinated with the Future Land Use Map to ensure alignment. Expanding the DDA boundary reflects both current development patterns and community feedback gathered during this planning process, particularly around Downtown. It aims to better represent already-approved developments and support a cohesive urban framework.

6.2
Promote the expeditious redevelopment of car-oriented shopping centers to create more downtown-like environments, with a greater mix of uses and improved walkability.

Redeveloping car-oriented shopping centers like Briarwood presents an opportunity to create more mixed-use hubs and add significant housing to the city. However, unlike downtown, these areas do not yet have the necessary infrastructure to support higher density development. The city will need to upgrade infrastructure and city services to support new uses and density, and encourage TheRide to align transit improvements. Additionally, these types of shopping centers are difficult to redevelop if they are not already vacant. Ann Arbor's shopping centers have high occupancy rates with well-loved businesses, some of which have long leases which would need to be bought out for redevelopment to occur. Given the complexity of such redevelopment projects, the city will need to consider a combination of regulatory tools and potential incentives to encourage redevelopment, with a goal of transitioning these shopping centers into walkable, mixed use hubs with flexibility to support existing small businesses.

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Goal 07:

Support entrepreneurs across different industries to launch, scale, and mature in the city

Strategies:

7.1
Encourage a variety of commercial and industrial spaces in the city to provide affordable opportunities for local entrepreneurs

One of the challenges Ann Arbor faces as it grows is the loss of affordable space for small businesses whether they are retail entrepreneurs or tech-based businesses outgrowing incubators. The city should explore various strategies and programs, including incentives, to help businesses start, grow, and stay in Ann Arbor. To do so, the city should work with its partners to identify and prioritize space for preservation and affordable "growth space" in key areas, such as downtown, neighborhood commercial districts, publicly owned assets, and underutilized industrial zones. In residential areas, the city should also explore Accessory Commercial Uses (ACUs) as a long-term strategy to address affordability challenges while enabling small-scale entrepreneurship close to home.

7.2
Support local entrepreneurs through training, financing, and technical assistance programs

Fledgling businesses benefit from additional support to help manage risk and uncertainty, particularly in today's rapidly changing retail landscape, where margins are thin and resources limited. This need is even greater in the face of potential redevelopment and displacement as Ann Arbor grows. The city can help fill capacity gaps and provide greater stability through a range of measures. These may include reducing regulatory barriers, expanding marketing programs such as the A²ZERO Green Business Challenge, offering credit enhancement and financing options for new commercial tenants, and supporting master leasing (in which a nonprofit, service provider, or government agency leases space from a property owner and then subleases to smaller tenants). The city can also promote model lease frameworks that increase transparency in rent rates and rent increases, while requiring relocation assistance in cases of substantial rate hikes.

7.3
Support workforce capacity building and clear connection between development and emerging job opportunities

The recommendations of this plan to increase development, create new businesses, and support emerging tech opportunities lend themselves to new job opportunities for a range of skillsets. To meet this opportunity, the work force must be ready. The city can help ensure the skilled trades are able to meet the coming development demand by working with county and institutional partners on training and programming, including in relation to green construction and green jobs, as well as engaging contractors associations and programs. One example is the collaboration with OSI and local IBEW 252 and UA190. Working together, these organizations have created a foundational workforce development strategy to grow local, good paying, family sustaining jobs in sustainability-related industries. Additionally, local educational institutions should be encouraged to provide tech literacy, tech exposure, and skill development training that matches with emerging tech opportunities in the region.

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Chapter 04

Infrastructure and Services

The goals in this chapter include:

Goal 8: Increase community resilience to support disaster preparedness, climate change readiness, and community health and well-being

Goal 9: Invest in a mutually-supportive street, transportation, and land use system that prioritizes safe and equitable access

Goal 10: Balance development with protection and integration of natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem

Goal 11: Promote carbon neutrality through efficient energy and resource use and transitioning to zero carbon sources

Goal 12: Plan for and invest in city services and infrastructure that can accommodate expected growth.

These goals make Ann Arbor more:

Affordable

by reducing transportation and energy costs through enabling better transportation options and improving energy efficiency and access to clean energy

Equitable

by investing in and improving access to community health, services, and amenities, and enhancing resilience for everyone

Sustainable

by encouraging efficient land use through compact, dense development to better preserve natural features and enable better transportation options thus supporting A²ZERO goals for reducing the city's carbon footprint, improving resilience of people and place, working toward a circular economy, improving energy efficiency, and transitioning to clean energy

Dynamic

by encouraging complete neighborhoods that are more walkable, creating new mixed use centers for activity, and strengthening community relationships and quality of life

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Rationale

What We've Heard:

Resilience and Natural Features:

- The importance of natural features to the city's health, resilience, and identity emerged as a major theme throughout the engagement process. In response to concerns about the instability caused by climate change, the public emphasized that city infrastructure should incorporate systems capable of supporting the community through future stressors.
- Many participants viewed the network of open spaces, parks, tree canopies, and other natural features as essential for resident well-being and community resilience.
- Increasing density by building up rather than building out is seen as necessary to have a greater impact on preserving ecologically beneficial green spaces and also meet larger sustainability goals by creating walkable neighborhoods and reducing car dependency.
- However, many participants expressed anxiety that increased density would lead to loss of habitat, quality open space, and tree canopy.
- The quality of open spaces was often seen as more important than the quantity, with an emphasis on high-quality habitat, such as forests and wetlands.
- When asked about how to balance competing priorities, the top priorities included aligning development with transportation infrastructure, preserving natural features, and greater density of housing.

Infrastructure:

- Some community members expressed concern that additional density in areas of the city would strain city infrastructure or require unrealistic investment, and there is also concern over the high tax burden. Intentionally linking land use changes to transportation and infrastructure investments is preferred over increasing spending and taxes for areas of the city with little existing infrastructure and fewer drivers for growth.
- Improved infrastructure for walking, biking, and transit was a major theme coming from nearly all the engagement activities, with support for prioritizing safe biking and walking over cars to meet plan goals. However, some expressed concern that these changes have made driving more difficult in the short term.

Sustainability

- Sustainable building practices, reducing fossil fuel dependence, and transitioning to clean energy emerged as themes throughout the engagement process, although some noted potential conflicts with promoting affordability.
- Residents expressed support for the A²ZERO goal of achieving carbon neutrality, with particular interest in the expanded use of renewable energy.
- Green infrastructure and stormwater solutions were seen as an integral part of the overall city system.
- Waste reduction and recycling, composting programs, and reducing overall waste generation are top of mind for many Ann Arborites.

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Resilience and Natural Features

- Ann Arbor is home to significant natural features including the Huron River corridor, woodlands, wetlands, and open spaces, that play a vital role in shaping community identity and supporting both ecological and watershed health. Many of these features are already under public ownership.
- Wetlands offer many benefits including flood control, stormwater storage and release, ground water recharge, and water quality improvement. Their preservation helps to maintain ecological stability, educational opportunities, and quality of life.
- Climate change is increasing precipitation variability, substantially affecting stormwater management needs, as well as increasing the urban heat island effect.
- Nature-based solutions can complement traditional infrastructure while providing ecological benefits.
- The city has robust programs in place to conserve natural features during development and to increase overall tree canopy throughout the city. Under those programs, in some instances, development projects are modified to protect natural features, and in some instances natural features are removed to accommodate site development needs. When the loss of natural features is necessary, that loss is mitigated through site design features and new plantings, and the city's tree canopy overall is being enhanced through the planting of new and mitigation trees.

City Efforts To Protect Natural Features, Underway or Planned

Urban Tree Canopy

- *The 10,000 Tree Program, which has surpassed its distribution goal with 11,000 trees planted on private property to date.*
- *Partnership with the Elizabeth Dean Fund in a collaborative and synergistic fashion for tree planting and tree maintenance*
- *Provide educational and engagement materials to highlight the importance of urban trees and other natural features to our community members*
- *Implement a grant-funded program for tree maintenance work on private property within EPA-identified disadvantaged communities to improve tree canopy health and reduce risk of property damage*
- *Assess current tree canopy and health, prioritize plantings based on canopy cover and equity*

Stormwater

- *Maintain the floodplain management overlay district*
- *Develop Comprehensive Stormwater Plan that incorporates sustainability and equity and enforce stormwater credits*
- *Promote Washtenaw County's Master Rain Gardener program*

Planning & Development

- *Enforce existing zoning protection and mitigation regulations for seven natural features*
- *The Greenbelt Millage, which protects surrounding farmland and the city's water supply*

Biodiversity

- *Collected 30 years of ecological data within the city's park system to increase biodiversity on public land*

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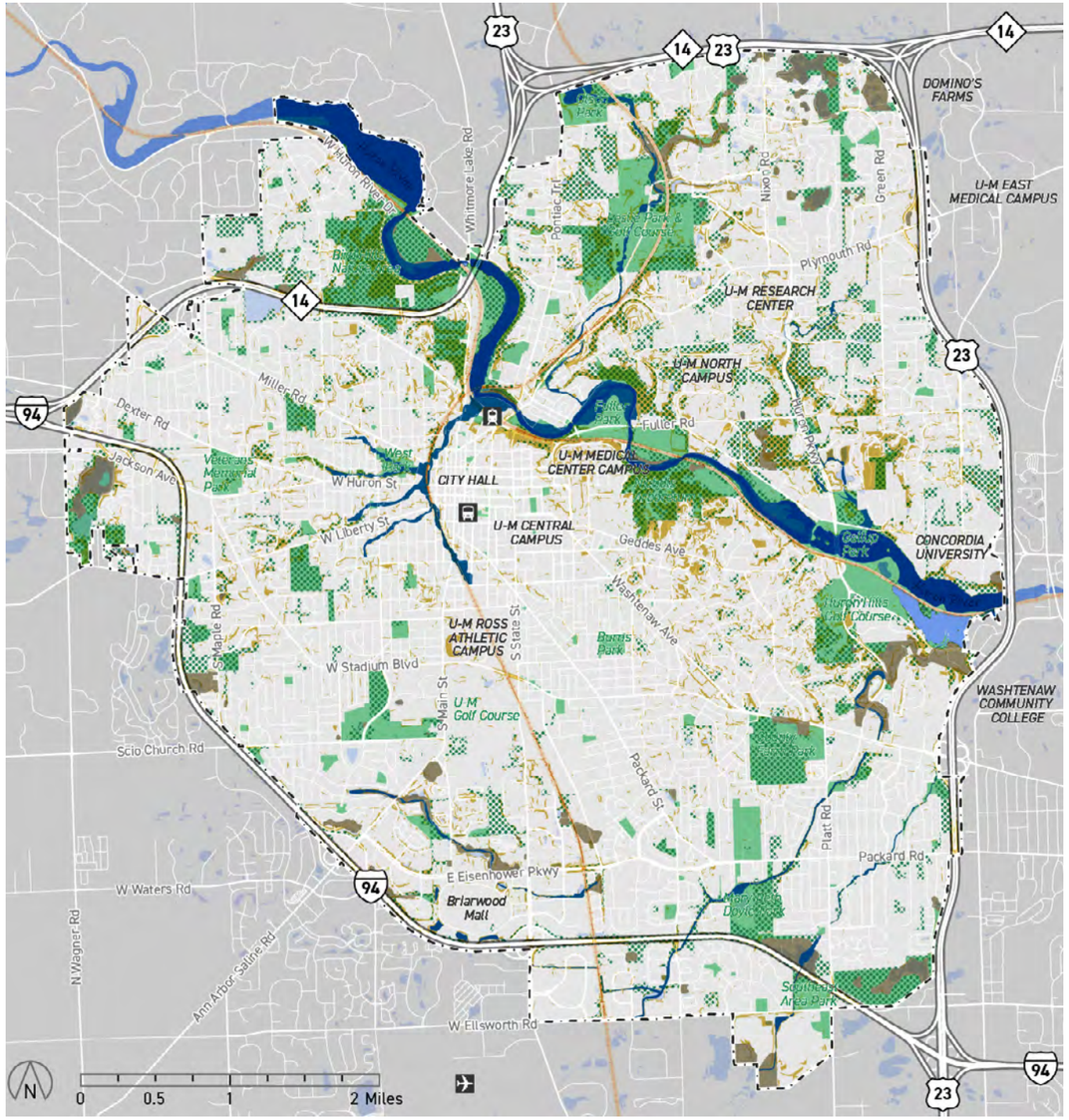

Map
Natural Features

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS, US Fish & Wildlife Service

- *Hydrology (Rivers and Other Water Bodies)*
- *Floodplain (FEMA Flood Map)*
- *Park/Open Space*
- *Woodlands*
- *Wetlands*
- *Steep Slopes*

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Energy

- In November 2024, voters approved the creation of the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), marking a significant step toward diversifying the city's energy sources and advancing its sustainability and resilience goals. Implementing the SEU will involve identifying suitable sites for solar installations and maximizing rooftop solar potential in new development projects.
- A major challenge in Ann Arbor's energy transition will be providing cleaner heating sources; thermal energy districts, similar to those deployed in cities like Framingham and Copenhagen, will help to distribute equitable and decarbonized heating solutions.
- Residents have expressed concerns that increased building heights could shade rooftop solar units. Although experiences in other cities suggest that shading effects are minimal, the Plan should aim to minimize zero-sum tradeoffs between valued goals. Capping height at three stories in the residential category is one important step in that direction.
- Aging housing stock poses a costly challenge for many homeowners, as older homes and buildings often suffer from inefficient, leaky roofs, windows, and building envelopes. Weatherization, such as sealing air leaks, upgrading insulation, and improving windows and roofing, is a critical strategy for improving energy efficiency, reducing utility costs, and increasing comfort and resilience. New development and the opportunity for electrification provide even faster emissions reductions.
- Shifting towards higher density buildings for residential and multifamily provide excellent opportunities to catalyze district energy systems with ground source heat pumps. District energy systems are characterized by one or more central plants producing hot water, steam, and/or chilled water, which then flows through a network of insulated pipes to provide hot water, space heating, and/or air conditioning for nearby buildings. District energy systems combine loads for multiple buildings (as found in downtowns, institutional, or industrial campuses) to create economies of scale that help reduce energy costs and enable the use of high-efficiency technologies.

Existing Energy Transition Programs:

- *Sustainable Energy Utility*
- *Home Energy Rebate Program*
- *Home Energy Advisor Services*
- *Heat Pump Concierge*
- *Aging in Place Efficiently Program*
- *A Carbon-Neutral Bryant Neighborhood*
- *Commercial Decarbonization Program*
- *Green Rental Housing Program*

Urban Tree Canopy

- The urban tree canopy provides numerous benefits, including cleaner air and water, cooler temperatures, and enhanced wildlife habitat. It also plays a critical role in reducing stormwater flows, offering significant stormwater management benefits.
- Ann Arbor's urban tree canopy was 33% at the last assessment in 2010, but an updated assessment is planned.[1] Comparing across Michigan, Ann Arbor's canopy cover is higher than Detroit and Lansing, but slightly lower than Grand Rapids.

1 *City of Ann Arbor Urban & Community Forest Management Plan, 2014.*

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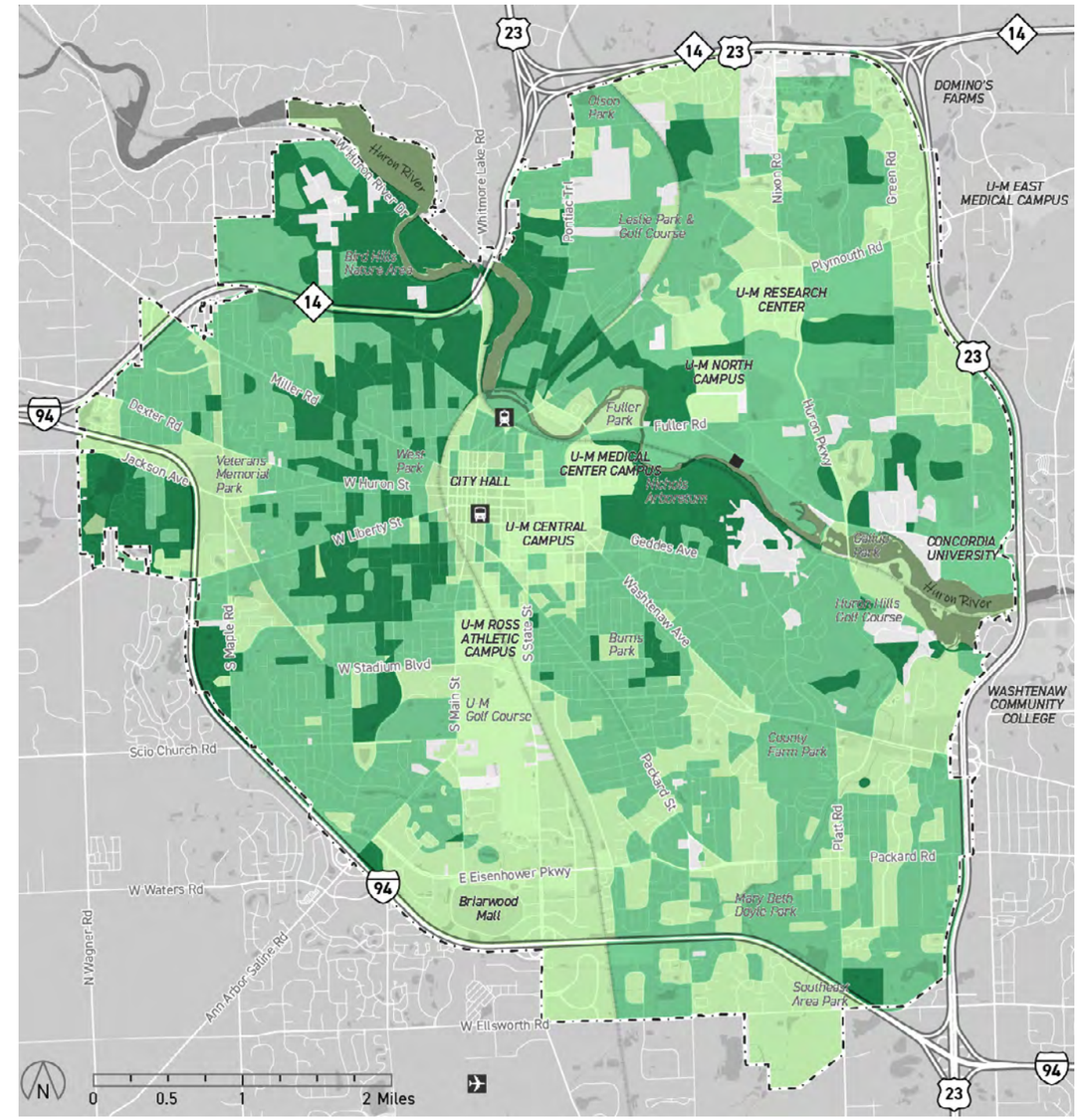

Map
Urban Tree Canopy (2010)

- *No data*
- *<25% Canopy*
- *25-50% Canopy*
- *>50% Canopy*

source: Ann Arbor Urban Tree Canopy Assessment, 2010

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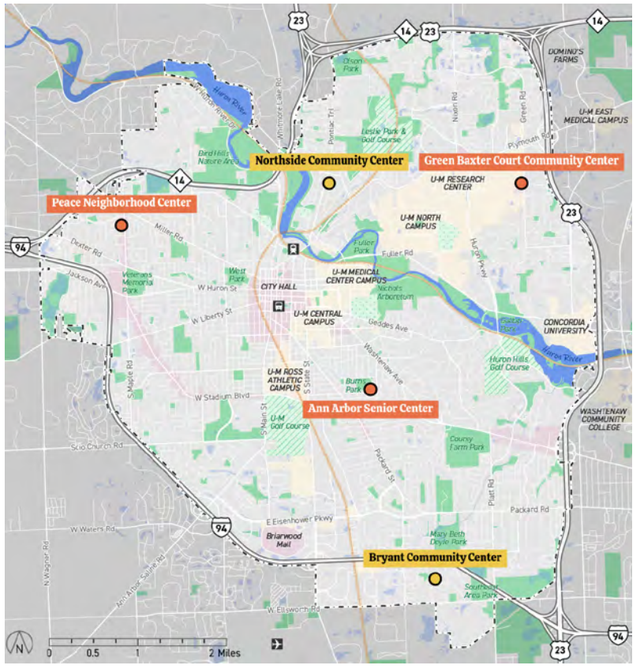
Rationale

Key Considerations:

Infrastructure

- The Comprehensive Plan offers a vision of the city that enables growth and transformation in alignment with community values, however, existing infrastructure and other constraints will influence the realization of this vision. While limiting the plan and future land use to current infrastructure would hinder the city's ability to evolve and achieve its broader vision, it remains essential to acknowledge that existing infrastructure and other constraints will influence the realization of that vision. Some infrastructure investments may be phased in over time to accommodate growing demands, while in other cases, upfront investment may be necessary to support the envisioned growth. Any implementation of this plan must carefully align with analysis and projections of infrastructure investment needs and coordinate zoning with capital improvement planning.



Map
Resilience Hubs

Active Resilience Hubs

Northside Community Center
(809 Taylor St, Ann Arbor, MI 48105)

Bryant Community Center
(3 W Eden Ct, Ann Arbor, MI 48108)

Future Resilience Hubs

Ann Arbor Senior Center
(1320 Baldwin Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104)

Peace Neighborhood Center
(1111 N Maple Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103)

Green Baxter Court Community Center
(1737 Green Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48105)

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City Efforts To Decarbonize

Climate Millage

On the November 2022 general election ballot, Ann Arbor residents voted overwhelmingly in favor (71%) of a millage related to the community's investment in climate action. The approximately $7 million dollars generated annually (through 2043) is a historic vote that illustrates the community's dedication to a just and carbon-neutral future. The millage will help to accomplish the following from the Carbon Neutrality Plan:

- *Create, enhance, and provide services that move the city toward a zero waste, circular economy.*
- *Advance the deployment and utilization of renewable energies such as solar and geothermal*
- *Support energy efficiency and weatherization programs designed for residents and businesses in improving the energy and water efficiency.*
- *Advance neighborhood and community resilience and preparedness to climate change*
- *Create and sustain home and transportation related electrification programs*
- *Support educational efforts to administer such programs and services*
- *Use to unlock additional financial resources*

Bryant Neighborhood

Ann Arbor's Bryant neighborhood is one of the city's lowest-income areas. OSI has partnered with the non-profit Community Action Network (CAN) to make it one of the first carbon neutral neighborhoods in the country! This effort would not only help to decarbonize the neighborhood but significantly reduce utility bills and provide financial savings for households. Through grant funding, the city's pilot program is providing free energy efficiency improvements, helping transition appliances to electric, providing solar and energy storage, making home health and safety improvements, and creating a geothermal network that will provide sustainable heating and cooling for the neighborhood, all while advancing goals of affordability, equity, and sustainability.

- Sanitary sewer and stormwater management infrastructure are currently limited, and the city will need to invest in water distribution and conveyance capacity improvements to accommodate future growth. In addition, source water constraints must be managed to protect the health of the Huron River and preserve reserves for drought or emergency events. Finally, the existing water treatment plant is restricted by its size and cannot be expanded at its current location.
- Ann Arbor's community infrastructure includes resilience hubs, which are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during, or after a natural hazard event. They strive to enhance community sustainability and resilience through a bottom-up approach centered on co-development and local leadership. The city is looking to develop a resilience hub in each of the five wards of the city.

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Rationale

Key Considerations:

Transportation

- Ann Arbor's role as a regional employment and education hub shapes its transportation patterns. Close to 80,000 people work in Ann Arbor and live elsewhere, while 20,000 live in Ann Arbor and work elsewhere.[2] These commuting patterns impact land use goals and the city's ability to achieve safe and carbon-neutral streets.
- In some areas of the city, over 50% of households do not own a car.[3] Compact land use, frequent and reliable transit service, and safe, comfortable places to walk and bike are important to allow these individuals to access daily needs, as well as to support commuters.
- The Moving Together plan identified Tier 1 focus corridors as having 37% of all fatalities and severe injuries. These include many of the higher-speed, higher-volume arterials that move traffic through the city: Washtenaw, Plymouth, State, Packard, Main, and Division. Planning for increased density on these corridors will require corresponding speed management, transit, pedestrian, and bike improvements to improve safety.
- The Moving Together plan establishes key goals and values to guide its approach to mobility. The two overall goals, zero deaths or serious injuries on the roads and zero transportation emissions, form a guidepost for transportation infrastructure and corresponding land use decisions. Compact, walkable communities allow residents to access most of their daily needs by walking and biking.
- Transit is most cost-effective at dense nodes and corridors of development where ridership is higher. For this reason, the greatest density should be planned where frequent transit lines already exist, creating a positive feedback loop where each supports the other. Regardless, a future land use scenario that adds thousands of residents will require investment in transportation infrastructure to make the city less car dependent.

2 Census LEHD - On The Map data, (Primary Jobs 2021).
3 NHGIS, ACS 5-year estimates 2018-2022.

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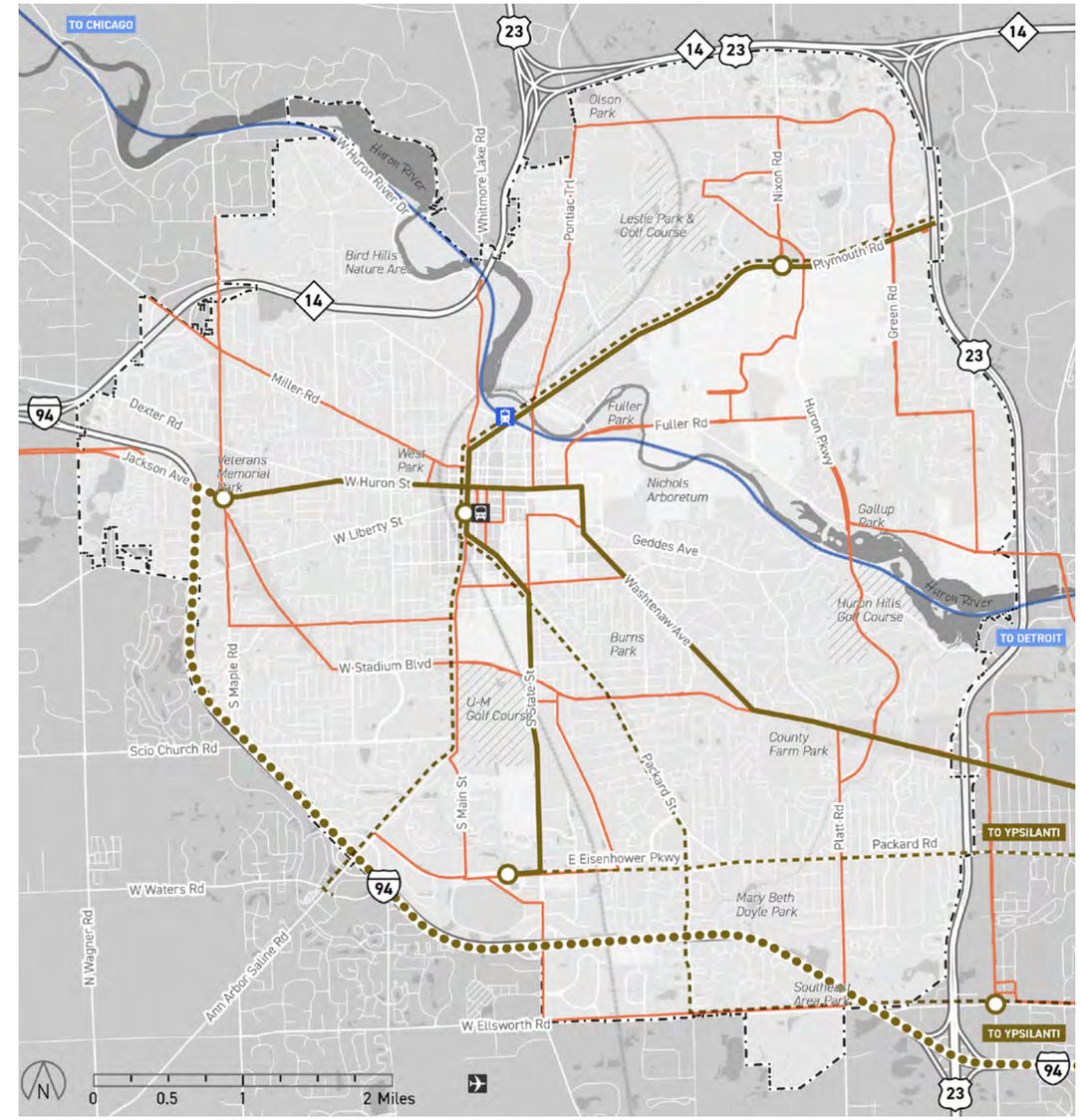

Map
TheRide 2045 Proposed Transit System

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, TheRide

- *Existing Amtrak Route*
- *TheRide - Transit Hubs*
- *TheRide - Bus Rapid Transit*
- *TheRide - Express Service*
- *TheRide - Priority Bus Service*
- *TheRide - High Frequency Service Lines*

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Goal 08:

Increase community resilience to support disaster preparedness, climate change readiness, and community health and well-being

Strategies:

8.1
Strengthen social resilience through education, access, and connections

Social factors, such as community relationships and resources, allow a community to endure and recover from stressors. Yet the U.S. Surgeon General has identified a loneliness and isolation epidemic that has negative impacts on health and resilience. The city and its partners can help facilitate stronger community relationships and social resilience through programming to strengthen community capacity and civic engagement, such as city meetings, events, programs like Citizen Pruners, Community Academy, A²ZERO Ambassadors, and park stewardship initiatives, as well as through improving the vitality and appeal of physical gathering locations such as libraries, cultural assets, and other community centers. The city should also continue to work with the county and non-profits to increase support for social networks and services targeting vulnerable populations facing long-term challenges, such as mental health issues, substance use disorders, youth crises, and chronic homelessness.

8.2
Strengthen physical resilience by investing in the infrastructure and facilities needed to prepare for and recover from disaster

The city should ensure that essential facilities are designed and upgraded to withstand and adapt to future climate risks. To support its residents, it can invest in resilience hubs and identify parcels and/or buildings to be considered "resilient sites" for disaster response meeting places, as well as enhance communication and response systems to create a robust and resilient disaster readiness program. Additionally, the city can enhance access to county-designated cooling and warming centers and increase their number for use during extreme weather events or power outages.

The city regularly updates its Hazard Mitigation Plan to anticipate potential disasters and develop strategies to protect against harm to its residents and infrastructure. Any preparation, planning, and recovery from natural and humanmade disasters should align with this more detailed plan. See the city's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Frequent storms strain the city's infrastructure.

Celebrating the opening of the resilience hub at the Bryant Community Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

image sources: City of Ann Arbor

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Goal 09:

Invest in a mutually-supportive street, transportation, and land use system that prioritizes safe and equitable access

Strategies:

9.1
Develop a context-based street typology decision-making process to design streets appropriately for the expected land use and level of density

A street typology approach provides criteria for decision-making without being too prescriptive. The city can use a street typology approach to align the transportation functions of different types of streets with the adjacent land use context – considering both existing and future land patterns and pairing it with policies to support consistent implementation of street projects. Public investments should support mode shift strategies and compact land use patterns by prioritizing pedestrian safety and comfort with wide, amenity-rich sidewalks in areas slated for growth and building out the All Ages and Abilities bike network to connect these areas, where possible.

9.2
Align transit service and land development

As with street design, transit service and land use must be closely aligned. The city and TheRide are partners in this effort. The city is working to support implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) and high frequency lines as proposed by TheRide. On major corridors, building setbacks and access define the space available for transit, bicycling, pedestrian, and other features. The TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan is planning for four transit hubs, composed of multiple stops serving multiple connecting routes, outside of the downtown cores to facilitate better connectivity between peripheral areas. Accommodating dedicated transit lanes and multimodal transit hubs should be a priority on planned high frequency transit corridors, but plans will have to be coordinated with development and cognizant of the trade-offs inherent in limited right-of-way width.

Plans To Retain

This plan does not replace the Moving Together plan; rather, it aligns with and supports its recommendations. As the Moving Together plan is updated over time, coordination with this plan's strategies will be important to maintain consistency and alignment.

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9.3
Support a shift in transportation modes, away from vehicular use, through infrastructure investments and updated transportation policies

To reduce car dependency and promote a shift to more sustainable modes of transportation, the city will need to upgrade infrastructure to facilitate the mode shift by continuing to build a network of low stress bicycle connections and shared use trails throughout the city, especially connecting hubs of activity, and partner with Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) to prioritize non-motorized walkability and connectivity.

The city will also need to make policy changes at the intersection of transportation and land use, incentivizing the switch to sustainable transportation through a transportation demand management (TDM) strategy. The Association for Commuter Transportation defines TDM as the use of strategies to inform and encourage travelers to maximize the efficiency of our transportation systems, leading to improved mobility, reduced congestion, and lower vehicle emissions. TDM encompasses a range of tools. The Moving Together plan recommends expanding the getDowntown program, which provides downtown employees with bus passes, removing the need for 1200+ parking spaces. If widened to other parts of the city, it could have even greater impact. The city should work towards this goal in partnership with TheRide, employers, and U-M.

The city should continue to work to expand reliable mobility options for people traveling through Ann Arbor, following the Moving Together recommendations for next steps on bike share, scooter share, car share, and other first/last mile solutions.

Regional connections are also critical given the volume of commuters and visitors to Ann Arbor. The city should make efforts to strengthen regional transit options as outlined in Moving Together, continuing to collaborate with the RTA on D2A2 and AirRide expansion, supporting regional express bus and rail, and expanding Park & Ride services and incentives.

Existing City Traffic Demand Management Programs

The city has a history of traffic demand management. Every bus ride and bike ride induced by city programming and infrastructure is a trip not taken in a private vehicle.

25 Years of getDowntown

- *Distributes approximately 3,000 go!passes each year*
- *TheRide estimates about 300,000 go!pass rides over a one-year period*
- *Post-pandemic, the shift to remote work had a significant effect on go!pass use as fewer people commute. Since 2022, the go!pass program is seeing a slow and steady increase.*

2024 Bikeway Counts

- *318,000 bikes on the Downtown Bikeway (Miller, First, William, and Division Streets)*
- *Daily weekday average: 908*
- *Peak month weekday average: 1,454*
- *Maynard Parking Structure vehicle capacity for comparison: 799*

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Goal 10:

Balance development with protection and integration of natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem

Strategies:

10.1
Protect, enhance, and manage natural features or open space that provide ecological benefits

The city's existing natural features protections will be maintained to mitigate the impacts of development on natural features, including woodlands, steep slopes, endangered species habitats, and waterways. The City Council has also provided a mandate to reduce carbon emissions and supporting denser, compact development for efficient use of land and infrastructure will be one of the most important ways the city can reduce carbon emissions.

To support higher-density development, the city should prioritize the quality and ecological function of open space over sheer quantity in its planning processes and regulations. Promoting compact, concentrated development can help preserve ecologically valuable areas, such as woodlands and tree canopy, which offer far greater environmental benefits than lawns.

The city should consider updating its natural features review standards to reflect current ecological understanding and introduce natural features analysis earlier in the site review process. Emphasis should be placed on maximizing ecosystem benefits—such as preserving woodlands, restoring degraded natural features, or protecting landmark trees of a certain size—rather than relying solely on dimensional standards. Performance metrics and incentives should be aligned with these ecological priorities.

Additionally, the city can continue to encourage community greening and sustainability practices to strengthen natural features on private land, including supporting education on sustainable landscaping and property management, and technical assistance and incentives for rain gardens, native plantings, wildflower pollination lawns, and other ecological enhancements.

Did You Know?

The Gelman Plume

In Ann Arbor, contamination poses risks to water supply and water treatment systems. The Gelman Sciences 1,4-dioxane groundwater plume, spans over four miles through western Ann Arbor and portions of Scio and Ann Arbor Townships. Gelman was ordered by a county circuit court to address the plume with state oversight to operate a treatment system and manage more than 250 monitoring wells to track concentrations. The dioxane plume, a suspected carcinogen, poses significant challenges to land use planning in several ways:

- *Increased cost and complexity to develop: Development within the plume area is more difficult. Sites with shallow groundwater must conduct rigorous water quality testing, and if concentrations exceed certain levels, water must be routed to the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) for treatment or hauled offsite to a licensed hazardous waste facility.*
- *Constraints on water supply and treatment: The city depends on Barton Pond for roughly 85% of its drinking water. The expansion of the plume northward beyond the Prohibition Zone toward Barton Pond threatens the city's major drinking water source.*
- *Public perception: Even when concentrations are considered protective of public health as defined under Gelman's court order, residents and businesses often express concerns about living, working, or recreating above the plume.*

In 2024, the State of Michigan referred the Gelman site to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL) because it lacks authority to compel additional cleanup measures as the plume continues to expand beyond the Prohibition Zone. Ann Arbor supports NPL listing, with the expectation that federal involvement will bring additional resources to address the contamination.

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10.2
Encourage tree cover and landscaping to help mitigate the urban heat island effect

The urban forest provides many environmental, economic, and social benefits to the community, including reducing stormwater runoff, improving water and air quality, moderating summer temperatures, lowering utility costs, improving quality of life, and beautifying the city. Ann Arbor's citywide urban tree canopy was 33% in a 2010 assessment with the highest coverage occurring in residential areas (37%) and recreational and open spaces (48%). The city's tree canopy cover goals are determined by land use as shown in the table below with canopy cover data from 2010. Implementation of the SEU through maximizing rooftop solar potential will require coordination of tree canopy goals.

With climate change, it is anticipated that urban temperatures will continue to rise and tree cover and shade will be critical for mitigating its impact. The city should target tree plantings in areas with limited tree coverage, ensure shading and green spaces surround resilience hubs to provide enhanced cooling capacity and update the landmark trees definition to prioritize ecological benefit. Within its parkland, the city will try to balance ongoing and growing needs for open recreational spaces with opportunities for increasing canopy cover.

Tree Canopy Cover Goals

source: Ann Arbor Urban and Community Forest Management Plan, 2014

Land Use Category	2010	Goal
Commercial	*10%*	*15%*
Industrial	*14%*	*25%*
Mixed Use	*9%*	*15%*
Office	*19%*	*30%*
Public/Institutional	*28%*	*40%*
Public Right-of-Way	*24%*	*30%*
Recreation/Open Space	*48%*	*50%*
Residential	*37%*	*60%*

10.3
Reduce stormwater runoff volume and flood occurrences with a focus on deploying nature-based solutions and managing stormwater where it falls

Rainfall is expected to increase in amount and frequency with climate change. Managing stormwater is a critical component of protecting source waters, managing water quality and reducing the impacts of flooding on infrastructure and properties. To help meet the A²ZERO and other city stormwater management goals, the city should continue to prioritize investment in areas with documented flooding issues and opportunities for infiltrative practices in public projects and rights-of-way. The city should seek further opportunities for incentivizing on-site stormwater management in development projects. Through its Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan, the city will continue to explore how to improve stormwater and watershed management with local and regional coordination.

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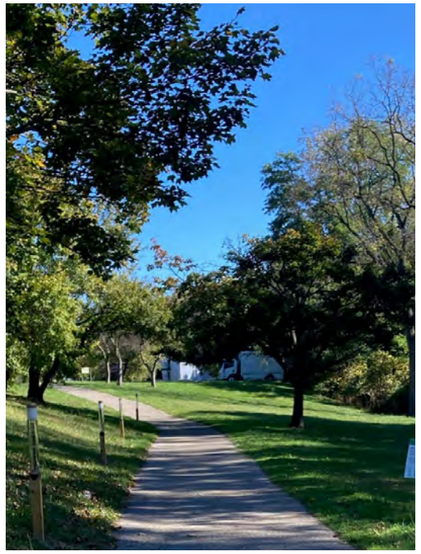
The city has set goals to increase the tree canopy cover across different land uses, including commercial, and recreational and open spaces.



Nature-based solutions such as rain gardens can both help address stormwater run-off and beautify the streetscape.

image sources: City of Ann Arbor

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Goal 11:

Promote carbon neutrality through efficient energy and resource use and transitioning to zero carbon sources

Strategies:

11.1
Support the transition to clean energy through land use and investment

New high density multifamily residential and mixed-use development offer an excellent opportunity to shift to clean energy systems such as solar and geothermal. In 2024, Ann Arbor residents authorized the creation of a Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), an opt-in program that will provide 100% renewable energy from local solar and battery storage systems, diversifying the city's energy sources and making its energy infrastructure more resilient as a whole. As SEU planning and design proceeds, the city will be focusing on small-scale generation and distribution, but may also need to identify parcels suitable for deployment of large-scale solar systems and prioritize developments to reduce construction disruption of streets and rights-of-way. New commercial and residential developments should be coordinated with district energy systems to improve energy efficiency. Additionally, the city should designate buildings and locations critical for resilience where microgrids could be implemented to ensure 100% continuous energy operations.

Did You Know?

District Energy Systems

District energy systems are a highly efficient way to heat and cool many buildings at a district or neighborhood scale from a central plant and are commonly used in areas such as downtown districts and university or hospital campuses. A microgrid is a localized form of district energy which can connect and disconnect from the grid, essentially operating as an "island" that can provide power through grid disturbances.

11.2
Reduce energy use and carbon emissions of buildings

In addition to transitioning to green energy, reducing carbon emissions will require reducing buildings' energy use and resource waste. Building operations accounted for 68% of greenhouse gas emissions, according to data collected by the Office of Sustainability and Innovation. Reducing energy use intensity of existing buildings will be important through increasing weatherization programs and encouraging conversion of HVAC systems that are nearing end-of-life. For new buildings, the city can develop design guidelines for high-performance buildings and full electrification, incentivize zero-emission technologies and energy reduction measures, and promote the utilization of mass-timber to reduce embodied carbon.

Existing City Programs

A²ZERO Home Energy Advisor (HEA) Assessment:

The A²ZERO Home Energy Advisor is a free program designed to provide residents of Ann Arbor clear and actionable pathways to decarbonize their homes. The program is rooted in an assessment of your home where the HEA team will identify opportunities for energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy, and develop a personalized Path To Zero report. Most assessments will be conducted virtually via video call, while a portion will be done on-site, ensuring accessibility for all.

source: A²ZERO

Ann Arbor Solarize:

Since its inception in 2019, Solarize, Ann Arbor's Community Bulk-Buy Solar Program, has installed over 3.9 MW of rooftop solar on roofs in R1/R2 districts. This saved the 526 participating households a total of $1.8 million upfront solar costs and a projected $17.4 million in energy costs over the lifetime of the system.

source: Office of Sustainability and Innovation

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Goal 12:

Plan for and invest in city services and infrastructure that can accommodate expected growth

Strategies:

12.1
Coordinate and align infrastructure investment with land use and growth

Significant infrastructure investments will be needed to accommodate anticipated growth that will support the city's goals for additional housing and carbon reduction. Since water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater capacity is limited, the city will need to invest in water distribution and conveyance capacity improvements to support more households, focusing on additional capacity where the highest density will be encouraged. In addition, depending on the intensity of future growth, there will be strains on the current drinking water plant (both treatment and available water source supply) as well as the wastewater treatment plant. At the time of this report, the city has initiated comprehensive utility planning efforts to begin evaluating the changes and investments that would be necessary to accommodate such an anticipated growth being considered with the proposed future land use. To support the city's transition to clean energy, street repairs and major construction projects will need to be coordinated with Ann Arbor's utility planning. This coordination should integrate potential geothermal and district energy networks, support vehicle electrification by installing charging infrastructure at public facilities, and encourage the development of charging stations on public properties.

12.2
Coordinate city services to accommodate growth

As the city grows, it will need to ensure services such as public safety, schools, libraries, community centers, and waste management are evaluated, updated, and increased to handle additional residents and businesses. The city should ensure that police and fire services have the necessary capacity and equipment to accommodate growing populations and maintain target response times. Additionally, it will need to allocate resources for the equipment and vehicles to accommodate additional density and new building types. The city will maintain ongoing coordination with institutions such as Ann Arbor Public Schools, Ann Arbor District Library, Washtenaw County, U-M, and service providers to accommodate city growth.

The city is prioritizing upstream waste reduction such as reduced consumption, repair, and repurposing to keep items out of the waste stream to begin with. Nevertheless, waste management will be an important component of growth. All new developments need to have a Solid Waste Management Plan that will be reviewed and approved by Solid Waste. This will help to ensure that an adequate solid waste capacity and disposal plan are provided by the development. Resources will be needed for the solid waste services staff, equipment, and vehicles to accommodate additional density and new building types. To minimize landfill waste as the city densifies, the city will promote development that incorporates shared waste management systems to streamline collection, manage waste more efficiently, and encourage recycling and composting in households, institutions, and construction projects.

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source: City of Ann Arbor

Future Land Use

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Future Land Use Approach

A Future Land Use Map is a long-term vision for how a city's land is used and developed. It serves as a guiding framework for policy decisions, setting priorities and directing both public and private investments. Although it sets the stage for zoning changes, the Future Land Use Map itself is not a regulatory document; rather, it provides a policy foundation that shapes future growth and land use decisions. The plan comprehensively considers all aspects of city development—from housing and transportation to economic sustainability and environmental preservation—and through an implementation strategy, identifies where investments are needed to achieve the desired future outcomes.

At its core, the Future Land Use Map reflects the values and aspirations of the community. It is directly informed by public input and City Council priorities, ensuring that the city's growth aligns with the vision residents have for their future. These values are expressed through guiding principles that focus on affordability, equity, sustainability, and dynamism.

A set of core objectives guided the development of the land use plan:

Infill Development

Growth in Ann Arbor over history came through building on previously undeveloped "greenfield" sites. Now, with limits on the expansion of city boundaries, the city must find ways to grow within and among developed areas. While the city must consider this "new" development pattern mindfully, with a balance of protection of natural features within the city, it is also an opportunity to seek opportunities to support sustainable development patterns from a regional lens.

Mixed Use Categories Supporting Transit

A central goal of the Comprehensive Plan and related efforts—including the Moving Together plan and A²ZERO—is to shift the development pattern away from automobile-dependent, single-use land use categories. This includes strictly commercial areas, such as shopping centers and auto-centric corridors, as well as strictly residential neighborhoods made up exclusively of single-family homes. The focus is instead on creating mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environments supported by public and shared transit. Recent TC1 zoning reflects the city's evolving policies in response to residents' needs for more flexible and dynamic commercial land use categories.

New And Diverse Housing Options

This plan emphasizes expanding housing options across the city by allowing a broader range of housing types and increasing the areas where higher-density development is permitted. Guided by City Council direction, it also explores potential changes to single-family and two-family zoning districts, which currently make up over 50% of the city's zoned land (excluding Public Land).

In 2021, the City updated the UDC requiring short-term rentals in residential zones be registered as the homeowner's principal residence. The purpose of this regulation was to halt the conversion of homes into investment properties that would have the potential to take even more units off the market. Still, hundreds of homes in the City are used as short-term rentals that are reducing options for residents. Currently, the City is looking for tools to help monitor and identify short-term rentals. The findings can be used to determine how policy can be improved to meet our affordability goals through an expanded housing supply.[1]

Simplified, Flexible, And Adaptable Over Time

Finally, under the direction of City Council, the Future Land Use Map is designed to promote flexibility and adaptability over time. Predicting how people will live and work in the future is inherently uncertain. A more flexible and adaptable land use plan is better positioned to serve as a meaningful guide as the city evolves.

Plan Goals that inform the land use approach

Goal 01: Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels

Goal 03: Provide high-quality, accessible parks, trails, and recreation areas

Goal 04: Encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods with access to basic needs and amenities

Goal 06: Create and enhance walkable mixed-use hubs that appeal to a broad range of residents, employers, and employees.

Goal 09: Invest in a mutually-supportive street, transportation, and land use system that prioritizes safe and equitable access

Goal 10: Balance development with protection and integration of natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem

1 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.

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Future Land Use Methodology

The methodology for developing the Future Land Use Map began with defining a set of land use categories based on key objectives. These categories were then applied citywide by first translating existing zoning districts into the new framework. This initial one-to-one translation was refined by considering additional factors expected to shape land use in the coming decades, creating a more forward-looking plan.

In compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the process also produced a Zoning Plan (see page 128) that outlines how the Future Land Use Categories align with existing zoning districts. Consistent with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities program, this comparison also serves as a tool for identifying zoning changes needed to advance the city's long-term land use goals.

Translation from Zoning to Future Land Use

Development of the Future Land Use Map began with an assessment of how the city is currently built, focusing on the existing zoning code and translating it into simplified and more flexible categories. The current zoning code includes 34 distinct districts, which were consolidated into three primary Future Land Use Categories organized by development scale and urban form, generally aligned as follows:

- Residential: Residential (R1, R2)
- Transition: Commercial (C1, C2, C3), Residential (R3, R4), Industrial (M1, M2), Research/Manufacturing (ORL, RE), Office (O)
- Hub: Downtown (D1, D2), Transit Corridor (TC1)

The simplified land use framework could not be uniformly applied due to variations in the built environment across existing zoning districts. Specifically, certain zoning districts, such as some R3 and R4, exhibit characteristics that fall between the defined Residential and Transition built forms. These areas have been delineated on the Future Land Use Map and will require more detailed evaluation during the implementation phase to determine the appropriate regulatory approach.

Existing Zoning Districts

Residential Districts

- *AG - Agriculture-Open Space*
- *R1A-E - Single-Family Dwelling*
- *R2A - Two-Family Dwelling*
- *R2B - Two-Family Dwelling and Student Housing*
- *R3 - Townhouse Dwelling*
- *R4A-E - Multiple-Family Dwelling*
- *R6 - Mobile Home Park*

Mixed Use Districts

- *O - Office*
- *C1 - Local Business*
- *C1A - Campus Business*
- *C1B - Community Convenience Center*
- *C1A/R - Campus Business Residential*
- *D1 - Downtown Core*
- *D2 - Downtown Interface*
- *C2B - Business Service*
- *C3 - Fringe Commercial*
- *TC1 - Transit Corridor*

Nonresidential And Special Purpose Districts

- *R5 - Hotel*
- *P - Parking*
- *PL - Public Land*
- *RE - Research*
- *ORL - Office/Research/Light Industrial*
- *M1 - Limited Industrial*
- *M1A - Limited Light Industrial*
- *M2 - Heavy Industrial*
- *PUD - Planned Unit Development*

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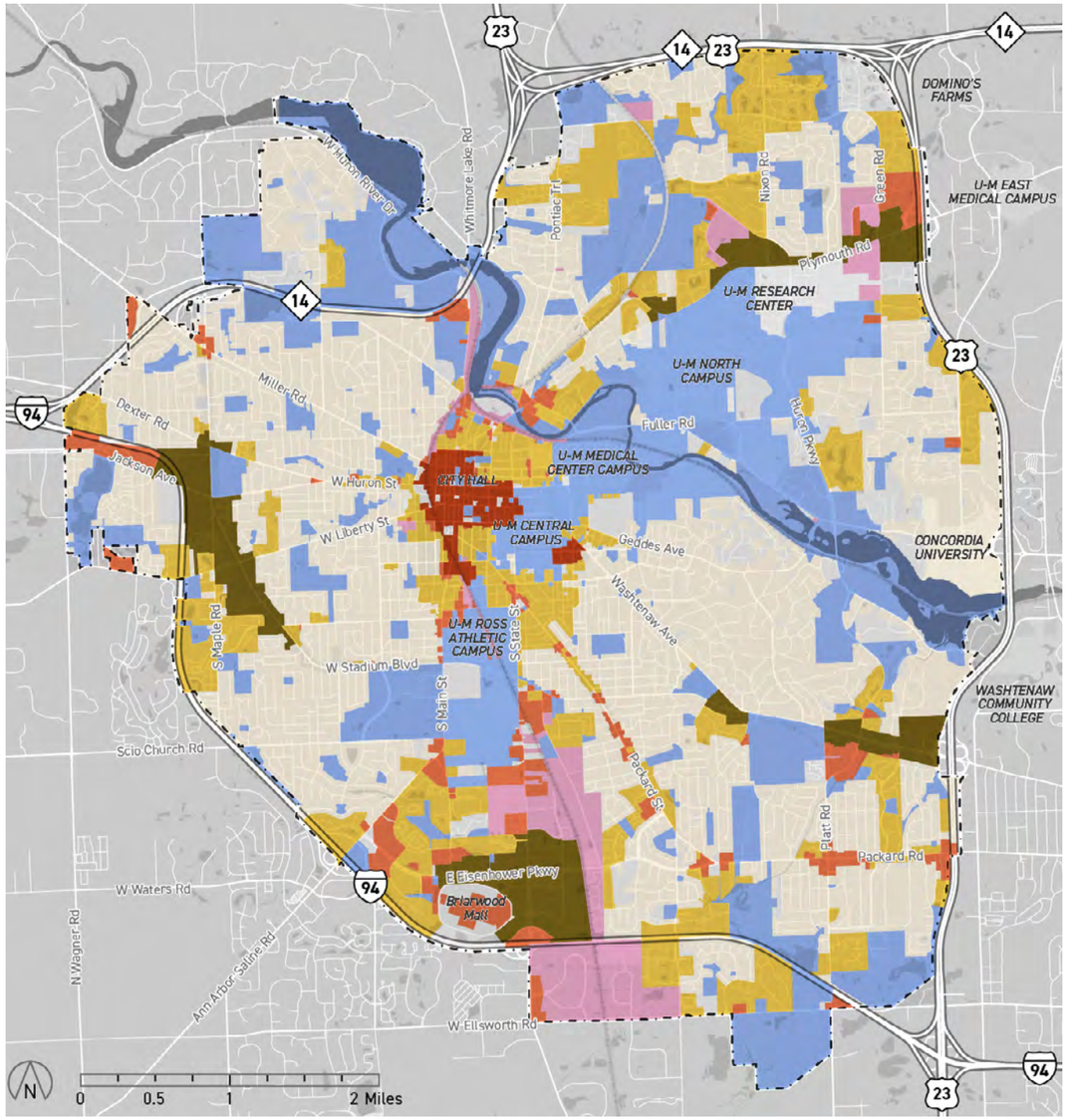

Map
Existing Simplified Zoning

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, Washtenaw County GIS

- *Commercial (C1, C1A, C1A/R, C1B, C2B, C3, O, R5)*
- *Downtown (D1, D2)*
- *Industrial / Research (M1, M1A, M2, RE, ORL)*
- *Single Family / Two Family Residential (R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R1E, R2A, R2B)*
- *Townhome / Multi Family Residential (R3, R4A, R4B, R4C, R4D, R4E, R6)*
- *Public Land (PL)*
- *Transit Corridor (TC1)*
- *Other (AG, P, PUD, TWP, UNZONED)*

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Factors Shaping Future Land Use

Rather than simply reinforcing existing land use patterns, the Future Land Use Map is shaped by planned investments, such as infrastructure improvements, campus expansion, and policy initiatives, that will guide how Ann Arbor evolves in the coming decades. These investments are designed to advance long-term planning goals and ensure the city remains adaptable and forward-looking.

Key influences include:

TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan (AAATA)
TheRide has outlined a series of investments aimed at enhancing transit across the region. From a land use perspective, the most transformative elements include proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines along the Plymouth Road–State Street corridor and the Washtenaw–Huron corridor. Additional upgrades, such as consolidating stops and increasing service frequency on Priority Service Lines, will further improve transit efficiency and accessibility. TheRide also plans to establish four transit hubs outside the downtown core at key high-demand connection points. These hubs will improve connectivity between peripheral areas and feature amenities like shelters, seating, and real-time signage to support convenient, frequent transfers.

University of Michigan Campus Plan 2050
The University's long-range plan outlines redevelopment across its five campuses, with the most significant focused on North Campus, including the creation of a new Innovation District along the Plymouth Road corridor. The plan also proposes an Elevated Automated Transit System and several BRT routes to better connect university campuses. While specific alignments remain preliminary, these proposed corridors provide valuable context for guiding future land use decisions.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Plan Update
Ann Arbor's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is updating its strategic plan and considering the first expansion of its boundary since the 1980s. This update is being closely coordinated with the Future Land Use Map to ensure alignment. Expanding the DDA boundary reflects both current development patterns and community feedback gathered during this planning process, particularly around Downtown. It aims to better represent already-approved developments and support a cohesive urban framework.

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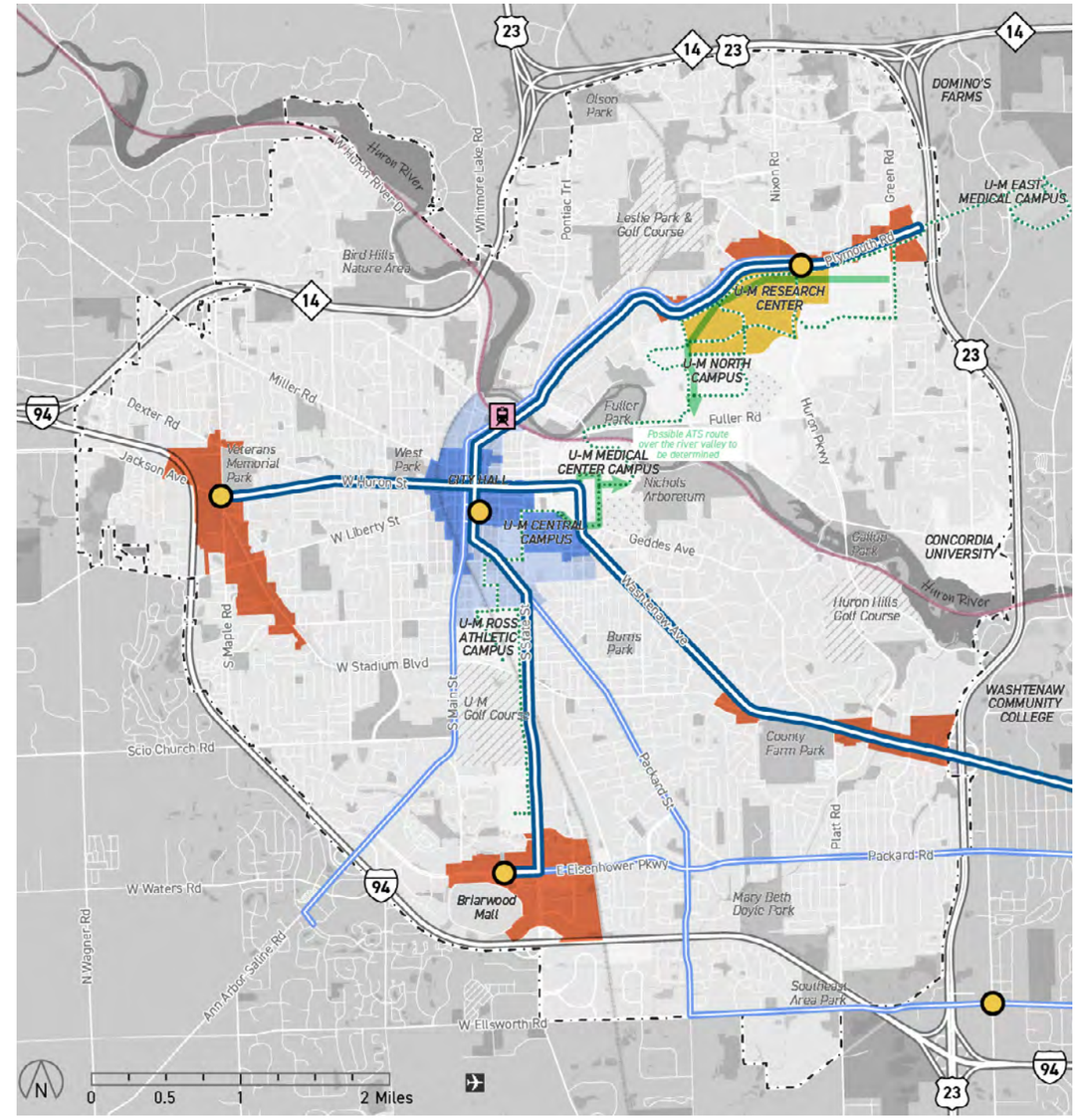

Map
Factors Shaping Future Land Use

- *Transit Hub / Center (Proposed by TheRide)*
- *Bus Rapid Transit (Proposed by TheRide)*
- *Priority Service (Proposed by TheRide)*
- *Automated Transit System Elevated Guideway (Proposed U-M)*
- *Bus Rapid Transit Dedicated Lane (Proposed U-M)*
- *Innovation District (Proposed U-M)*
- *DDA Boundary*
- *Potential DDA Expansion*
- *TC1 Zoning*

source: City of Ann Arbor GIS, TheRide, University of Michigan

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Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map defines various categories that shape the city's character and function. While all categories are mixed-use, they vary in their range of uses and density. The plan prioritizes higher density in specific areas, such as along transit routes and near existing amenities, while also establishing a flexible, broad based land use structure that moves beyond reinforcing existing, often limiting policies. By applying new flexible approaches equitably across the city, the plan helps to transition and support goals. Ultimately, this dynamic approach ensures that development remains responsive to current needs and adaptable for future growth.

Importantly, the Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. It presents a citywide vision that will be implemented through multiple zoning districts. These zoning districts will reflect the values of housing access and equity, using tools such as dimensional standards, walkability, and public realm design to guide outcomes that are inclusive and responsive to community needs.

The plan identifies three primary land use categories across the city:

Residential

A primarily residential area with limited commercial activity that enhances walkability and access to local amenities. Provides a variety of housing options to accommodate diverse household types and income levels, while maintaining the essence of Ann Arbor's neighborhoods.

Transition

A mixed-use area with a flexible blend of residential, commercial, and industrial employment spaces. Supports moderate to higher-density housing to enhance walkability, encourage transit use and strengthen commercial activity within key nodes and corridors.

Hub

An active, mixed-use area that integrates residential and commercial uses. Located around transit hubs, it supports the city's most concentrated development to maximize mobility and regional connectivity.

In limited portions of the city, the Future Land Use Map describes areas that could be either Residential or Transition. During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission responded to City Council direction that resulted in refined, or more detailed, recommendations to height and unit limits in the Residential Land Use Category. To minimize potential non-conformities or overly restrictive limitations, these areas were identified for further examination during the implementation phase.

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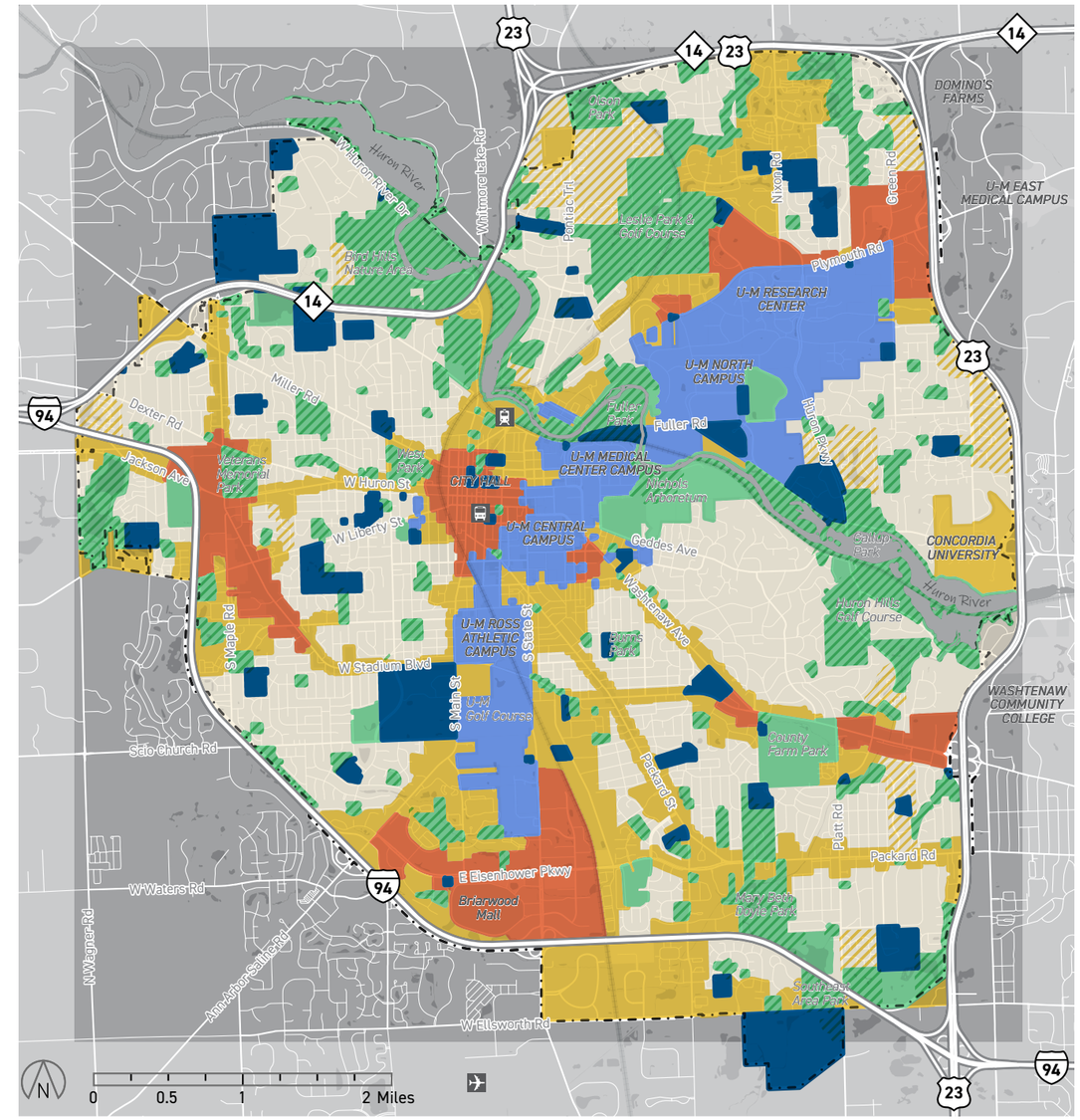

Map
Future Land Use

Unlike zoning, which provides a regulatory framework applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis, land use offers a broader, more flexible approach to planning. Recognizing that each property in the city is unique, the Future Land Use Map is designed with intentional flexibility, allowing certain boundaries to be fluid rather than strictly prescriptive.

- *Residential*
- *Transition*
- *Residential or Transition*
- *Hub*
- *Public (City/County/School District)*
- *University of Michigan*
- *Parks/Open Space/Recreational Facilities*
- *City Owned Parks*

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Future Land Use Categories

	Category Intent	Development Style		Preferred Building Form	Building Uses	Zoning
Residential	*A primarily residential category that expands the housing types (not exclusively single family detached) to foster a more dynamic neighborhood atmosphere with limited commercial uses, support diverse housing needs, and enable aging in place within established communities.*	> *Neighborhood grid* > *Compatible with existing neighborhood fabric* > *Greater intensity along collectors and minor arterials*	Residential	> *Low-rise (approximately 3 stories)* > *Duplexes and triplexes permitted as primary uses with reform to dimensional standards to accommodate them.* > *Reduced restrictions on materials and aesthetic "style"* > *Functional/form characteristics*	> *Residential* > *Small-scale neighborhood-serving services*	*New residential district(s) that consider dimensional standards to appropriately scale (e.g. maximum building footprint, building width standards to align with existing patterns, setback/lot size adjustments to create flexibility to add new/additional housing types)*
Transition	*A flexible mixed-use category that accommodates residential, commercial, and industrial employment uses. It supports a variety of building types near transit to enhance walkability, increase transit use and strengthen commercial activity along key corridors and nodes.*	> *Redevelopment of larger lots* > *Conversion of suburban multi-family residential patterns to greater floor area and intensities* > *Re-introduce grid for larger sites* > *Minimize impacts of parking (screen, locate in rear, consider maximums)*	Transition	> *Low- to high-rise buildings* > *Building height dynamic relative to proximity to the Residential or Hub categories* > *Pedestrian-oriented design* > *Lot size and access considerations for industrial uses*	> *Residential* > *Commercial / Office* > *Industrial uses that do not create nuisances or hazards* > *Prefer active first floor on arterials*	*New mixed-use district(s) that may self-regulate height when adjacent to established Residential and Hub categories, may provide a variety of place types to emphasize or limit distinct land uses*
Hub	*A vibrant mixed-use category that concentrates residential and commercial development around major transit hubs. It supports the highest development intensity to improve mobility, activate key centers and strengthen regional connectivity.*	> *Walkable grid* > *Shared parking and stormwater management* > *Connections into residential neighborhoods while providing sufficient transition or buffering*	Hub	> *Mid- to high-rise buildings* > *Context-sensitive height (adjacent to Residential)* > *Building step-backs on upper floors* > *Pedestrian-oriented design*	> *Residential* > *Commercial / Office* > *Industrial uses that do not create nuisances or hazards* > *Prefer active first floor commercial, particularly at nodes*	*New mixed-use district that permits greater densities and land uses to mimic an urban downtown format with improved safety and functionality for non-motorized users*
Public/ Open Spaces/ Recreational Facilities	*Accommodates large-scale educational campuses, infrastructure, and facilities, as well as preserved natural open spaces that are typically publicly owned and managed.*	> *Campuses* > *Infrastructure facilities* > *Parks and recreational areas* > *Natural areas*	Public/Open Spaces	> *Public buildings* > *Parks and recreation facilities* > *Preserved open space*	> *Municipal uses* > *Schools* > *Preserved open space* > *Recreation*	*Existing Public Land district. Consider dedicated U-M district*

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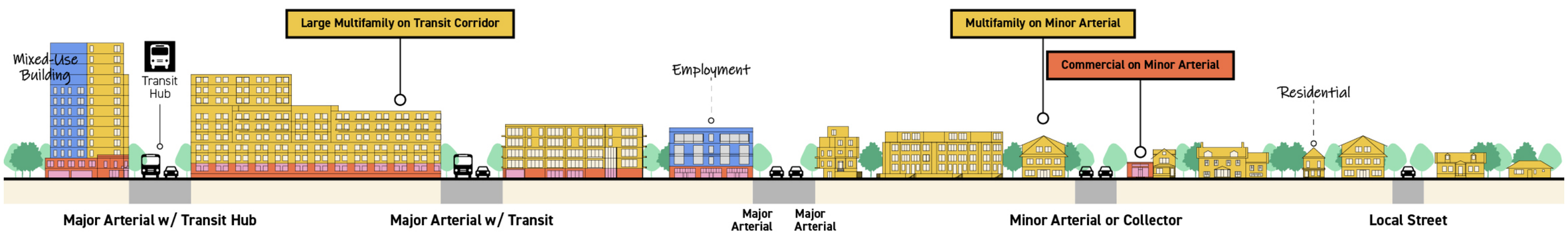
Appropriate Development Intensity

The Future Land Use Map is organized into three primary mixed-use categories that are predominantly residential, each differing in the scale and intensity of commercial activity. The diagram below illustrates one conceptual transect, just one of many possible configurations.

Hub	Transition	Transition	Residential
Scale and intensity of use: **Large-scale, high-rise**	Scale and intensity of use: **Medium-scale, 3 stories to high-rise depending on context**	Scale and intensity of use: **Medium-scale, 3 stories to high-rise depending on context**	Scale and intensity of use: **Small-scale, approximately 3 stories and under**



While the plan offers a general framework, it remains intentionally flexible rather than prescriptive, allowing for variation within each category. However, certain locations are better suited for specific scales and intensities of use. Higher-density development and more intensive commercial activities should be concentrated along major streets, transit routes, key nodes and major intersections to ensure efficient land use and accessibility.

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Residential

Intent:

A primarily residential category that expands the housing types (not exclusively single family detached) to foster a more dynamic neighborhood atmosphere with limited commercial uses, support diverse housing needs, and enable aging in place within established communities.

Rationale:

Community engagement revealed support for a broader range of housing types within traditionally single-family neighborhoods, provided new development aligns with the existing scale. Some have expressed concerns about potential impacts on existing neighborhoods, but this district is designed to allow for incremental increases in density. The district promotes walkability and a range of price points in housing options. Growing the housing supply throughout residential areas contributes to greater affordability and equity.[1] The addition of small-scale commercial uses further supports walkable neighborhoods by bringing everyday amenities and services closer to home, helping to create a more dynamic and sustainable future. Based on this input, the plan identifies broad permissions for three stories and up to three units (or larger housing typologies where they fit into the neighborhood context) as appropriate for these areas.

Translating the Residential Category into zoning regulations will require thoughtful implementation. Further analysis will be necessary to determine additional strategies for regulating building form and scale, which will be addressed during the implementation process.

Primary Uses/Buildings:

- Single family, Duplexes, and Triplexes are permitted by right, with additional building types allowed where consistent with neighborhood form and scale
- Cottage courts
- Stacked flats[2]
- Townhouses - where there is adequate depth and access
- Neighborhood commercial "corner store"

Secondary Uses/Buildings:

- Small multi-family building

Form & Site Considerations:

- Buildings up to 3 stories
- Standards should encourage the development of smaller, more flexible homes, and may address maximum building size, setbacks, building coverage, parcel assemblages, lot size, number of dwellings, unit counts, and/or bedroom counts—as appropriate—to support livability, scale, and compatibility within residential areas.

1 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.

2 "Stacked Flats" are multi-family housing types where separate units are vertically layered within a single building.

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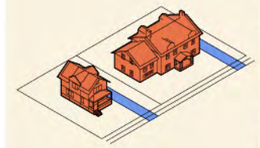
Typical Residential Category Building Types (not an exhaustive list)

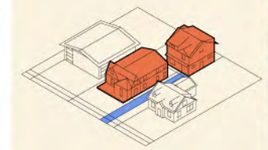
image sources: Interface Studio, Google Street View, Steve Jensen, MapQuest, Apartments.com

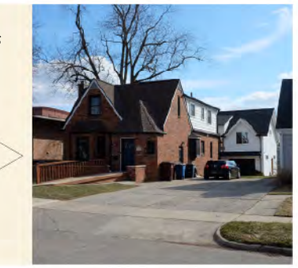
Detached Single-Family Homes



1503 Cambridge Rd.

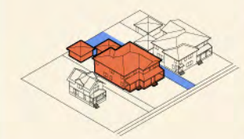
Accessory Dwelling Units

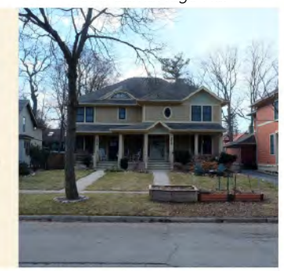




309 Potter Ave.

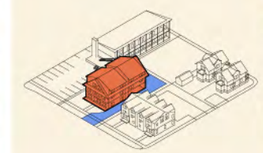
Duplex





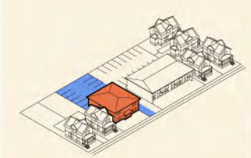
1014 & 1016 Baldwin Ave.

Triplex



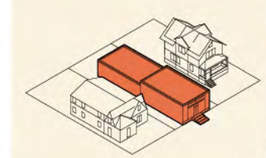
133 Hill St.

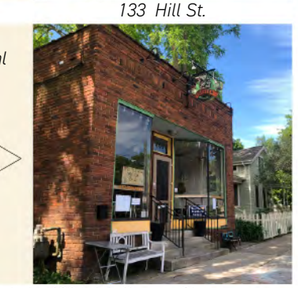
Small Apartment Building



207 W. Mosley St.

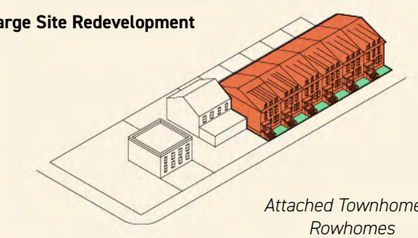
Neighborhood Commercial





The Jefferson Market - 609 W Jefferson St.

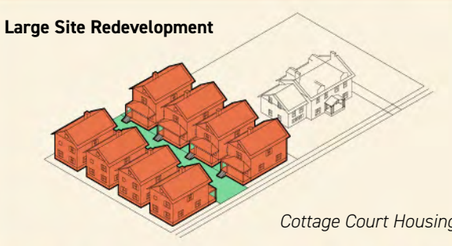
Large Site Redevelopment



Attached Townhomes/ Rowhomes

Ashley Mews - Ashley St.

Large Site Redevelopment



Cottage Court Housing

Mary Court

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Transition

Intent

A flexible, mixed-use category that accommodates residential, commercial, and industrial employment uses. It supports a variety of building types near transit to enhance walkability, increase transit use and strengthen commercial activity along key corridors and nodes.

Rationale:

Both the TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan and the Moving Together plan emphasize the importance of locating higher-density development along transit routes as a key land use strategy. Additionally, to achieve the A²ZERO goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by over 50%, more residents will need to live and work near rapid transit lines to make car-free living a viable option. Community engagement has shown support for transit-aligned higher-density development, as well as a desire for more walkable neighborhoods with accessible amenities.

The Transition category offers an opportunity to enhance affordability by supporting a diverse range of housing options near transit, amenities, and services.[1] It also allows for a wider variety of employment types to be located along transit corridors, expanding access to jobs beyond traditional office roles. Within this category, Ann Arbor can strike a balance between creating additional housing opportunities and encouraging flexible, transit-accessible employment.

Primary Uses/Buildings:

- Attached houses
- Townhouses
- Stacked flats[2] / Apartments
- University of Michigan-related housing
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial uses that do not create nuisances or hazards
- Restrictions on short term rental uses in Transition should be explored during zoning revision

Form & Site Considerations:

- Building height dynamic relative to proximity to the Residential or Hub categories
- Zoning districts, nuisance ordinances, permitted uses, and performance standards should be reviewed and revised to permit the appropriate and safe integration of a wide variety of businesses into the Transition category.
- Site design and access management

1 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.

2 "Stacked Flats" are multi-family housing types where separate units are vertically layered within a single building.

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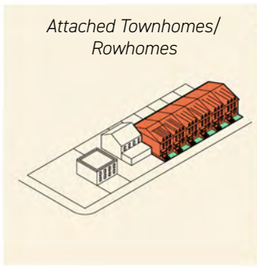
Typical Transition Category Building Types (not an exhaustive list)

image sources: Interface Studio, Apartments.com, DMA, Ann Arbor PTO Thrift, Sartorius, Thrive Collaborative

Attached Townhomes/ Rowhomes



Ashley Mews - Ashley St.

Mid-rise Apartment Building

318 W. Liberty St.

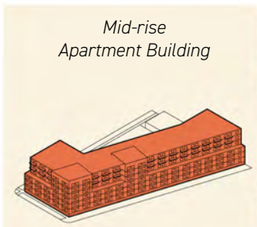
Low-rise Apartment Building

830 Henry St.

Mid-rise Apartment Building

410 N. 1st St.

Mid-rise Apartment Building



618 S. Main St.

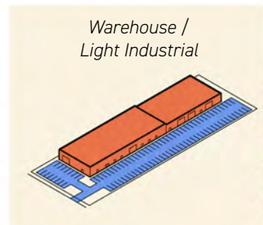
*High-rise Mixed Use Building *when adjacent to Hub*

1107 S. University Ave.

Commercial Retail Complex

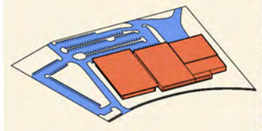
Arbor Hills Shopping Center - Washtenaw Ave.

Warehouse / Light Industrial



Ann Arbor PTO Thrift S. Industrial Ave.

Research & Development / Manufacturing Facility



Sartorius Research Park Dr.

Large Site Redevelopment

Commercial & Residential Complex

Veridian at County Farm

Hub

Intent:

A vibrant mixed-use category that concentrates residential and commercial development around major transit hubs. It supports the highest development intensity to improve mobility, activate key centers and strengthen regional connectivity.

Rationale:

There is broad support for increasing density in areas aligned with major transit infrastructure, especially around multimodal hubs. The Hub category, which allows for the highest-density residential development combined with commercial uses, expands opportunities for Ann Arbor residents to live and work near downtown and along key corridors. It also encourages the creation of new walkable, mixed-use centers beyond downtown. This category presents the greatest opportunity to significantly increase housing supply, helping to improve affordability.[1] Additionally, these compact, walkable areas make more efficient use of land and resources while supporting diverse transportation options, ultimately reducing VMT and lowering carbon emissions.

Downtown has long served as the commercial and cultural heart of Ann Arbor. With its restaurants, theaters, small businesses, and shops, it represents the vibrant, community-centered urban form that residents deeply value. In addition, as more people live downtown, it is expected that resident-serving businesses like grocery stores and drug stores will emerge to serve a growing customer base. The goal is to encourage this distinctive quality by promoting infill development that complements the existing built environment rather than replacing it.

Many of the city's large shopping centers and office or research parks are also envisioned as future Hub categories, transitioning from their current auto-oriented, single-use layouts into more pedestrian-friendly, integrated environments. While they remain important employment and commercial hubs, their transformation offers an opportunity to bring walkability, connectivity, and a more human-scale urban fabric to underutilized areas. Downtown's built form can serve as a model for these areas, emphasizing a connected street network, small walkable blocks and a dense urban fabric.

Primary Uses/Buildings:

- High density residential
- University of Michigan-related housing
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial uses that do not create nuisances or hazards

Form & Site Considerations:

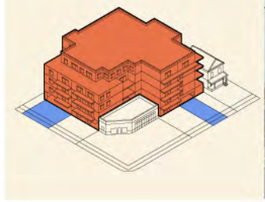
- Tallest, most intensive development potential in the city
- Curb management

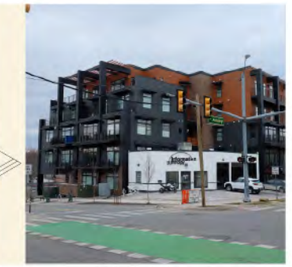
1 Refer to the "Housing Appendix" for sourced research articles on the relationship between housing supply and prices.

Typical Hub Category Building Types (not an exhaustive list)

image sources: Interface Studio, Beekman on Broadway, Ann Arbor City Club, Google Street View, MAVD, Astrophobe, Meyers+Associates, Engage Ann Arbor

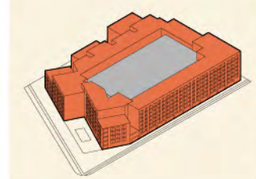
Mid-rise Apartment Building





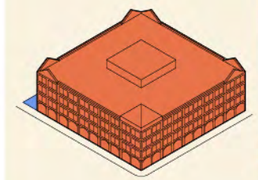
309 N. Ashley St.

Mid-rise Apartment Building w/ Wrapped Parking



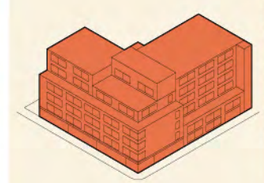
1200 Broadway Ave.

Mid-rise Office Building (Ground Floor Commercial)



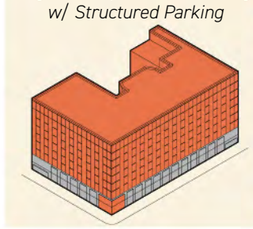
350 S. Main St.

Mid-rise Hotel Building



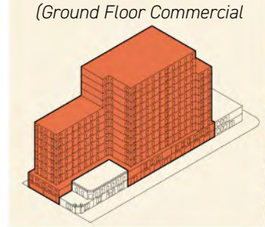
310 E. Huron St.

High-rise Apartment Building w/ Structured Parking



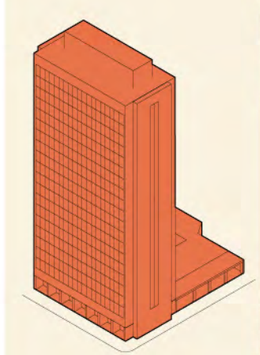
201 S. 1st St.

High-rise Apartment Building (Ground Floor Commercial



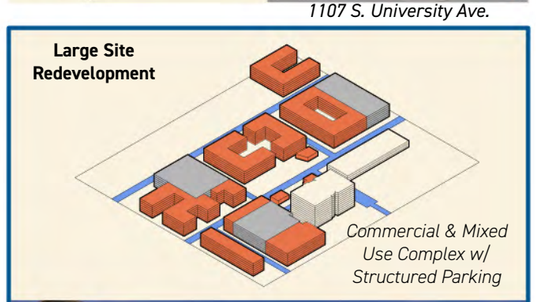
1107 S. University Ave.

High-rise Office Building (Ground Floor Commercial)



Tower Plaza 555 E. William St. (Offices converted to condos)

Large Site Redevelopment



Arbor South

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Other Areas

Parks, Open Space, & Recreational Facilities

This category includes parks and open spaces that feature significant natural elements or offer recreational amenities such as playing fields, golf courses, and trail networks. These areas are typically publicly owned and managed. Residents have expressed broad support for preserving existing open spaces and ensuring the city can meet the recreational needs of a growing population. See the city's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan for more detail.

source: City of Ann Arbor

source: City of Ann Arbor

source: City of Ann Arbor

Public

This category includes non-park public properties such as schools, infrastructure, and other publicly owned facilities. The city plans to repurpose certain sites, particularly downtown parking lots, and these intentions have been considered in this plan. When city-owned properties are proposed for sale or a change in use, adjacent land uses should be considered to guide appropriate future development.

source: City of Ann Arbor

source: Ann Arbor Public Schools

source: City of Ann Arbor

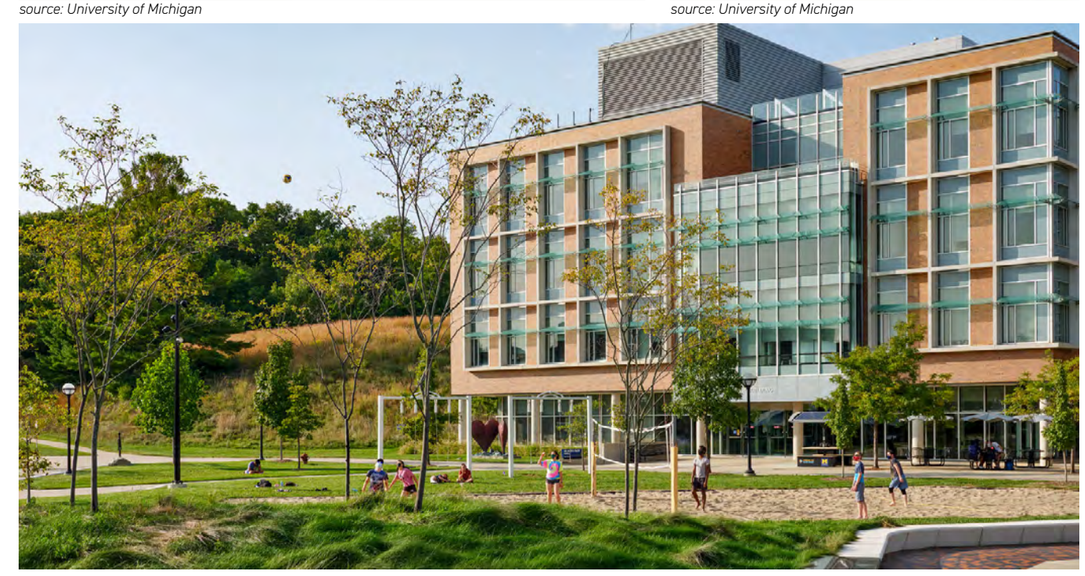
University of Michigan

This category includes all properties owned by the University of Michigan across its five campuses. As these properties fall under university jurisdiction, the City of Ann Arbor has no regulatory authority over their use, development or management. However, continued collaboration between the city and the university is essential to support coordinated planning and address shared community priorities. See the University's Campus Plan 2050 for more detail.

source: University of Michigan

source: University of Michigan

source: University of Michigan


source: STOSS Landscape Urbanism

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Zoning Plan

Adjustments to Direct Zoning Translation

Given the scale and impact of planned investments, future land use designations required more than a simple one-to-one translation of existing zoning. They were refined to reflect evolving development patterns, anticipated infrastructure improvements, and broader policy goals. In addition, certain one-off circumstances—such as sites where zoning does not match redevelopment potential, properties located within designated historic districts, and other location-specific factors—were addressed to ensure alignment with the overall objectives of the Future Land Use Map. The following changes were made to the initial zoning translations to reflect these considerations:

- Residential Zoning Districts **(R1, R2, R3, & R4)**: Designated as either **Residential** or **Transition** based on proximity to planned rapid transit lines, adjacency to previously designated **Hub** areas, or within designated historic districts. Due to the flexible nature of these residential zones, many existing buildings remain compatible with the new **Residential** designation. Additionally, certain areas were delineated as **Residential or Transition** where the existing built form didn't fall neatly within the two categories. In limited cases, **Hub** designations were applied near Downtown where intensity and access justify higher density.
- Commercial Zoning Districts **(C1, C2, C3)**: Designated as either **Transition** or **Hub** depending on adjacency to planned rapid transit lines or proximity to previously designated **Hub** areas. In limited cases, **Residential** designations were applied if located within a designated historic district.
- Transit Corridor and Downtown Zoning Districts **(TC1, D1, D2)**: All properties designated as **Hub**.
- Industrial Zoning Districts **(M1, M2)**: Designated as either **Transition** or **Hub** depending on proximity to planned transit hubs, nearby University of Michigan investments, and adjacency to previously designated **Hub** areas. In limited cases, **Public** designations were applied if properties included infrastructure or utilities.
- Research/Manufacturing Zoning Districts **(ORL, RE)**: Designated as either **Transition** or **Hub** depending on proximity to planned transit hubs, nearby University of Michigan investments, and adjacency to previously designated **Hub** areas.
- Office Zoning Districts **(O)**: Designated as either **Transition** or **Hub** depending on proximity to planned transit hubs, nearby University of Michigan investments, and adjacency to previously designated **Hub** areas.
- Planned Unit Development Zoning Districts **(PUD)**: Designation determined by already described surrounding Future Land Use Categories to maintain contextual consistency.
- Township Zoning Districts **(TWP)**: Designation determined by already described surrounding Future Land Use Categories to maintain contextual consistency.
- Public Land Zoning Districts **(PL)**: Designation assigned based on current ownership and use, including parks, open space, recreational facilities and properties owned by the University of Michigan or the City of Ann Arbor.

The **Zoning Plan** chart on the next page compares Future Land Use Categories with the existing zoning districts within each category. It also highlights potential considerations for rezoning implementation.

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Future Land Use	Existing Zoning Districts	Zoning Considerations
Residential	C1, C2B, PL, PUD, R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R1E, R2A, R2B, R3, R4A, R4B, R4C, TWP	*Zoning will need to be amended to allow for greater diversity of housing types and limited commercial uses allowed in the proposed Residential land use category*
Transition	AG, C1, C1A, C1A/R, C1B, C2B, C3, M1, M1A, M2, O, ORL, P, PL, PUD, R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R1E, R2A, R2B, R3, R4A, R4B, R4C, R4D, R4E, R5, R6, RE	*Zoning will need to be amended to allow for greater density and mix of land uses allowed in Transition land use category*
Residential or Transition	C1, C3, PUD, R1B, R1D, R1E, R3, R4A, R4B, R4C, TWP	*Considerations for* ***Residential:*** *Street pattern, existing building types, residential height and density, adjacent land use categories, park access* ***Transition:*** *transit proximity/accessibility, ROW for adequate multi-modal networks, adequate space for intended density and heights, proximity to hub, grade change, need for commercial uses*
Hub	C1, C1A/R, C1B, C2B, C3, D1, D2, M1, M1A, O, ORL, P, PUD, R1B, R2B, R4B, R4C, R4D, R5, RE, TC1	*Zoning will need to be amended to allow for greater density and mix of land uses allowed in Hub land use category*
Public/ Open Spaces/ Recreational Facilities	AG, D2, M1, M2, O, PL, PUD, R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R2A, R4A, R4C, TWP	*The proposed Public category aligns with the existing PL zoning district. The Future Land Use Map also incorporates many recent University of Michigan acquisitions, where legacy zoning designations remain in place and will need to be updated.*

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Investments Needed to Achieve Future Land Use Vision

The Future Land Use Map presents a vision for the city's growth and transformation that aligns with community values. While it is not limited by current infrastructure, it recognizes that existing systems and other constraints will shape how the vision is realized. Relying solely on today's infrastructure would limit the city's ability to evolve, but acknowledging these constraints is essential. In some cases, infrastructure investments may be phased in over time to meet growing needs; in others, upfront investment may be required to support the envisioned growth. In all cases, the consideration of infrastructure capacity must be carefully calibrated with all steps of city development, from ordinance amendments and rezonings, to site-specific development review.

Utility Systems

Achieving the city's Future Land Use Vision for increased growth will require strategic investment in core municipal utilities, including sanitary sewer and drinking water systems, as well as stormwater management infrastructure. Many of these investments will be necessary in the coming years even if current housing and population growth rates hold steady and do not increase over the next decade. As development intensifies, existing infrastructure may lack the capacity to accommodate higher demand, which could lead to service disruptions and environmental concerns. Planning for utility system upgrades and expansion will ensure reliable delivery of essential services, protect public health and support sustainable development. Without these improvements, future growth could be constrained by capacity limitations of the current infrastructure. Ultimately, aligning utility infrastructure planning with growth projections is key to enabling a vibrant, resilient community.

In addition, the redevelopment of older sites presents a valuable opportunity to add modern stormwater management systems on parcels where it does not currently exist. By incorporating nature-based solutions and improved drainage, future development can reduce runoff, mitigate flooding, and enhance water quality—delivering lasting benefits to surrounding neighborhoods and downstream communities.

The city's water and sewer systems have been designed to provide sufficient capacity for both current customers and anticipated future growth in customer connections based on projected capacity needs as of 2015. As new connections tap into the water and sewer systems, those new connections must pay a capital cost recovery charge which represents the systems' recovery of previous system capacity investments.

When new development desiring to connect to the city's water and sewer systems would exceed existing capacity, generally new development pays for the additional capacity to serve its needs. This can be through special assessments, improvement charges, direct developer payments, or contributed system assets and improvements. But, there are other ways of funding new utility capacity including grants, loans, contributions from other entities, tax increment financing, or city general fund or taxpayer contributions when authorized in compliance with applicable legal requirements.

Transit

A key component of the city's Future Land Use Vision is shifting away from automobile-centric development toward more walkable, transit-served communities. Achieving this goal will require retrofitting incompatible development patterns alongside planned transit improvements, such as new bus rapid transit lines, increased service, and enhanced bike routes and infrastructure. TheRide (AAATA) has identified numerous rapid transit routes in its long-range strategic plan and will need to coordinate efforts to bring these projects to fruition. Additionally, a recently completed Downtown Circulation Study recommends various improvements to create a more walkable, pedestrian- and transit-friendly environment. A similar level of investment will be needed to replicate this experience in other Hub areas originally developed for automobile-centric use. New development should contribute to an improved street network, and streets may need to be redesigned to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and enhanced walkability.

Open Space

While most residents currently have convenient access to parks and open spaces within their neighborhoods, the Future Land Use Map envisions adding new residential areas in parts of the city where people have not historically lived. This is especially true in Hub areas like State/Eisenhower/Briarwood and Plymouth Road, as well as in Transition categories along South Industrial and North Main. To realize the vision of walkable neighborhoods with accessible amenities, the city will need to make thoughtful, strategic investments in parks and open spaces as redevelopment occurs over the coming decades.

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source: City of Ann Arbor

Implementation 06

Implementation Factors to Consider
Page: 134

A Note About Category Transitions
Page: 135

Implementation Matrix and Metrics
Page: 136

Glossary of Terms
Page: 160

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Implementation Factors to Consider

- **Zoning:** Rewriting the zoning code will be necessary to implement the Future Land Use Map.
- **Developers:** Ann Arbor has a limited number of small-scale developers capable of building "missing middle" housing.
- **Shopping Centers:** The profitability of shopping centers and long-term lease agreements can hinder redevelopment efforts.
- **Expansion and Funding:** Expanding the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) boundary and changing the funding model may be needed to support infrastructure improvements for the Hub category expansion.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Financing challenges and high construction costs limit ADU development.
- **Building & Fire Codes:** Existing building and fire codes related to ingress/egress and structural materials increase costs and reduce housing options.
- **Timing/Coordination:** The long lead time needed to design and construct new infrastructure can slow desires for redevelopment.

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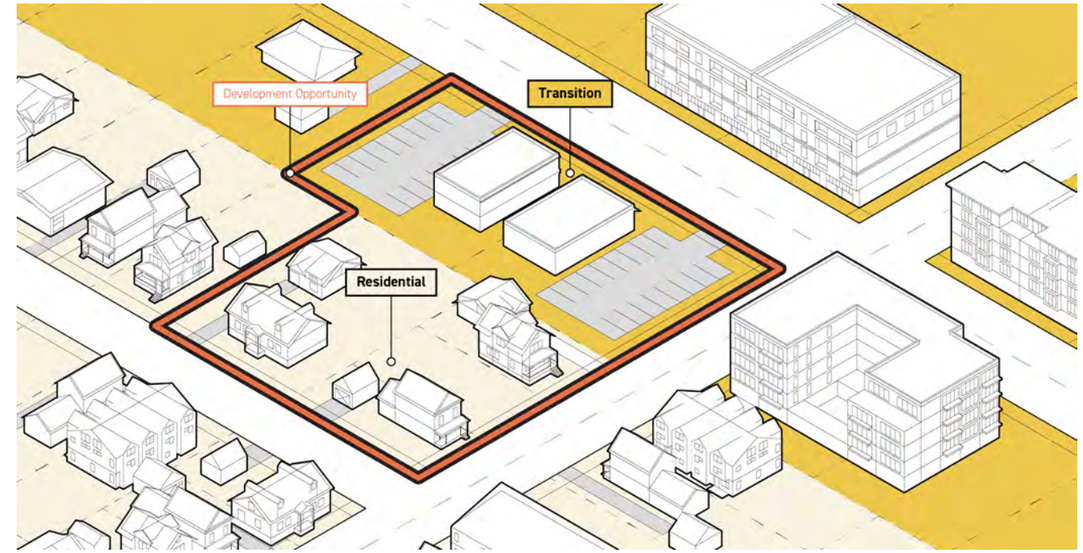
A Note about Category Transitions

The Future Land Use Map represents the city's values in physical form, serving as a guiding vision rather than a rigid mandate. Unlike zoning, which provides a regulatory framework applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis, land use offers a broader, more flexible approach to planning. Recognizing that each property in the city is unique, the Future Land Use Map is designed with intentional flexibility, allowing certain boundaries to be fluid rather than strictly prescriptive. In some cases, adjoining properties may need to take on the category of a neighboring parcel to support viable development. As new proposals come before the city, this flexibility should be carefully considered to ensure development aligns with the overarching vision while remaining adaptable to specific circumstances.



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Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 01: Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels	**1.1** **Change dimensional standards to allow for more density in all residential districts and encourage denser multi-family housing in places with public infrastructure**				
	1.1.1 *Review and rewrite the zoning code to remove barriers to housing development and redevelopment for needed housing types, considering:*				
	› *Reduce or remove minimum lot sizes, adjust setbacks, and other regulations to allow more flexibility in the built environment*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*		*Strategy 1.1: average time for site plan review for residential units; overall number of housing units produced*
	› *Utilize form-based code approaches or other standards to require new infill development to be contextually similar to existing neighborhoods*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*		
	› *Modify zoning to allow housing in all areas of the city, aligned with supportive infrastructure, and draft zoning amendments that reconsider prior density, open space, and other requirements to enable densification of existing multifamily developments*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*		
	› *Streamline the development review process to easily develop missing middle and multi-family housing to reduce costs and shorten the review timeframe*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	
	› *Reduce the development types that require site plan review, for example interior changes to add units to enable conversions to residential and/or densification*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	
	› *Advocate for state-level changes to building code and fire code to provide more flexibility for sustainable and affordable housing development*	*Ongoing*	*City Administration*	*OSI, Building Services, Planning Services*	
	1.2 **Diversify the types of housing through a "missing middle" housing strategy and universal design**				
	1.2.1 *Cultivate a network of "missing middle" developers/ contractors and incentives to increase capacity to develop such units*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*		*Strategy 1.2 metrics: average time for site plan review for "missing middle" units; number of units produced by type*
	1.2.2 *Explore an expedited permitting process for duplexes and triplexes in the Residential category to achieve gradual infill for a diverse range of residents, including workers and families*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*		
	1.2.3 *Incentivize the development of barrier free, adaptable, or visitable housing design to provide housing for residents with differing needs*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*	*Building Services,*	
	1.2.4 *Explore the impacts of short-term rentals on housing supply and pursue restrictions in the Transition category if warranted*	*1-3 Years*			
	1.2.5 *Develop and adopt pre-approved plans to expedite approvals and lower upfront cost for infill development*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning, Building Services*		

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Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 01: Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels	**1.3** **Support and preserve existing subsidized income-eligible affordable housing and non-subsidized housing and make it more sustainable**				
	1.3.1 *Develop and adopt incentives that grant increased development density, flexibility with the achievement of measurable sustainability outcomes*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning, Housing Commission, Economic Development*	*OSI, Building Services*	*Strategy 1.3 metrics: number of affordable units produced; cost savings from energy efficiency; cost-burden rates; housing costs relative to income and inflation*
	1.3.2 *Review rates of development and housing affordability measures within five years of approval of the Comprehensive Plan and make modifications to plan as appropriate*	*5 Years*	*Planning, Housing Commission, Economic Development*		
	1.3.3 *Explore mechanisms to protect naturally occurring affordable housing*		*Planning, Housing Commission, Economic Development*		
	1.3.4 *Remove the height exceptions in the Residential category to minimize adverse shading impacts on adjacent properties*		*Planning*	*OSI*	
	1.3.5 *Identify and support programs and investments to reduce the cost of existing affordable housing such as HUD, LIHTC, and Affordable Housing Millage programs*	*Ongoing*	*Planning, Housing Commission, Economic Development*	*Housing Commission*	
	1.4 **Prioritize and expedite process for subsidized affordable housing development for income-eligible residents across the city**				
	1.4.1 *Consider limited standards when affordable housing development is reviewed, when compared to market-rate housing development.*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	*Strategy 1.4 metrics: number of affordable units within proximity to bus stops*
	1.4.2 *Inventory and leverage city-owned land to build affordable housing in areas of the city with transit, public assets such as parks, and access to commercial amenities*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*City Administration, Parks and Recreation, Public Works*	
	1.4.3 *Modify and adopt regulations that are supportive of a variety of housing ownership models, including non-profits, trusts, cooperative housing, co-housing, and/or group/rooming houses*	*Ongoing*	*Planning*		
	1.4.4 *Monitor funding program criteria and consider ordinance amendments to promote competitive scoring outcomes for State and/or federally supported income-eligible housing sources (e.g. Low Income Housing Tax Credits)*	*Ongoing*	*Planning, Housing Commission*		

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Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 01: Increase the supply and diversify the types of housing for households of different sizes, abilities, and income levels	**1.5** **Coordinate housing implementation strategy across local and regional partners**				*Strategy 1.5 metrics: University of Michigan student enrollment, employment, and housing units*
	1.5.1 *Develop an educational program that teaches the public about property tax basics that includes who contributes to the tax base and how funds are distributed for city services*	*1-3 Years*	*Economic Development*		
	1.5.2 *Convene neighboring jurisdictions to expand coordination around housing issues*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*Townships, Washtenaw County*	
	1.5.3 *Formalize regular training for boards and commission with regular reports on housing goals, progress, and challenges*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning, OCED*		
	1.5.4 *Consider a regional housing implementation strategy that includes workforce development, particularly in skilled trades, to increase construction capacity [see Economy and Opportunity strategy 7.3]*	*7-9 Years*	*Planning*	*Washtenaw County, OSI*	
	1.5.5 *Regularly calibrate student and housing goals with University of Michigan enrollment and employment levels*	*Ongoing*	*Planning*	*U-M, Economic Development*	
Goal 02: Support all residents in accessing quality housing and mitigate displacement	**2.1** **Provide supports for low- and moderate-income residents to mitigate displacement**				*Goal 2 metrics: number of households who received county assistance for home repair and retrofit*
	2.1.1 *Promote home repair and retrofit programs for homeowners to support low to moderate income residents and those aging in place*	*Ongoing*		*OSI*	
	2.1.2 *Work with the County on eviction prevention and early intervention*	*Ongoing*	*OCED*	*Housing Commission*	
	2.1.3 *Work with the County to support unhoused residents with connections to housing and social services*	*Ongoing*	*Housing Commission, OCED*	*Shelter Association of Washtenaw County*	
	2.2 **Advocate for County and State-level policy and legislation**				
	2.2.1 Advocate for state-level reform of property tax to remove barriers for filtering housing to new users, and enabling residents to downsize and remain in their community	*4-6 Years*	*City Administration*	*Planning*	
	2.2.2 Adopt local anti-displacement policies and advocate for county and state-level reform to support them	*Ongoing*	*Planning*		

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Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 03: Provide high-quality, accessible parks, trails, and recreation areas	**3.1** **Continue to maintain high-quality parks and recreation areas and align with land use patterns**				
	3.1.1 *Strengthen activities and connections along the Huron River Corridor*	*4-9 Years*	*Parks, Planning*		
	3.1.2 *Through inventory and evaluation, identify parks that could be suitable for strategic closures, redistribution, and re-programming that would improve access and resources citywide*	*4-9 Years*	*Parks*		
	3.1.3 *Align parks and recreation facilities with evolving land use patterns including the location, amenities, and proximity*	*Ongoing*	*Parks*	*Planning*	*Goal 3 metrics: park acreage per capita*
	3.2 **Focus on quality, equity, and ecological benefit in the development of new open space**				
	3.2.1 *Inventory and categorize natural features on private property (woodlands, floodways, floodplains, wetlands, open water) to determine level of protection, restoration, and mitigation for site plan review*	*Ongoing*	*Public Services*	*Planning*	
	3.2.2 *Incentivize quality, rather than quantity, in open space requirements within the zoning code to encourage private development to prioritize naturalized areas that emphasize biodiversity*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning, Systems Planning*		
Goal 04: Encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods with access to basic needs and amenities	**4.1** **Leverage public and institutional land to accommodate growth in walkable communities and historically underinvested communities**				
	4.1.1 *Inventory public land for use to meet plan goals and accommodate growth in complete, walkable communities, focusing on underutilized spaces and low quality natural features*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*U-M, AAPS, Washtenaw County*	
	4.1.2 *Partner with institutions to explore potential for disposition for underutilized space for housing development*	*4-9 Years*	*Planning*	*U-M, AAPS, Washtenaw County*	*Goal 4 metrics: number of ACUs and commercial businesses in residential; number of new units near bus stop; walk score*
	4.2 **Promote "complete neighborhoods" with neighborhood-level retail and service hubs**				
	4.2.1 *Explore commercial uses in residential districts and align use restrictions with community desires and needs*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*		
	4.2.2 *Inventory land and space opportunities that can meet the need for expanded services and amenities in commercially underserved communities and primary transit corridors*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*		

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Economy and Opportunity

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 05: Diversify the economy to grow the non-residential tax base	**5.1** **Secure a share of the companies that grow out of universities**				
	5.1.1 *Work with U-M Innovation Partnerships and Entrepreneurship Center, SPARK Ann Arbor, and others on finding and locating sites in Ann Arbor as ideas move from university lab, home, and/or incubator*	*4-9 Years*	*Economic Development*	*U-M, Ann Arbor SPARK*	
	5.1.2 *Explore and utilize financial incentives to ensure desired economic development outcomes are achieved, and support Ann Arbor as a viable thriving innovation market*	*Ongoing*	*Economic Development*	*U-M, Ann Arbor SPARK*	
	5.2 **Encourage a wide-range of businesses by offering flexibility in land use and regulations in key locations**				
	5.2.1 *Review and rewrite the zoning code to remove barriers to development and redevelopment for a variety of business types as summarized in the 2023 New Approach to Economic Development Report:*				
	› *Utilize form-based code approaches or other standards to ensure that new infill development is contextually appropriate to desired area attributes*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning*	*Economic Development*	
	› *Support the utilization of available financial incentives to promote and partner with private entities to achieve development that advances city goals*	*Ongoing*	*Economic Development*	*SPARK, MEDC, State of Michigan, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority*	*Goal 5 metrics: tax revenue sources by type; location quotients of commercial/industrial portfolio; number of annual tech transfer companies*
	5.2.2 *Ensure that Transition Area zoning allows businesses that utilize all modes of transportation can locate and grow in these designated areas*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*City Council, Planning Commission, Market Advisory Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals*	
	5.2.3 *Support A²ZERO circular economy goals by allowing industrial-size facilities and activities for recycle and repair in Transition Zone areas*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*OSI*	

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Economy and Opportunity

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 06: Create and enhance walkable mixed-use hubs that appeal to a broad range of residents, employers, and employees	**6.1** **Strengthen Downtown as the economic, cultural, and civic heart of the community**				
	6.1.1 *Expand the Downtown Development Authority area to support greater density and intensity of uses*	*1-3 Years*	*DDA, City Council*		
	6.1.2 *Apply curb management strategies to address the challenges of added density and competing ROW users*	*1-3 Years*	*DDA*	*Transportation, Engineering*	
	6.1.3 *Invest in associated infrastructure and city services to support density*	*Ongoing*	*City Council, DDA*	*Systems Planning, Public Works*	
	6.2 **Promote the expeditious redevelopment of car-oriented shopping centers to create more downtown-like environments, with a greater mix of uses and improved walkability**				*Goal 6 metrics: average time for site plan review; land use diversity in new hubs; number of parking spaces*
	6.2.1 *Consider applying curb management strategies using DDA plan as a template*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*Transportation, Engineering*	
	6.2.2 *Expand and support incentives to encourage the conversion of auto-centric centers into successful multi-modal hubs*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*City Council*	
	6.2.3 *Align transit improvements with mixed-use shopping center redevelopment*	*Ongoing*	*AAATA*		
	6.2.4 *Upgrade and invest in infrastructure and city services to support new uses and density*	*Ongoing*	*Systems Planning*		

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Economy and Opportunity

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 07: Support entrepreneurs across different industries to launch, scale, and mature in the city.	**7.1** **Encourage a variety of commercial and industrial spaces in the city to provide affordable opportunities for local entrepreneurs**				
	7.1.1 *Work with Spark, the University, and others to create "growth space" after incubation to keep growing tech-based businesses needing specialized facilities in Ann Arbor*	*4-6 Years*	*Economic Development*	*U-M*	
	7.1.2 *Utilize tools and incentives to support the creation and maintenance of affordable commercial spaces to provide a variety of opportunities for entrepreneurs to conceive, establish, and grow businesses in the city*	*Ongoing*	*Planning, Economic Development*		
	7.2 **Support local entrepreneurs through training, financing, and technical assistance programs**				
	7.2.1 *Allocate resources to entrepreneurial training and company development to generate opportunities for targeted industries, areas, and/or groups*	*4-6 Years*	*Economic Development*		
	7.2.2 *Devise credit enhancement, financing, and funding options for tenanting new commercial retail space to local, small firms*	*4-9 Years*	*Economic Development*	*DDA*	
	7.3 **Support workforce capacity building and clear connection between development and emerging job opportunities**				*Goal 7 metrics: price per square foot of commercial space*
	7.3.1 *Promote job training and workforce development opportunities related to green construction and green jobs*	*4-6 Years*	*OSI, Economic Development*	*U-M, WCC, Michigan Works, AAPS*	

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Infrastructure and Services

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 08: Increase community resilience to support disaster preparedness, climate change readiness, and community health and well-being	**8.1** **Strengthen social resilience through education, access, and connections**				*Goal 8 metrics: number of functioning resilience hubs; number of block party kits issued; number of emergency kits issued*
	8.1.1 *Develop programming to strengthen community capacity and civic engagement, such as city meetings, events, programs like A²Zero Ambassadors, Citizen Pruners, Community Academy, and park stewardship initiatives*	*4-6 Years*	*Various city depts*		
	8.1.2 *Engage property owners to increase education and resources for disaster preparedness and recovery and support the Hazard Mitigation Plan*	*Ongoing*	*Emergency management*	*OSI*	
	8.2 **Strengthen physical resilience by investing in the infrastructure and facilities needed to prepare for and recover from disaster**				
	8.2.1 *Ensure that resilience hubs, essential facilities, and infrastructure are designed and upgraded to withstand and adapt to future climate risks*	*Ongoing*	*Systems Planning, Engineering*	*OSI, Fleet & Facilities*	
Goal 09: Invest in a mutually-supportive street, transportation, and land use system that prioritizes safe and equitable access	**9.1** **Develop a context-based street typology decision-making process to design streets appropriately for the expected land use and level of density**				*Goal 9 metrics: annual average daily traffic; AAATA ridership; bicycle/ pedestrian trips; mode share; households with zero cars; number of bicycle lanes added per year; crash data; vehicle miles traveled*
	9.1.1 *Build upon the city's multi-lane studies to analyze how to best coordinate land use for future development*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning*	*Transportation*	
	9.1.2 *Develop and amend ordinances to require context-appropriate sidewalks, with amenities in areas slated for growth*	*4-6 Years*	*Transportation*	*Planning*	
	9.1.3 *Create shared streets in strategic high-pedestrian areas*	*4-6 Years*	*Transportation*	*DDA, Planning*	
	9.2 **Align transit service and land development**				
	9.2.1 *Support implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) and high frequency lines as proposed by AAATA*	*4-6 Years*	*Transportation*	*AAATA, Planning*	
	9.2.2 *Establish zoning framework to support high-density development around planned transit hubs and high-frequency lines*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning Services*	*AAATA, Transportation*	
	9.2.3 *Prioritize multimodal access to transit hubs and bus stops*	*4-6 Years*	*Transportation*	*AAATA, Planning*	
	9.2.4 *Prioritize ROW realignment to accommodate dedicated transit lanes*	*Ongoing*	*Transportation, Engineering*	*AAATA*	

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Infrastructure and Services

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 09: Invest in a mutually-supportive street, transportation, and land use system that prioritizes safe and equitable access	**9.3** **Support a shift in transportation modes, away from vehicular use, through infrastructure investments and updated transportation policies**				*Goal 9 metrics: annual average daily traffic; AAATA ridership; bicycle/ pedestrian trips; mode share; households with zero cars; number of bicycle lanes added per year; crash data; vehicle miles traveled*
	9.3.1 *Consider pricing policies to align parking supply and demand relative to costs*	*4- 6 Years*	*DDA, City Administration*	*Transportation*	
	9.3.2 *Partner with AAPS to prioritize non-motorized walkability and connectivity to public schools*	*4-9 Years*	*Transportation*	*AAPS*	
Goal 10: Balance development with protection and integration of natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem	**10.1** **Protect, enhance, and manage natural features or open space that provide ecological benefits**				*Goal 10 metrics: number of rain gardens installed; percent of land area with stormwater management; number of trees provided for private property (10K Tree Program)*
	10.1.1 *Support denser, compact development and maintain 2025 regulations that mitigate the impacts on natural features, including landmark trees, woodlands, steep slopes, endangered species habitats, and waterways*	*Ongoing*	*Planning, Systems Planning*	*Forestry, Natural Areas Preservation, Environmental Services*	
	10.1.2 *Encourage community greening and sustainability practices to strengthen natural features on private land through education on land management.*	*4-6 Years*	*Systems Planning*	*OSI*	
	10.1.3 *Consider updating regulations and processes to reflect current ecological understanding:*				
	› *Incentivize quality, rather than quantity, in open space requirements within the zoning code to protect natural features or open space that provide ecological benefits, and minimizes lawn areas*	*1-3 Years*	*Planning, Systems Planning*		
	› *Develop and adopt incentives that result in early consideration of natural features in the development process and achieve the preservation of significant areas or restoration of degraded natural features within development sites*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning, Systems Planning*		
	› *Develop performance metrics that assess ecological function rather than dimensional standards*	*4-6 Years*	*Systems Planning*	*Planning*	
	› *Work with regional partners to create cohesive ecological corridors that extend beyond city boundaries*	*4-9 Years*	*Systems Planning, Parks*	*Planning*	

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Infrastructure and Services

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 10: Balance development with protection and integration of natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem	**10.2** **Encourage tree cover and landscaping to help mitigate the urban heat island effect**				*Goal 10 metrics: number of rain gardens installed; percent of land area with stormwater management; number of trees provided for private property (10K Tree Program)*
	10.2.1 *Target tree plantings in areas with limited tree coverage*	*Ongoing*	*OSI*	*Forestry*	
	10.2.2 *Update landmark trees definition*	*1-3 Years*	*Systems Planning*	*Planning*	
	10.3 **Reduce stormwater runoff volume and flood occurrences with a focus on deploying nature-based solutions and managing stormwater where it falls**				
	10.3.1 *Review stormwater requirements in light of changing precipitation patterns*	*1-3 Years*	*Systems Planning*	*Planning*	
	10.3.2 *Evaluate current flooding ordinances and update to reflect increased precipitation experiences as caused by climate change*	*7-9 Years*	*Systems Planning*	*Planning*	
	10.3.3 *Identify opportunities for nature-based solutions in public projects and rights-of-way*	*Ongoing*	*Engineering*	*Systems Planning, WCWRC*	
	10.3.4 *Explore regional coordination opportunities for watershed management*	*Ongoing*	*Systems Planning*	*WCWRC, HRWC*	
Goal 11: Promote carbon neutrality through efficient energy and resource use and transitioning to zero carbon sources	**11.1** **Support the transition to clean energy through land and investment**				*Goal 11 metrics: number of SEU households; energy source of new builds; number of zero emission buildings; fleet electrification*
	11.1.1 *Identify priority developments so Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU) planning can be coordinated on the same timeline to reduce construction disruption of streets and rights-of-way*	*1-6 Years*	*OSI, Planning, Engineering, Systems Planning*		
	11.1.2 *Provide guidance for private development as to how they integrate into the city's SEU plans and where private development needs to carry the responsibility of clean energy on their own developments*	*4-6 Years*	*OSI, Planning*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	
	11.1.3 *Coordinate commercial and residential developments with district energy systems to improve energy efficiency*	*4-9 Years*	*OSI, Planning*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	
	11.1.4 *Designate buildings and locations critical for resilience where microgrids could be implemented to ensure 100% continuous energy operations.*	*4-6 Years*	*OSI*	*All departments reviewing site plans*	

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Infrastructure and Services

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 11: Promote carbon neutrality through efficient energy and resource use and transitioning to zero carbon sources	**11.2** **Reduce energy use and carbon emissions of buildings**				*Goal 11 metrics: number of SEU households; energy source of new builds; number of zero emission buildings; fleet electrification*
	11.2.1 *Provide training and education for developers and contractors who are unfamiliar or new to high-performance buildings*	*1-3 Years*	*OSI*	*Building*	
	11.2.2 *Incentivize high-performance (zero-emission) buildings, full electrification, and energy reduction measures*	*4-6 Years*	*Planning, OSI*	*Building*	
	11.2.3 *Reduce energy use intensity of existing buildings through increase in weatherization programs*	*Ongoing*	*OCED*	*OSI*	
	11.2.4 *Provide deeper knowledge to residents and building owners on the benefits of building electrification for those buildings with HVAC systems that are nearing end-of-life and easy for conversion*	*Ongoing*	*OSI*		
	11.2.5 *Minimize landfill waste by encouraging recycling and composting in households, institutions, and constructions*	*Ongoing*	*Solid Waste*		
Goal 12: Plan for and invest in city services and infrastructure that can accommodate expected growth	**12.1** **Coordinate and align infrastructure investment with land use and growth**				*Goal 12 metrics: number of public and private EV chargers; tonnes of waste per capita*
	12.1.1 *Promote development that incorporates shared waste management functions to streamline collection, manage waste more efficiently, and reduce landfill waste as the city densifies*	*4-6 Years*	*Solid Waste*	*Planning*	
	12.1.2 *Coordinate street repairs and major construction projects inline with Ann Arbor utility planning to integrate potential geothermal/district energy networks*	*4-6 Years*	*Engineering, Systems Planning*	*OSI*	
	12.1.3 *Align implementation of the Future Land Use Map with investments in water/sewer conveyance and treatment capacity to support more growth of the city*	*Ongoing*	*Systems Planning, Planning*	*WTP, WRRF*	
	12.1.4 *Work with energy utilities to bury energy distribution during street reconstruction and coordinate on geothermal network deployment*	*Ongoing*	*Engineering, Systems Planning*	*OSI*	
	12.1.5 *Support additional street construction in large-scale development proposals to enhance citywide connectivity*	*Ongoing*	*Engineering, Systems Planning, Planning*	*Transportation*	
	12.1.6 *Support the electrification of vehicle networks, building electric charging infrastructure at public facilities and encouraging construction of charging stations on private properties*	*Ongoing*	*OSI, Public Works, Planning*	*OSI, Engineering (ROW)*	

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Infrastructure and Services

Goal	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Lead Organization/Unit	Partners	Metrics
Goal 12: Plan for and invest in city services and infrastructure that can accommodate expected growth	**12.2** **Coordinate city services to accommodate growth**				*Goal 12 metrics: number of public and private EV chargers; tonnes of waste per capita*
	12.2.1 *Encourage recycling and composting in households, institutions, and construction projects*	*Ongoing*	*Solid Waste*	*OSI*	
	12.2.2 *Allocate resources to ensure that solid waste services have the necessary staff capacity, equipment, and vehicles to accommodate additional density and diverse building types*	*Ongoing*	*Solid Waste*		
	12.2.3 *Allocate resources to ensure that basic safety services are provided to accommodate a growing population and new building types while maintaining appropriate response times*	*Ongoing*	*Police, Fire*		
	12.2.4 *Maintain ongoing coordination with regional institutions and service providers to accommodate city growth*	*Ongoing*	*Various city departments*	*AAPS, Ann Arbor District Library, U-M, Washtenaw County*	
	12.2.5 *Provide a regular update on the progress towards the plan's goals, using at a minimum the metrics outlined*	*Ongoing*	*Planning*		

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Glossary of Terms

Affordable and Market Rate Housing[1]

The term "affordable" refers to housing that can only be rented or sold to households meeting income eligibility requirements. The metric to determine eligibility is if a household earns below levels correlated to the area median income. In this plan, we will use the term "income-eligible affordable housing" when referring to housing that is legally restricted to income qualified households. This is in contrast with "market-rate" housing, in which pricing is determined by economic forces (such as supply and demand), rather than by government regulation.
Due to high housing costs, many households earning more than median incomes struggle to find housing in Ann Arbor. In this plan, the term "affordable housing" will refer to the city's goal to provide housing options for every income bracket.

Anchor Institution[2]

"Anchor institutions" are important place-makers within a community and often a key source of resources and investment. Anchor institutions are generally mission-driven organizations, although they may be either public or private. Examples of anchor institutions include corporate headquarters of a major company, large universities or other educational institutions, and hospitals or healthcare organizations.
The importance presence of these institutions – which may manifest through employing a significant share of the population or controlling a large share of available land – means that the past and future of the institution and the local community are deeply intertwined.

Bus Rapid Transit[3]

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines are frequent, comfortable, and fast services that can provide quicker service through transit priority features, longer distances between stops, off-door fare boarding, and attractive and accessible stations. Transit priority features include dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority, and queue jump lanes (often located at intersections).

1 Strong Towns
2 Rutgers University
3 TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan

BIPOC[4]

"BIPOC" is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, People of Color. While this term encompasses individuals with diverse histories, identities, and experiences, communities are historically marginalized groups and are disproportionately impacted by exclusionary zoning practices.

Circular Economy[5]

The circular economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products, and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting. The circular economy tackles climate change and other global challenges, like biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution, by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources.

Concentrated Code Enforcement[6]

A targeted house-to-house style of code enforcement in which the exteriors of all homes in the enforcement area are subject to inspection. In low-income areas, the fines, inspections, and mandatory repairs associated with this style of code enforcement can trigger a cascade of evictions, disinvestment, and displacement, particularly when enforcement is paired with gentrification pressures or redevelopment plans. Historically, concentrated code enforcement – under the guise of "urban renewal" – was used with Ann Arbor to accelerate the removal of poor and Black residents from neighborhoods marked for reinvestment or redevelopment.

Density[7]

The concentration of people within a geographic area, typically expressed as people per square mile. Adding more housing units within the same amount of land means that the number of people who live on that land can increase, translating to higher population density.
Higher density areas can foster connectivity and innovative hubs, thereby leading to greater economic growth. Density also has sustainability benefits, as denser urban areas are generally more walkable and offer superior public transportation.

4 Source: Center for Economic Inclusion
5 Source: Ellen Macarthur Foundation
6 Source: Furman Center and "City's Black Neighborhoods Disappearing" Ann Arbor News
7 Source: Smart Cities

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Glossary of Terms

Displacement[8]

Displacement is often the result of gentrification (see definition below) when many existing residents are priced out of their own neighborhood due to the high cost of living caused by new investment in the area. It is a destabilizing change that often starts with a loss of affordable housing, and forces lower-income and minority residents to move out of an established neighborhood.

Essential Facilities[9]

Sometimes also known as "community lifelines," refers to facilities whose functions are essential to human health, safety, and/or economic security. Examples may include water and wastewater systems, nuclear reactors, and healthcare facilities.

Embodied Carbon[10]

An important sustainability indicator and a way to quantify the environmental costs associated with development. This measurement includes the total greenhouse gas emissions created by the entire lifecycle of the building materials – including extraction, manufacturing, transport, construction, and disposal.

Exclusionary Zoning[11]

Refers to a range of policies – including restrictions on multi-family dwellings, large minimum lot sizes, limits on building height – that, explicitly or implicitly, seek to prevent people of certain races, ethnicities, or income levels from buying homes in specific neighborhoods.

8 American Planning Association
9 Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
10 American Institute of Architects
11 Planetizen

Form-Based Code[12]

Form-based code addresses the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types.

Gentrification[13]

A combination of rising home values and rents, rising income levels, and rising educational attainment levels, usually in longtime urban neighborhoods that historically had low levels in each of these areas. The results in the neighborhood come from an influx of new, often upscale, housing development; new commercial development that caters to an emerging clientele; and the change — or outright loss — of community identity.

Housing Cost-Burdened[14]

A household is considered "cost-burdened" when they spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses, or "severely cost-burdened" when those expenses exceed 50% of their income. The term can apply to either renters or homeowners, although nearly half of all renters in the US are cost-burdened, compared with under one-third of homeowners who are cost-burdened. In 2020, 49% of renters spent at least 30% of their household income on housing costs, compared with 27% of homeowners.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit[15]

The "low-income housing tax credit" (LIHTC) is a federally-funded, IRS-run program that subsidizes income-restricted affordable housing development. The program awards dollar-for-dollar tax credits to developers who agree to reserve a portion of units for low-income households at below-market rents. The LIHTC is the most important affordable housing program in the United States, accounting for 90% of affordable housing development in the United States. While many types of rental housing are eligible for the LIHTC, due to economies of scale, this tool is most beneficial for large apartment complexes, not typical "missing middle" housing such as duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes.

12 Center for Zoning Solutions
13 American Planning Association
14 HUD and Population Reference Bureau
15 MSHDA

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Glossary of Terms

Master Lease and Model Lease[16]

Master leasing, whereby a master tenant (such as a nonprofit agency, service provider, or government agency) leases a unit or multiple units from a property owner, then subleases units to subtenants. A model lease framework promotes transparency in rent rates and increases, with relocation assistance requirements for substantial rate hikes.

Michigan Planning Enabling Act[17]

An act to codify the laws regarding county, township, city, and village planning. This act provides for the creation, organization, powers, and duties of local planning commissions, as well as for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and agencies. The act provides for the regulation and subdivision of land, and to repeal acts and parts of acts. According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, a master plan* must address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future. The master plan must include maps, plats, charts, and descriptive, explanatory, and other related matter that show the planning commission's recommendations for the future development of the planning jurisdiction. The planning commission shall not hold less than 1 public hearing on the proposed master plan after the 63-day public comment period. Approval of the proposed master plan shall be by resolution of the planning commission carried by affirmative votes of not less than 2/3 of the members of the planning commission. City Council shall then approve or reject the proposed master plan.

*The City of Ann Arbor uses the term Comprehensive Land Use Plan instead of master plan, but they are interchangeable terms.

Missing Middle Housing[18]

Missing middle refers to housing structures that fill the gap between single-family detached homes and high-rise buildings. These are often market-rate units that are compatible in scale and form to detached single-family homes. They may include structures such as duplex, triplexes, quadplexes, ADUs, cottage housing, row houses, garden apartments and other smaller single-family homes.

16 *Ninigret Partners*
17 *Michigan Planning Enabling Act*
18 *missingmiddle.com*

Independent Businesses[19]

Independent businesses are those that operate with full control over every aspect of their business. Independent businesses lack management hierarchies, corporate boards, and other stakeholders. These businesses afford the freedom to serve clients in a way that matches the independent business owner's values and mindset. Examples include a family-operated bakery, a small software development company, or a clothing boutique operated solely by the owner.

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)[20]

Housing units that are unsubsidized, market-rate housing units that are still affordable to low- and middle-income households due to low market values. These units may be low-cost for a variety of reasons, such as location (i.e., being located in low-cost areas), or age (i.e., older structures that lack premium amenities, such as dishwashers). Many of these units fall into the "missing middle" category and are owned and operated by small developers.

Nature-Based Solutions (formerly called Green Infrastructure)[21]

Nature-based solutions is the term used to discuss the physical ways we use nature in a smart, lasting way to solve stormwater problems for the environment, people, and the economy.

Resilience Hubs[22]

Resilience hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during, or after a natural hazard event. At their core, resilience hubs are about shifting power to communities and increasing neighborhood capacity. Resilience hubs operate at the nexus of climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and equity. They strive to enhance community sustainability and resilience through a bottom-up approach centered on co-development and local leadership. Learn more about resilience hubs on the Resilience Hubs website.

19 *Forbes*
20 *Institute for Housing Studies*
21 *Ann Arbor Systems Planning Unit*
22 *Urban Sustainability Directors Network*

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Glossary of Terms

SEMCOG[23]

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments fostering cooperative efforts in order to move southeast Michigan forward. SEMCOG supports local planning through its technical, data, and intergovernmental resources, in addition to advocating on behalf of southeast Michigan in Lansing and Washington, D.C.

Sustainable Energy Utility[24]

The Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU) is an opt-in, supplemental, community-owned energy utility that provides 100% renewable energy from local solar and battery storage systems and networked geothermal systems installed at participating homes and businesses in the Ann Arbor.

Tech Transfer (University of Michigan)[25]

Facilitate the efficient transfer of knowledge and technology from the University to the private sector in support of the public interest; to support the discovery of new knowledge and technology; to attract resources for the support of University programs; to provide services to University Employees to facilitate their efforts to carry out the University's mission; and to promote local, state, and national economic development.

Transit Hub[26]

Smaller versions of transit centers (i.e., Blake Transit Center) composed of multiple transit stops serving multiple connecting routes. Transit hubs make transfers easy and comfortable, provide a recovery location for vehicles and operators at the terminus of routes, and provide a higher level of amenities and service than a standard bus stop in higher demand locations.

23 SEMCOG
24 Office of Sustainability and Innovation, City of Ann Arbor
25 University of Michigan Tech Transfer Policy
26 AAATA

Unified Development Code[27]

The Unified Development Code (UDC) serves as Ann Arbor's zoning ordinance that follows the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006. This ordinance is intended to require city review and approval of the development of certain buildings, structures, land uses, and the creation of new lots, all of which can a have significant economic, social, and environmental impact on the community as a whole and on adjacent parcels and land uses. It is further the intent of this ordinance to provide for the preservation and management of significant natural features, ensure safe and efficient traffic patterns, and to achieve harmonious relationships between buildings, structures, infrastructure, and land uses, to implement the adopted Comprehensive Plan of the city, and to comply with all applicable federal and state laws.

Vehicle Miles Traveled[28]

As the name implies, "vehicle miles traveled" refers to the number of miles all the vehicles in a region travel during a given period of time. In the 2020 A2 Zero Plan, the City of Ann Arbor set a goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled 50% by 2030.

Walk Score[29]

The "walk score" of a neighborhood represents how easily residents of that neighborhood are able to run errands and accomplish daily tasks on foot, rather than by car. A higher score indicates greater walkability, while a lower score represents greater car dependency. The score is based on proximity to amenities, as well as various measures of "pedestrian friendliness," such as population density, block length, and intersection density. The Average Walk Score of each city is based on a weighted average of the scores of each address in the city. Walk Scores are created by Walk Score, Inc., a Redfin subsidiary.

27 Unified Development Code
28 AZ Zero Plan
29 Walk Score