

**Subject:**

Commission Discussions

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**From:** Ellen Ramsburgh**Sent:** Tuesday, July 8, 2025 4:08 PM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Commission Discussions

Dear Commissioners,

Discussions by Commissioners of the Comprehensive Plan following the July 1 meeting were among the rare in-depth discussions that I've seen. Thank you for your patience in listening to public commentary and engaging in the type of democratic discourse vital to the creation of an inclusive plan. Special thanks to Commissioner Norton for initiating the discussion of how policies to increase density in AA's single-family neighborhoods should also recognize and include protections for existing beneficial elements in these neighborhoods.

Toward the end of discussion a commissioner pushed the process, "it is really getting late, . . . but we've got to get this to the consultants. . . . Can we move to the next item?" Please, please, do not rush this process! This is the time to discuss more deeply how this 'guiding document' will translate into ordinances that meet our goals but do not cause harm.

The level of community participation you are now seeing should remind you that, even when discomfoting, this is what democracy looks like at its best and it should alarm you that future opportunities for public discourse are being removed to make the planning process faster and easier for the developer. Commissioners, Council members, and developers should be made aware of the effect of their decisions on citizens, regardless of whether those voices affect the outcome.

Commissioner Abrons, please explain how you can reassure a speaker that there will never be an 85-foot tall building next to a single-family 16" foot house in a transition zone because of buffers, setbacks, or step-downs. Since there are examples throughout the city like the Foundry Lofts, approved at 14 stories, approximately 150', next to 30' houses in the Old 4th Ward Historic District, I can understand why she would be concerned about the possibility of an 85' tall building next to her single family scale home.

Commissioner Disch, please refrain from continuing to blame the Greenbelt for constraining the growth of Ann Arbor. The Greenbelt is a protection for highest quality farmland; protected properties do not form a "belt" and are not a constraint on development in Ann Arbor. It is the agreement with the townships that constrains Ann Arbor within the boundaries of I94, I23, and M14.

Thank you,  
Ellen Ramsburgh  
3rd Ward