

1/22/25

To the Planning Commission and Staff:

Let me thank you all for the efforts to date on the Comprehensive Plan. May I respectfully offer the following comments and concerns? These are in no particular order.

1. The plan does not seem to address important conflicting goals, for example that A2 people love green space but density directly reduces it. Another conflicting goal: we want to reduce inbound commuting and price escalation while promoting high tech business development. This will bring in highly paid professionals, exacerbating the high prices. Acknowledged on p. 29. How can we address these?
2. There seems to be little objective data in the plan. Instead, many areas seem to be responses to self-selected surveys which may reflect only the wishes of the “squeaky wheels” or anecdotal/opinion data – e.g. the target of new residents which was based on a SWAG of half of the commuter population? Is it too late to address this? This assumption alone heavily influences the plan but there is precious little objective data to support it.
3. Many of the stated goals - e.g. mixed use walkable neighborhoods – have not materialized despite years of promotion. It seems that in most mixed use projects in recent years, most properties seem to succeed in the commercial or residential areas, but not as true mixed use. The plan seems to acknowledge this (p, 26) but does not address it. Why? What else can we do??? Do residents and business people really want this???
4. The report acknowledges that “**some** residents want no change to single family” ( p. 6). The overwhelming number of my acquaintances who already own single family homes **strongly prefer** that these remain. (This includes the writer.) Note the comments in #2 – I am willing to acknowledge that this is anecdotal. If we had objective survey data, I would accept it over my casual observation, but I haven’t seen objective data.
5. Whose interests matter, existing residents or potential future residents? Remember, us existing residents are the ones paying your salaries, not commuters who might move in in the future. It seems reasonable to me that we should be your priority.

6. Unrealistic assessment of peoples' preferences: In the authors' opinion, many of the assumptions of the "walkable neighborhood" reflect a unrealistic hope for a return to the good old days. Maybe this works for the drug store. But, will Ann Arbor residents in 2030 be willing to shop for groceries at a small corner store on foot, or prefer a Plum Market, Zingerman's, Whole Foods, or one of the many ethnic specialty grocers such as Way One Chinese groceries on Plymouth? Similarly, will you walk to your doctor's office? Your attorney's? Barber or hair stylist? If you are a highly specialized professional, will you be willing to live on site or next door to your employer – say, UM Medical System; Thomson Reuters; or Black and Veatch Engineering? Similarly, if you are a sandwich builder at Zingermans, can you realistically afford to live within a 20 minute walk from Zingermans?
6. NIMBY vs. general resistance to change/ desire for the good old days. Many people mourn the loss of "good old Ann Arbor" and complain about high rise buildings, wherever they are located. The author favors high density including high rise **near campus/ employment centers**. These make a lot of sense- put the dense housing next to the big employers/ educational institutions. This can directly impact vehicle usage. True, it may cause a major change on the "look and feel" of, say, South University; but how many townies really spend much time there, or live within the shadows of the S. U. highrises? That said, among my circle most don't want tall buildings at all.
7. p. 25 – TC1 has reduced development of undesirable features (the dreaded drive throughs!) but so far has not achieved the positive goals. With the proposal for the city to fund development of new parking structures at State and Eisenhower this is further compromised. Yet the plan seems to continue to promote TC1 without addressing these concerns. In my view, TC1 already favors "sticks" over "carrots". It seems that the "sticks" are working, but not the "carrots".
8. What consideration has been given to other infrastructure limitations/needs, such as water, roads and sewer? Police, fire or EMS services? Or, is it expected that this plan will be proposed and the other city services will study and respond?

With best regards,

*Bradley A. Pritts*

3030 Lexington Drive  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

