

**Ann Arbor
Comprehensive
Plan**

Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan

Planning Commission Subcommittee Meeting
11.26.2024

AGENDA:

1. Recent Outreach Summary (October Event & Focus Groups)
2. Future Land Use Discussion
3. Next Steps

Recent Outreach Summary

Engagement to date



35,000+ website views

3,000+ survey participants

19 interviews (49 individuals, 15 agencies)

7 events at Downtown and Branch Libraries

380+ attendees

27 stakeholders in small group meetings

Pop up events at Green Fair, Summer Party, Farmers Market and Meeting in a Box

October Workshop



By the Numbers:

Over 200 attendees
2 public presentations
3 city official meetings

Priorities Activity

Participants were asked to distribute five dot stickers among nine priority areas for a hypothetical development site.

PRIORITY

Increasing affordable housing	29
More housing overall	19
Aligning with walk/bike/transit	14
Preservation of natural features	13
Green building practices	12
Providing quality open space	11
Community character	11
Stormwater management	9
Increasing accessible homes	6

More housing overall in the development

Providing quality open space within development projects

Green building practices (all electric, sustainable materials)

Preservation of natural features (woods, large trees, wetlands, etc)

Increasing accessible/barrier free homes

Stormwater management and floodplain protection

Community character (materials, design, historic preservation)

Aligning development with walking, biking and transit infrastructure

Increasing affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents

Or, write your own:

...green building practices are appealing to moderate price housing in my neighborhood. Shop them/choose them. They're making the situation of financing affordable housing easier.

**includes responses from Elks Community Fun Day pop-up*

Key Proposed Changes

Participants used dot stickers to rate their reactions to the proposed key changes.

VERY STRONG AGREEMENT

Develop transit corridors

Add density near north campus

Redevelop shopping centers

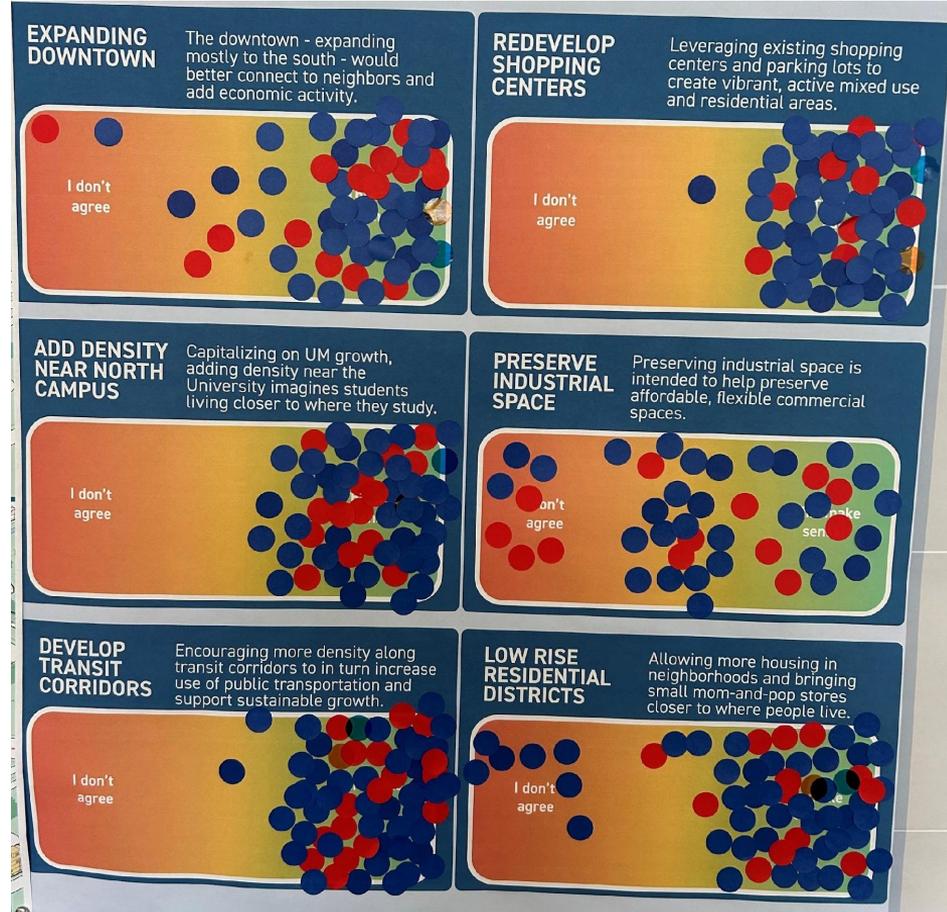
STRONG AGREEMENT

Low rise residential districts

Expanding downtown

MODERATE/ LOW AGREEMENT

Preserve industrial space



Comment Summary

Participants left a variety of responses on sticky notes and comment cards.

Major themes include:

1. Housing Density and Affordability:

- Need for **increased housing density**, particularly in **mixed-use developments**, to address the housing shortage and affordability issues
- Allowing **taller buildings** and more **diverse housing options**, including affordable housing for **low- and middle-income** residents.

2. Transportation and Infrastructure:

- Improving transportation infrastructure, including better **public transit options, bike lanes, and pedestrian pathways**.
- **Reducing car dependency** and **enhancing connectivity** between neighborhoods and commercial areas.

3. Community and Public Spaces:

- Importance of **parks, green spaces, and community hubs**.
- Desire for more **accessible and well-maintained public spaces**, as well as the integration of parks into urban planning.

4. Environmental Sustainability:

- Need for sustainable development practices, including **energy-efficient buildings** and the **preservation of mature trees**.
- Policies that promote **fossil fuel-free construction** and the incorporation of **green infrastructure**.

5. Zoning and Land Use:

- Concerns about existing zoning laws and their **impact on development**.
- Reforms to allow for **more flexible land use** that accommodates **mixed-use developments** and reduces restrictions on **building heights**.

6. Community Engagement and Transparency:

- Desire for **better communication and engagement** with community members regarding urban planning decisions.
- More **inclusive processes** that consider the needs and opinions of **all stakeholders**, especially those in single-family neighborhoods.

**generated by the Conversational AI tool in Atlas.ti*

Focus Groups: Major Takeaways

Housing

Supportive of residential density

Housing and transportation must be planned in unison

Use public land for affordable housing

Aging in place

Affordability cannot only be solved with zoning (i.e., low wages, high taxes)

Sustainability

Support for density

Trade-offs will not leave everyone happy

Expand bike and trail network so that it is safe to use

Reduce building energy use through incentives

Our goal is to be carbon neutral – policy can't be wishy washy!

Community resilience is important for other goals

Equity/Access

More support needed for homeownership

Prioritize building for persons with disabilities

Save land for affordable housing

Preserve affordable commercial space and help local businesses access it

Keep skilled trades in Ann Arbor - from training to starting a business

Natural Features

High quality natural areas deserve more attention

Site plan review: mitigation efforts may not be sufficient

Biodiversity and ecosystems need protection even when land values are high

Preservation for ecological impact or quality of life impact?

Future Land Use

Future Land Use vs. Zoning

Key Distinctions:

1. Future Land Use Plans are aspirational and provide a vision.
2. Zoning is actionable and provides the legal framework to enforce that vision.

Future Land Use Goals & Strategies

1. Create more flexibility in residential districts
2. Expand where denser multifamily housing is allowed by right
3. Create walkable, connected neighborhoods with access to basic needs and amenities.
4. Align transit service with land development
5. Support denser, compact development and mitigate the impacts on critical natural features
6. Diversify the economy to grow the non-residential tax base

Potential future districts

Low-Rise Residential

Lower scale housing, missing middle, compact neighborhoods, small-scale commercial

Mixed-Use Transition

Provides medium intensity housing and mixed uses, transitioning from low-rise residential to mixed-use hubs, focus on transit accessibility

Mixed-Use Hub

Tallest buildings allowed, strong transit hub emphasis, large sites, anchor destinations

Employment Non-Res.

Encourages the development of flexible building types for a variety of non-residential uses (light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing or laboratory space).

Low Rise Residential - Approach 01

- **35-foot height** limit
- **1-4 housing units** allowed (more on larger parcels)
- Potential to define reduced setbacks and/or minimum lot sizes
- Limited neighborhood commercial uses

Clear distinction in scale to Mixed Use Transition



Detached Houses



Townhouse/Rowhouse



Quadplex/Miniplex



Neighborhood Commercial

Low Rise Residential - Approach 02

- **48-foot height** limit
- **No limit on the number of units**
- Potential to define reduced setbacks and/or minimum lot sizes
- Limited neighborhood commercial uses

Limited distinction in scale to Mixed Use Transition

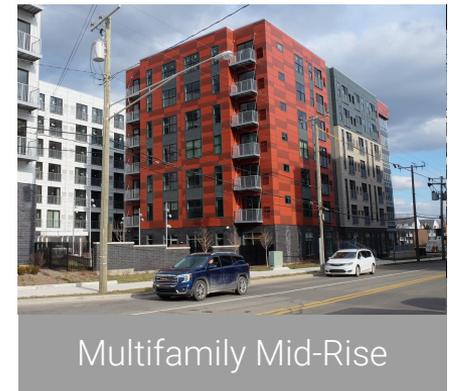
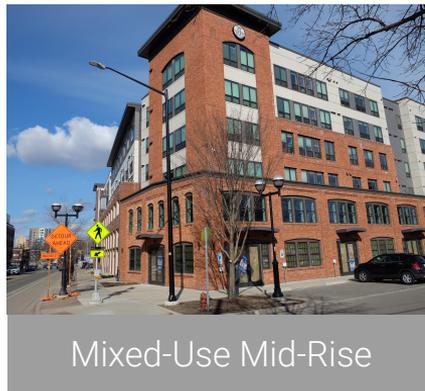


Discussion

1. Gentle density vs. maximizing housing opportunities: Which approach should we prioritize?
2. Should the district be designed to align with existing building codes and typical construction types, or should developers have the flexibility to choose their preferred construction methods and costs?
3. Should we encourage the subdivision of lots with smaller-scale buildings, or the assembly of properties for larger-scale developments?
4. What is the best way to regulate building form?
 - Height
 - Unit count
 - Setbacks
 - Open space requirements
 - Minimum lot sizes
 - Number of egresses (stairs/exits) and their connections (corridors/hallways)?

Mixed-Use Transition District

- **55-foot height limit *within fifty feet*** of Low-rise Residential
- Allowed height increases further from Low-rise Residential (**up to 80-feet**)
- Allows for neighborhood scale buildings **and** mixed-use style buildings
- Focused on larger corridors and areas adjacent to Mixed Use Hubs



Discussion

1. If we aim to maximize housing opportunities in the Low-Rise Residential district, should there be a transitional district that is distinct in building scale and form from both the Low-Rise Residential district and the Mixed-Use Hub?

Mixed-Use Hub Districts (Core)

- **80-foot height limit by right,** but can go higher
- Height limit increases the further you are from Low-Rise Residential (e.g. up to 300+ feet tall)
- Mixed-use (residential, commercial, office/lab)
- Encourage redevelopment of suburban commercial areas



Mixed-Use Hub Districts (Innovation)

- **80-foot height limit by right,** but can go higher
- Height limit increases the further you are from Low-Rise Residential (e.g. up to 300+ feet tall)
- Mixed-use but focused on employment (30-40% residential, 60-70% employment)
- Transition from suburban office park to more urban form over time



Mixed-Use Hub Districts (Retail)

- **80-foot height limit by right,** but can go higher
- Height limit increases the further you are from Low-Rise Residential (e.g. up to 300+ feet tall)
- Mixed-use with focus on retail (70% ground floor commercial, plus residential, limited office)
- Auto-supportive design with transition over time



Transitional Shopping Center



Mixed-Use Mid-Rise



Shopping Center Redevelopment (retail-centric)

Discussion

1. What are your general thoughts on emphasizing innovation and retail in specific locations within the city while still maintaining the overarching goal of creating mixed-use districts?

Employment Non-Residential

Encourages the development of flexible building types for a variety of non-residential uses that would become employment anchors, such as light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing or research and development space.

- Decreases the geography of M zoning districts across the city - concentrated on S. Industrial and Research Park
- NOTE: N. Main Street could transition over time in coordination with roadway infrastructure improvements.



Light Industrial/Production



Flex Tech



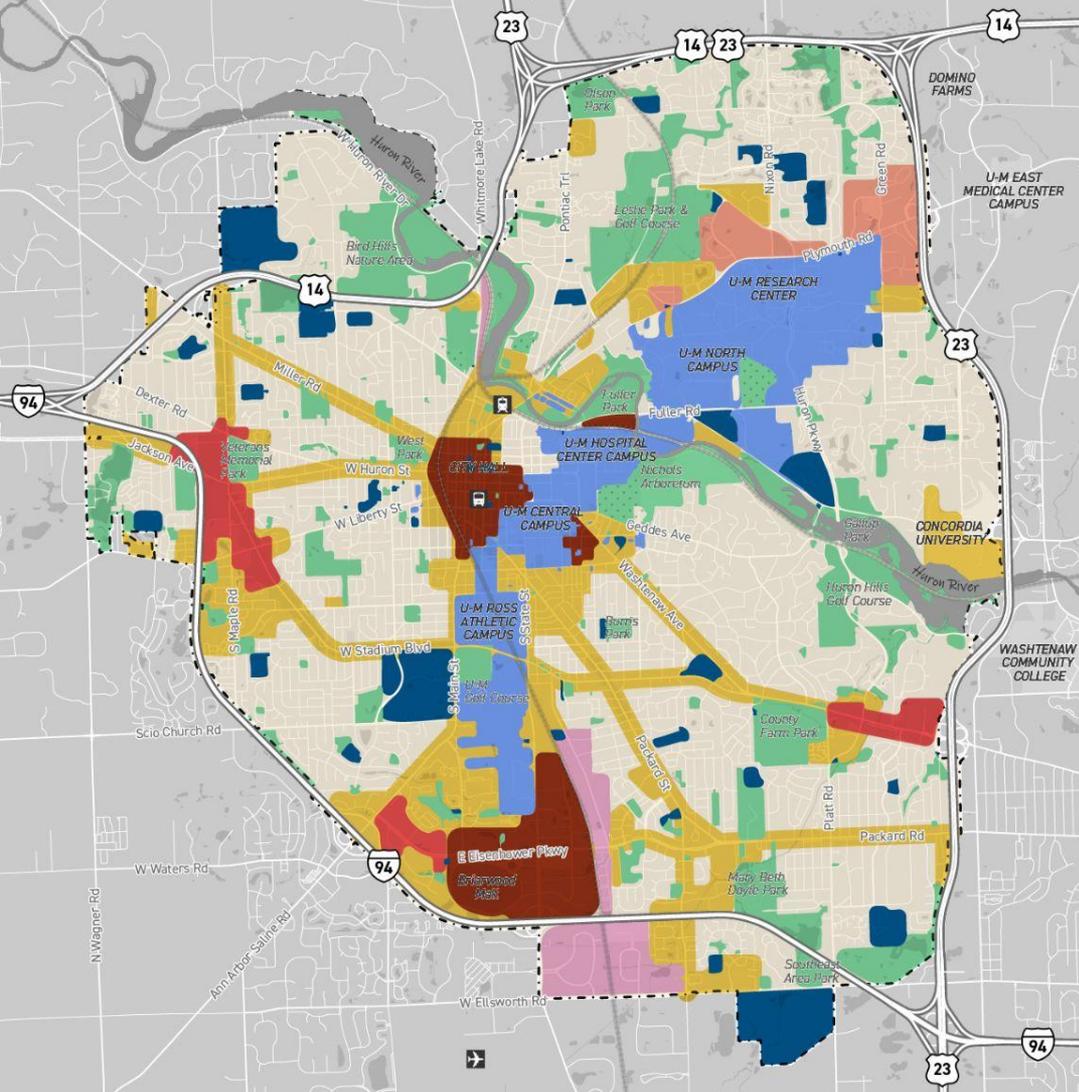
Legacy Industrial Building

Discussion

1. What are your general thoughts on maintaining a district that does not permit housing (as per current regulations) to preserve a diversity of commercial types in the city while allowing flexibility to accommodate the unknown demands of future businesses?
2. Was South Industrial considered for TC1 rezoning, and if so, why was it not selected as an opportunity to introduce dense, mixed-use development?

Future Land Use

[draft]



Legend

- Low-Rise Residential
- Employment - Non Residential
- Mixed-Use Transit/Transition
- Mixed-Use Hub - Innovation
- Mixed-Use Hub - Retail
- Mixed-Use Hub - Core
- Public
- Public - University of Michigan
- Parks/Open Space

NEXT STEPS

How is the plan developed?

Steering Committee guides the process

Planning Commission is the author

Council adopts the plan

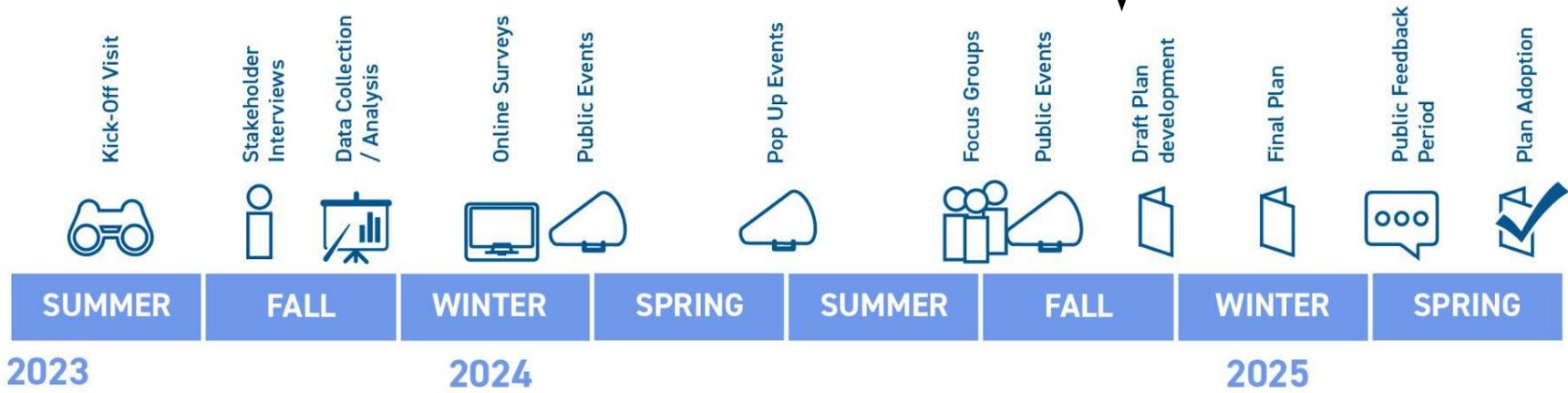
City Departments
implement the plan



Project Schedule



We are here



Next Steps

- 1. Organize and Draft the Plan**
- 2. Draft Refinement & Engagement**
- 3. Public Review Process**

THANK YOU!