

Subject: Draft Comprehensive Plan feedback

From: Pam Sjo
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 6:31 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
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Dear Planning Commissioners,

As a long-time resident and homeowner of Ann Arbor, who just recently this year became aware of the city's draft Comprehensive Plan, I find it upsetting and appalling that the city did not announce this idea by mailing postcards to every resident when the initial idea was proposed. Since only about 2% of the population was queried, this clearly is not representative of the wants, needs, and desires of most of the people in Ann Arbor.

I am urging you to hold off on the planning process and mail postcards to all residents so everyone has a chance to participate in the planning of their neighborhood and the city. This may delay your process but since this is such an impactful plan, it's important to engage as many people as possible.

I have read a lot of the draft plan and though there may be some good intentions, the very premise of it seems flawed in light of future population growth predictions by SEMCOG. And if the plan's growth prediction is valid, why does additional housing come at the expense of changing the fabric of established neighborhoods? Each neighborhood has its own characteristic which is why people choose to buy or rent in a particular area. Why have there not been organized neighborhood meetings to elicit input from the people who live there?

As a long-time resident in the near downtown westside neighborhood bounded by Sunset, Miller, Brooks, and the railroad tracks (sometimes referred to as "Waterhill,") I find it disturbing that this proposed plan does not serve the best interests of current or future residents of our neighborhood. The plan for increased density would preclude many middle and low-income people from being able to afford to buy or rent since prices would increase. It only serves to benefit the developers who must build high and large enough to make their profit margins. Thus, housing prices go up, choices in affordability go down, and the neighborhood changes dramatically.

People choose to buy or rent in my neighborhood because of its character, affordability, location, schools, etc. and it's just not right to allow developers, or others with the means, to scrape off an existing one- or two-story single-family house and replace it with a 3-story house or condo or apartment building or a commercial entity. Besides the increase in prices, these would not fit in with the type and scale of surrounding houses, would create more shade and towering affect for the next-door neighbor, create more traffic, and would change the fabric of the neighborhood forever. That's what would happen if the current plan were to be approved.

Also, the feedback given to Planning Commission was from the “community” not from my neighborhood. There was no thoughtful discussion about our wants and needs and now we find ourselves in a position to defend the very homes we have created and what newcomers could come to expect.

I appreciate your consideration and thoughtfulness of these concerns.

Respectfully,

Pam Sjo