

Subject: REZ24-0008 and SP24-0013 Woodbury Gardens

From: John Fingerle

Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2026 10:09 AM

To: Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>; Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@a2gov.org>;

Subject: REZ24-0008 & SP24-0013 Woodbury Gardens

Dear Mr. Lenart and Members of the Planning Commission,

We are Laurel and John Fingerle. We have resided at 1316 Iroquois Place since 1986. We are writing to you as residents who support much of the "Neighbors for More Neighbors" initiative and Ann Arbor's goals for increased urban density. We believe that more housing is crucial for our city's climate goals, social mobility, and racial justice. However, for density to be successful, it must be contextually intelligent.

After reviewing the REZ24-0008 and SP24-0013 proposals for Woodbury Gardens, we believe this 7-story plan represents a misapplication of city policy as follows:

- **Enclave Design vs. Neighborhood Integration:** True urbanist density should integrate new residents into the existing neighborhood fabric. The current proposal, featuring two 7-story towers and a 5-level parking structure, creates a self-contained enclave. This type of internalized design often fails to promote the street-level activity and social cohesion that urban density is intended to foster. Density should feel like a neighborhood expansion, not a disconnected vertical node.
- **Misalignment with the "Missing Middle":** High-rise "podium" buildings (7 stories) are among the most expensive residential structures to build. These costs typically mandate "luxury-tier" rents to remain viable. By contrast, a 3-to-4 story development is the definition of "Missing Middle" housing. A lower-profile, high-density approach on this site would better align with the attainable rent structures needed to support social mobility for Ann Arbor's workforce. We request to see a comparison of rent for today's Woodbury Garden residents vs anticipated rents for the units in the proposed new development.
- **Preserving the "Step-Down" Precedent:** Woodbury Gardens is a massive 41-acre site. Approving a 7-story height at this early stage sets a precedent for the entire parcel. If the City allows a 7-story "Urban Core" scale here, it effectively abandons the "Neighborhood Scale" transition that is supposed to exist between transit corridors and established residential areas.
 - We would like to know whether this 7-story proposal is intended to be the final high-density project for this 41-acre site, or is this the initial phase of a larger master plan to densify the entire parcel?
 - If this is the only high-density phase planned, is the Petitioner willing to enter into a Voluntary Development Agreement or a Deed Restriction limiting the remainder of the 41 acres to its current density?"
- **Prioritizing TC1 for "Greyfields":** The Transit Corridor (TC1) district was designed to transform underutilized surface parking lots and obsolescent commercial strips. Using it here, on a site that is already an established residential community, feels like an overreach of the tool's intent.

We urge the Commission to recommend a scaled-back, 3-to-4 story alternative that aligns with the "Missing Middle" principles we need for a truly inclusive Ann Arbor. This allows us to welcome new neighbors without setting a 7-story precedent for the remaining 41 acres.

Sincerely,

Laurel & John Fingerle
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