

From: Adam Goodman
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 7:56 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: Drive-Throughs

Hi planning commission and staff,

I just watched the ORC meeting from 2 weeks ago which featured a lengthy discussion about drive-through businesses. Two things I wanted to bring to your attention:

First, I strongly support and agree with a move to require drive-throughs to serve people walking and biking. In this case, I think it's particularly important to find a way to apply this rule to existing businesses, not just new developments. I know that would be somewhat out of the ordinary for anything we would do in the zoning code given the doctrine of continuing nonconforming use. However, it does appear that Portland was able to achieve this: <https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2019/07/23/portlands-fast-food-drive-thrus-have-been-transformed-into-bike-lanes/>

Second, I want to push back a little on the idea that areas in the vicinity of highway interchanges are ones in which we shouldn't care about safety, access, or comfort for people walking and biking. It's true that many of these interchanges around Ann Arbor are *currently* dreadful when it comes to pedestrian/bike access and mobility; however, people have real needs to access and traverse these areas on foot or bike, and over time it may be possible to work with MDOT to make improvements. The transportation commission, for example, recently passed a resolution (<https://a2gov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6354010&GUID=0DE6024D-A629-4D56-9B12-92A1EF8261D3>) advocating for MDOT to improve pedestrian and bike access through the various US-23 crossings in an upcoming reconstruction project.

As such, I'm ambivalent at best about the idea that drive-throughs should be allowed *by right* even in these locations. I'm particularly concerned about safety here - not for folks in the drive-through queue itself, but for pedestrians and bikes traversing the road(s) in front of a business. Drive-throughs tend to generate a disproportionately large number of car trips compared to other uses, and often involve multiple closely-spaced curb cuts; both of these factors tend to greatly increase the potential for dangerous conflicts. Perhaps it's feasible to mitigate some of these concerns with specific design standards in the UDC, but I remain skeptical.

Thanks for your attention to this issue, and for all the good work y'all do.

- Adam