

Subject: Support of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

From: Salome Viljoen

Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 5:07 PM

To: City Council <CityCouncil@a2gov.org>; Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Subject: Support of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Dear Ann Arbor City Council and Planning Commission,

I am a new mother living in Ann Arbor, writing to convey my strongest support in favor of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan!

I moved to Ann Arbor in 2020, and have since met lots of young families—transplants to Ann Arbor like me, lifelong locals, and others who grew up in A2, left, and have now come back to raise their families here. New parents like us are often a ‘silent’ constituency—balancing jobs and childcare for young children, there’s little time left over for attending evening meetings and writing our reps. But in my experience, young families are the group that most badly needs and supports this Plan.

A [recent MLIVE report](#) showed that the majority of Michigan counties now contain more seniors than children. Washtenaw county still tips in favor of children—but barely. Ann Arbor is a wonderful place to raise our baby. It’s the place many of our friends have chosen for the same reason. The good news is that young families **want** to live in Ann Arbor! But there simply isn’t the housing available at the prices most young families can afford for them to do so. Young families are priced out, pushed to outer communities or—worse—out of the state altogether.

I get that many of our neighbors don’t want to change what they think isn’t broken. But frankly, just because other residents (especially older longtime residents) aren’t feeling or seeing what’s broken doesn’t mean there isn’t much for us to fix. I’ve lived in—and been priced out of—too many places that consider themselves inclusive and progressive, but block development out of nostalgia and an attachment to the charm of life as it’s always been. But by freezing themselves in time, they freeze new residents out.

I am sympathetic to the impulse to preserve life as it is here. Ann Arbor is a charming place. But living things are supposed to grow. Pausing (and let’s be real, cutting the development intended under) the Comprehensive Plan harms Ann Arbor’s capacity to house its future: new generations of families, young residents, and working people. And we cannot claim progressive values if we shunt possible new citizens to the side and encase ourselves in a 20th century bubble of expensive single family homes.

By adopting the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, we can be a rare example of a progressive city that says yes to new people, and to the density that supports social vibrancy and environmental sustainability. And I’m optimistic that we can do so in a way that doesn’t just rubber stamp architecture that sucks—density and charm can go hand in hand! But the first step is committing to that density to begin with by supporting this Plan.

Again, we are lucky that people *want* to live in Ann Arbor. But we have to make that a viable possibility. Please use your voice and your vote to make a more vibrant, thriving and inclusive future for Ann Arbor possible. Please make Ann Arbor a city that says yes to new families like mine.

Sincerely,
Salomé Viljoen