

Subject: Adopting the CLUP: Expanding Housing Choices while Protecting Affordability

From: Brian Chambers

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Good evening, Mayor and Councilmembers.

Thank you for your work over the years to bring this plan forward.

My name is Brian Chambers, a Third Ward resident who has participated in Ann Arbor's housing and land-use discussions for several years. In 2019, I served on the City's contractor selection process for the Comprehensive Plan, when the City first selected Interface. My work has since included several published working papers on housing affordability, zoning reform, and Ann Arbor's role in the knowledge economy. I also serve on the Boards of the Ann Arbor Economic Development Corporation and its Strategic Investment Development Committee, as well as the Equitable Ann Arbor Land Trust.

My work leads me to one clear conclusion: Ann Arbor cannot remain affordable, sustainable, and economically strong without adding more housing choices. Our city continues to experience a hot housing market, the University continues to expand, and many want to live and work here. When housing supply fails to keep up with demand, prices rise quickly and more commute in.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan creates a long-term framework to guide that growth. For these reasons, I support adoption of the CLUP.

At the same time, the CLUP represents only one part of a broader effort to address the cost of living. Council has already taken important steps through renter protections, green housing initiatives, and transit improvements that reduce living costs. These actions matter because affordability includes the total cost of living, not just the price of housing.

The CLUP strengthens that multi-pronged approach.

As an early zoning step, I ask the City to allow duplexes and triplexes in residential neighborhoods. The City could initially prioritize these housing types for shared-equity models such as community land trusts and housing cooperatives. This would allow them to create significantly more permanently affordable homeownership opportunities now, and do market rate ordinances later.

Many residents worry about private-equity investors buying housing and about gentrification. These pressures already affect Ann Arbor significantly. When housing remains scarce, investors compete for a limited number of homes, prices rise faster, and long-time residents face greater risk of displacement.

Expanding housing options helps reduce that pricing pressure.

As the City moves into implementation, we should also keep the rules clear and workable so the housing the plan envisions can actually be built. The balance between strong planning goals and regulatory simplicity will determine whether the plan produces incremental housing — or mostly procedural debate. By-right development ordinances will help ensure we don't revert to expensive, complex, and uncertain permitting processes.

Adopting the CLUP gives Ann Arbor the tools to manage growth, expand housing options, and protect affordability over the long term.

Tonight is an important step in that direction.

Thank you.