

Subject: CULP documentation of decision matrix or comparative evaluation that led to rejecting retention of single-family zoning

From: Susan Patton

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

Subject: CULP documentation of decision matrix or comparative evaluation that led to rejecting retention of single-family zoning

Greetings.

Regarding Draft #3 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Please provide documentation.

Draft #3 3: Demand for the Record. Walkability is valuable, but.....All three drafts of the Plan have recommended the wholesale elimination of all 13 Ann Arbor residential zoning sub-types and their replacement with just 1 “Residential” “one size fits all” residential zone. But we have not been told why.

Best practices in planning, especially for a recommendation as consequential as eliminating single-family zoning, require transparent documentation of public input and a rational basis for major policy choices. American Planning Association (APA) 578 process and analysis standards and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008),

The Plan does not appear to provide clear evidence that less disruptive alternatives were considered or found insufficient to achieve these goals. Public materials regarding Plan drafts and appendices contain engagement summaries, demographic and housing data, and a narrative justification for increasing housing. However, I do not see that there is either public materials alternative scenario modeling and/or comparative evaluation/decision rationale in any of the three drafts. Drafts of the Plan do not seem to provide evidence that less disruptive alternatives were considered or found insufficient to achieve housing goals or that the recommended elimination of R1 A-E single family zoning and R 2-6 consolidation reflects evidence-based planning. If so, please point them out with appropriate citations. Or does this end result in all 3 drafts simply reflect a predetermined outcome?

Ann Arbor has about 13 discrete residential zoning categories/subtypes. There are 5 single-family subtypes (R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R1E). Other residential sub-types are R2A (Two-Family Dwelling); R2B (Two-Family Dwelling & Student Housing); R3 (Townhouse Dwelling); R4A-E-5 (Multiple-Family Dwelling, with 5 sub-types A through E) and R6 (Mobile Home Park).

Why not “right size” the zoning map by consolidating some of the 5 R1 A-E sub-types, instead of eliminating single family zoning wholesale? Why not revisit the other residential zoning categories--R2-R-6--without eliminating them wholesale either? 13 sub-types shrunk into 1.

A fair and transparent process as it pertains to the proposed Residential status requires the City to:

Disclose the staff (or consultant) decision matrix or comparative evaluation that led to rejecting retention of single-family zoning — comparing costs, benefits, trade-offs, and why the zero-single-family option was deemed superior.

Provide the full documentation of how public comments opposing or questioning the elimination of single family zoning and the consolidation of all R sub-types were considered in developing the successive drafts: what alternatives were presented, what feedback was received, how was that feedback was addressed, and why certain alternatives were excluded from all three drafts.

Provide the documentation or analysis comparing alternative housing and zoning scenarios before the decision to eliminate single-family zoning was made.

Please provide documentation to support these decisions. Thank you

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Bonus issue: What about housing for neighbors who need cars? Walkability is a worthy planning goal. I'm a huge walker. It promotes health, sustainability, and community connections but a *truly inclusive city* acknowledges that not all residents can or should be expected to give up driving. An inclusive city recognizes a diversity of needs and avoids policies that unintentionally disadvantage those whose circumstances make driving essential. Plans that restrict car use or parking without realistic alternatives risk disadvantaging people who are already stretched by mobility, financial, or logistical constraints.

Neighbors who depend on cars include:

Neighbors with physical, sensory, or chronic health conditions cannot easily rely on walking, biking, or transit; older adults with stamina, balance or health concerns that make long walks or waiting for transit difficult; tradespeople and service providers, such as electricians, plumbers, landscapers, and other trades who rely on vehicles to transport heavy tools and equipment between multiple job sites; parents and caregivers who need to schlep children, groceries, strollers, sports equipment, to and from schools, lessons, sports activities, play dates; home workers and volunteers, like home health aides and Meals on Wheels; public safety, shift workers and employees with irregular hours, such as nurses, custodians, bartenders, and other workers with early or late shifts often lack safe, reliable transit options outside standard service hours; neighbors living outside of bus, sidewalks or bike infrastructure; small business owners and independent contractors who need cars for deliveries, client visits, and supply runs that are often time-sensitive and geographically dispersed. Many neighbors combine work, school, errands, caregiving, and volunteering in a single day. Neighbors managing multiple commitments and those with multi-stop (read errands), and time-constrained travel patterns are not supported by current transit options.

An inclusive city recognizes this diversity of needs and avoids policies that unintentionally disadvantage those whose circumstances make driving essential.

Let's take care of neighbors who need cars too.

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