

Subject:

Transition Districts

From: Karen Eisley**Sent:** Thursday, May 22, 2025 1:15 PM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Transition Districts

After attending the planning commission meeting on Tuesday, May 13, I found the use and definitions of Transition Districts very confusing. I am trying to determine what stipulations or what method was used when choosing which areas would be considered Transition Districts.

The use of Transition Districts in some areas of Ann Arbor make perfect sense, however, the one I am concerned about doesn't. Currently, all the property on Swift St. and Howley Ct., and the area along the west side of Wright Street, south of Fairview cemetery, has been designated as a Transition District for our neighborhood. My understanding is that these districts can be up to seven stories tall or more. This area does currently have some commercial and multi-family structures, but they are no more than two stories and I believe would be considered low-rise.

My family currently owns property in this neighborhood and has for over 100 years. We have lived alongside low-rise, multi-family housing, and commercial property. However, when you start allowing tall buildings near one of Ann Arbor's most valuable assets, the river, then I think we have a problem. Why is there a need by the City to develop this natural area? I know why the developers want to. I can only guess that the area adjacent to the river would bring a higher bidding price from developers, since the area targeted as the Transition District is farther from the higher traffic area. Please clarify why the west side of Wright St. is being considered for more density rather than the east side which is closer to the area that currently has more housing and traffic along Pontiac Trail.

Lower Town is the oldest area of Ann Arbor. It still has cobblestone curbs and narrow streets. There are two parks, the canoe livery, a beautiful pathway around the river, a historical cemetery, and the Anson Brown house all located within a few blocks of each other. The neighborhood has a park-like feel to it which will be lost with the proposed development.

Will all the potential new residents moving to the Ann Arbor area be happy living in high-rise housing? In larger urban cities other modes of transportation are also available like trains or subways which Ann Arbor does not offer. Will any of this new housing be "affordable"? This area of Ann Arbor has remained relatively affordable compared to other Ann Arbor neighborhoods, but with the new developments would it continue to be? Everyone talks about "affordable housing" in this community, but little is ever done to provide it. Money seems to talk in this city and for a neighborhood that traditionally was very diverse it is changing.

Yes, many people commute into Ann Arbor but is that only because of the so-called housing crisis? Could there be other reasons like smaller schools, a smaller community, or the opportunity to own more property? Have you considered that high-density housing, the cheapest way for developers to build, may not be what all the new potential residents are looking for? I am sure that you have done your homework and looked at the occupancy rate and demand for more housing before assuming Ann Arbor needs new development, and it's not just the developers saying we need more.

Please reconsider your plan. **We are not against more housing that fits into the existing neighborhoods.** Consider building taller buildings in the areas closer to more density for your Transition Districts. Perhaps the already existing Beekman buildings, within two blocks of this area, could be considered the Transition District for this neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Karen Eisley
635 Swift