

Manor, Courtney

Subject: In Support of Housing Wherever You Can

From: Norton Fogel

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 3:10 PM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Subject: In Support of Housing Wherever You Can

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication in updating the Comprehensive Plan. I know this is a huge and complicated task, and I'm grateful for all the time and thought you're putting into it.

I'm writing as someone who cares deeply about Ann Arbor's future. Our family has a long connection to this city — our sons grew up here, attended the University of Michigan, moved away for a while, and have returned because Ann Arbor is a truly special place.

Today, though, we are very concerned about the rising cost of housing in our community. It's becoming harder and harder for regular people — students, young families, retirees, engineers, essential workers — to afford to live here. If we don't act, we risk becoming a place that is only accessible to the wealthy, which would be a real loss for the character, diversity, and spirit of Ann Arbor. We have lived in Ann Arbor for over 30 years and were able to buy a house and raise our family on an engineer's salary. At this point, it would be impossible.

We've seen firsthand how bad this problem can get. In cities like Boston, Boulder, and Seattle, where our sons have lived for a time, housing has become so expensive that it pushes people out, stifles economic opportunity, and makes vibrant communities harder to maintain. These places talk a lot about affordability and inclusivity — but because they made it so hard to build new homes, prices kept climbing anyway and pushing people away.

We don't want Ann Arbor to go down the same road. We want it to stay open, welcoming, and inclusive — for everyone.

That's why we hope the Commission will focus on making it easier, not harder, to build more homes.

Specifically:

- Please allow taller and denser housing in more areas, especially where it won't hurt existing neighborhoods.
- Please avoid adding new complicated rules that make it even harder and more expensive to build.
- Please focus on growing the total amount of housing, not just on setting requirements that might sound good but end up making projects unworkable.

The best way to keep Ann Arbor affordable and vibrant is to make sure there are enough homes for the people who want to live here. Abundant housing supports affordability, diversity, and even our climate goals by helping people live closer to where they work and study.

This plan is an opportunity to build a better future. We hope you will be bold and flexible — and help Ann Arbor stay the inclusive, thriving place we know and love.

Thank you again for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Norton Fogel