

Subject:

The Draft Comprehensive Plan

Members of the City Planning Commission

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your service and for an opportunity to comment on the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

I am writing to urge the Commission and City Council to reconsider and to modify this plan as well as to put it to a vote of all of Ann Arbor voters before putting any such drastic plan into effect.

While I believe the plan, which is to increase "affordable" housing is well intentioned, I believe that it will neither increase affordable housing nor allow a seamless melding of a very large number of people into existing neighbourhoods. What it will do is give developers the opportunity to build and sell million dollar condos to people who can afford them in the city.

I believe that the City should follow through on its unfulfilled promises to increase affordable housing. I think there is plenty of room to build such housing (DEDICATED to serving those who need it) outside of residential neighbourhoods in Ann Arbor. An improved city transit plan of frequent service (10-15 min interval) electric powered buses or trams--or even the long talked of "people mover"-- from high density housing which is built in areas where such housing already exists (e.g. near Briarwood, south Ann Arbor Saline Rd, and of course, North Campus) to the UM, the hospitals and downtown Ann Arbor, would, I believe easily solve the housing availability and cost issues.

Such housing should have associated shops, libraries, movie houses and cafes. Most of all, they should have well developed bike paths.

A lot has been said about nurses, technicians, medical support staff not being able to afford housing in Ann Arbor. Many people live in Ypsi, Howell and surrounding areas and have difficult commutes to AA, particularly in Michigan winters. I've talked to a good many of these people during my time here in the Medical School and also during my husband's many hospital stays and surgeries during the last 20 years of his life. These workers don't want to live in high density housing, especially if they have kids. They want to live in the single family homes with a yard (and a dog) they can afford; these kinds of homes are available in Howell and Brighton.

I have been a resident of Ann Arbor and a member of the University of Michigan faculty (both Engineering and Medical School) for 45 years.

My family and I lived on Dexter Ave at the corner of Dexter and Wildwood for 24 of those years (opposite the gas station and small shopping plaza).

My husband, Douglas Jewett, who was also on the faculty and our son Ethan designed and built the house I now live in on West Keech Ave. My husband of more than 51 years died in February of 2022 after 3 years in hospice here during Covid. We put his hospital bed in the kitchen's attached dining space so that he could watch the sun rising through the large window on the East side of the house he built and loved.

I have been an advocate of "affordable housing" --especially for students, all my working life. I have donated personal funds and loaned money to many UM students--particularly the students in the

PREP program. I helped co-found and directed this program for more than a dozen years, and was engaged in admissions committee work for next year, until a few weeks ago when our PREP and the 40 similar such programs across the country, were terminated by the present federal administration for being "DEI". Essentially ALL of the students in this program were "under-represented" and low income (we had almost 200 alums). I taught courses in the graduate school, the Medical School, the Dental School and both undergraduate engineering and LSA for over 40 years. I was honoured to receive many teaching awards, mentoring awards and three "Lifetime Achievement Awards". If the award had a monetary prize, I gave the money (the awards ranged from \$1000 to \$10,000) to students, many of whom WERE struggling to pay rent and living expenses here.

I've lived in many places: I grew up in Vermont, Connecticut, Missouri and Ohio. My Dad was a WWII veteran of the Army Air Corps who was a radiologist with the VA system.

My husband and I lived in Madison Wisconsin when we were graduate students (he was also born there) and in both southern and northern California when we were scientific research fellows. My husband worked at NASA when I was a postdoc at Stanford just before we came to Ann Arbor. I spent a year on a Fulbright fellowship in Sydney Australia's Children's Medical Research Institute when my husband was working as a research chemist at MacQuarie University.

We lived in and rented many different kinds of housing during those years--from large (La Jolla) and small (Madison) apartment complexes to a tiny apartment over our landlord's garage (Palo Alto). None of it was upscale (although some of the places we lived in were) and NONE of it cost (in today's dollars) what developers (including a former regent of UM) are charging students to live "off campus" high density housing here in Ann Arbor in "today's dollars".

I also conducted an active federally sponsored research program here at UM for over 4 decades. Of course, such medical research programs are currently under threat from the federal government. I mentored 60 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and 366 undergraduate research students during that time. The last of these students, is graduating this weekend in UM stadium. One of my former graduate student's sons is also graduating on Saturday. They and their families will park in our yard before crossing the street to the stadium and to Crisler for the graduation ceremonies. We've never charged anyone to park here although we have allowed our students, friends, colleagues (some with disabled children) to park here for football games, basketball games and commencement since we owned the property (1989). We (neither my son, who helped design and build this house or I) will ever sell this property to a developer to build a sunlight blocking, over trafficked, multi occupancy building. We'll use the "vacant" garden space to grow vegetables and fruit. And encourage the building of TRULY "Low Income" housing in areas where such housing already exists or is being developed.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this plan.

Thanks and best wishes,

Kate

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Professor Emerita of Cell and Developmental Biology (Active)

Program in Biomedical Sciences

Michigan NIH PREP Program

<http://www.med.umich.edu/prep/index.html>

Program in Neuroscience

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