

Note to Planning Commission 1 April 2025

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In the Ann Arbor government website, the new comprehensive plan, in big block letters, is followed by the sentence “The City of Ann Arbor is developing a new Comprehensive Plan to forge a new affordable, sustainable, and equitable vision of the City’s future”.

Consider your word, affordability. Council Representative Lisa Disch admits this plan will not increase affordability.

Consider sustainability. Is the City’s office of Sustainability on board with this? I’ve read the three news letters published by that office in 2025, and there is no mention of upzoning. To their credit, they actually have a news letter. I praise them for their outreach efforts. I participated in “town halls” with Missy Stults, director of that office, and I remember being in a room filled with white boards and residents and business people brainstorming and writing down ideas for sustainability when she was setting up that office. Her efforts continue. What are the Planning Commission’s outreach efforts, and how do they dovetail with the Office of Sustainability? For the average resident to go to the Ann Arbor website and find a string of projects considered by the Commission is no help. The average resident does not know where to start.

I first learned of the “upzoning” effort when an activist left this flyer at my doorstep. I attached it to my notes to the Commission. Of course it is negative, but after the three days I’ve had since I received this, I have yet to find a fact in it I can refute. I would love, really, love to see a meaningful rebuttal to this flyer from the Commission. How about some positive advertising and positive facts so I can help make a reasonable argument to any of the several people I have interviewed since receiving this. The reaction I have received has been uniformly negative.

I enjoy a community where I live in a single family dwelling. I see and interact with neighbors. On the other hand it is hard to imagine a large apartment building next to me with its concomitant extra traffic, lack of grass, lack of trees and neighbors I know. I can’t believe the majority of residents in Ann Arbor would be in favor of this without a lot more positive and rational information distribution. The vast majority have probably never heard of this plan. I would be in favor of putting to a city-wide vote whatever plan you eventually come up with.

Thank you

Chris VandenBroek