

Subject:

Comprehensive Plan

From: Amby Gallagher**Sent:** Friday, May 16, 2025 8:47 AM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan

Hello I tried to include these thoughts under each area online but had trouble and so will include them here. I apologize for the length. I have been giving this a lot of thought.

General thoughts:

- What are the long-term implications of this plan, not only in development but in infrastructure, taxes, neighborhood change (which may or may not impact the walkability and attractiveness of Ann Arbor neighborhoods)?
- Does the infrastructure - current and planned - support this? Eg water, sewer, electric, traffic, etc.
- I am particularly concerned about traffic and its impact on walkability, especially as someone with mobility issues. For example, downtown is no longer walkable for me, between the traffic, the bicycles and the pedestrians not looking up from their phones and nearly walking into me. The wind tunnels caused by some of the taller buildings add to the unpleasantness. I used to go frequently; now I avoid it unless I am with my husband, unfortunately. This is not idle worry; I have almost been hit by pickup trucks (while I was in the crosswalk), bicycles and people not looking up from their phones.
- How will this be used by developers?

Neighborhoods.

- I am supportive of increased neighborhood density, and of much of this plan, with a couple of caveats.
- No teardowns. I want a restriction on developers, or others, being allowed to tear down a property in an established neighborhood and build a multi-unit building on it. This is the most important point to me, and to others that I have spoken with. I think it is one of the concerns that many people are worried about and I am afraid it may threaten the whole plan, which would be unfortunate.
- ADUs and more than one unit on a site - in keeping with the neighborhood aesthetic-makes sense to me.
- 30 feet is the height limit proposed at this point, same as current? I would hope that most would not achieve that, I guess.
- When I spoke with a staff member at one of the library meetings she said that with OWS rules, more than one unit could be in a house as long as the front retains the OWS standards. This makes sense to me to use in other established neighborhoods (I live in Eberwhite).
- OWS is mentioned in the document, yet the OWS has been protected from certain types of development and allowed it to retain its charm.

- Try to keep the neighborhood character in existing neighborhoods when possible. I think it is too late to stick to the mid-century architecture in our neighborhood as young families move in and want more space and build on. I do miss the old houses, but I love the new families.
- This is critical for me: If housing is not affordable to those who work here, how will VMTs go down?
- I like the different types of households in the plan and the mention of aging in place. Middle-class people can no longer afford to live here, as I am sure you are aware, and hopefully this plan would address this, rather than just pulling in people who want to rent out their apartments for football games and other events.
- I support allowing more small businesses in neighborhoods but with attention to the impact of traffic on walkability and safety, particularly for our children and those with disabilities. Our neighborhoods were not designed for high traffic volumes or for heavy on street parking. This could be accommodated, of course, by limiting hours that conflict with school opening and closing for small businesses right by schools. But I think there needs to be dialogue about this.
- Interestingly, the OWS has been cited as an example of mixed use areas, but this area also has problems with that, as the OWS was not developed with a heavy car traffic in mind. Ask anyone who has tried to park at The Dairy on a beautiful summer evening! And yes, it is great if people can walk to these businesses, - we used to do so - and that is one of the charms of The Dairy. But everyone cannot do so, and many choose not to.
- Many of the other small businesses in the OWS have shut down in the last decade or two for various reasons, such as Armen's, the little garage on Ashley, Fox Tents, the vet. S. Main Market, was a fantastic resource, where I could walk with my kids and pick up everything we needed for dinner. Where we formed relationships with store owners that continue to this day - not exactly replaced by the 7-11. The corner store on Main and Madison that was eventually replaced by a high rise. Fox Tents. Like the small manufacturing mentioned in another section, it seems that many of these businesses have been unable to compete with the more lucrative housing, and I am hoping the plan would address this.

Transition district

I support transit-oriented development and think it is really important. My concerns would be the impact on walkability. I am thinking of S. Main at Madison, again. Although I support the increased density provided by the apartment buildings, the area has become less pleasant to walk in (it was never a great intersection to cross) and the number of destinations has decreased with the loss of S. Main Market. Incorporating that existing, viable business might have helped keep that area a little more interesting and approachable.

Hub district

- In general, I support the idea of mixed-use districts, but how has it worked so far? I see a lot of apartment buildings that were supposed to be mixed use that don't seem to have a lot going on on the first floor. How will this plan affect this?
- It sounds like the AADL may have a plan that supports mixed-use. It seems to be a great use of the lower floors of an apartment building.
- Honestly, I think the loss of SROs in the old Y just increased the burden for our unhoused folks. While a return to that type of model may not be feasible at this point, I really hope this plan would address the issue of cheaper housing.

Office and Research Park

- I like the idea of encouraging smaller manufacturing in the State St. so they don't have to compete with more lucrative housing options.
- I like what is being done with Briarwood, for example, and the creative re-use of these underused malls and shopping centers.

Flex districts

No thoughts here. Seems like a challenging area.

Parks and Open spaces

- We are so blessed here!
- "The city plans to repurpose certain properties, particularly downtown parking lots....."
- I understand the need for this, but as a woman and person with mobility disability, I avoid most parking structures. My experience with them is that the elevators and stairwells are filthy and smell like urine. I am a nurse, so I am not that queasy. I thought that the parking lot next to the AADL was a really good compromise, and I would hope we could model ideas like that.

More General Thoughts...

At one of the meetings I heard someone say, "they are trying to ruin our city!" I do not believe this. I do not believe there is a "they" or an "our" here. I think the opinions and lived experiences of those like me who have lived here for decades need to be taken into consideration. However, I recognize that we also need to adapt to a changing city. I am offering my 2 cents. My main point is: No tear downs in existing neighborhoods, in order to keep them walkable and retain that charm that is one of the things that makes this city so attractive in the first place.

Thank you for all of the thoughtful work that you have put into this plan. as well as your efforts to include the public at different points along the way.

Thank you.

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