

Subject:

North Central Neighborhood Association comments re 700 North Main Street proposal

From: Ovide Pomerleau**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 6:44 PM**To:** Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; Lisa Disch; Harrison, Cynthia <CHarrison@a2gov.org>**Cc:** Ovide Pomerleau**Subject:** North Central Neighborhood Association comments re 700 North Main Street proposal**TO: Ann Arbor Planning Commission****DATE: May 4, 2026**

The North Central Neighborhood Association was founded as the North Central Property Owners Association in 1958 to fight an urban renewal plan that would have displaced nearly 500 residents, more than 400 of them Black family members. It later led the opposition to the destructive Packard-Beakes bypass. Under longtime president Letty Wickliffe, the association worked with Mayors, City Council members, the Planning Commission, and U-M professor James Chaffers' architecture design team. Joining many hands, a "neighborhood-developed" Master Plan accelerated the revitalization of a boarded-up train station into the Gandy Dancer, the removal of a longstanding junkyard, the "co-designing" of what is now Wheeler Park, the establishment of Casey's Tavern, and the hilltop development of Wickliffe Place. These legacy seeds have served to nurture a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-looking community - one where, in Prof. Chaffers' words, "everyone is welcomed."

With this submission, we want to stress that we are not expecting the city to drastically alter site plans for 700 North Main Street. We do note, however, that the proposed construction height of 75 feet for this project is an anomaly based on the steep drop in elevation occurring in that location. Should this building height set a precedent,

many parts of the Kerrytown residential neighborhood would be adversely affected! Since the current building height-limit in the residential neighborhood is 3 stories, a more appropriate approach would be to allow only modest building-height increases on a case-by-case basis. We encourage the Planning Commission to take this into account when they review future development projects on North Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

It is important also to remember what local architect, Peter Pollock, said about the difference between the downtown area in which buildings dominate and our near-downtown neighborhood featuring small yards and vernacular houses under a canopy of mature private and public trees. Urban planning should not ignore or minimize the importance of a tree canopy that provides shade, clean air, and noise reduction from the downtown urban area—these features are critical for the ecological health of the city of Ann Arbor.

**Curtis Davis, President
North Central Neighborhood Association
510 North Fourth Avenue**