

Subject: Ageism and Ableism in the Planning Process

From: Leslie Ford

Sent: Sunday, July 13, 2025 8:16 AM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@a2gov.org>

Subject: Ageism and Ableism in the Planning Process

Dear Planning Commission and planning staff,

In your public meetings, a number of residents have voiced, either expressly or tacitly, a prejudice against senior citizens. There has also been a push for everyone to walk or bike, which is a positive thing, but it needs to be balanced with some understanding and empathy for those who are disabled and cannot walk or bike.

The ageism and ableism expressed by some Ann Arbor residents in your meetings is disturbing, and yet the residents' statements have gone unchecked by city leaders.

I have not heard any Commissioner or planning staff member push back on the public voicing of hostility toward older people at your meetings. Perhaps you have done so and I have missed it. I haven't watched all your meetings, so I could well have missed it.

If you have not spoken against these concerning statements of prejudice at your public meetings, your silence may give people the impression that the Commissioners and planning staff share and encourage prejudice against seniors and disabled people.

I hope you will speak to this issue at your next public meeting. You are in a leadership position, and people look to leaders to establish community standards. Perhaps you can find some guidance in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The collective message many of us are receiving is that senior citizens are hated in Ann Arbor, and that some city leaders and residents want all the old people to get out. One city leader even indicated that it would be better for younger residents and property values if seniors left en masse in one swift "whoosh" instead of the usual, slow "trickle."

If people spoke against a racial or religious group in the same way that they are speaking about seniors at your meetings, you wouldn't tolerate it.

Thank you for your consideration,
Leslie Ford