

Subject: City Council Final Meeting Thoughts - Please Include if possible

From: Amar Nigam
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 5:31 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
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Hi! I was not able to make it to the meeting but I was told I could submit comments to the city council in my three minute time range. Doesn't have to be read out loud, perhaps I can try to make a different meeting but sharing in case.

Hello. Thank you so much for your time today. My name is Amar, and I am a lifelong resident of the city — born and raised here. I also attended Michigan, as did my father, and my grandparents lived in this city for much of their lives as well.

I will say I have been humbled by the capabilities of the City Council when I have watched recordings in the past and how on occasion you all have corrected my understanding of your actions in the city.

I came today because I heard some citizens speak on this issue and I felt their passion, their purpose, and the consistency of the voices in the room. It was also a lot of elder intellectual white folks, and I thought perhaps it was worth having my youthful brown voice here as well — not really to refute anything they are saying, but perhaps to emphasize it from a different lens. Having grown up in this city, I experienced a brilliant culture that believed in environmentalism, that believed in cultural diversity, that believed in progress.

My job is not to chastise you, but to ask you to reconsider whether plans may be moving in a direction with more haste than intentionality.

I understand the city is growing, and I welcome that. But so far, that growth has not necessarily felt positive.

I can't speak to your data, although I'm sure you're using some. I can speak to my own empirical evidence of having been around people of color, low-income groups, as well as the wealthiest members of our city.

Every townie I've ever talked to feels uncomfortable with the progress of the city they live in, although none of them at my age have the time or the capacity to think deeply about these issues yet. Yet those of us who are able to stay, or who desire to stay, will be the ones who face the changing culture creeping up behind us.

I didn't really grow up with houseless people on the streets. Having been to the houseless shelter, I was told by their executive director that their financing has been decreased substantially by the city. I don't want to have to bear the burden of passing houseless people on the streets because there are so many. I don't have enough money in my wallet or the time in my day.

I live off Earhart, and I remember the day I saw they decided to cut down all the trees right next to GreenHills — thousands and thousands of trees — to make room for an open landscape and luxury

housing that perhaps a few hundred people will enjoy if they can cough up a few hundred thousand dollars, and eventually a million or so.

I cried and cried as I looked at a tree that was older than any of us in this room — full and fresh with life, yet taken down by us.

This city has more honking than I ever remember.

Friends who are the last Black neighbors in their neighborhood — neighborhoods that used to be entirely Black, just down the road — one by one were forced, not fled.

These are the socio-cultural elements we are forgetting when we change things so quickly without intentionality and additionality.

Think of the appropriate solutions around mixed-income housing using the federal policies that allot for it, like the Community Reinvestment Act. Think of solutions that don't cut down trees when we're living in a world where all the trees are cut down outside of the city.

It may take more time. But if not at one of the wealthiest and most educated cities on the planet Earth, where else are we going to do it?

Life here has been brilliant. It's been amazing in most ways. I just don't think it's fair that I get that and others don't.

I think if you're to come to this place, it's to embrace this culture — not to try to force the status quo cultures onto us.

I've witnessed the tax-exempt university that promulgates further the Porsches and the West and East Coast elites who take up the high rises. I'm not above it. I'm one of the privileged ones.

But if we exacerbate the class, environmental, and racial dynamics already at play, then we will continue — whether we like it or not — to become a less coherent culture.

I have no interest in Trumpian culture. It is ignorant and a waste of my time. There are massive issues at play that will affect your grandchildren. I work on those, and we all should be.

If my education from this brilliant city has taught me anything, it's that public goods should outweigh private good selection. Empathy, humanity, and kindness are real and genuine traits to move toward.

I don't doubt that's the goal. But without real intentionality and additionality from the intellectuals in this space, we will become like the rest of our society — more conservative, more individualistic in our sense of what it is to be human.

Thanks,
Amar Nigam