



Ann Arbor City Planning Commission
Questions for Draft Comprehensive Plan
May 6, 2025

CPC Requests and Reminders

- Break the editing process down by section.
- This is the first round of edits. Keep comments on content or questions.
- Staff to wrap up what we've heard to see if there's consensus. We can start with a straw poll. Chairman can help direct when we need to pass a motion.
- Staff to provide questions that we'd like your guidance on the discussion.

Questions from Staff, Chapters 1-3

1. Chapter 1: (page 5) Staff would like to add a section that discusses why we plan. What are reasons you would add for why we develop a Comprehensive Land Use Plan?
 - a. Holistic planning, proactive – increase scope of why it's important
2. Chapter 1: (page 5) How would you like to see past plans incorporated into this section?
3. Chapter 1: (pages 8-13, 20-21) Are there any major or impactful historical events missing?
4. Chapter 1: (pages 14-18) Does the "Ann Arbor Today" snapshot resonate? Is there any other significant data that you would want to see in this section?
5. Chapter 2: How would you like to see the engagement process and results presented?
6. Chapter 3: One of the Comp Plan directives is to have a values-based plan. Do you support how our values are described?

CPC Edits, Chapter 1-3

Page 3: use term UDC and include that it regulates development process for approval

Page 5: Section "What can't it do?": How does the 5-year review process happen? Plan is not a blueprint, vague set of recommendations

Page 5: Past plans to incorporate – maybe use word "retain" instead. Where should the Economic Development report be located?



Page 6 needs to align with page 5 – A2 Zero isn't on the previous page and the values are missing. Part of the graphic that doesn't have a plan title next to it should be removed. Make title clearer.

Page 5: Economic Development report should be included. Could be added to the section "plan resolution," report provides support for density pushes affordability

Page 9: Map – add roads for major corridors

Page 10: Timeline:

- add Prop A and Headlee Act,
- add housing and climate millage.
- There are 15 historic districts – should we add those or at least group the years together when they were formed?
- Preserve Michigan theatre.
- Curbside recycling added

Page 10 – term exclusionary zoning: why is it introduced in 1957? What about 1923?

Pages 12-13 make images clickable to be bigger or higher resolution, hyperlinks where available (example 1970s Packard-Beakes bypass article)

How are 10-11 different from 12-13? Add sentence to explain why 12-13 is different

Pages 14-18 remove the Pacman cartoon and add a graph about housing– show how rent increase correlates to the pace of construction in the City

Page 15: Make 59% bigger, student growth is 75% doesn't match the timeline - is student growth a percentage of the city or county?

Page 14 What does family-aged residents mean? – last sentence of first paragraph

Glossary: Add one at the start of the document or in the margin. For example, terms like VMT, exclusionary zoning, gentrification (consider use of "displacement" instead)

Page 15 – We have gone past "starting a conversation" – update language for more urgency

Page 16-17: cite the first bolded sentence. Need citations throughout document. Find somewhere to acknowledge that some people like status quo (how many households in R-1 and R-2) **TABLE ITEM**

Page 17 **VOTE** Cut last two sentences of second paragraph – claims are not supported in the document, remove references to this on page 18 and 19. Can re-emerge if present with precise data.



- Density and taxable value – we need to list that commercial includes apartments

Pages 18-19 simplify this graphic

Page 20-21 Absent in the narrative that something happens in 1970 – something constrains housing compared to the city’s plan from that time. Again in 1980, increases were made to minimum lot sizes

- Gentrification is used. Define it or remove it. Can talk about this trend with the word displacement. Citations from Mlive articles?
- We should use term *detached* for single-family
- Citation for concentrated code enforcement – give example

Chapter 2:

- Need more detail, and appendices (e.g., survey)
- Summary of the fact that we started with the premise that we are going to grow, survey was not statistical, questions changed over time across activities
- Page 31 – contractionary, the areas for build up a lot are not in the neighborhoods
- Page 29 – these need to be in quotes or clarified or separated
- Page 28 – remove all quotes. **VOTE**
- Page 32 – Call it a summary in the header
- Page 33 – how did we get to these high-level takeaways? Add a paragraph to summarize the methodology.
- Add recognition of high quality of life and that many in City don’t want to see any change occur.

Chapter 3:

Page 36 Is this our vision statement? Change language to “need to/want to grow”

- Greenbelt – need to remind people that this constrains
- Ann Arbor today – add geographic limitations in reference to that we can grow up or out
- Values Framework – affordability in the “long run” and add “diverse types of housing”
 - Left column is facts (so there need to be citations), right side is values
- A further explanation of values as tradeoffs
- Come back to sustainable definition – too broad
- Remove 40 and 41

Questions from Staff, Chapter 4



1. Would this section benefit from a key/graphic that demonstrates Vision/Value > Goals > Strategies > Implementation/Objectives?
2. P. 46 The housing target numbers are approximately 2-3 times the City's current annual production. In the context of other factors, does this seem appropriate?
3. P. 47 Reference to other communities seems more appropriate for zoning work, do we want this level of specificity/moment in time in the Comprehensive Plan?
4. P. 48 Are we interested in calibrating this plan to the Michigan Housing Plan?
5. P. 48 Do you find the rationale to be supportive of the proposed goals?
6. P. 54 Do we need to describe what affordable means in this context?
7. P. 55 Regular calibration of the City's housing goals with UM enrollment and employment levels could be linked to section identified in chapters 1-3 – "How will this plan be updated in the future"
8. P. 57 Tenant-right to purchase, and funding access to tenants are potential displacement tools that may be specifically hampered by State of Michigan Legislative Framework. Should plan make more clear these examples rely on changes identified broadly in strategy 2.3?
9. P. 64 Is this where we can expand more on the commercial vs. residential growth discussion we tabled on 4/15?
10. P. 75 Strategy 7.3 is an important goal, but should it be a focus of the City, in the context of the traditional roles and responsibilities of agencies (Workforce Development agencies, educational institutions)?
11. P. 78 Numerous objectives reference "decarbonization" as a goal. Is this the right specificity level for future land use decision-making?
12. P. 89 Strategy 10.3 – This may be a good time to discuss current tree preservation policy (to address comments we receive from residents – a good way to talk about tradeoffs in our values)

CPC Edits from 4/22/2025 Discussion, Chapter 4

- How does it all relate? One page user guide. Why do objectives come first? Graphic solution to make it clearer. Show relationships between values/goals/strategies/implementation/objectives/measurements. Should the



objectives come under the goals? Remove the bullseye icon – housing targets are like marching orders

- Does the economic development report talk about housing targets?
- How did we get to these objectives and go
- Objectives – explain that it is twice to thrice what we do now
 - Homes and units – are they interchangeable?
 - What do we do if we hit our housing goal range?
 - Is vacancy rate a better metric?
 - Some are specific and some are vague
 - VMT could be more specific (50%)
- Page 46: Increase tax revenue and millage **revenue** for affordable. . . .
- Page 47: remove the blue box – **use the MAP housing toolkit, focus on techniques not cities**
- Page 48: remove the reference “The issue in Ann Arbor is that.”
- Page 48: The 750 units per year should be clarified, ideally find longer term data
- Page 48: Michigan housing plan should be clarified about how it is inadequate and do not take into consideration our local context– unbold it – this could be call out box that explains how it was calculated and why it’s problematic to apply
- Page 48: Since 2020 – remove the bar because it’s misleading since it’s not a decade. Add dotted line to show what’s estimated to be built. Title Total Number of Housing Units by Decade
- Page 48: Clarify last sentence of first bullet point
- Page 48: clarify rate of growth vs plateau
- Page 48: Facts and what we are facing are not well explained
 - Some compelling data would be that 7,000 people applied for 30 affordable units (Mlive) and Housing Commission has to house people outside of the city
 - What is the pre-2018 housing growth by year?
 - Constraints on developable land
 - Household size has reduced
 - Ann Arbor residents have a lower VMT
- Page 49: Attainability can be defined by the median household income.
- Page 49: Have to accommodate growth in the City
- Page 50: What’s the argument behind “property tax resets” – we should use the word “uncaps” and explain that worsens supply because it slows generational turnover and prospective buyers are more limited
- Page 50: Link last bullet “the city still lacks some. . .” to economy and opportunity section.



- Page 51- verify map labels are correct, for example, U-M Research Center and Hospital Center Campus. Confusion about the map accuracy of the shopping center locations
- There are references to 10- 15- and 20- minute neighborhoods. We need to explain why there are different/or consolidate into single reference– what did engagement say?
- Page 52: remove drastic and say “fit into the existing scale”
- Page 52: Is that an image of Ann Arbor?
- Page 52: 1.1 Historic districts are presented as neutral and we could state that it has the effect of preventing development and discuss the tradeoffs/history
- Page 52: Define medium and high density
- Page 53: 1.2 One degree more specificity, for example, consider incentivize for missing middle housing aside from zoning
- Page 53: Connect Universal Design to missing middle if it’s in the same box
- Page 53: re-order title to match following paragraph order of topics
- Page 54: 1.3 & 1.4 – we need to make the distinction that this is income-eligible affordable housing
- Page 54: What does “offsetting city sustainability requirements” mean?
- Page 54: embodied carbon is too broad
- Page 54: Separate strategies of preservation of exiting income-restricted units from other affordability
- Page 54: Recommend relaxation of development standards for affordable housing
- Page 55 1.3 – not clear when and if it’s always best to keep an older home. Good for affordable housing, might not be for emissions
- Page 55 1.5 – we need to explain the theory behind naturally occurring affordable housing and that it is a long-term strategy
- Page 55 1.5 – city should monitor U-M housing and employment data
- Page 55 1.5 – add community land trust (Brett to determine how to include)
- Page 55 – Remove the green box
- Page 56 2.2 – name the programs (if we are increasing then it’s more than continuing)
- Page 56 – a good use of “did you know?” box is sharing what the city already does
- Page 57: Blue box has good content, but seems out of place here.
- Page 58: Include the Treeline Trail and the B2b Tunnel to “Some of the densest areas of the city, such as downtown, have fairly limited park and recreational



space, which provides an opportunity to strengthen activities and connections along the Huron River Corridor as both a downtown and citywide destination.”

- Page 58: Call out of what the PROS Plan does
- Remove qualifiers like “very” or “extremely” – document wide
- Page 58. 3.2 – We say focus on quality but the map is about quantity, why is 5 acres the threshold? We need verification of this map -Some of the parks that are under 5 acres look bigger.
- Page 58: What do we mean by “underserved”?
- Page 59: clarify how golf courses are labeled/considered in this map
- Page 60 – remove San Diego example
- Page 60: 4.1 Strategy should reference “neighborhoods” instead of “communities”
- Page 61 4.3 – questions, not answers and use examples like Jefferson Market
- Pages 64-68 Compress rationale and make it less focused on tax base and innovation district land use. We have more jobs than housing. Top employer is missing the number of employees from the U-M health system
- Page 70: 5.1 – this content can be summarized under 5.2 – want to move away from specific references to U-M
- Page 71: Add summary of how cities are places for diverse business, employment and services
- Goals 4 and 6 can be combined because they are redundant.
- Commercial tax base per acre?
- Page 72: 6.2 – this seems car-centric because our parking maximums are too high so this will not generate what we want
- Page 73 6.3 – get rid of
- Page 74: don’t need land use regulation to achieve this – the city is planning to set aside \$5 million to help achieve this strategy. Lean on this instead (i.e., language from Boulder, CO)
- Page 7: 7.2 target population
- Page 75: remove blue box

Staff Questions for Chapter 5, April 29

- Page 102: Is this the level of detail that you want to see? Is this helpful for future decision-making?
- Page 102: Do you want to define low, mid, and high density?



- Page 106: Should we add here infrastructure constraints here (when we have all of the information)?
- Page 109: Do you want to keep limit of number of homes or expand on how that would be regulated by design?

Chapter 5, CPC Edits Sent In

Page 96: Would prefer to remove "Historic Districts" from this page. Our zoning/planning recommendations for the districts should be largely independent of their legal status as historic districts, which are governed by different rules and processes. If a future determination is made to remove those legal protections, a Plan that relies on or defers to those legal protections will be rendered (unnecessarily) obsolete/out of date.

Page 96: Strike or reword "Employment Opportunities" section to remove emphasis on diversifying employment opportunities/tax base.

Page 100: The image suggests to me that there is equal space devoted to each of these types of districts. I don't think that's actually what's being proposed and so I might adjust the wedges of the pie to reflect that.

Page 101: Two public comments questioned the exclusion of what appears to be the Old Fourth Ward Historic district from the surrounding Transition district. I agree with those comments. This area is currently zoned R4C, I believe, and the draft generally (and correctly, in my opinion) recommends Transition for existing multifamily (R3+) districts. That seems appropriate to recommend here as well. Similarly, there are large sections of the city--primarily near the Plymouth Road corridor--that are currently zoned multifamily that are not included in Transition, as the map generally does for anything R3+. I'd propose adding those areas to Transition unless there is a reason to recommend effectively downzoning them.

Page 101: Why isn't there more transition along Plymouth NW of Fuller Park? It's on the BRT route. Historic district?

Page 101: Why isn't there more transition along Ellsworth just west of Southeast Area Park?

Page 102: What is meant by "reduced restrictions on materials and aesthetic style"; reduced from what? Current practice? Other districts?

Page 102: Not sure we want to require active first floor commercial

Page 102 and 104: Reword "mid-rise" and "Medium-scale" in reference to Transition. Transition is going to vary in character widely across the city; as the draft discusses later in the same pages, proximity to low-rise residential should be the key factor in the permitted scale and height of structures in Transition, and the intention of Transition is to accommodate "higher-



intensity uses" and "higher-density housing" where appropriate. So, it might be medium-rise in some parts of the city and high-rise in others. If this change is supported, every part of the draft that discusses scale in this district should be explicit about the fact that permitted height/scale should taper based on proximity to nearby homes.

Page 104: Residential district words say 4 stories; pictures mostly show 2. I think this is problematic

Page 104: transition district "building heights may be limited based on proximity to nearby homes; apartment buildings are homes, too!

Page 104: transition district, not sure what is meant by "higher-intensity uses should be concentrated at key nodes and major intersections

Page 108: mention of 4 stories again

Page 108-109: Amend "Buildings up to 4 stories" to "Buildings up to three stories" per Resolution 25-0761.

Page 109: "no limit on the number of homes"; not something I'm hearing

Page 109: can we get a picture of "stacked flats"; I don't know what that is

Page 109: what's the difference between a duplex and "attached SF homes?

Page 109: small apartment buildings (along with some larger ones!) are shown on the map, but not mentioned in the primary/secondary uses or shown in the building types. What do we mean by small? Are they anticipated or not?

Page 111: are there no "secondary" uses?

Page 111: are "small condo/apartment" buildings here only or also in residential? If so, need to show that. Also, how are we defining medium vs. large apartment buildings? How to make clearer the intent is to be more context specific. Not all of these transition zones will look the same. Some are more suitable for medium vs. large.

Page 111: Do we want large commercial retail here? I think not. But certainly small.

Page 113: I think I might just ditch this page. What's on page 114 & 115 is much better.

Page 114: should reference to shopping centers be moved to page 114?



Page 114- 115: Strike language regarding preservation/balancing of commercial uses and housing--e.g., "shopping centers . . . will be needed as the city's population grows."

Page 116-117: Strike the Flex District and reclassify Flex districts on the proposed map to Transition.

Added on 4/30 – Comments received after the deadline

Pg 96: 2nd paragraph, how does the FLUP address lack of consensus or disagreement in the community? This paragraph reads as if the "values and aspirations" are homogenous.

Pg 96: Under "Natural Areas and Open Spaces", end of the 2nd paragraph: future growth must focus inward and upward. We have to grow within our boundaries and also taller.

Pg 98: Blue box: the UM part reads like it was copy-pasted from their own PR materials. At the very least, delete the word "bold" from the first sentence!

Pg 100-102: The Flex District is pink except for in the map, which is confusing. Color coding should stay the same.

Transition District - remove restriction to mid-rise only - taller buildings should be allowed and we can use step down height restrictions (like TC1) in the UDC to consider residential adjacencies.

Pg 108: This is all over the plan, but I really don't like it here - can we remove the phrase "neighborhood character?" It's such a dog whistle. Can we consider removing it all together from the entire document? If not, let's at least remove it here.

Pg 108: Under "What is the reasoning..." for the sentence that begins, "Increasing the housing supply..." let's add sustainability as something that increased supply also supports.

Pg 108: Under "What is the reasoning..." for the sentence that begins, "Community engagement revealed..." It's not possible to align with the existing scale if people take align to mean "line up with" - we need to build at a larger scale (how much larger is being debated). Revise this sentence.

Same para as above: would be good to provide examples of the "measures" needed, such as form-based code, transitional height zones according to distance from (old) R1, etc.

Pg 109: The photos in the "Typical Types" need some updating, in particular the image for Attached Single Family shows a huge house that doesn't appear to be attached to another house in the image and Duplex is enormous. There are more typical Duplexes all over Ann Arbor (around Revena/Virginia for example)



Pg 109: Under "Primary Uses" delete "No limit on number of homes" This is more appropriate for UDC and something we will inevitably be discussing in the future.

Pg 111: In the map/drawing, should say "Residential" instead of "Neighborhood."

Pg 111: Under "Typical Types" can we find better language than small, medium, large? Low-rise, Mid-rise, Hi-Rise? The Infill Building isn't infill. It's just next to a small building - doesn't appear much different than the others. There are better examples downtown. Small "Condo" building - condo is a financial/ownership model - not really about land use, no? Maybe I'm wrong about that?

Pg 114: In the "Potential" drawing, it would be better to show development on the lots across the street, surrounding the center site, where there are currently one-story white buildings on gray.

Pg 116: I don't understand the Flex District. If others are suggesting that we delete it, I'm in favor of that.

Chapter 4 (Infrastructure & Services section) 5, CPC Edits From 4/29 Discussion

Page 77: would like to re-order goals. Make 9 the first goal - would like infrastructure to be more prominent/first.

Page 78: highest density to align with transportation corridors

Page 78: new development is an opportunity upgrade infrastructure

Large scale solar - still talking to Dr. Stults about this and will confer on desired language. Staff is also reviewing until May 5th. Height blocking solar is another area of discussion. DTE has limitations that SEU doesn't have

MB: aligning resiliency hubs - current city goal is one per ward

- MB: decarbonization might be the best word, we can switch to that from "neutral"
- Wyche - there are teams in the city working on supporting infrastructure aligned with desired density.

Page 82: remove "due in part to the student population"

Page 82: bring language from page 106 forward

Page 83: ask consultants to add the university bus system

Page 84: Make better connections to the existing hazard mitigation reports, include maps, gaps, also include proactive; beef up rationale on page 82; give examples of our resilience hubs like



election center and fire station; connect to city's efforts like a map of our hubs, mobile station; ask OSI what are other steps we can take to prevent disaster; resilience as community infrastructure

Page 86: reference to transportation hub. Mobility hub is the term used in the Transportation Plan.

Page 86: blue highlighted text at the bottom should be incorporated into the text

Page 86 – please address micromobility (Weatherbee comments reference: car-sharing, scooters, A2D2, Michigan flyer, university carpool lots)

Page 87: Strategy 9.3 - What's TDM (look at Transportation Plan). Remove sentence that sounds like congestion parking. Sounds like congestion management - remove congestion pricing sounding language; relate to TDM in the plan. Look at DDA and university examples of providing free transit passes to employees

Page 88-89: perhaps it's good to start with a spread about how tradeoffs work for example how density preserves green space (counter to what people think, lawn is not green space). Better job of discussing our current programs, the tree fund, OSI giving away 11K trees, the greenbelt.

- Blue box title need to be consistent
- Green box should be dedicated to tree, for example, how many we have from the urban forestry plan

Page 89 – 10.3 - what is a good tree canopy?

Page 92 – first mention of the hub but it hasn't been described yet.

- Goal 10 - When people are talking about open space; If we take a stance that every tree needs to be protected, we should stop now; consider adding a intro of tradeoffs; Parks - quantity vs. quality; lawn
- Street trees are perceived as a measure of canopy
- Page 88 blue box should have similar formatting for other versions
- Page 89 - Swap out green box for work we are doing
- Goal 11 - Emphasize incentives for sustainability
- Goal 12 - put off hub references until we introduce

Chapter 5

- Page 96 - Strike the What are we looking to protect column; reframe the last paragraph and remove the map; potentially moving toward the natural features section
- Page 98 - clarity of language at beginning of paragraph that this policy is established by these plans



- Page 100 - Consider a shorter narrative that builds on remaining paragraphs on p. 96
- Page 98-99 Remove spread; move acknowledgement of UM Plan and other blue box references earlier in the year
- Page 99 - Drivers for change may not be the right title; Consider removing the monorail from the plan
- Page 100 - Remove complex graphic
- Page 101 - Old Fourth Ward and Old West Side should be transition district
- Page 101 – show your work, what maps did you refer to, what's the logic? Show your work. Can you provide a simplified zoning map to convey your point?
- Page 101 - Zoning should be primary source for recommending land use districts;
- Page 101 - reference Historic District Maps; Planning Commission is more interested in zoning base than the likelihood of development potential; 721 S. Forest and Five Corners should be community examples of where increased density are appropriate
- Page 101 - remove "please proceed to the following pages"
- Page 104 - parentheticals aren't the right labels - Intensity of activity and scale of buildings
- Page 108 & 109 - change to 3 stories; can we provide street names for images of housing? Image name and typology should match; header could be simplified to "rationale"; dimensional standards should be moved from "primary uses"
- Page 109 - remove no limit on number of homes
- Page 107 - Emphasize public open space/green spaces (not big private lawns)
- Page 103 - Transition Zone graphics; show single family homes as a current land use, the images shown are not going to be realized overnight
- District descriptions - reasoning and basis; adding different housing sizes and scale in addition to price point;