

From: Planning
Subject: Feedback for 1/23 comprehensive plan meeting

From: Jirka Hladis
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 3:12 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: Feedback for 1/23 comprehensive plan meeting

Dear planning commission and consultant team,

Thank you for your continued work on developing a transformative and actionable comprehensive plan.

I would like to suggest that the plan directly address the concerns many residents have about the negative impacts of permitting increased density. The plan should make it unequivocally clear that the vast majority of negative impacts on urban environments are caused by excessive car use. Traffic violence, congestion, and car storage are the real underlying problems, not people or buildings.

Virtually every other aspect of cities improves with increased density, whether it's economic vitality, cultural amenities, environmental sustainability, feasibility of high quality public transit, or the per capita cost of providing utilities and services.

I would also like to suggest that the comprehensive plan include a recommended list of the types of regulatory and fiscal approaches that the city should take to meet the plan's stated goals, beyond just zoning and land use. To give a few examples:

- Prevent and mitigate sources of noise, water, and air pollution through targeted, enforceable regulations
- Reduce speeds and volumes of motorized vehicles on all streets through engineering measures and targeted enforcement
- Build world-class infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit by adopting proven and cost effective solutions
- Offer public options for services that are not being adequately addressed by private entities (affordable housing, transit, utilities, etc.)

I would also like to express concern and disappointment about the inclusion of anti-housing proposals in the latest slide deck, particularly the proposal on slide 20 to limit residential uses in parts of the city.

While this idea may be well-intentioned, it clearly stems from the same flawed line of reasoning that originally led to the type of exclusionary zoning that caused the current housing crisis. The most desirable and attractive parts of Ann Arbor and cities around the world predate the introduction of zoning laws, and no top down master planned development can hope to rival the vibrancy and economic vitality of urban areas that are allowed to organically evolve to meet the needs of their residents.

If there was a community consensus on the need to offer below-market space for local businesses, I believe the best way to accomplish that goal would be to add capacity to currently underutilized public spaces. For example, the Farmer's Market could be turned into a multi story market hall with affordable housing and other community amenities.

The meagre increase in housing supply to date attributable to the ADU and TC1 ordinances underscores the need for a broad-based and far-reaching overhaul of the legacy regulatory regime. Please try to avoid burdening the comprehensive plan with unnecessary complexity and speculative prescriptions for particular uses on specific privately owned parcels. Instead, seek to enable residential and commercial uses of all kinds to coexist side by side throughout the city, allow for organic growth to accommodate new residents and businesses, and reduce car-dependency.

Thank you,
Jirka Hladis
Ward 1