

Subject: Regarding the Comprehensive Plan for Ann Arbor
Attachments: Letter to the Ann Arbor Planning Commission May 8, 2025.docx

From: Iris Gruhl
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:49 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>
Subject: Regarding the Comprehensive Plan for Ann Arbor

Dear Mr. Brett Lenart and the Ann Arbor Planning Commission,

I am a resident of Ann Arbor (since 1974.)

Thank you for all of your work regarding the formulation of the Comprehensive Plan for Ann Arbor.

I am concerned about this plan and have written a letter to you with my comments. Thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter! Please see the attached file (the formatting did not transfer well to this email, I apologize.)

Sincerely,

Iris Gruhl

To the Ann Arbor Planning Commission:

My name is Iris Gruhl, I have lived in Ann Arbor since January 1974 (51+ years) and at my current neighborhood since August 1982. Only recently did I learn about the city's Comprehensive Plan being formulated. It is very complex and no doubt took many hours to envision and prepare. I thank all of you who worked on this plan, however, I wish I had known about it sooner!

Getting feedback from our community members must be a high priority for you. Therefore, I am sending you mine:

I have loved living in Ann Arbor all of these years, and particularly in my neighborhood where I raised my family. The idea of encouraging a lot of future expansion and population growth causes me concern. One of the main attractive features of our town has been its small-town appeal, yet with many natural and cultural offerings as provided by the University of Michigan and other 'venues' in Ann Arbor and neighboring communities such as Ypsilanti and Dexter. I know my neighbors, and I feel safe living here.

Every time I go into the downtown area, I'm always amazed and shocked by the development that has been happening. Making dramatic changes to our town carries many risks. Once old buildings/structures are torn down and large, new ones are built, we cannot go back. Some people may view this as 'keeping up with the times' and 'progress.' If so, we have to ask ourselves what the definition of 'progress' is!

At what cost do we transform our community into one of high-density living, congestion and less natural spaces to enjoy? Do we want to lose the attractive and long-standing character of our town?

The following are my suggestions:

1) Please do not move too quickly with this Comprehensive Plan.

Finalizing this Plan in the fall of 2025 is too soon considering the lack of adequate and representative community feedback so far.

- 2) **Please do a city-wide survey using a sample size that is large and broad enough to be representative of our population to see what the residents of Ann Arbor would like.** Maybe a postcard with QR codes to the Comprehensive Plan and surveys of various sections of it could be sent to each resident or residential address?
- 3) **Please do not change zoning in the residential areas.** You may say that developers will not tear down old homes and build apartments wherever they want. They may not do this right away, but there would be nothing stopping them in the future if the zoning is changed.
- 4) **Please limit the construction of multi-family complexes to the main thoroughfares that have 4-6 lanes of traffic along bus routes.** There should be room for parking. If zoning needs to be changed in these limited areas, then it can be changed. Judging from what I have seen on the main thoroughfares, I don't believe the zoning would need to be changed, but I do not know for sure.
- 5) **Please consider making additional truly affordable housing in areas a bit out-of-town, such as the Briarwood Mall and area, west on Jackson Road, etc. where we already have bus routes.**
- 6) **Please preserve natural areas and leave our beautiful trees intact!**
- 7) **For any needed construction, please use local builders who have a vested, personal interest in maintaining the character of Ann Arbor.** Large, external construction firms are only interested in their profit.
- 8) **Please leave single-family dwellings as is.** People can expand the size of their homes as allowed in our current easement and height restrictions.

Being a college town, there is a certain amount of transiency built into our population. It would be very sad to see a lot of disruption in our environment to build new structures, and even more wasteful and destructive if theses dwellings are left uninhabited.

I have considered Ann Arbor to be my home for a long time. I hope it will always feel like home to me for many years to come.

Thank you!

Iris Gruhl

1192 Westport Rd.

Ann Arbor, MI 48103

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