

Subject:

Comments on Chapter 4 of the CLUP Draft

From: Eleanor Jones

Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:54 PM

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Subject: Comments on Chapter 4 of the CLUP Draft

Chapter 4 of Comprehensive Land Use Plan Draft Comments, questions, & suggestions

p. 45 (Goals)

Unless there are plans to force developers to build a variety of housing types, use universal design so people can age in place, a wide range of cost levels, - especially low-income and/or retirees, and specify which services move into neighborhoods, this is just misleading idealism – wishes, not reality.

p. 48 (Number of people commuting to work in Ann Arbor) To the best of my knowledge, the Plan presents no actual data on what portion of folks commuting into A2 for work would actually want to live here. You can't assume they all do.

p. 51: (Access to Commercial Amenities & Walk Score) What is the definition of a walk score, and what is the scale? (e.g. 0 -10 means what?) And is it based only on the number of things you can walk to? Does it take into account the individual's satisfaction with the walking in their neighborhood – the intangible joys, mental health benefits, etc.? If I love walking in my neighborhood because there's no commercial activity, I'd give it a top score! You can't assume everyone wants commercial amenities closer to their home. They do come with downsides like traffic, noise, etc. which is not addressed – nor do I see any plans for remediation.

p. 52 (1.1 Allow more density...)

Reducing lot sizes and relaxing setbacks and other regulations are all quality of life issues for the people living in the given neighborhood. If you are increasing the number of units per lot, that's adding enough crowding. You don't have to compound the crowding effect by reducing lot size minimum and/or reducing setbacks/offset sizes.

p. 56: Home Ownership gets barely a mention.

Why is there so little attention and emphasis on the benefits of home ownership? For most people, this is how we build wealth, security in our old age, and lifetime stability. That is a great good that should be encouraged in this Plan. It is not inherently "exclusionary" - what about the proven benefits to lower-income folks of building equity in a home to create generational wealth?

What about the community stability that home ownership engenders?

Also why not talk about the benefits to the surrounding neighborhood when a building is owner-occupied? (Vastly different from out-of-town or out-of-state ownership!)

p. 54-57: I absolutely endorse the Plan if it will actually generate (i.e. require building or conversion of existing structures) affordable housing.

p. 58: Who gets to define "high quality open spaces" and "high-quality parks"? The most local residents should get to weigh in on how they define this!

Re: how to increase access to green space in neighborhoods under-served by our current parks:

You could say that new construction in these “park-poor” areas must have larger setbacks and more green space required per site. These areas should not be forced to endure reduced lot sizes for new developments. New builds there should be required to have MORE green space than other areas of the city that are currently “park-rich.” Don’t treat the “park-poor” areas the same as everyone else. We should be improving amount of greenery there.

p. 61: re: “complete neighborhoods” – I find it arrogant that my neighborhood is described as “incomplete” by the Plan. Many neighborhoods are already complete according to the residents. And they may not want to change them because they already provide:

- a) walkable tree-lined streets,
- b) air cleaned by trees, gardens, and other greenery,
- c) a diversity of people and housing types,
- d) elementary schools,
- e) parks,
- f) peace and quiet, lack of crowding,
- g) a smattering of owner-occupied small businesses, and
- h) a sense of community via front porches, block parties, you name it.

p. 71 (section 5.2) No, there is no need to relax nuisance regs on commercial properties. We have noise, pollution, nuisance, etc. regulations for a reason: to protect everyone’s quality of life (not to mention safety).

p. 78, 88, 89, re: natural features:

Trees and other green spaces have huge personal and psychological benefits to everyone – not just the ecological benefits you mention. No, we don’t need to give developers more flexibility in green space requirements. We need to require them to provide MORE green space, set up extensions with mature trees, build rain gardens, require a certain % of a lot to have water-permeable surfaces, etc. Also we need to protect large trees where developers are planning to demolish them. If you are actually serious about ecology.... you would strongly protect existing trees, require MORE tree planting & rain gardens etc. Mitigating climate change by expanding our tree canopy is crucial.

p. 91: How to promote/encourage/possibly sometimes require mass-timber construction?

p. 93: (Waste)

What happens to the waste generated every time houses and other buildings are torn down? Does the city have any requirements for salvaging and re-use of materials? Or promoting retrofitting older structures not just for future energy use efficiency but ALSO to keep them out of the landfill? Please don’t ignore the environmental costs of tear-downs! It is part of the whole equation – not just future energy use. What’s the calculated ecological payback period of tearing down vs. building new? We need to waste fewer of our natural resources.

Thank you for your attention,

-Eleanor Jones
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