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**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Cc:** [Briggs, Erica](#); [Cornell, Jenn](#)  
**Subject:** [Planning Commission] Don't cap most of Ann Arbor to 3-units  
**Date:** Friday, August 15, 2025 9:18:58 AM

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Hello Commission,

I'm a ward 5 resident strongly urging we send a version of the CLUP to council as soon as possible without splitting residential and without introducing 3-unit caps in existing R1/R2.

**Council Members have not asked for a 3-unit cap. It is an overstep to introduce one**

City Council passed a resolution on July 21, which had this specific language:

Recommendation of a range of infill options in the Residential Category (Draft v. 2), where duplexes and triplexes are provided widespread opportunity and ease of development, and where larger building typologies are authorized only where they would fit into existing neighborhood contexts.

In conversations with multiple council members who voted for this resolution, they specifically mentioned cases where higher unit counts can make sense in certain residential contexts, especially when paired with other restrictions on height, setbacks, etc. CM Akmon shared [this on her Facebook page](#). The post shows photos of 4 and 5-unit buildings in an area that the CLUP currently marks as residential, and she says:

When we talk about allowing more housing options in our low-rise residential areas, this is what we mean: small-scale buildings that add homes and neighbors, strengthen local businesses, and give more people the chance to live near schools, parks, transit, and jobs. It's how we keep Ann Arbor a place people can move to, stay in, and grow with

Any plan that makes these specific buildings non-conforming goes beyond what council has asked for. It is clear that both the letter and spirit of the resolution asks for duplexes and triplexes by right and for allowances for larger typologies that are context-dependent. The CLUP should reflect that and can use the language directly from the resolution. A staff memo earlier this week suggested introducing a "new residential" district and updating the existing residential to cap at 3-units without exception. This is an overreach and goes against a city council that has been championing gentle density and outwardly say we need more density, thoughtfully done, in residential neighborhoods.

**We can't get all our new housing from Transition and Hub**

There's an argument that so much of our new housing will come from Transition and Hub, so

we can afford to be more limiting in Residential. CM Disch has made a form of this argument in her written response to folks who emailed ahead of the 7/21 council meeting.

4 of the 5 hub districts contain busy highway interchanges and unsafe corridors for pedestrians (it's terrible crossing Jackson near I-94 or Washtenaw near US-23 by foot). Several of the corridors that make up Transition are designated "traffic safety corridors" in need of work because of the high number of fatalities and serious injuries. I believe we can make these areas safe and enjoyable places for people to live over time, but I want to highlight: There is a deep inequity in trying to solve our housing crisis by only letting more people live on fast, wide roads or near highway interchanges, while protecting the aesthetics and lifestyle of those that live on the majority of Ann Arbor land and have access to safer, slower streets.

### **A New Residential use opens up a million new fights**

More than anything, we need to get this comprehensive plan passed. We need zoning to be reformed and we need to start building the homes that will house the tens of thousands of people who would live here, but are priced out of Ann Arbor. Adding a fourth category jeopardizes that. We already hear neighbors complain about why they are in transition instead of residential. Get ready for someone from every neighborhood in transition to come out and argue they'd be better suited in "new residential". And for folks in "new residential" to argue that actually residential is a better fit. The land use map becomes a new battleground with a new category.

Transition already has tapering built in. It seems some commissioners feel transition should be restricted to arterials, but I don't see why. Complete neighborhoods with a healthy mix of residential, commercial, office space etc. can exist outside of arterials. For the set of debated parcels, if Transition is deemed inappropriate, I'd argue it's still even better to put them in Residential than to create a new category. Residential allows for a wider mix especially when considering the existing context.

A new category, and therefore new debates, on a lot of previously uncontested parts of the map could devastate the timeline. More granular zones will end up being added during the rezoning process, adding that now is unnecessary. People are suffering today from the housing shortage. Delays have real impacts on people's lives.

### **In Summary**

Add council's language to the plan and send it over to city council for approval asap. Do not add additional categories or additional limits that council isn't asking for. State what is allowed by right for residential but allow for flexibility for projects that can show they will fit into existing neighborhoods. Let's get this thing done and move onto zoning!

Thank you,  
Gaurav Kulkarni