

Comprehensive plan input

Brad Pritts

3030 Lexington Drive, Ann Arbor 48105

11/25/24

This process seems to be focused on soliciting public attitudes and preferences, while providing the opportunity to promote the strategies. Equally important are hard facts and data. Little of these has been shared in the process so far!!!

I want to hope that with the funds we are spending on expert help, they are doing this kind of leg work, and just haven't shared it yet. I am disappointed that, for example, none of the surveys done so far appear to be based on statistically valid samples. That means we can't assume that they are representative of the population as a whole.

How should we proceed?

Where best to locate high density?

Two types of area would be best. First, the vicinity of UM's Central Campus and Medical complex. This is already occurring to some extent with several recently proposed projects, some already approved. 721 S. Forest, "Southtown" at State and Stimson; and Galleria on S. University are just a few examples. Let's put the dense housing next to the dense school and employer. If anything we should encourage even greater density in these areas!

Second, existing commercial and mixed use areas, such as Briarwood itself and the area just north, already in planning stages. Third, promoting modest infill elsewhere in TC1 districts.

Let's leverage the areas already ceded to more intense development rather than sacrificing green space and single family neighborhoods. Yes, the current single family homes are too expensive for some, but most of us fortunate enough to have them would like to keep them. For most of us, owning a single family home represents years of investment as well as deferral of other luxuries such as new automobiles and expensive vacations. (I support providing direct financial help to those struggling with housing at the lower income scales. My current taxes provide for a modest number of publicly owned housing units as well as Section 8 subsidies. Further, by supporting Food Gatherers, the Jewish Family Services refugee resettlement program, and the Hope Clinic, our family and

many other Ann Arbor folk are already pitching in for this population. Let's keep these projects simple...the unconscionable delays in developing the Ann Arbor Y lot project is a role model on too much complexity.)..

What should we avoid?

More carrots, fewer sticks. The recent history of the TC1 code development is an instructive example. TC1 plans express a goal of moving away from specific use-based standards in favor of form-based zoning. Yet many new restrictions are placed on automotive related uses such as service stations, vehicle repair facilities, and even drive-through windows. (The author has been personally puzzled by disproportionate vigor used to oppose drive-through windows!)

It appears that the city is already seriously considering subsidizing \$100 million in new parking!!! This seems frankly astonishing to me and deeply disappointing.

Overly complex plans from the City to motivate developers to get “something for nothing”, for example proposing complex plans for private developers to ensure set-asides of certain numbers of affordable units, or certain mixes of residential and commercial uses. Se This was the conclusion reached by studies commissioned by the Planning Commission in 2023, which concluded that the attempts to offer zoning “premiums” had been unsuccessful. While these efforts are well intentioned, the experience has been that at best their added complexity slows development, and at worst fails and brings about failure.

Let's keep things simple, please!!! And, let's not let “the search for perfect prevent us from attaining improvement”.

Brad Pritty