

SAC Annual Report 2018

2017 Annual Report Follow Up

Meeting Structure

Following the recommendations of the 2017 Student Advisory Council, the members of the 2018 Student Advisory Council elected to meet the second Wednesday every month. Meetings were held in the Michigan League from 6-7 pm. To accommodate the change in schedules of various members, the council adopted to elect a new time every semester. The 2019 SAC should continue this structure.

Leadership

Following the recommendations of the 2017 SAC, we have elected a chair, Kenji Yeoh (CSG), who is responsible for leading discussions, facilitating the creation of the annual report, and reaching out to student groups, and a secretary, Angela Kimber (RSG), who is responsible for scheduling meetings, meeting reminders, and meeting minutes. This will continue onto the 2019-2020 academic year. For the future SACs, we recommend these positions are elected during the first January meeting of the Student Advisory Council and filled by the end of the academic year.

Presentations

During this academic year, the Student Advisory Council had the opportunity to hear from the Michigan Dark Skies group, CSG's Food Insecurity and Campus Affordability Task Force, and past members of the Residence Hall Association in regards to different aspects of issues as they pertain to students in Ann Arbor. Much like the previous year, these presentations were useful in educating SAC members about the relevant focus areas, as well as facilitating discussion, disseminating information, and establishing networking opportunities to lay the foundation for collaboration between student groups. This is in line with the 2017 SAC's recommendations, and the 2018 SAC recommends that future councils continue to host presentations from student groups, especially earlier in the academic year.

Outreach

The 2018 SAC recommends that members reach out to student groups through meetings outside of the monthly meeting structure to compensate for the limits of meeting presentations. We recommend selecting one member to lead and coordinate outreach efforts with student groups, surveying the various opinions and conceptions of the student body in regards to the efficacy of the Ann Arbor City Council in regards to the relevant focus areas decided by the

SAC. This information should be used to supplement any statements the SAC wishes to make on certain resolutions of City Council and in the Annual Report.

Recommendations to the next SAC

- Future student advisory councils should follow the meeting and leadership structure established here.
- Future student advisory councils should have one person from the Michigan Daily attend their meetings, acting as a liaison so that any important announcements SAC makes to the public can be shared through a press release.

Focus Area 1: Campus Safety

Key Issues and Recommendations

In light of the centralized, urban location of the University of Michigan's (UM) campus, it is the charge of the City Council of Ann Arbor to help keep the students and residential citizens safe through adequate lighting, traffic signage, and transportation infrastructure. Building from the Student Advisory Council's 2017 recommendations on continuing to fund and build better lighting in and around UM campus areas, we would also like to highlight student and citizen concern regarding the crosswalk at State Street and East Madison Street,¹ in addition to low visibility on East Huron Street between Thayer and Ingalls streets, where a student was struck and critically injured on January 14th, 2019.² Ann Arbor City Council's Pedestrian Safety Improvements 2016-2019 plan is a move in the right direction, implementing many necessary lighting and signage improvements, particularly around K-12 school neighborhoods. The Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) State Street expansion project³ shows further initiative to develop a safer, more pedestrian-friendly downtown area, and the SAC applauds these efforts. Additionally, DDA has in the past, held events to give out portable clip-on lights for pedestrian and cyclists and we would like to see similar solutions towards pedestrian safety be supported and funded in the future. Thus, the 2018 University of Michigan Student Advisory

¹ Cunningham, Rachel. "Law Students, Councilmembers Raise Concerns over Dangerous Crosswalk on Campus." The Michigan Daily. Accessed March 27, 2019.
<https://www.michigandaily.com/section/ann-arbor/law-students-councilmembers-raise-concerns-over-dangerous-crosswalk-campus>.

² Moran, Darcie. "University of Michigan Student Critical after Being Struck in Crosswalk," Mlive.com, January 15, 2019, accessed March 27, 2019,
<https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2019/01/university-of-michigan-student-critical-after-being-struck-in-crosswalk.html>.

³ "Upcoming Projects," Downtown Development Authority, accessed March 27, 2019,
<https://www.a2dda.org/current-projects/upcoming-projects/>.

Council recommends the following to Ann Arbor City Council, in order to continue to support the safety of all of its residents:

- Future budget and planning for street lighting to include sustainable and low-light pollution design and architecture to minimize glare and wasted energy for safety considerations, and to promote the health and wellbeing of Ann Arbor's residents and ecosystem, per the suggestions of Michigan Dark Skies and other student groups that share their knowledge and expertise on light pollution. The International Dark Sky Association has provided information on how to implement outdoor lighting ordinances to minimize light pollution.⁴
- Signage, additional crosswalk lighting, and sound warnings to the areas where there is high-density pedestrian traffic at all times of day and evening, particularly at the painted crosswalks at East Huron Street between Thayer and Ingalls streets, and the northside of State Street and East Madison Street.
- In partnership with student organizations such as Central Student Government and the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, facilitate a publically free distribution of portable, clip-on visibility lights for pedestrians and cyclists.

Campus Lighting

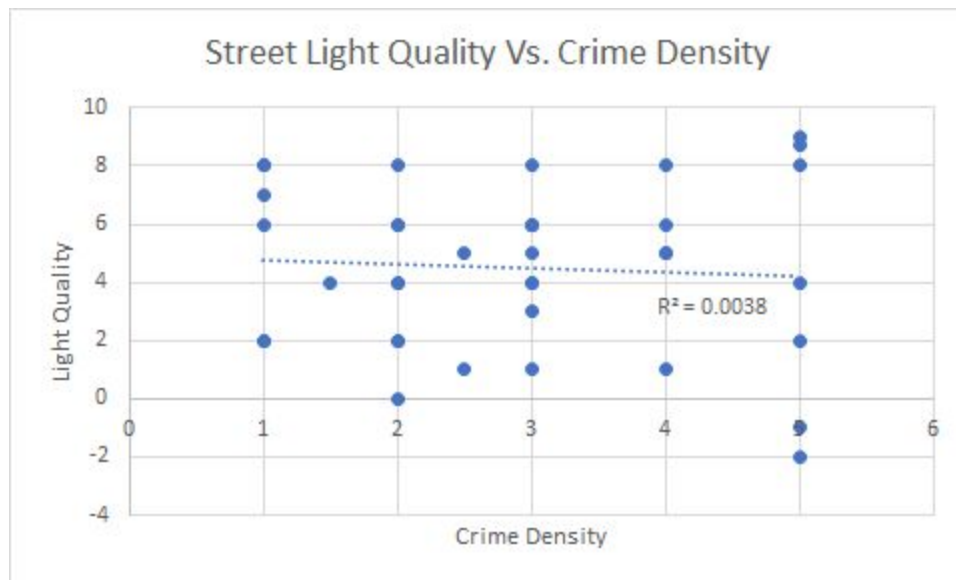
Following up with the 2017 SAC's recommendation to continue their lighting survey, we have conducted a more comprehensive geographical survey of streetlights in the Ann Arbor area. The goal of this survey is to investigate and delineate the role between street lights and the safety of students, as it pertains to criminal activity and traffic accidents.

The survey focused on residential areas in Ann Arbor, evaluating the quality of streetlights on streets from neighborhoods such as Kerrytown, Germantown, Old Fourth Ward, North Burns Park, and Old West Side. Each street light observed was assigned a value ranging from 0 (does not meet or inhibits criteria) to 1 (completely meets criteria) under the following qualities:

- Light Color (Indicator of intensity)
- Light trespass onto private property
- Target Area Illumination
- Light obstruction
- Light function and safety measures

⁴ "The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)," International Dark-Sky Association, February 24, 2019, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/public-policy/lighting-ordinances/>.

From each score, we attempted to determine if there was any correlation to the crime density in each respective neighborhood. The linear regression of this data to determine any linearity/correlation yielded no significant correlation between the crime and street light quality.



While we did not see a relationship between criminal activity and street light quality, there are two other tangible effects of inadequate or poor streetlights. The first major concern brought to us by the Michigan Dark Skies group⁵ is the light pollution that arises from the specific designs used for the street lights of Ann Arbor. Light pollution is defined as any light produced by man-made sources that brighten the night sky. This definition can be extended to include any area in which light is not intended to reach. These include private properties and direct exposure to a driver's vision. Light pollution directly impacts both the natural environment and traffic safety.

Light pollution disrupts the night ecosystem, wastes energy, and has a negative impact on people in areas with high light pollution.⁶⁷ Artificial light during the night can disrupt the circadian rhythms of both humans and other organisms, causing restlessness and unnatural sleep patterns. Artificial light at night disrupts the production of melatonin in humans, a hormone used to regulate sleep, at a time normally melatonin levels start to rise at dusk. For wildlife, light

⁵ "Home." Michigan Dark Skies, Michigan Dark Skies, sites.lsa.umich.edu/darkskies/.

⁶ "AMA adopts guidance to reduce harm from high intensity street lights," AMA, <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-adopts-guidance-reduce-harm-high-intensity-street-lights>

⁷ Raap, T. *et al.* Light pollution disrupts sleep in free-living animals. *Sci. Rep.* 5, 13557; doi: 10.1038/srep13557 (2015).

pollution can affect a wide variety of behaviors. This ranges from a bird's ability to navigate through a dark sky to prey animals being able to hide in the darkness.⁸

Solutions to minimize light pollution are centered around smart streetlight design. A street light should be designed to light only what is needed, when it is needed, as bright as needed, and be fully shielded to point all light downwards. A diagram showing acceptable and unacceptable lighting fixtures has been provided.⁹ This diagram is not exhaustive.

Examples of Acceptable / Unacceptable Lighting Fixtures



⁸ "About Lighting Pollution." Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, <https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/lighting/pollution/>

⁹ "The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)." International Dark-Sky Association, IDA, 24 Oct. 2018, www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/lighting-basics/.

Focus Area 2: Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing: Summary of Key Events and Issues

In the past year, the City of Ann Arbor was largely unable to meet its annual goals in terms of the creation of affordable housing, which is set at 140 new units per year. Since setting this goal in 2015, the city has only created 50 new units.¹⁰ This number is alarmingly low, especially considering the original goal of creating 420 new affordable units by the end of 2018. Given the increasing demand for affordable housing, the current number of affordable housing units in Ann Arbor are insufficient as is the rate at which affordable housing is being constructed.

While the Affordable Housing Fund is now being funded using the county millage rebate, more funds are needed if the city is to make serious progress towards its affordable housing goals. With the little overall progress towards the city meeting its affordable housing goals in 2018, we believe that in the future more must be done to ensure an adequate number of affordable housing units for both students and Ann Arbor residents as the city and student populations continue to grow. As we move into 2019, more progress needs to be made.

Recommendations to City Council

Going forward, we encourage City Council to strive to provide additional affordable housing units in Ann Arbor, while being thoughtful and cognizant of the different elements that go into approving affordable housing. Housing must be not only safe and up to code, but it must offer reasonable price options, have certain amenities if not close to campus, and not cause traffic issues in the surrounding area. As we have seen this year from the proposed Barton Green development, it is important to be discerning about which housing developments are approved. We hope that City Council will continue to keep Ann Arbor residents' best interests in mind in the coming year. Therefore, we hope that the City Council follow these recommendations:

- Adhere to its previous promises stated in its work plans of establishing 140 units per year
- Continue to fund the Affordable Housing Fund using the county millage rebate
- Continue to explore the viability of sites in the city to build affordable housing on
- Examine how city ordinances can be changed to promote the creation of affordable housing

¹⁰ Slagter, Lauren. "How Should Ann Arbor Fix Its Affordable Housing Shortage?" MLive.com, July 2, 2018. https://www.mlive.com/expo/news/erry-2018/07/8e61ef7d3b7026/how_should_ann_arbor_fix_its_a.html.

Recommendations to SAC

For the next year of SAC, we hope to continue addressing affordable housing issues on campus. As the university's enrollment continues to increase, affordable housing is becoming a progressively more pressing issue for students. We intend to advocate on behalf of students and make informed recommendations to City Council about any further developments. Therefore, we hope that future iterations of the SAC follow these recommendations:

- Establish communications with student organizations like CSG to work with the University of Michigan to expand affordable housing units for students on university property
- Research how city ordinances can be revised to facilitate the creation of affordable housing
- Work in coalition with on-campus and community groups to promote the creation of affordable housing

Statement of Concern Regarding Ann Arbor Housing Ordinance 8-530

Section one of Ann Arbor Housing Ordinance 8-530 states:

“(1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, a landlord of residential premises shall not:

- (a) Enter the leased premises for the purpose of showing the premises to prospective tenants until 70 days of the current lease period has passed; or
- (b) Enter into an agreement to rent the leased premises to another tenant for a subsequent lease period until 70 days of the current lease period has passed.”

It is the understanding of SAC that this ordinance was implemented with the purpose of slowing down the off-campus housing search process, thereby allowing students to make more informed housing decisions without the chaotic conditions present when hordes of students rush to secure housing for the next year as soon as they get back to campus in August. The problem is real, and the ordinance is well-intentioned.

Unfortunately, because the ordinance is unenforced, it promotes a climate of confusion, chaos, rushed decision making and even potentially unsafe situations - the opposite of the intent of the ordinance. The reality of the situation is that some landlords abide by the ordinance, while some do not. Those that do not follow the ordinance usually skirt the regulations by asking prospective tenants to “simply go knock on the door” of a potential rental residence and ask the current tenants for a tour; this all happens without the presence of the landlord. This situation poses a number of issues:

1. How does the current tenant deal with a potentially high volume of prospective tenants requesting tours? Is that the current tenants' job, or the landlords?
2. How does the current tenant reconcile concerns about letting random people into their home with a sense of responsibility to give a tour to a prospective tenant?
3. For prospective tenants, the housing search process becomes even more arduous. They may knock on the door of a prospective residence and no one may answer. They may have to return to the residence multiple times, which put unnecessary strain on students' time.
4. The absence of the landlord during a tour means that questions that tenants have about specific aspects of a residence may not be answered correctly or at all.

The housing companies that do not adhere to the ordinance, along with those that skirt the ordinance's provisions (as described above) contribute to an inequitable housing search process which punishes housing companies who follow the ordinance and rewards those that do not. Prospective tenants are much more likely to tour and commit to a house when a landlord offers

them a tour at a specific time, as opposed to going through a process without the landlord, as described above. This is not to even mention the housing companies that follow the ordinance and do not give any tours during the seventy-day period - thus losing out on prospective tenants. The ordinance fosters an environment in which landlords are encouraged to skirt the ordinance provisions in an effort to secure tenants for the next year relatively earlier than those who follow the ordinance.

Recommendations in regards to Ann Arbor Housing Ordinance 8-530

Housing Ordinance 8-530 was intended to lessen the anxiety and stress involved in the off-campus housing search process. In practice, however, the ordinance has had the opposite effect. The SAC recommends two courses of actions to be taken by Ann Arbor City Council:

- The ordinance to be strengthened with enforcement mechanisms, such as assigning city employees to monitor housing company practices in regards to adherence to ordinance 8-530, and penalties (perhaps fines) for housing companies that are found to be in breach of the ordinance.
- The city, in coordination with the University of Michigan, should better advertise the ordinance in an effort to promote self-reporting.

Student Representation in the Master Plan

According to the US Census, the population of Ann Arbor is 121,477 and the student enrollment at the University of Michigan is 46,002.^{11,12} Although all students who attend UM do not live in Ann Arbor, a sizable portion of the student body does, and thus students make up approximately 27.5% of the population. While students are transient as individuals, they have been a permanent part of the population since the University moved to Ann Arbor and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Students contribute to the local economy through their shopping at local businesses and occupy a sizable percentage of the rental housing supply. Students comprise a significant portion of the city's population and social fabric, despite this, students and their interests lack representation in the City's Master Plan.

The city's Master Plan as a statutory document should reflect the interest of students as a large social group with unique interests. The Master Plan, however, does not reflect the interests of students but in fact, voices various complaints about them. The Master Plan identifies students as eroding neighborhood preservation and complains that "young students are not always aware that the effect of their noise, parties or behavior creates conflicts with other residents."¹³ Such complaints are not appropriate in a statutory document. The city also suggests a desire to abdicate some of its responsibility to students, stating as an action item "encourage The University of Michigan to increase its mediating role in off-campus housing beyond tenant/landlord disputes."¹⁴ The city states this in the Master Plan when increased enforcement of existing ordinances, discussed in the next previous section, would significantly help the student body. The plan does not mention this or state it as an action item. The Master Plan also complains about out of scale buildings, coded language for high rises where many students live. Perhaps the one element of the plan which might be related to student interests is the preservation and reestablishment of neighborhood grocery stores.¹⁵ The city does not seem to have made progress on this goal however as students continue to raise issues of food insecurity on UM's campus.¹⁶

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Ann Arbor City, Michigan." Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/annarborcitymichigan/POP060210#viewtop>.

¹² "University of Michigan Facts & Figures." University of Michigan. Accessed March 12, 2019. <http://umich.edu/facts-figures/>.

¹³ Ann Arbor City Planning and Development Services Unit and the City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission. "City of Ann Arbor Master Plan Land Use Element." City of Ann Arbor, November 5, 2009. https://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning/Documents/MasterPlans/Land_Use_Plan_Nov09.pdf. Pg. 60

¹⁴ Ibid, Pg. 65

¹⁵ Ibid, Pg. 62

¹⁶ Nouhan, Catherine. "Students Call University to Action over Food Insecurity on Campus." The Michigan Daily. Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://www.michigandaily.com/section/campus-life/students-call-university-action-over-food-insecurity-campus>.

Master Plan Recommendations

We recommend that a section is added to the Ann Arbor Master Plan which is dedicated to student issues and have a student or students, be involved in the creation of the Master Plan. We believe that a member of the Student Advisory Council should be at least one student representative present at the meetings whose input is solicited for the creation and revisions of the Master Plan. We believe this will provide important representation to students as an important part of the city's social fabric. Students have unique interests which should be represented as the city plans for the future as students will remain a part of the city's population and continue to grow. Since City Council has described the Master Plan as a promise to residents, we wish it to be a promise to us as students as well.