

## A2D2 EVALUATION INTERVIEW NOTES

<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 7/29
<b>Interviewer:</b> Erin	<b>Place/Room:</b>

Open by asking how familiar the interviewee is with the A2D2 ordinance. Explain as much as possible (D1 and D2, character overlays, emphasis on form, premiums, and explain the intent) to give context and provide the informational handout.

Notes from introductory conversation:

### QUESTIONS

- 1. What was your interaction/experience with the A2D2 ordinance or planning process (as a developer? Property owner? Neighbor? Other interested party)?**

Interviewee 1: On City Council for final vote on zoning

Interviewee 2: DDA was excluded from the process; specifically asked to participate and was able to speak to Wendy. In general, their pro-development input has not been welcomed. They even passed a resolution that was given to Council with some suggestions for the A2D2 zoning.

- 2. Starting with the big picture: Understanding the intent of the ordinances, overall do you think they are fulfilling that intent? Why or why not?**

They are beginning to: higher density in the core, but will always fall short because of the historic districts, floodways, and other constraints to development. Thus, higher density zoning downtown will never solve the problem of sprawl because there isn't enough developable land.

Ordinances tried to make it easier for developers, but established a cap that wasn't there before (height).

Tried to make the process more streamlined, and entitlement projects are able to move through faster

Developer feedback: all the attention is being focused around the edges, and not on the easy, entitlement projects. Thus, the *perception* is that Ann Arbor is a difficult place to do business and develop in. The bad press is undermining developers' confidence in Ann Arbor. They want to spend as little time in process as possible.

- 3. Thinking about your specific example/observation, what were the positive things that came of the project (or what positive impacts have you observed, if their experience wasn't a specific project)? Think about things like "Allowable Uses", "Height and Massing", "Floor Area Limits/Premiums" and "Design".**

Available financing is driving the student housing boom, not the ordinance; it's a safe investment for developers right now.

The ordinance is encouraging growth and gives more predictability to developers for entitlement projects

Allows more mixed use to happen without the use of PUDs

We are developing a common vocabulary, so that we all can communicate what we want better.

**4. What were the negative things? And what do you think needs to change about the ordinance? Again, thinking about things like “Allowable Uses”, “Height and Massing”, “Floor Area Limits/Premiums” and “Design”.**

There is now a cap on height that wasn't there before

There is much more room to go on the common vocabulary, like defining how you break up massing (so that large buildings look more like multiple small buildings)

Design guidelines don't work – they can be ignored.

Premiums are not working: affordable housing isn't being build, environmental amenities aren't being included, and no one is up at their maximum height (with premiums)

The longer we drag out the process, the less resources developers have to invest in good architecture/materials, amenities, etc.

We need to be more flexible about use...but the building needs to contribute to the fabric of the area as well. The buildings will outlive the current owners, and so they must contribute to the fabric while being adaptable to different uses.

The City wanted a spectrum of different types of residential, not just student high rises

**5. Of the things you mentioned, what are the top three priorities you would like the Planning Commission consider?**

- Revisit why we are doing this; we have strayed from the original intent. What do we gain from this? People have forgotten the “why” and what are the social benefits. Then create a diagnosis of what works and what doesn't (and remember what is working)
- Incentivize precisely what we want (residential? Office? Hotel?)
- Focus on more than just the buildings – look at the public realm (sidewalk, street, right of way);
- Don't downsize any more and keep the amount of developable land (don't restrict more). For example, if the DTE lot is downzoned, its highest and best use will be to remain a parking lot. Setbacks and design restrictions are ok, but don't downzone
- Consider extending D1 southward on Main

**6. Have you seen examples of techniques, ordinances or standards in other communities that you think work well?**

In older communities (like Ypsi) – ground level storefronts can be used for multiple things, including residences! They can be converted as the market changes, but the buildings are still suited for the active retail use.

**7. Is there anything else you would like the Commission to know?**

We need to make sure we get some variation in height (not everyone bumping up against a maximum

Uniformity isn't speaking to liveability (need things like balconies, rooftop spaces, etc.)

Don't price out the core – people need to be able to live there; we don't want to have just the very rich and the very poor (downtown Boulder is an example).

Consider allowing the private sector to own and manage some of the public spaces near their buildings – don't just get a contribution to the parks fund. Could use this as a trigger for premiums as well.