

EQUITABLE ANN ARBOR LAND TRUST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jan. 6. 2024

Ann Arbor is currently grappling with a complex set of challenges related to affordable housing. Population growth, fueled by expansion at the University, has driven up housing prices and demand. Exacerbated by zoning regulations and limited available land, affordable housing is increasingly difficult for middle-income residents to find!

This is why the Equitable Ann Arbor Land Trust (EA2) was formed in 2019 by Peter Allen, a real estate development faculty member at the Ross School of Business for over 40 years, and Sarah Lorenz, a former U-M grad student. EA2 is a Michigan nonprofit catalyzing visionary plans for equitable housing, creative placemaking, and mixed-use sustainable development.

EA2 has now assembled a diverse, talented board with expertise in all of the housing issues Ann Arbor is facing. We have engaged with hundreds of experts and stakeholders from the community, the City of Ann Arbor, and the University of Michigan. With 3 classes and 20+ students this winter term, we will craft a growth agenda to meaningfully address complex problems surrounding the riverfront, transportation, housing and climate action in Ann Arbor, right in the center of Town and Gown, the Fuller Rd corridor from the Medical Campus to North Campus!

We have heard from University leadership that Ann Arbor needs to become a city of 200,000 residents to keep up with the strong pace of growth of the University of Michigan. Building accessory dwelling units and duplexes won't suffice; we need thousands of new units. All of the recent development is not adequately addressing affordable housing and net zero construction. Most importantly, the profit-oriented private sector has not addressed these issues as EA2 believes is necessary. Here is our prioritized list of Action Items:

1. Start with a focus on the Huron River to bridge the Town & Gown divide and create a world-class riverfront. Connect the 6 river oxbows from Argo to the Arb using 8 new pedestrian crossings, with funding via the Corridor Improvement Authority with the help of Ann Arbor's Economic Development Corp.
2. Form a Community Land Trust (CLT) to hold public land at low rent, starting with U-M parking lots and then City-owned land- at permanently affordable rents for middle-income households, who cannot afford open-market rents or home purchases.
3. Create middle-income housing so that anyone who works in Ann Arbor can live in Ann Arbor. At least 25% of every development must offer affordable workforce housing, with up to 75% market-rate to help underwrite the affordable. In order to create net worth, offer for sale options with Ann Arbor's significant appreciation so that all the occupants can own, not just rent.
4. Add major residential density along Fuller Road between Maiden Lane and Bonisteel as well as along all TOD corridors, including Plymouth Road and N. Main.
5. Transform Ann Arbor into a walking, biking, and mass transit-oriented community. This includes a new, integrated system with trains, bus lines, a connector monorail, and expanded pedestrian pathways/trails to connect downtown with the campuses. Start by extending the Treeline Trail to form a loop trail and integrating it with the B2B Trail and IronBelle trail system.
6. Replace all campus and city parking decks with park-and-ride outside the city. Transfer commuters to town with the proposed monorail. Replace existing parking lots and decks with mixed-use development of housing, retail, research labs, classrooms, and more.
7. Expand Amtrak to include commuter trains East and West and the WATCO Ann Arbor Railroad train North and South for commuters and vacationers via heavy rail trolleys.

Therefore, we ask that the University of Michigan and the City of Ann Arbor collaborate with EA2 and ask Sasaki and Interface Studios to thoroughly vet our Vision for the University's Campus Plan 2030 and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Appreciative,
Peter Allen & Sarah Lorenz, EA2 Co-Founders