

NEIGHBORHOODS

Many citizens have expressed the importance of their neighborhood to them. I understand this concern, I live in an historic district on the old west side. I enjoy my home and neighborhood very much and I think it would have been a significant loss to the city if this area had not been preserved.

But neighborhoods are more than the preservation of the homes. Many citizens have expressed the importance of the diversity of the people, sometimes the location. For some Ann Arbor city residents these characteristics of the neighborhood are more important than the architecture of their specific house.

Our city spends considerable resources encouraging greater residential development in the central business district. I agree, those that wish to live in the urban core should have that opportunity. Often this is the single professional and we certainly want these individuals to have access to the living style they may wish. But we should also recognize that when they marry, and perhaps start a family, the majority traditionally move to non-urban neighborhoods.

The traditional neighborhood homeowners are the most stable demographic of the city. Life changes occur, and the home becomes a partner in those changes. People come to identify with their homes and their neighborhood in so many complex and intertwined ways. The residents of these neighborhoods establish the long term character of the city.

The character of our city now attracts the young professional. And now the cycle will repeat. But it will not be sustainable without the traditional neighborhoods because it is these homeowners that pay the taxes that maintain the services of the city. These are the reasons that I believe in the preservation of our neighborhoods.

I have worked with residents near the proposed 42 North project to help prevent this large apartment development in their neighborhood. A development that they believe will change the character of the neighborhood. I have worked with the citizens of Ann Arbor's Germantown to establish a neighborhood association as a step toward establishing a historic preservation district.

Some groups feel that they are under represented. They are working to increase voter representation. This is another means to increase neighborhood cohesion and preservation. I support these efforts.

Maintaining a neighborhood is not just preservation. When obsolete and deteriorating buildings become detriments to the neighborhood, such as the old Michigan Inn, I will work with the neighborhood residents for the removal of detrimental buildings. In the case of the Michigan Inn I am disappointed that this has taken our city so long.