

The Michigan Daily

*Edited and managed by students at
the University of Michigan since 1890.*



420 Maynard St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
tothedaily@michigandaily.com

ANDREW WEINER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

MELANIE KRUVELIS
and **ADRIENNE ROBERTS**
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITORS

MATT SLOVIN
MANAGING EDITOR

Unsigned editorials reflect the official position of the Daily's editorial board.
All other signed articles and illustrations represent solely the views of their authors.

FROM THE DAILY

A city in its own right

Downtown revitalization should be a priority for Ann Arbor

Last week the Ann Arbor City Council voted 7-3 on a city ordinance designed to place new limitations on the Downtown Development Authority. The DDA, an arm of the city government tasked with improving the downtown area, is seeing a potential re-appropriation of approximately \$1 million on projected tax revenues of nearly \$4 million. With Ann Arbor's downtown booming financially and projected growth continuing to rise, the DDA is in a position to see its revenue significantly increase. Many city leaders say this isn't necessary, arguing that the revenue could be put to better use outside the downtown area. As all city ordinance changes require two separate votes, the City Council should rethink what is truly at stake and reverse its initial decision. The City Council should not redirect this revenue from the DDA to the detriment of downtown Ann Arbor.

The DDA shouldn't be penalized for doing its job, let alone for doing it well. Of the total taxes collected within the DDA district in 2011, only 17 percent was allocated to the DDA itself. Ann Arbor public schools and the city of Ann Arbor took the lion's share, together appropriating nearly 50 percent of all downtown tax disbursements. The city government wanting to acquire more revenue for its own purposes sets an uneasy precedent. "Excesses" shouldn't be diverted to agencies the city deems more worthy of the funds.

The city of Ann Arbor is clearly making an effort to become more of a city than a suburb. With the development of new high rises, the addition of several new businesses and many innovative transportation initiatives, Ann Arbor has progressively gone from a quirky quasi-suburb of Detroit to a city in its own right — in part due to the work of the DDA. From the

streamlining of parking services to the promotion of community involvement, downtown has become a place to visit.

Similarly, the revitalization of downtown has helped spark the growth of Ann Arbor itself. Downtown should not merely be considered by the City Council as a zone whose taxes are dispersed in a certain way, but as an entity that helps define and catalyze the character of Ann Arbor as a whole. To jeopardize this in order to divert an additional \$1 million in taxes to other agencies — a mere 1.2 percent of the city's projected revenues — is a disservice to both the city and to those who reside within it.

Ultimately this decision will reflect where the priorities of the city's leaders lie. Though the city government of Ann Arbor may benefit in the short term from an additional stream of revenue, it will be at the expense of both the DDA and downtown in the long term.

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Kaan Avdan, Sharik Bashir, Barry Belmont, Eli Cahan, Eric Ferguson, Jesse Klein, Melanie Kruvelis, Maura Levine, Patrick Maillet, Aarica Marsh, Megan McDonald, Jasmine McNenny, Harsha Nahata, Adrienne Roberts, Paul Sherman, Sarah Skaluba, Michael Spaeth, Daniel Wang, Luchen Wang, Derek Wolfe