

Monday, March 07, 2011

Objections to the Adoption of the PROS Plan.
2011-2015 Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan

I strongly object to the adoption of the PROS Plan as it stands. This plan will serve as a planning document for Ann Arbor's future development during 2011 through 2015, and decisions based on this plan will impact the parks, recreation, and open space owned by the citizen tax-payers of our city well past 2015.

Based upon the objections set forth below, I recommend that Council reject the PROS plan in its present form and send it back to the Planning Commission for further title research, additional public input, including possible amendments and ballot initiatives.

First, the problem of Fuller Park .

The proposed use of this park is included in the plan as if all decisions, legal, public, and financial were in place and that is not so. Unresolved problems remain.

The planned use of Fuller could well cause the City to be sued over deed restrictions that would prevent the whole project.

There is no defined funding for the transportation rails part of the proposal. With no rail, there would simply be a very large garage for 1,000 or more cars. And, there is no clearly developed source of funding for the garage itself.

The park's essential environmental role in preserving the ecology of this segment of the Huron River Valley watershed needs to be protected so we avoid adding more pollutants to the river.

The Allen's Creek Greenway, a part of public discourse for nearly 10 years, received insufficient provisions. This important project

should be an important part of the PROS plan.

Furthermore, most of the public is unaware of the plan's disturbing emphasis upon public and private partnerships with the City's Parks. Such an economic partnership would open a Pandora's box of advertising billboards, placards, and even business use of parkland that once in place, would cause taxpayer outrage. These major decisions must be made with informed taxpayer discussion and consent.

The parks are the legacy of our City, paid for and supported by the citizens and taxpayers of this community for many years. This Council should clearly demonstrate by time and attention to the Parks and Open Space Plan that they value the parks. Private developers are given as much as three years of Planning Department time and resources. Taxpayers' property is as valuable as any other; we have time to make a better plan. There is no fire here tonight. We must reject this flawed PROS plan.

For some time, the use or projected use of many parks, recreation, open space areas has been hotly protested by citizens: Huron Hills Park & Golf Course, Fuller Road Park, Argo Dam, Almendinger Park, all have caused much Community and City dialogue about use of parkland. Parkland cannot be taken or repurposed without a vote of the public; the public should be fully informed before making such irrevocable decisions that impact the whole community.

I invite other Council Members to add to this list of objections to adoption with their own suggestions as to how to make this planning document better reflect our community's values and goals.

Respectfully,

Michael Anglin

Ward 5 Councilmember