

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ann Arbor City Council

FROM: Park Advisory Commission

DATE: August 16, 2011

SUBJECT: Resolution on the Proposed Fuller Road Station (FRS) and Non-Motorized Transportation

The proposed Fuller Road Station (FRS) is a multimillion dollar project that will have a great impact on many modes of transportation in the Huron River Valley. The completion of the project might eventually bring rail commuters to town, but would also bring many hundreds of additional buses and other vehicles into and out of the area.

The existing paved paths on both sides of Fuller Road in the area of the proposed FRS are important and heavily used, both as part of the Border To Border (B2B) Trail and for commuters and others traveling between downtown, central campus, the medical campus, north campus, parks, and parking lots. For the FRS to fulfill its goal of improving all modes of transportation, it's important to insure that the integrity and convenience of the non-motorized trail system be maintained and improved.

The FRS is planned to include a bus terminal and 1000 parking spaces. These uses would add thousands of vehicles crossing over the paved path on the south side of Fuller Road, and increased traffic on all the roads and intersections in the area. It is possible that traffic roundabouts will be developed which will mean continuous streams of traffic crossing the various non-motorized paths. If no improvements to the trail system are made, these changes will make non-motorized travel in the area more difficult and less safe.

There are two bridges over the railroad tracks and two over the Huron River, all of which were designed to allow a paved path under the bridge to safely pass next to the tracks or river. Developing trails that connected the various trail segments via the underpasses would create safe alternatives for bicycling, walking, and using a wheel chair to get to the other side of the street or intersection without crossing over traffic lanes. Additionally, there is a site where a non-motorized bridge over the river could be constructed to connect the B2B trail adjacent to Riverside park to the underpasses around the Fuller Road/East Medical Center.

Many of these trail connections are already proposed in recent Non-Motorized transit plans and Parks and Recreation Open Space plans. This approach is also advocated in the 2010 statement from the Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition. If the proposed FRS is completed without regard for these planned trail improvements, the FRS could actually make it more difficult and expensive to

complete the improvements, since some FRS elements might occupy important locations. The addition of these trail improvements to the FRS project would be entirely consistent with the overall goals and strategies of the project. The overall budget of the FRS project is likely to be in the tens of millions of dollars, whereas the planning and development of the trail enhancements would be a small fraction of that cost.

For all these reasons, we feel that planning and implementing trail improvements as an integrated part of the overall FRS project will meet the goals of the FRS project and the city's other goals in the area of sustainability by producing a better trail system at a lower overall cost.

RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED FULLER ROAD STATION (FRS) AND NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Whereas the completion of a trail system along the Huron River valley through the string of city parks from Gallup to Barton has been master planned in the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) plans for decades, and the Ann Arbor river trail is now a major section of the Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail through Washtenaw County, and

Whereas facilitating non-motorized travel supports the city goals of reducing the city carbon footprint and increasing sustainability, and improving non-motorized transportation options in the area, including bicycling, walking, and wheel chair travel, is a key goal of the proposed FRS project, and

Whereas an attractive and well-designed greenway trail along the Huron is a major recreational park amenity accessible to many users of all ages and abilities, and

Whereas the continued increase in vehicular traffic on Fuller Road will necessitate improved options for safe non-motorized travel in the area, and

Whereas the proposed FRS would drastically increase the volume of vehicles crossing the path along the south side of Fuller Road;

Be It Therefore RESOLVED that PAC Recommends the following:

That detailed plans for the design and funding of the trail system including the B2B Trail through Fuller Park and the connecting links on all sides be approved by PAC and City Council prior to action on the FRS project, and

That a safe design to facilitate bicycle, pedestrian and wheelchair access through the intersections, crossing lanes, and driveways as well as on and off road bike lanes be fully developed prior to any construction, and

That trail improvements be completed prior to, or concurrently with construction of Fuller Road, crosswalks, accesses, intersections and roundabout, and any structures of the entire FRS project including those beyond the Phase I parking structure, and

That any future transit improvements, including the "Signature Route" of the future rapid transit UM connector through Fuller Park or along Fuller Road should preserve the integrity of the trail system,

That improvement of the trail system, including the B2B Trail, be given priority over the bicycle elements of Phase I of FRS since there is use of and demand for trail continuity now, and

That the costs of a complete non-motorized trail system and source of funding be established jointly by the City of Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan, and the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission.

Prepared by: Commissioner Tim Berla
Commissioner Gwen Nystuen

Action: Approved unanimously at the August 16, 2011 PAC meeting