

From: Chad Bailey
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2014 11:41 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Support for planned development around Nixon & Dhu Varren

Dear Planning Commission,

I am a resident of the Traver Lakes neighborhood adjoining the proposed development by Toll Brothers. My address is 2800 Tuebingen Pkwy, where I have resided since July 2011. I was unable to attend the meeting held on July 10, but wanted to share some initial thoughts.

I am writing to express my general support for the 2009 Land Use Element of the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan. I will be writing more shortly about concerns I have about the lack of appropriate pedestrian facilities such as crosswalks at major crossings in the neighborhood, including the intersections of Traver Blvd & Nixon and Traver Blvd & Tuebingen. I also think that if the city intends to make Northeast Ann Arbor a place accessible to multiple modes of transportation, as described in pages 100-104 of the 2009 Land Use Element of the Master Plan, it is critical that sidewalks connect Sites 2, 3, and 4 (there described) with the Plymouth Road corridor. In addition, connecting Placid Way to Sites 2, 3, and 4 is an important component of integrating new and existing land uses.

Unlike a number of my neighbors, I am not opposed to density, nor are other of my neighbors (whom I have requested to contact you). If Toll Brothers believes that the real estate market will bear 500 homes at a density of 4.5 units/acre (http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2014/07/2nd_ward_candidates_disagree_o.html), the City should not oppose such development. Numerous studies have shown that higher-density development, particularly mixed land use development, results in significantly higher tax revenue per acre (a local fact that is abundantly clear when comparing my neighborhood with higher-density locations). Density also is correlated with greater transit use and the development of bike/walk oriented businesses. The city should be promoting, not penalizing density.

I have heard a number of times that there are concerns that Nixon Road would be overburdened with congestion from vehicles from new residents. As I conveyed to one neighbor, there are econometric studies of land pricing and development patterns (e.g. those developed by SEMCOG in calibrating its UrbanSIM land use simulation model) that fairly consistently say that land developers price travel time to major places of employment into their decisions. This suggests that Toll Brothers themselves believe that acceptable travel times will be possible for its residents (hopefully without their manipulating local politicians and the SEMCOG executive board to add more roadway lane-miles or other highway infrastructure to support their development). Furthermore, congestion per se is not a bad thing, as it provides opportunities for modes of transportation other than single occupancy vehicles (SOV) to gain a market foothold. I am opposed to the addition of new lane-miles along the Nixon Road corridor, regardless the planned developments around the Dhu Varren/Nixon corner. The city should be making it walker/biker friendly, and crosswalk paint is a much more cost-effective way to improve accessibility.

I heard that a number of residents at the meeting on July 10 expressed a desire to revert the land along Lakehurst Drive as farmland. This proposal is outrageous, and should not be taken seriously.

I do urge the city to devote serious attention to the intersection at Traver Blvd & Nixon, which is very close to Logan Elementary School. It lacks sidewalks, crosswalks, and significant visibility when looking northward on Nixon. Parents of Logan students are routinely parking along Traver, opening door and walking along Traver to and from the school with their children. I would urge the city to consider redesigning the intersection, including at least crosswalk paint, and potentially using a roundabout, traffic circle, or other means that will both calm traffic on Nixon and improve pedestrian safety.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Chad R. Bailey, MPH
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