

From: Woodcreek Homeowners Association Board
To: City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission, June 21, 2016 Public Hearing
Re: WASHTENAW-CHALMERS and the South Pond Village Proposal

The Planning Commission has voted to recommend denial of two different site plans for SPV. Its return to the Commission is mystifying, irregular, and suspicious.

The site is zoned for single-family residences. To secure legal approval, a site plan must meet zoning ordinance requirements. Despite attorney's threats, the city does not have to approve site plans that do not comply with the zoning ordinance. It requires that "the development would not cause a public or private nuisance and would not have a detrimental effect on the public health, safety, or welfare."

The current site plan fails this test in many ways. This memo addresses just one---- routing all SPV traffic onto Chalmers Drive, with most it exiting at Washtenaw Avenue. Washtenaw is highly congested most of the day, seven days a week. The Reimagine Washtenaw study cited 42,000 vehicle trips daily east of Huron Parkway and 46,000 daily vehicle trips near US-23. This congestion makes it difficult and dangerous to exit Chalmers onto Washtenaw. There is no traffic light here; owing to the many other lights along Washtenaw, an additional light at Chalmers is unlikely. Chalmers traffic already has long waits to enter Washtenaw. Long waits make drivers impatient, and some take chances to get into Washtenaw. Danger is greatest for those wanting to go east on Washtenaw. That's how motorists get to US-23, I-94, and Ypsilanti. But turning left entails exciting adventures. One dodges both westbound and eastbound traffic. Sometimes one westbound lane of traffic will stop, but the other westbound lane continues, and that's dangerous. Even if both lanes stop, eastbound traffic wanting to enter Chalmers or Paesano's Restaurant appears in the middle turn lane at the same time we do, always a dangerous situation. There are some crashes and many more near-misses.

By adding about 75 homes, SPV would make traffic conditions more dangerous, failing the legal test for approval. Though the developer claims minimal traffic impact, this claim defies common sense and everyday experience. If SPV were built, about 150 more vehicles daily would come from residents. Moreover, visitors, USPS, Fed Ex, pizza cars, lawn and other service vehicles would add to the total.

There is another access route for outbound traffic that would be safer, but neither city staff nor the developer supported it thus far. That's not our fault, nor should Chalmers and Woodcreek residents suffer owing to others' inflexibility. Therefore, we ask Planning Commission to apply the nuisance and safety tests and once again recommend denial of this site plan which is both a public nuisance and a threat to public safety.