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Zoning Board of Appeals
City of Ann Arbor

To members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

I am writing today to voice my concerns about the parking space variance requested by Morningside Development Group for the 1140 Broadway project which I live directly adjacent to. I wouldn't always do this, but in this discussion I think it is important for me to establish some personal credibility on the matter. I'm 31 years old and have lived in Ann Arbor since I was 18. I've lived here car-free utilizing my bike, friends' vehicles, car-sharing services, and car rental agencies up until three months ago when I finally did the analysis and bit the bullet and bought an old used truck for out of town trips. I am a dedicated bike commuter and ride year round. I do this for exercise and because I believe that it is important for all of us to do our fair share to reduce our carbon footprint. Throughout those nearly 13 years of living car-free, I honestly can't remember meeting more than a dozen other people who lived similarly (and we tend to attract each other). With that being said, I believe that the Developer's argument that building fewer parking spaces will result in lower vehicle ownership among their tenants to be the textbook definition of a specious argument - it sounds good at first glance, but does not hold water upon inspection.

In their traffic and parking study, Morningside references DDA reports that contain results of surveys of how people commute to work (I'd presume in the Downtown area). They lean on these to justify the mix of parking spaces that they are proposing. What bothers me about this is that it draws the conclusion that if you take alternative transportation to work, then you don't own a car. That is an absurd conclusion to draw. Like I said, I've been a bike commuter for most of the time that I've lived in Ann Arbor - winters, summers, whatever the weather, I love getting out there and experiencing it - but I still own a car. I've got family up north, errands to run in the evening, friends to visit, etc... This is southeast Michigan and folks, especially those in the workforce, are going to own vehicles - *especially* if they live in our neighborhood where most stores are a couple of miles up the hill, it isn't as convenient as Morningside likes to paint it to just jump on the bus and head to the nearest CVS to fill a prescription and head back. Using the DDA reports to justify the parking space variance is not logical.

Regarding car ownership, this wikipedia page has some good information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._cities_with_most_households_without_a_car. A study from UM in 2014 showed that, on average, 9.2% of households in the US were car-free. Now, Morningside could use that statistic and say "Perfect. We're providing a space for 90% of our dwelling units which is slightly more aggressive than the national trend." But the study doesn't give any information about the average number of vehicles owned by the remained 90.8% of households who do own a car - unless those remaining 90.8% of households own one car, and one car only, the average number of vehicles per household is greater than one. This statistic shows that Morningside is not providing enough spaces for their tenants.

This page also links to a handful of relevant studies:

<https://www.quora.com/What-percentage-of-U-S-households-own-a-car>. This bit is interesting:

Another source, has a very detailed document that also highlights the “households with workers” vs. vehicles.

“... only 3 percent of households with workers have no vehicles, indicating that large segments of the households without vehicles are often older single-person households usually out of the labor force.”

This map: <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/car-ownership-numbers-of-vehicles-by-city-map.html> displays information from the US Census and shows that, in Ann Arbor, there are 1.4 vehicles per household or 7.6 vehicles per 10 adults. At 1.4 vehicles per dwelling unit, the Developer would need to construct 868 spaces. Assuming that one bedroom out of every four has two people living in it (a conservative estimate in my opinion) and using the 7.6 vehicles per 10 adults figure, they'd need to construct 773 spaces. There are so many ways to look at the numbers and very few of them work out in Morningside's favor.

The charts on the last two pages of this letter look at the number of spaces needed given a distribution of dwelling units or bedrooms which require zero, one, or two parking spaces. The first page looks at the number of spaces required based on car ownership by dwelling unit and the second page looks at the number of spaces required based on car ownership by bedroom. On each page, the top chart shows the number of empty parking spaces for a given distribution of car ownership assuming the Developer’s variance is granted and the bottom chart shows the number of empty spaces assuming the Developer is required to meet City Code as it stands. A negative “Empty Spaces” number can be interpreted as “Number of additional spaces required to meet demand”. The highlighted rows are rows that have distributions of car ownership which result in empty spaces.

Please, look at the charts and come to your own conclusions. I think that it is most instructive to look at the analysis on a per bedroom level because that is more closely associated with a “per person” value (keeping in mind that many of the bedrooms will be occupied by couples!). Clearly, the purpose of these charts to illustrate the importance of requiring the Developer to meet City Code without a variance and even then there are many scenarios which would result in more spaces needed than required by code.

Of course, the phrase “there are lies, damned lies, and statistics” applies here. Dealing with percentages gets tricky and perhaps I’ve meddled with the numbers to confirm my fears. Let me now deconstruct an actual, and typical, response to my arguments.

“If self-driving cars come on the market in the near future as predicted, not owning a car becomes much more viable. As it is, between Zipcar, Maven, Uber, Lyft, old-school taxi services and buses, the cost of hiring an occasional ride vs. owning and maintaining a rapidly depreciating expensive asset often favors not owning. Most of the supermarkets have delivery now, though it would certainly help if there were a grocery store less than a mile away. (Where would be a good place to put one?) Morningside's parking space

calculation is a risk but it's more likely premature than unreasonable. That, and if they don't discourage car ownership we're going to have an even bigger traffic mess. “

First off, this development is not being planned for the future. It being planned for next year. We must keep in mind future trends, but also must meet current demand. As I stated in the intro to this letter, for a long time I was a proponent of car sharing services and alternative transportation (and still am), until I entered my 30s and wanted to be able to leave town for the weekend every couple of months. I did the financial analysis and quickly realized that buying a used car was the winner there. Furthermore, the Developer has not been clear on the number of spaces that will be committed to vehicle sharing services. Continuing on, the idea that folks living in “workforce housing” are able to afford a luxury like grocery delivery is a stretch. Finally, the argument that it is the Developer’s responsibility to discourage car ownership assumes two things: 1) that the City Code has not taken this into account already and 2) that people will ditch their cars to live in this development. As I see it, the City Code requiring one space per unit is already quite discouraging to car ownership and, given the statistics that I have provided above, a lack of parking spaces in the development simply means even more cars parked on the street in the surrounding neighborhoods which are already congested daily with UMHS employees.

In closing, I would like to draw attention to the City’s current zoning requirements. Time and time again, the Developer has failed to explain why he has chosen the C1A/R zoning. When asked, he simply states why the former zoning of PUD is not meaningful anymore. When you look at it through the lens of parking requirements, the answer is clear. R4A, R4A/B, and townhouses require 2 spaces per dwelling unit, R4B R4C R4C/D and R4D require 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit, and D1/D2 requires 1 space / 1,000 sq. ft of usable floor area (this development proposes 626,000 sq. ft. of residential area). C1A/R requires 1 space per dwelling unit - the lowest of all - and yet the Developer is requesting a variance from that. Please deny the request, the zoning as it stands hardly requires enough spaces.

Thank you for reading.

Bill Rosemurgy

Analysis by Vehicles Per Dwelling Unit

Number of Empty Spaces Based on Requested Spaces (558)

| % of apts that have... | | | % of condos that have... | | | ave. # cars / DU | cars | empty spaces |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------------------------|-------|--------|------------------|------|--------------|
| 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | | | |
| 10% | 70% | 20% | 0% | 60% | 40% | 1.13 | 703 | -145 |
| 10% | 80% | 10% | 0% | 75% | 25% | 1.03 | 638 | -80 |
| 10% | 85% | 5% | 0% | 90% | 10% | 0.97 | 600 | -42 |
| 20% | 60% | 20% | 10% | 50% | 40% | 1.03 | 641 | -83 |
| 20% | 70% | 10% | 10% | 65% | 25% | 0.93 | 576 | -18 |
| 20% | 75% | 5% | 10% | 80% | 10% | 0.87 | 538 | 20 |
| 30% | 50% | 20% | 15% | 45% | 40% | 0.94 | 583 | -25 |
| 30% | 60% | 10% | 15% | 60% | 25% | 0.83 | 517 | 41 |
| 30% | 65% | 5% | 15% | 75% | 10% | 0.77 | 479 | 79 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Number of Empty Spaces Based on Required Spaces (620)

| % of apts that have... | | | % of condos that have... | | | ave. # cars / DU | cars | empty spaces |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------------------------|-------|--------|------------------|------|--------------|
| 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | | | |
| 10% | 70% | 20% | 0% | 60% | 40% | 1.13 | 703 | -83 |
| 10% | 80% | 10% | 0% | 75% | 25% | 1.03 | 638 | -18 |
| 10% | 85% | 5% | 0% | 90% | 10% | 0.97 | 600 | 20 |
| 20% | 60% | 20% | 10% | 50% | 40% | 1.03 | 641 | -21 |
| 20% | 70% | 10% | 10% | 65% | 25% | 0.93 | 576 | 44 |
| 20% | 75% | 5% | 10% | 80% | 10% | 0.87 | 538 | 82 |
| 30% | 50% | 20% | 15% | 45% | 40% | 0.94 | 583 | 37 |
| 30% | 60% | 10% | 15% | 60% | 25% | 0.83 | 517 | 103 |
| 30% | 65% | 5% | 15% | 75% | 10% | 0.77 | 479 | 141 |

Analysis by Vehicles Per Bedroom

(or person, assuming one person per bedroom)

Number of Empty Spaces Based on Requested Spaces (558)

| % of BRs in apts that have... | | | % of BRs in condos that have... | | | ave. # cars / bedroom | cars | empty spaces |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------------------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|------|--------------|
| 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | | | |
| 20% | 60% | 20% | 30% | 60% | 10% | 0.97 | 786 | -228 |
| 20% | 70% | 10% | 30% | 65% | 5% | 0.87 | 712 | -154 |
| 20% | 80% | 0% | 30% | 70% | 0% | 0.78 | 637 | -79 |
| 30% | 50% | 20% | 35% | 55% | 10% | 0.87 | 712 | -154 |
| 30% | 60% | 10% | 35% | 60% | 5% | 0.78 | 637 | -79 |
| 30% | 70% | 0% | 35% | 65% | 0% | 0.69 | 563 | -5 |
| 40% | 40% | 20% | 40% | 50% | 10% | 0.78 | 637 | -79 |
| 40% | 50% | 10% | 40% | 55% | 5% | 0.69 | 563 | -5 |
| 40% | 60% | 0% | 40% | 60% | 0% | 0.60 | 488 | 70 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Number of Empty Spaces Based on Required Spaces (620)

| % of BRs in apts that have... | | | % of BRs in condos that have... | | | ave. # cars / bedroom | cars | empty spaces |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------------------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|------|--------------|
| 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | 0 cars | 1 car | 2 cars | | | |
| 20% | 60% | 20% | 30% | 60% | 10% | 0.97 | 786 | -166 |
| 20% | 70% | 10% | 30% | 65% | 5% | 0.87 | 712 | -92 |
| 20% | 80% | 0% | 30% | 70% | 0% | 0.78 | 637 | -17 |
| 30% | 50% | 20% | 35% | 55% | 10% | 0.87 | 712 | -92 |
| 30% | 60% | 10% | 35% | 60% | 5% | 0.78 | 637 | -17 |
| 30% | 70% | 0% | 35% | 65% | 0% | 0.69 | 563 | 57 |
| 40% | 40% | 20% | 40% | 50% | 10% | 0.78 | 637 | -17 |
| 40% | 50% | 10% | 40% | 55% | 5% | 0.69 | 563 | 57 |
| 40% | 60% | 0% | 40% | 60% | 0% | 0.60 | 488 | 132 |