

July 27, 2016 (amended 10/30/16)  
Old Orchard Court  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Mr. Matt Kowalski, AICP, City Planner  
301 E. Huron St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Mr. Kowalski:

On behalf of our neighborhood group, I would like to introduce you to our concerns about development of **312 Glendale**, known as the Old Orchard. We have successfully forestalled attempts in 2013 and 2014 to build condominiums at this site, largely due to inadequacy of stormwater containment plans. The current submitted plans for a memory care facility, essentially an extension of Hillside Terrace, have similar flaws. Our report below shows some of the data we have collected on stormwater and flooding. Also attached is a "Fact Sheet" summarizing additional concerns in the context of City guidelines.

As residents adjacent to the **312 Glendale property**, our significant concerns led us to research the stormwater run-off, flooding and sewage overflow problems. These water-related issues are already severe in our neighborhood and we expect that increased water discharge due to development of this site will adversely impact downstream property owners and natural water-courses. Given the proposed extensive coverage of existing greenfield by roofs and asphalt, the developer's plans for stormwater detention remain inadequate to contain current rain levels, let alone an event on the order of a "100 year flood". We fear that this proposed development will damage our environment and neighborhood beyond its already fragile state.

To document our concerns, we created a flood, storm water and sewage survey modeled after the City of Ann Arbor's water survey. The first survey was performed and analyzed in 2013. Based on our significant results, we re-canvassed the neighborhood with more detailed questions in 2014, via email and by a door-to-door campaign. Out of about 135 surveys delivered, our response rate was over 50% (the vast majority of respondents had water problems, thus encouraging reply), indicating exceptional concern on this issue throughout the neighborhood. Results of the survey are summarized below, including a neighborhood map with affected houses marked (red, green and black symbols represent basement flooding, yard flooding and sewage overflow, respectively). We also include some photos of spring street flooding. We are currently collecting additional data from neighbors who previously did not respond or are in houses newly built in this already dense area. The excel file with all addresses and survey data collected is available upon request.

Summary of 312 Glendale Flooding Survey Results:

Total surveys	~135
Total responses	73
Basement flooding	35
Yard flooding	25
Sewage overflow	11
Extensive repairs due to water damage	19
Flooding in street adjacent	13

We hope that you take our concerns into consideration as you evaluate the plans for the Memory Care Facility. We are requesting that a new stormwater evaluation be performed by the city, taking into consideration increasingly severe flooding, with predictions that future development needs to account for not just 100 year but 500 year rains, and we request that the development plan be brought into compliance with city ordinances, prior to any approval. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

With sincere regards,  
Diane Robins, 1914 Old Orchard Court  
(on behalf of the Glendale-Action Committee)

**Fact Sheet regarding City purchase of 312 Glendale Drive  
(compiled Aug 26, 2014; modified Nov 10, 2016)**

**QUESTION:** Why should the City of Ann Arbor use “Greenbelt” Millage funds to purchase the 312 Glendale property, and retain it as open green space?

**ANSWERS:**

1. Purpose of “Greenbelt” Millage Funds: The “Open Space and Parkland Preservation” Millage, passed by voters in 2003, assesses 0.05 mills for 30 years, *expressly for the purpose of preventing land from being developed and for preserving green space.*
  - One-third of the millage funds are designated to purchase open land within the Ann Arbor city limits.
  - But, since its inception, 75% of the millage funds have been spent to purchase 4,200 acres outside of Ann Arbor. Data from the *FY 2012-2013 Greenbelt Activity Report* show that as of 8/26/14,
    - \$27,742,000 (75.8%) of millage funds have been used to purchase 4,200 acres outside the City, while only
    - \$8,873,000 (24.2%) have been used to purchase 56 acres within the City limits.
  - Revenue from the “Greenbelt” Millage is about \$2 million each year. A July 27, 2014 Ann Arbor News article reported the June 30, 2014 balance of the Greenbelt Millage fund was \$9.5 million
  
2. Natural Features: The 312 Glendale property has natural features that are afforded protection under Ann Arbor’s Land Development Regulations (Chapter 57 of City Code).
  - There are steep slopes on the north end of the site that are identified in the “Map of Steep Slopes of Ann Arbor, 2004.”
  - There are more than 60 trees on this parcel, and a dozen of them meet the City’s definition of protected Landmark Tree.
    - Among the trees in this old apple orchard is a rare species, large (21 inch DBH) and healthy Butternut tree, as well as 3 Pear and 2 Black Cherry trees that are mature and healthy, bearing fruit each year.
    - The majority (75%) of the trees are 10 inches or more in diameter, thus they provide the environmental benefits of mature trees.
  - These 60 trees, and the other vegetation, protect our environment each and every year by:
    - Reducing air pollution by capturing *thousands of pounds* of carbon dioxide from the surrounding air.
    - Reducing water pollution by absorbing *tens of thousands of gallons* of rainwater each year.
    - For example: One 10-inch Black Walnut absorbs 360 pounds of carbon dioxide and 1,132 gallons of stormwater annually. So, the 24 Black Walnut trees on this parcel absorb at least 8,640 pounds of carbon dioxide and 27,168 gallons of stormwater each year.
    - The 35+ other trees perform similarly, increasing the overall environmental benefits of this property.
  - *Thus, this little, 2+ acre parcel protects the Allen’s Creek watershed and the Huron River!*
  
3. Stormwater management: This 2 + acre property protects the surrounding residential neighborhood, and the near downtown neighborhoods to the east, from storm water run-off and flooding.
  - In recent years flooding problems are documented east and north of Glendale Drive, in the near-downtown neighborhoods within the Allen’s Creek watershed.
    - Most of the stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure in the downstream neighborhoods dates from the 1920’s.
    - Upstream, several new developments have been built in recent years, and flooding issues downstream have increased.
  - This open 2+ acre parcel, with more than 60 trees and other vegetation, *collects and absorbs the rainwater that falls on it and filters it into the water table, rather than directing that flow into the City’s stormwater system pipes.* (See data in Natural Features, above.)
    - Even during significant rain events, stormwater does *not* flow off the green, undeveloped, part of this site, not even down the ‘natural steep slopes.’ *Rather, it percolates into the ground.*
    - To achieve the same result -- preventing rainfall from entering the City’s stormwater system -- the May 7, 2014 site plan for the 12 condos proposed for 312 Glendale Dr. required not only a large underground detention system but also an *above-ground retention pond 78 feet on*

*each side and 7 feet deep.* This retention pond was questioned as a danger to the neighborhood. The current plans (2016), for a memory care facility that is essentially an extension of Hillside Terrace, has extensive underground stormwater detention, questioned by the city engineer.

- This is extreme engineering and disruption of terrain to replicate what this site *already does very well in its natural state!*
- This engineering indicates that the physical terrain of this site, in the context of the surrounding area (Allen's Creek watershed) is not suited for development.
- This is the only remaining property of its size in this near-downtown, Westside neighborhood that can help protect the Allen's Creek watershed.

4. **Density:** The 312 Glendale property sits in the middle of a very densely populated area bordered by Stadium Blvd, Jackson Ave, Montgomery Ave, and Liberty St.

- To the west and south of Glendale Drive, in addition to Hillside Terrace retirement home, there are several apartment complexes with many hundreds of bedrooms.
- To the east, the parcel size of the single family and duplex residences is small compared to other neighborhoods in Ann Arbor. These neighborhoods, established almost a century ago, have had a great deal of 'in-fill' housing development in the intervening years.
- This 2 acre greenspace is needed to mitigate the density that surrounds it.
  - The *Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (PROC) 2011-2015*, page 60, says: "The current standard is provision of neighborhood parks within 1/4 mile of each residence."

5. **History of Zoning:** City records indicate that what is now Hillside Terrace (1939 Jackson Ave.) and several adjacent parcels owned by it (including 312 Glendale Dr. and 1943 Jackson Ave.) were annexed into Ann Arbor in 1987 -- *without a zoning designation.*

- In 1994 Hillside Terrace submitted a site plan to expand into the adjacent 312 Glendale Dr. parcel and, as a result, the R4B (multiple family dwelling) zoning code was assigned to both parcels.
  - That site plan expired in 1999.
  - The zoning code for 312 Glendale Dr. should have expired with that site plan (several City officials have privately acknowledged this, and that R4B is not appropriate for this site).
  - There continue to be several tiny parcels surrounding 312 Glendale Dr. that are zoned R1.
- 1943 Jackson Ave. (owned by Mr. Jeffrey Starman) *remains unzoned to this day.*

**Summary:** 312 Glendale Drive, with its open 2+ acres, is exactly the type of property the "Greenbelt" Millage is designed to protect. This purchase is about:

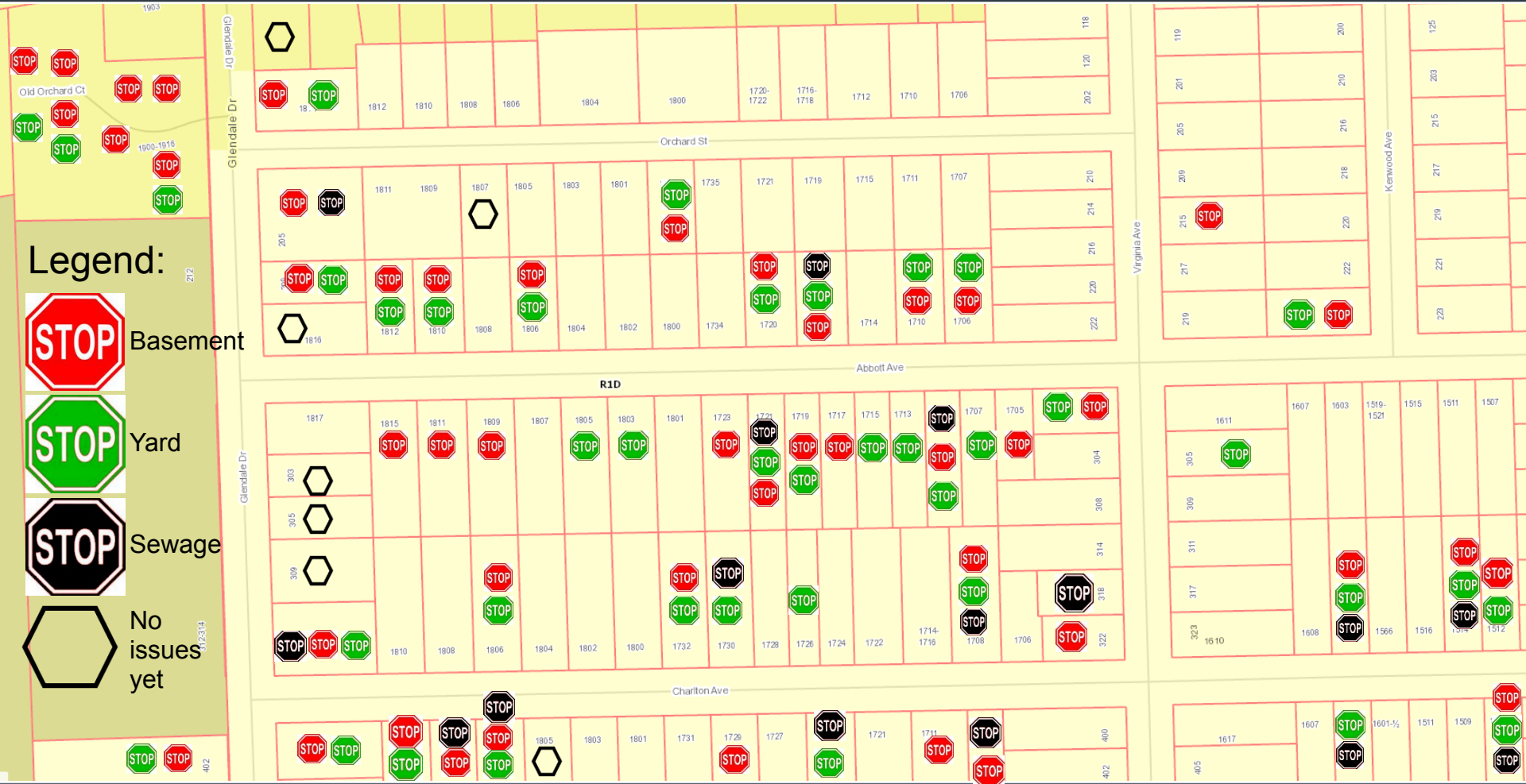
- Protecting existing neighborhoods that have contributed to the City's tax base for many decades.
- Protecting our environment: the Allen's Creek watershed, the Huron River, and air quality.
- Protecting quality of life in our near-downtown neighborhoods.
- Implementing the goals and standards that Ann Arbor has written into its Planning Documents since 2003.

The "Greenbelt" Millage, along with City of Ann Arbor Planning Documents, Land Development Regulations, and common sense, provide sufficient, and significant, justification for the City to purchase the 312 Glendale property and retain it as open green space to preserve the environment and protect existing neighborhoods.

(Note: It is assumed the 2 homes on the south end of this property would be offered for sale separately as single family residences. The value of the 2 houses in the current housing market is likely more than \$500,000 -- well above the 2014 assessed value of \$356,000 for the entire 2.64 acre parcel.)

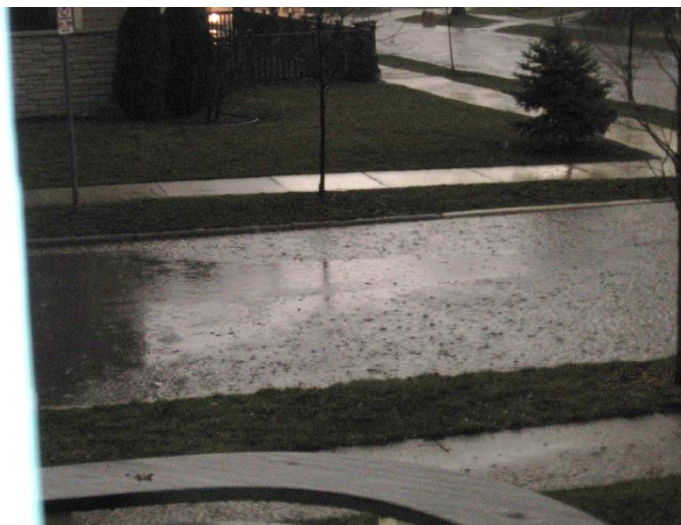
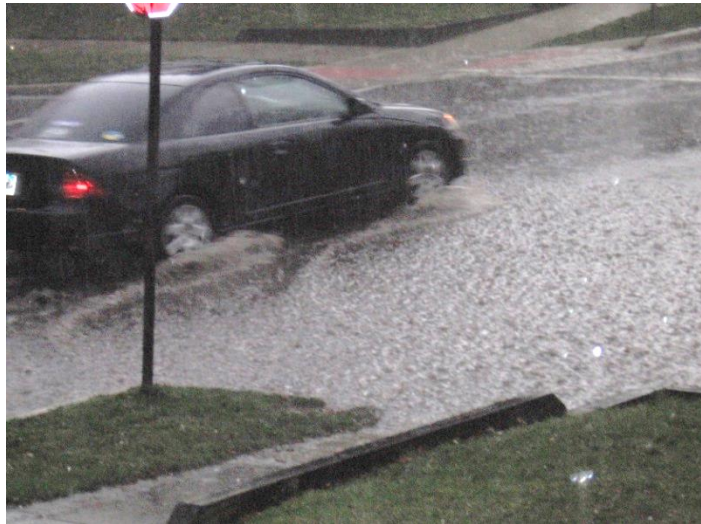
***If you have questions about the information presented in this Fact Sheet, please email:  
Glendale-flooding@googlegroups.com***

# Location of homes and their issues from responders to survey (olive-colored area where legend is placed is the development site [Old Orchard])



*Photos of corner of Charlton and Virginia after a heavy rain in May, 2012*

These were taken in May and so are not due to fall leaves clogging drains.



**From:** Robins, Diane  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 10, 2016 4:03 PM  
**To:** Kowalski, Matthew; Planning  
**Cc:** [glendale-action@googlegroups.com](mailto:glendale-action@googlegroups.com)  
**Subject:** Comment for Planning Commission meeting 11/15/16

(This email letter and attachments were sent 07/27/16 but are being resent since no acknowledgement was received. We would appreciate it if the 2 brief attachments are printed and available for the Planning Commission meeting next week. The body of the letter is printed below and is also attached with figures.)

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