

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Wendy L. Rampson, Planning Manager
Matthew Kowalski, City Planner

DATE: August 6, 2015

SUBJECT: Response to June 16, 2015 Council Questions regarding South Pond Village Site Plan (Item DB-1)

On June 15, 2015, City Council postponed final action on the South Pond Village site plan and requested that staff report back on the following items:

- Inclusion of the proposed pedestrian access features into the development agreement.
- Equity issues regarding the inclusion of Chalmers Drive residents in a special assessment for paving Chalmers Drive.
- Adequacy of emergency/fire access to the site, including the maximum distance for a single access.
- Evaluation of all possible access options to the South Pond site, including access from the north, including the capacity of adjacent roadways to handle the new traffic.

Responses to each item are provided below. These responses are based on the site plan proposal reviewed by City Council on June 15, 2015 and the updated development agreement, dated July 30, 2015.

Pedestrian Access

Requirements to provide non-motorized access have been included in the Development Agreement (see Paragraph P-21). This access is shown on the approved site plan and will be required to be installed as part of the construction of South Pond Village.

Emergency Access

The Fire Marshal is responsible for reviewing plans for compliance with the International Fire Code (IFC). In the IFC 2009, the relevant requirements for one- or two-family residential developments are:

D107.1 One- or two-family dwelling residential developments where the number of *dwelling units* exceeds 30 shall be provided with separate and *approved* fire apparatus access roads and shall meet the requirements of Section D104.3.

Exceptions:

1. Where there are more than 30 *dwelling units* on a single public or private fire apparatus access road and all *dwelling units* are equipped throughout with an *approved automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, 903.3.1.2

or 903.3.1.3 of the *International Fire Code (IFC)*, access from two directions shall not be required.

2. The number of *dwelling units* on a single fire apparatus access road shall not be increased unless fire apparatus access roads will connect with future development, as determined by the *fire code official*.

D104.3 Remoteness. Where two access roads are required, they shall be placed a distance apart equal to not less than one half of the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the property or area to be served, measured in a straight line between accesses.

One of the primary reasons for multiple access roads is to ensure that if one access road is blocked or otherwise unavailable, another will allow access to the fire department. Therefore, when more than one access road is required, they need to be separated by enough distance to avoid a situation where both would be blocked or unavailable simply because they are too close to one another.

The Fire Marshal has concluded access to the South Pond Village site should be accomplished using two points of access. The existing boulevard entrance to Woodcreek, as extended with the new access road along the south boundary of Woodcreek, in addition to a secondary access point from Algebe Way, is recommended to provide these two points of access at a separation distance that is recommended in the IFC Section D104.3 as noted above.

Chalmers Drive Paving Special Assessment

Chapter 12 (Financing Local Public Improvements) defines a local public improvement as “any initial public improvement conferring a special benefit on any parcel or parcels of land distinct from the benefit from such improvement to the city at large, including... sidewalks, storm sewers street grading, graveling and paving, curbs, gutters and the like.” Past policy and practice has required properties that front on an unimproved street to be specially assessed for new pavement and sidewalks.

Recognizing that added traffic from the Woodcreek development might degrade the gravel Chalmers Drive beyond acceptable levels, City Council approved the Woodcreek site plan and development agreement in 1996, committing condominium owners to participating, on a per unit basis, in a future special assessment district to pave the road. Likewise, the draft South Pond Village development agreement includes a commitment for the developer/condominium to pay their pro rata share of the total costs of improvements to Chalmers Drive.

Paving and sidewalk improvements to Chalmers Drive will also benefit properties fronting on this segment of Chalmers, adding improved accessibility for both motorized and non-motorized transportation. The cost assessment of the improvements to Chalmers Drive will be divided by 16 parcels located south of Woodcreek Boulevard (i.e., those with direct access to Chalmers), 88 Woodcreek parcels, and 73 South Pond Village parcels.

City Council could request that the developer commit to the full cost of Chalmers Drive paving and sidewalks (which would not trigger a special assessment district) or agree to pay some or

all of the Chalmers properties assessment shares. Either scenario would need to be included in the development agreement.

Access Options: Background

Access to the area north of Arborland Mall has been the focus of several past studies, which have informed a number of Planning Commission and City Council actions, as well as City master plan documents. An overview of these studies and actions is provided below:

Woodcreek Area Traffic Circulation Study (1995): This study was a preliminary assessment of the traffic and environmental impacts associated with various access scenarios for the Woodcreek area, which included the then planned Woodcreek development and the Van Curler property, now the proposed South Pond Village site. The study's recommendations were:

- Consider adopting a traffic circulation plan that provides opportunities for north, east, south and west connections to the regional road system
- Development of the Woodcreek and Van Curler (South Pond Village) properties should include a north access to Huron River Drive and a west access to Huron Parkway and preserve right-of-way for connections to the east and south
- The north access to Huron River Drive should be located at the existing Chalmers Drive intersection with its sight distance restrictions being corrected, or moving the intersection just to the east of Malletts Creek, which would require a new bridge over Malletts Creek
- The west access to Huron Parkway should be located approximately 1,550 feet north of Washtenaw (*right-of-way was subsequently secured for this purpose at Lindsay Lane of the Brentwood Square Condominiums, and the Woodcreek Boulevard Extension from Chalmers to Huron Parkway has been in the City's Capital Improvement Plan since 2008*)
- The future east connection should be to Hogback following the alignment identified in the previous Clark Road study (*this connection has not been included in subsequent City transportation plans, including the Northeast Area Transportation Plan adopted by City Council in 2006 and the Transportation Plan Update adopted by City Council in 2009*)
- The future south connection to Washtenaw should be through the Arborland Mall at the existing Pittsfield intersection

On December 18, 1995 City Council passed resolution R-600-12-95 which expressly: accepted the study; accepted the study's circulation/access options; and, authorized the City Administrator to begin implementation of the following actions first:

1. Encourage the development of an east-west collector road along the southern property line of Woodcreek and, preferably, along the southern property line of the Van Curler (South Pond Village) property, which would "provide future Commissions and Council the flexibility and opportunity to allow for a preferred north/south route between Huron

River Drive and Washtenaw Avenue, access to the Van Curler property if high quality wetlands would be destroyed by a 'new' north access to Huron River Drive, and an access to Chalmers Drive for Woodcreek coupled with a south connection to Washtenaw Avenue

2. Investigate the feasibility of intersection improvements at the intersection of Chalmers Drive and Huron River Drive for the purpose of improving the sight distance and safety of turning movements
3. Facilitate the development of a northern access from the Van Curler property to Huron River Drive. This road would connect, at a minimum, to the stub road at the eastern edge of the Woodcreek Development
4. Facilitate the development of a two-way road along Arborland's western boundary for the purpose of developing a south access for the Woodcreek and Van Curler developments

Northeast Area Transportation Plan (2004-2006): This plan re-examined circulation and access to this area based on the initial South Pond development submittal, a multi-family residential development proposal with a more intense development proposal than the current South Pond Village proposal. The conclusions from this re-examination were:

- Pittsfield Boulevard should be extended north to Woodcreek; most of the extension should operate as a one-way, southbound-only roadway.
- Two-way access to the rear of Arborland would not unduly impact the future east-west collector. This access should be provided either by allowing two-way traffic on the portion of Pittsfield Boulevard directly west of the Mall's detention basin, or by keeping that section one-way south and extending the drive east of the basin one-way north to the future east-west collector.
- To mitigate current traffic delays, the northbound, right-turn movement from Pittsfield Boulevard to Washtenaw Avenue should be provided a protected signal phase during the same time the westbound left-turn arrow is displayed. Also, when funding allows, the Michigan Department of Transportation and/or City of Ann Arbor should add a third eastbound thru-lane on Washtenaw, from about 250 feet west of Pittsfield to the U.S. 23 interchange.
- When the east-west collector is extended to Huron Parkway, the City should periodically evaluate actual traffic volumes with respect to published traffic signal installation warrants.

The *Northeast Area Transportation Plan* was adopted by City Council in 2006 with these recommendations.

Access Options: Evaluation of Alternatives

Based on the past studies noted above, in addition to the traffic information provided by the South Pond Village developer, there are four possible access alternatives for the South Pond Village site. A fifth option, an emergency access connection to Arborland at the southeast corner of the South Pond Village site, was not evaluated due to need for private property easements and its indirect route. See the attached map for general location information.

1. North: New northern access road from South Pond Village to Huron River Drive, with secondary access to Chalmers through Algebe Way or a new east-west street in the existing right-of-way along the southern edge of Woodcreek
2. South: New one-way extension of Pittsfield Boulevard along the western edge of Arborland, connecting to a new east-west street in the existing right-of-way along the southern edge of Woodcreek
3. West (Chalmers): New east-west street in the existing right-of-way along the southern edge of Woodcreek, from South Pond Village to Chalmers, with secondary access through Algebe Way.
4. West (Huron Parkway): New east-west street in existing and future rights-of-way south of Woodcreek and Brentwood Square, connecting Huron Parkway to Chalmers and South Pond Village. This alternative would require the acquisition of residential properties on the west side of Chalmers Drive.

Using currently available information, the table below outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each option. See attached map for

Access Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><u>North</u></p> <p>New street from South Pond Village to Huron River Drive, with secondary access at Algebe Way or new east-west street</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional paved access point to neighborhoods north of Arborland • Provides adequate emergency service access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road construction impacts natural features of the highest priority, i.e., overlapping natural features adjacent to Malletts Creek • Huron River Drive not under the jurisdiction of the City of Ann Arbor (WCWRC), creates an island of City jurisdiction for road/utility maintenance. • Improvements needed to the Chalmers/Huron River Drive intersection (WCWRC) • If new east-west street is not constructed, eliminates non-motorized connection to Arborland • Does not improve Chalmers/Washtenaw Level of Service

Access Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><u>South</u></p> <p>New one-way extension of Pittsfield Boulevard along western edge of Arborland, connected to new east-west street</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road construction would have no impact on protected natural features • Provides adequate emergency service access • City has dedicated right-of-way available for both new streets • Provides direct non-motorized connection to Arborland and public transit along Washtenaw for Woodcreek and South Pond Village residents • May mitigate the need to pave Chalmers due to redistribution of southbound trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signalized intersection at Pittsfield and Washtenaw not under the control of the City of Ann Arbor (MDOT). • Additional traffic would add delay to the Pittsfield/Washtenaw intersection • Traffic studies show no marked improvement to delay at the Chalmers/Washtenaw intersection • Constructability and implementation challenges due to the redesign of Arborland circulation and implementation of Green Street and Complete Street policies in narrow right-of-way
<p><u>West (Chalmers)</u></p> <p>New street along the southern edge of Woodcreek from Chalmers Drive to South Pond Village, with secondary access at Algebe Way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road construction would have no impact on protected natural features • Provides adequate emergency service access • City has dedicated right-of-way available • Developer has agreed to pay prorata share for paving and non-motorized improvements to Chalmers Drive • Provides direct non-motorized connection to Arborland and public transit along Washtenaw for Woodcreek and South Pond Village residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All South Pond traffic directed to Chalmers Drive for distribution to the north (Huron River Drive) or the south (Washtenaw) • Does not improve Chalmers/Washtenaw Level of Service

Access Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>West (Huron Parkway)</p> <p>New street connecting Huron Parkway to Chalmers and South Pond Village</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributes new and existing traffic away from the Washtenaw corridor • Provides additional emergency services access to the area • Provides additional direct access road to Huron Parkway for Chalmers, Woodcreek and South Pond Village residents • Partial right-of-way already obtained • Provides non-motorized connection to Huron Parkway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road construction may impact natural features adjacent to Malletts Creek • Acquisition of 1-2 homes necessary for additional right-of-way • Will increase traffic on Chalmers by creating an option to bypass the Washtenaw/Huron Parkway intersection to go north • Would likely require signalized intersection at the termini with Huron Parkway • Signalization would be difficult to coordinate with the existing intersection at Washtenaw Avenue

Attachment: South Pond Village Access Alternatives Map

Prepared by Matt Kowalski
7/30/15

South Pond Village Access Alternatives



- #1 Northern access to Huron River Dr
- #2 Pittsfield Blvd ROW extension along western edge of Arborland
- #3 Chalmers Dr access within the existing ROW along the southern edge of Woodcreek Blvd
- #4 Woodcreek Blvd extension to Huron Pkwy

Map date 7/30/2015
 Any aerial Imagery is circa 2012 unless otherwise noted
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