

Once again, I write to support the position taken by my neighbors on Thornoaks Drive about the developers who are not only eying but acting to take control of the large parcel bordered by Chalmers and East Huron River Drive. (Parcel 09-09-35-400-047.)

In addition to the others' excellent reasons for opposing this development, I would like to question whether the city of Ann Arbor's leaders are truly committed to the Greenbelt Initiative.

The goals of the greenbelt, as set by the 2006 Greenbelt Strategic Plan, are--(or perhaps no longer are):

1. Preserve large blocks of farmland in five target areas,
2. Preserve land alongside the Huron River and major tributaries, and
3. Obtain maximum leverage of taxpayer money through use of grant funds, partnerships, and landowner donations.

The parcel at issue, if developed, runs counter to #2 above. Further, development of this land would certainly limit any enthusiasm for landowner donations adjacent to or within the city of Ann Arbor. (#3 above) Why pass up the money to be made by selling my nearly 5 acre parcel of land to developers when the city has made my neighborhood much less attractive by allowing a dense development just across East Huron River Drive which is already unable to handle existing traffic for several hours each day?

If Greenbelt Initiative funds are to be spent primarily on the outlying farmland while green spaces and wetland in and near Ann Arbor is lost, the end result will be large numbers of potential Ann Arbor residents who choose to "hopscotch" out farther, commute to Ann Arbor, taking their tax dollars and shopping dollars with them. Justifying more dense settlement on areas like this parcel is short-sighted, to say the least. (I happen, by the way, to have a Ph.D. in urban history from the University of Michigan.)

I urge you to reject this proposed development.

Sincerely,
JoEllen Vinyard
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Professor of History
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