

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of September 21, 2010

**SUBJECT: Fuller Road Station (Phase 1) - Public Project Review
(south side of Fuller Road; east of E. Medical Center Drive)
File No. SP10-023**

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

WHEREAS, the City Administrator is directed to obtain comments and suggestions from the appropriate City departments with regard to certain City projects meeting private development regulations prior to recommending that City Council approve funding for them; and

WHEREAS, such projects are to be reviewed by the City Planning Commission prior to City Council approval;

RESOLVED, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission finds that Fuller Road Station (Phase I) adheres to City private development standards, including natural features mitigation and storm water detention requirements, with the exception of the following:

- The proposed drive approach dimensions for the two easternmost driveways exceed the maximums allowed by Chapter 47 (Streets). Documentation supporting the need for the larger dimensions has been provided.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission **approve** the motion above regarding this public project because it generally complies with local, state and federal laws and regulations to the greatest extent feasible.

LOCATION

The site is located on the south side of Fuller Road, east of East Medical Center Drive. This site is in the Huron River Watershed.

DESCRIPTION OF PETITION

The Fuller Road Station is the first phase of a multi-modal, multi-agency transportation center located on the site of an existing surface parking lot in Fuller Park. The parcel is currently zoned PL (Public Land). Phase I includes the construction of a five-level, 977-space parking structure and a 44-space surface parking lot on the west side of the proposed structure. An additional 17 motorcycle spaces will be provided on the ground level of the structure. A total of 6,200 square feet of enclosed space will be provided to accommodate a bus waiting area, bicycle parking spaces, and mechanical equipment. The structure has been designed to provide bus loading facilities on the ground level.

The surface parking lot and site improvements have been designed to accommodate Phase II improvements, including a future train station on the west side of the site and additional bus platforms within the structure. It has also been designed to accommodate additional floors on top of the parking structure and a possible pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks that could be directly connected to the University of Michigan Medical Center.

Vehicular access will be provided from Fuller Road at three locations. The non-motorized trail along the frontage of the site will be widened to current non-motorized standards and relocated closer to Fuller Road at the proposed driveways. The median in the center of Fuller Road will be adjusted as part of another public project to accommodate modifications in turning movements. These improvements would provide room for future bicycle lanes in each direction.

The first level of the parking deck is designed to accommodate five bus bays. The Phase I facility would service approximately 516 buses per day (56 AATA buses and 460 UM buses). In future phases, the estimated amount of bus traffic is anticipated to increase. Further analysis will be provided as part of the Phase II design.

An interior bicycle parking room will be provided on the north side of the structure. Additional exterior bicycle spaces will be provided near the facility entrance. A shared-use path will connect the bicycle facility to a new plaza that will be incorporated into the Fuller Road shared-use path. A total of 103 bicycle parking spaces (100 required) will be provided, including 31 Class A, 40 Class B, and 32 Class C spaces.

Landscaping will be provided along Fuller Road, in the surface parking lot, on the west side of the proposed structure, and east of the proposed structure. Thirty deciduous trees are proposed to be planted along with a variety of shrubs. Five landmark trees are proposed to be removed including a 30" Pine, 9" Box Elder, 12" Hawthorn, 36" Maple, and 9" Pine. The Maple is in poor condition but the other trees will be replaced (45 inches of replacement). Invasive species will be removed from all areas within the project's limit of disturbance. Staff has requested that existing trees that are proposed to be removed due to construction, be relocated.

Storm water management will be provided in a number of ways. A new forebay will be constructed on the east side of the site, immediately west of the existing detention pond. The forebay will handle storm water that flows through a new 24-inch storm water pipe that collects storm water from the parking structure. The storm water will settle in the forebay prior to flowing into the detention pond. Accumulated silt will be removed from the existing detention pond so that the original storage volume is restored. Twelve bioswales of various sizes are proposed in a variety of locations on the north and east sides of the proposed structure. The bioswales will primarily handle first flush storm events. The County Water Resources Commission does not have jurisdiction over this site.

PROJECT HISTORY

In 1994, City Council approved the construction of a new 250-space parking lot in this location. The City-University agreement stipulated that the lot would be leased by the University of Michigan during weekdays, and be available to the public during evenings and on weekends. The lot and detention system were constructed by the University of Michigan, which is also responsible for maintenance. The field east of the lot is used as a ball field.

The City and University of Michigan have been collaborating on designing and building a multimodal transportation station based on the Mayor's Model for Mobility and the City's adopted Transportation Plan Update. The potential for developing an intermodal transit center began with a feasibility study, summarized in a March 10, 2009 "Multimodal Transit Center Issue Analysis Report" that identified a potential program for the station and steps to advance the project. On August 17, 2009, City Council authorized the continuation of this process through the conceptual design of a facility as envisioned in the Issue Analysis Report (see attached Phase One Concept Plan and Master Concept Plan). The City and the University have developed a memo of understanding regarding collaboration on this effort.

The City's project website provides additional history and background materials:
www.a2gov.org/government/Pages/Fuller.aspx.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

A Citizens Participation Report has been submitted (executive summary attached) summarizing three Citizen Participation meetings that have been held for this project. The first meeting was held on February 10, 2010 in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Approximately 450 residents within 1,000 feet were invited. Approximately 25 individuals attended. The second meeting was held on May 6, 2010 in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Approximately 30 individuals attended. The third meeting was held on July 8, 2010 in the County building at 200 N. Main Street and approximately 35 individuals attended. A project website has been established.

TRAFFIC IMPACT REPORT

A traffic impact report was provided (executive summary attached). The report included the following findings:

Fuller Road/E. Medical Center Drive/Maiden Lane Intersection – As traffic volumes increase with auto traffic associated with other developments and the Fuller Road Station traffic, the capacity of this intersection can be expanded marginally under traffic signal control. It will remain operating at a poor level of service due to the physical constraints presented by the bridges that are in close proximity of the three approaches. Converting the intersection to a roundabout would greatly reduce the congestion level while simultaneously reducing emissions and pollutants. However, a roundabout is not included in the scope of this project; redesign of this intersection is under consideration by Project Management (Public Services) as a separate project.

Non-Motorized Improvements - The traffic study indicated that, "additional (non-motorized) connections to the existing and future paths within Fuller Park are also recommended, including the planned Fuller Road underpass at the Huron River". However, this connection is not being proposed in this Phase. A new mid-block crossing of Fuller Road is also being proposed in a future phase.

Site access:

- In Phase 1, add an exclusive right-turn lane at the west drive to accommodate peak periods activity.
- In future phases, add a right-turn bay at each of the three site drives to accommodate peak period activity. The eastbound to westbound median crossover movement does not operate at an acceptable level of service in the p.m. peak hour due to the volumes of vehicles leaving the parking deck and heading west on Fuller Road. Traffic signal control may be required as Fuller Road Station reaches full build out.

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

LAND USE		ZONING
NORTH	Surface Parking and Recreation	PL (Public Land District)
EAST	Surface Parking and Recreation	PL (Public Land District)
SOUTH	RR Tracks and UM Medical Center	PL (Public Land District)
WEST	Main entrance to UM Medical Center	PL (Public Land District)

COMPARISON CHART

		EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zoning		PL (Public Land District)	PL
Gross Lot Area		450,846 sq ft (10.35 acres)	450,846 sq ft (10.35 acres)
Maximum Usable Floor Area in Percentage of Lot Area		None	367,860 sq ft 81.59% (Includes deck and 6,200 sq/ft of enclosed space)
Set-backs	Front	None	25'-10"
	Rear	None	2'-5"
Building Height		None	77.5 ft
Parking - Automobiles		249 spaces (including 8 accessible)	1,038 spaces (including 26 accessible)
Parking – Bicycles		12 – Class C	31 spaces – Class A 40 spaces – Class B 32 spaces – Class C

PLANNING BACKGROUND

The City Master Plan: Land Use Element (2009) recommends “Parks and Open Space” uses for this site.

The Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan (2006-2011) includes a map called “Huron River Greenway: Proposed Acquisitions and Improvements”. This map identifies the site as part of Fuller Park. It also shows existing shared use paths through the site and includes a note that points to a proposed shared use path that crosses the railroad tracks and indicates: “provide direct link to commuter lots with RR overpass”. This map also shows a proposed shared use path along the Huron River at the east side of the site that extends under the Fuller Road bridge to a proposed shared use path on the north side of Fuller Road.

The City’s Transportation Plan Update (2009) recommends that this site be used for a “Proposed Commuter Rail Station.” It also identifies this segment of the Fuller Road corridor as being part of a study of “signature service” (high quality, frequent transit service) which is currently being evaluated as part of the Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study. The Plan also projects that this segment of Fuller Road will have moderate to severe congestion by 2030.

The City’s Non-motorized Transportation Plan (2007) Long Term map recommends a shared use paths along the Huron River on the east side of the site, on the south side of Fuller Road (existing) and just north of the railroad tracks.

The FY2010-2015 Capital Improvements Plan identifies this project, previously identified as the Amtrak Station relocation, as an “urgent” priority.

COMMENTS PENDING, DISMISSED OR UNRESOLVED

Planning – Consistent with Council Resolution on public projects approved on March 20, 1989, the City Planning Commission is required to review all public projects before City Council approval if the project costs more than \$250,000. The petitioner has indicated the cost of this project is approximately \$32 million. Staff applies the City’s private development standards for the review of public projects for the purpose of striving to adhere to these standards as close as practical. However, it is acknowledged, due to the characteristics of these projects, that the private standards are often not directly applicable. For this project, the proposed drive approach dimensions exceed the maximums allowed by Chapter 47. Documentation supporting the need for the larger dimensions has been provided.

When evaluating this project in relation to the City master plan, it provides a significant opportunity to enhance non-motorized access in the immediate vicinity and system-wide. The project identifies a number of important non-motorized improvements that could be incorporated but defers most of them to future phases. Planning staff strongly recommends that the shared use path to the Fuller bridge underpass be incorporated into Phase 1. This connection is consistent with master plan recommendations (PROS and Non-motorized) and would provide an important link in the Border-to-Border trail system.

Additionally, the site is located along a highly visible transportation corridor. The planting of 38 deciduous trees will provide an attractive buffer for 6 months out of the year but provides little screening for those months when leaves have fallen. Planning staff recommends the planting of additional conifer trees to help soften the visual impact of this large structure. Conifers have already been established on both sides of the Fuller Road corridor in the immediate vicinity.

Staff also recommends that existing trees that are proposed to be removed due to construction, be relocated in the immediate vicinity.

Traffic – City staff concurs with the findings of the traffic impact study. The proposed crosswalk to the east of the site, which provides a connection to Fuller Pool to the south side of Fuller Road, is likely to conflict with crossover traffic. The crosswalk should remain in its current location. Because of concerns regarding pedestrian conflicts, staff requests that conduit be placed under Fuller Road from the south side to the median in case a future advanced treatment is necessary.

Engineering – The proposed drive approach dimensions exceed the maximums allowed by Chapter 47. Documentation supporting the need for the larger dimensions has been provided. The City is currently discussing an alternative water main layout with the design team. An alternative layout is being developed to address the following items:

1. Two hydrants on dead-end main is not permitted.
2. Water main should be no closer than 20' from building structures.
3. Extend the looped water main layout westerly to better serve the possibility for a future train station to be added to this site.

Fire – Fire alarm horns/speaker strobes should be in the mechanical, electrical, substation, and storage rooms. There is a concern regarding capability of 12 inch water main with a dead end in excess of 500 feet providing 2 hydrants, fire service, and domestic water. It is the understanding of Fire that this issue will be resolved with the alternative water main layout.

Parks – Although the site plan meets code requirements for bicycle parking and public standards for pedestrian access, the Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) Plan as well as the Non-motorized Transportation Plan cite path connections that could be made for a small percentage of this sizable project to truly demonstrate the supposed sustainable aspect of this project. These pathways, which were discussed earlier on in this project as a core piece of the overall goals, are not part of phase one, nor are they shown in detail on the overall master plan.

A connection to Riverside Park, for example, would facilitate employees of the University Medical Center to access the Kellogg Eye Center safely from the parking structure. As the parking structure that was originally planned for the vicinity of the Kellogg Eye Center is not being constructed at this time, these commuters need to be accommodated in the Fuller parking structure, and should have a safe way to travel to the Eye Center. Another example is an underpass, utilizing the existing space that was planned for a pathway under the Fuller Road bridge on the east end of the site, which would facilitate a much safer crossing than the at grade crossing on Fuller Road. Elements of the approved Master Plans should be incorporated into this project.

Forestry – Wherever possible, existing trees should be transplanted instead of removed. The City no longer has a tree spade. Based on street frontage, the street tree escrow amount is \$2,415.40.

Archeological Review – The University of Michigan is in the process of conducting a field reconnaissance of the site. The findings will be forwarded to the City when it is completed.

Reviewed by Wendy Rampson

rmg/9/17/10

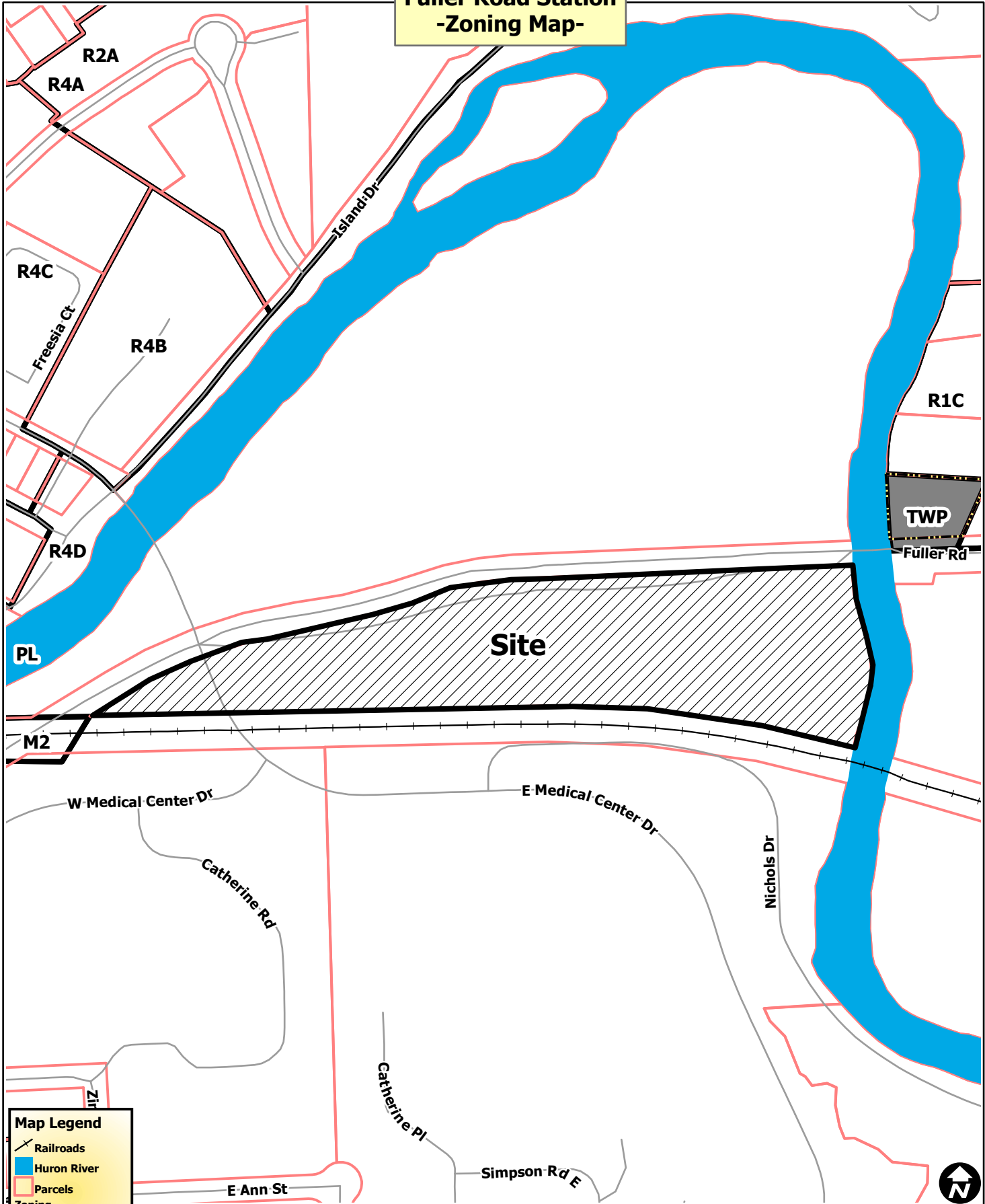
Attachments: Zoning/Parcel Maps
 Aerial Photo
 Phase One Concept Plan
 Master Concept Plan
 Citizen Participation Report (executive summary)
 Traffic Impact Study (executive summary)
 Site Plans
 Floor Plan
 Landscape Plan
 Elevations

c: Owner: City of Ann Arbor
 100 North Fifth Avenue
 Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Petitioner's Agent: Brian Barrick
 Beckett & Raieder
 535 W. William
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

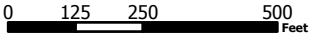
City Attorney
Parks and Recreation
Systems Planning
File No. SP10-023

Fuller Road Station -Zoning Map-



Map Legend

- Railroads
- Huron River
- Parcels
- Zoning**
- Township
- City of Ann Arbor
- City Boundary



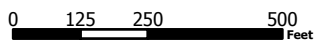
City of Ann Arbor Map Disclaimer:
 No part of this product shall be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without prior written permission from the City of Ann Arbor.
 This map complies with National Map Accuracy Standards for mapping at 1 inch = 100 Feet. The City of Ann Arbor and its mapping contractors assume no legal representation for the content and/or inappropriate use of information on this map.
 Map Created: 9/1/2010

Fuller Road Station -Aerial Map-



Map Legend

- Railroads
- Parcels
- City Boundary



City of Ann Arbor Map Disclaimer:
 No part of this product shall be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without prior written permission from the City of Ann Arbor.
 This map complies with National Map Accuracy Standards for mapping at 1 inch = 100 Feet. The City of Ann Arbor and its mapping contractors assume no legal representation for the content and/or inappropriate use of information on this map.
 Map Created: 9/1/2010