

**From:** Stacie Printon [<mailto:stacieprinton@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Friday, September 27, 2013 5:50 PM

**To:** Planning

**Subject:** Please consider alternatives to development of 2225 Traverwood site

Dear Members of the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission:

Attached is a statement concerning the development planned for 2225 Traverwood.

Northeast Ann Arbor is undergoing increased development. As development proceeds, it is important that a meaningful vision be established to guide that development. Such a vision sites development appropriately while preserving important green space, enhancing the vibrancy and quality of life for all residents, businesses and stakeholders.

For these reasons, I encourage the City to postpone development of the 2225 Traverwood site, so that further study can be conducted and alternatives to development investigated. The attached photo was taken recently at sunset and demonstrates the unparalleled scenic quality of this site. This piece of land could easily become a "greenway gateway" for North Ann Arbor. The attached map delineates the three greenway connections that currently exist.

I would be happy to visit the site with you and discuss the potential of this property. Though beautiful at all times of year, it is especially striking this time of year, just before sunset.

Sincerely,

Stacie Printon  
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## Statement Concerning Development of 2225 Traverwood

2225 Traverwood, an 18-acre parcel of land in North Ann Arbor slated for development as apartment homes and parking areas, will soon be reviewed by the City Planning Commission. It is hereby requested that development of this parcel be postponed to allow further review by the Ann Arbor Planning Commission and others.

This piece of land presents an opportunity to do something remarkable and visionary for Ann Arbor. An invitation is respectfully and cordially extended to the City to explore preservation of this land as a significant part of Ann Arbor's open space.

This land — which has the potential to become the “Nichols Arboretum of North Ann Arbor” — represents an opportunity for homeowners, residents, the business community, and Ann Arbor City government to work together to preserve an important natural and scenic amenity while also promoting the long-term economic vitality of Ann Arbor.

It is an opportunity to build bridges of possibility and encourage creative thinking. Ann Arbor is a city of tremendous resources and if the Ann Arbor city government, interested groups and individuals, and the business community are able to come forward and together develop a dynamic and creative plan to protect this piece of land, they will build a lasting legacy for the City of Ann Arbor, one that will benefit citizens and businesses for years to come.

A new development vision for North Ann Arbor is needed, one that emphasizes infill and mixed use redevelopment on developed properties while preserving valuable green space and natural area resources. Communities that make wise decisions with regard to the placement, density and design of new development and that demonstrate a strong commitment to the preservation of green space and scenic quality are vibrant communities. They are healthy economic engines and are noted for their high quality of life, excellent real estate values and strong business environment.

By preserving this piece of land, the City of Ann Arbor will demonstrate the kind of leadership its citizens expect from elected officials. The City will also demonstrate its commitment to guiding development in a way that supports residents and the business community alike.

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### **This parcel of land:**

- 1) *is an essential component of a unique scenic viewshed with unparalleled sunset views*
- 2) *forms a valuable piece of Ann Arbor's open space and greenway system*
- 3) *forms a valuable wildlife corridor connecting two preserved oak woodlands*
- 4) *provides an important linkage for recreational users using adjacent parklands*
- 5) *is part of one of the largest contiguous preserved green spaces in Ann Arbor*

### **Issues of concern include:**

## **Natural Area Impacts**

- ***Loss of connectivity*** between two ecologically sensitive zones — Leslie Woods and Stapp Woods. The parcel of land under consideration provides an important ecological — and visual — linkage between these two preserved oak woodlands.
- Potential ***negative impacts to water features*** due to proximity of development and landscape maintenance practices (runoff containing excess nutrients, pesticides, etc.). The water features on site, although manmade, contribute to the ecological function and health of the woodlands by providing water resources for mammals, insects and amphibians that use the woodlands.
- Potential for ***invasive species impacts*** in adjacent fragile zones (Leslie and Stapp Woods) depending on plant selection for designed landscape. Landscaping should be sensitive to these concerns. A landscape architect specializing in environmentally sensitive design should be brought on as a member of the site development team.
- ***Dumping of yard debris*** in adjacent fragile zones (Leslie and Stapp Woods). Such activities can negatively impact sensitive vegetation (e.g. spring wildflowers) and forest regeneration. This has been observed to be an issue in Leslie Woods with the dumping of debris from nearby areas. It is recommended that provisions be made to protect from these impacts.
- ***Impacts of dogs*** owned by residents of the new development on adjacent fragile zones (Leslie and Stapp Woods). Dogs, particularly when off leash, can negatively impacting sensitive vegetation (e.g. spring wildflowers) and forest regeneration. It is recommended that provisions be made to protect from these impacts.

## **Scenic Resource Impacts**

- ***Impacts to landmark trees.*** There are a number of trees along the boundary between the parcel under consideration and Leslie Golf Course that appear to be landmark trees. These trees function as an important visual, natural and cultural amenity. Potential negative impacts are possible from the proximity of development. It is recommended that development be planned in such a way as to minimize impact to these trees.
- ***Loss of scenic view from the roadway and for recreational users.*** The view west from Traver Road over the parcel under consideration is an important scenic resource for the City. The view is also important for recreational users who move along the western edge of the property, from Leslie Woods to Stapp Woods and vice versa. For these reasons, it is recommended that development be planned to minimize alteration of the viewshed, as seen from the road. It is also recommended that any physical linkages from Leslie Woods to Stapp Woods move along the western edge of the property in order to preserve the experience of this scenic view for recreational users.

## **Other Impacts**

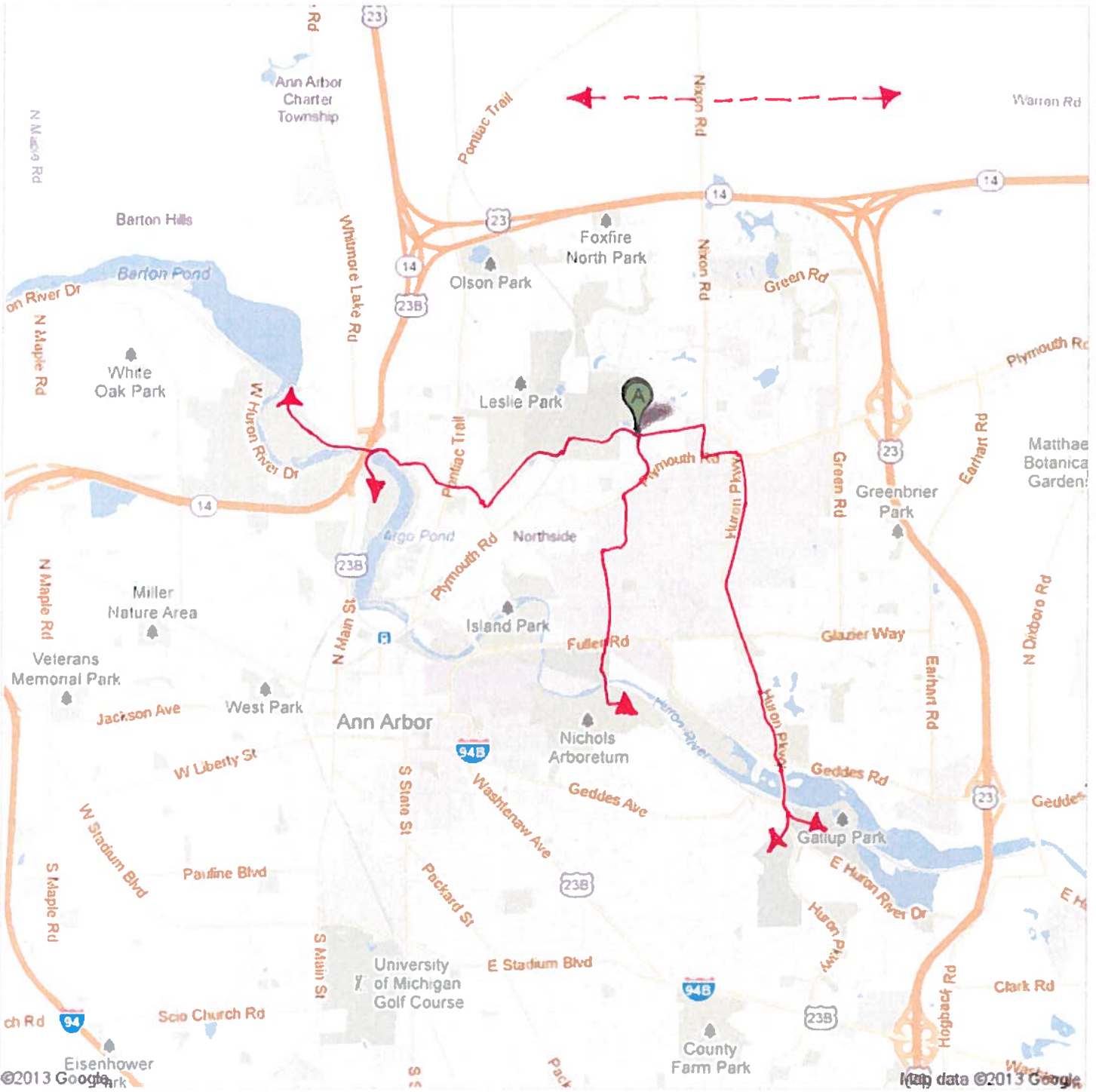
- ***Negative impacts to water features and adjacent preserved woodlands due to extensive impervious surface and heat island effects..*** The proposed site plan exhibits a large development footprint characterized by extensive impervious surface. The size of this footprint has potential to negatively impact water features and adjacent sensitive woodland areas. It is recommended that the development footprint be minimized, increasing building height if necessary.
- ***Increased heat island effects for residents of North Ann Arbor*** due to replacement of existing green space with impervious roofing and paving.
- ***Increased traffic impacts in Northeast Ann Arbor, which is already experiencing significant increases in traffic and congestion..***
- ***Alteration of areas of significant slope, with accompanying impacts to adjacent fragile zones.*** The original plan proposed embedding buildings in fragile slope areas, including along the edge of Stapp Woods. These areas are sensitive zones, and especially along the boundary with Leslie and Stapp Woods there is the potential for negative impacts to vegetation and topological integrity of the woodlands. It is recommended that buildings be sited to avoid such zones and impacts.

#### **Lack of Adequate Study and Public Input**

- Additional, detailed input should be sought from surrounding constituents including residents of the immediate neighborhood. Some comments were obtained at the Neighborhood Meeting held April 18 at Traverwood Library. However, most of the immediate neighborhood residents are apartment dwellers, many of whom do not have long term interests in the neighborhood. For that reason, it is important to collect comments and input from nearby neighborhoods of homeowners. Collecting input more broadly throughout Ann Arbor is also recommended given the potential of this site to serve as primary greenway gateway for the entire city. Further study of the site — including input from neutral party planning, design and natural areas specialists — is recommended.



### Directions to Traverwood Dr 112 ft



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Map data ©2013 Google

