

Subject:

Protect Thurston Prairie

From: Catherine Richter**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 2:55 PM**To:** Mallek, Jon <JMallek@a2gov.org>; Watson, Chris <CWatson@a2gov.org>; Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>; nap@gov.org; Delacourt, Derek <DDelacourt@a2gov.org>; mbennet@a2gov.org; Manor, Courtney <CManor@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>**Subject:** Protect Thurston Prairie

Dear Ward 5 Council members and city of Ann Arbor planning officials,

For months, our community has asked the city for help protecting the Thurston nature center from AAPS plans to build the new school on a corner of our beloved nature center, instead of the current building footprint. Responses from various government officials were regretful, but reiterated again and again that they have no jurisdiction over AAPS owned land.

In our discovery, our lawyers found and confirmed that the land parcel containing the Thurston Nature Center (TNC) South Prairie habitat is owned by the City of Ann Arbor and NOT Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS).

AAPS plans to pave over the prairie to build an impervious surface road for construction equipment and service vehicles. Construction is set to begin June 12. I am writing to urge you to take action quickly to save the Prairie.

Our Thurston Nature Center should never have been included in school plans as if it was vacant land anticipating development. The TNC was designated as a nature reserve by the Michigan DNR and environmental education center in the late 1960's and has been lovingly cared for by the school's teachers, students, alumni and neighbors. The land itself maybe an insignificant parcel to many but what it represents to our neighborhood about environmental stewardship is priceless to us. The school's callous disregard for the values of the community have angered many residents. I ask you to protect our values and the hard work that my neighbors have invested over decades by protecting Thurston prairie from being paved over. When my children were small, we walked past this prairie daily to school. Now I walk past it daily en route to the bus. It has an abundance of bird activity and is a welcome patch of native plants and birds in the midst of suburban manicured landscaping. No part of the TNC should be destroyed and that includes the prairie.

Please use your jurisdiction over this parcel of land to voice loudly and clearly that the city of Ann Arbor values environmental stewardship.

Sincerely,

Katie Richter, resident since 2001
2465 Trenton Court
Ann Arbor MI 48105