



Racquet Club OF ANN ARBOR

3010 Hickory Lane
P.O. Box 130228
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113

July 23, 2021

Chris Cheng, AICP
City of Ann Arbor
301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

RE: Request for waiver for sidewalk installation at Racquet Club of Ann Arbor

Chris,

We formally request that as part of our site plan review for updates to our facility, that the City waives the requirement for installing a sidewalk along the frontage of our property located on Geddes Ave and on the remainder of Hickory Lane that does not already have a sidewalk.

It is our opinion that the requirement serves no practical benefit to the city's non-motorized transportation plan. This issue has been pursued with the club under previous site plan reviews and administrative amendments in 1997, 2008 and 2015, and has been approved by City Council each time. With this site plan amendment, we are again requesting this waiver before City council as required.

In a previous decision, council remarked that this requirement should be part of a special assessment, and not a requirement for project approval. Our 2015 waiver restated this must be addressed for any project submittal. Council has previously waived this each time with will little debate, due to practical evaluation of the presented concerns. There are several factors that influenced this decision.

1. Racquet Club installed a sidewalk along Hickory Lane from Geddes Avenue to the south property driveway in 2016. This has improved safe pedestrian travel to the new sidewalk that was installed by the city on the north side of Geddes Avenue, a sidewalk that connected to the loop from Riverside running west to east to the bridge beneath the Huron Parkway bridge. The City did not elect to construct a sidewalk on any part of the south side of Geddes Avenue in their recent roadway project, so a sidewalk on the south side of Geddes would not connect to any larger pedestrian network beyond the property.
2. As an observer and someone who maintains the sidewalk on Hickory Lane, the sidewalk provides more than sufficient pedestrian travel in the area to the limited number of users on any day. Both the Hickory Lane frontage as well as the abandoned bike/pedestrian path on our east frontage deliver access to the Geddes Avenue sidewalk with clearly marked crosswalks. A sidewalk on the south side would serve little purpose, come at an overwhelming cost, lead to

the removal of several large trees near the roadway, and ultimately lead to nowhere as there is no sidewalk west of Hickory Lane on Geddes Ave.

3. The current sidewalks as well as bike paths have improved pedestrian travel with 4 crosswalks to the Geddes Avenue sidewalk in less than .25 miles. I am unaware of any major traffic or pedestrian accidents or concerns since installed.
4. The City's consulting engineer deemed putting a sidewalk along Geddes Avenue project in 2015-2017 as non-feasible. The installation of retaining walls, loss of landmark trees, moving of utilities exceeded any reasonable cost.
5. The cost for this sidewalk would have made it the most expensive sidewalk in the city, possibly the county. This issue would require removal of 19 landmark trees, moving fire hydrants, utility poles, major powerlines and cable. Not to mention the requirement to forfeit property to allow for a barrier-free accessible sidewalk. During our last project, MCI approached DTE regarding burying the power lines in this area, which are main lines that serve power stations. They were unwilling to give us an estimate.

The spirit of the non-motorized plan has great intention and we fully support the cause. In this case, we do not feel it is applicable. Although the comments that this issue does "not live in perpetuity" may arguably be true, we do not believe circumstances have changed since our last waiver in 2015.

The project submitted comes at careful thought to the expense of to the membership of our small, seasonal facility. This project is primed by the need to replace and update our pool mechanical equipment, a necessary part of our operations. With this we will be disconnecting our pool discharge from the city sewer system and connecting to our stormwater infiltration system which is also an improvement to the city's infrastructure. The cost of adding sidewalks may stall or stop this project if it were so imposed.

It is our hope that this issue does not compromise the integrity of the project and that our intentions align with the due diligence of all parties involved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Brent Schomaker, General Manager
Racquet Club of Ann Arbor

bschomaker@a2racquet.com