

Dear Planning commission members,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the possibility of an access road from the proposed new development through the South Pond wetlands to East Huron River Drive. We realize that the Chalmers community was worried about increased traffic on their road and especially problems turning left onto Washtenaw at the south end of Chalmers. However, the traffic study indicates that this potential egress would receive very little use – a trade-off that does not make sense to us.

*We are primarily concerned with the environmental impact on the South Pond wetlands. My family has lived at 4011 Thornoaks Drive for 47 years, longer than almost any other household in the area. We remember when the wetlands now under threat were part of a much larger wild area stretching north-south from E. Huron River Drive to Arborland and east-west from Clark Road to Chalmers Drive. In those days, we used to walk through the wild area on the way to and from Arborland, and we saw abundant wildlife, including wild turkeys, red foxes and other animals not seen in these parts today. We feared that, sooner or later, much of that wild land would disappear. Indeed, some was destroyed for the Woodcreek development, and most of the rest will go if the South Pond development is approved. We are sad that such progress has been deemed acceptable by the city, but we recognize the limits placed on the city when land is already zoned for development. *However, no such constraints force City Council to support an access road to and from South Pond development through the last remaining wetland in this area, a wetland that is protected because such habitats are all too rare in Ann Arbor, southeast Michigan and the state as a whole.**

Do you remember the Joni Mitchell song, "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot"? As pavement takes over Ann Arbor and surrounding areas, those lyrics seem prescient. If City Council supports an unnecessary access road through the wetlands, one of the last bits of paradise still left in the city will be destroyed. Such a decision will be regrettable from many points of view, already ably described in detail in letters from my neighbors.

We very much appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Smuts & Michael Abner

4011 Thornoaks Drive