

Hi Colin,

I am writing in opposition to the resolution to approve a “de minimus” status for Fuller Park with respect to the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment.

Attached is a letter outlining my concerns. I ask that you share my message with members of the Parks Advisory Commission.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rita Mitchell

October 17, 2017

To:
Colin Smith, Unit Manager, Parks and Recreation Services
Members of Parks Advisory Commission

Subject: Request to Deny Action on PAC RESOLUTION REGARDING THE PROPOSED ANN ARBOR STATION, PAC Meeting of October 17, 2017

Mr. Smith and members of the Parks Advisory Commission, your agenda for October 17, 2017 includes the above referenced resolution. I ask that you reject the above resolution, for the following reasons:

Lighting pole



Fuller Park, looking southwest toward University Hospital

1. **Viewshed:** The above photo shows the parking lot located in Fuller Park, where a parking structure with minimum of 5 floors is proposed. The lowest level will be greater than standard height to accommodate transit of buses. The lighting poles provide scale to estimate a parking structure in the space. It is likely that a parking structure would be twice the height of the lighting poles at a minimum. The Huron River Valley viewshed will be degraded for park users in the east part of the park and north of Fuller Road. It is unlikely that the proposed train station will be visible at all. The dominant visual element in the park will be the 1,300 car parking structure.
2. **Viewshed and transit oriented development:** The Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment, (Table 3.27, p. 166), implies that vertical development will be possible on top of the parking structure. Please imagine five additional floors built on top of the five story parking structure. From the perspective of a park user, the building would block University Hospital. Again, the dominant visual element in the park will be of a huge structure. Please consider the 3-D implication of your decision on park users and on pedestrians, bicyclists and motorized travelers along Fuller Road. If the resolution is approved, you will have agreed that a gateway to our city is a parking structure.
3. **Population density and open space:** The Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan: 2016-2020, (pp. 3-4, attached) show the location of Fuller Park in the Central Planning Area, and the population for the Central Planning Area. As of 2016, when the PROS Plan was approved, the Central Planning area is the most densely populated, and has the least acreage of park land available to residents, at 4.53 acres per 1,000 people. Population in

Ann Arbor is increasing, and in particular, the greatest increase in population is in the center of the city. It is short-sighted to reduce the amount of recreation and open space in the Planning Area that is underserved with park land, compared with the rest of the city. It is possible to convert the existing parking lot to recreation and open space. Under the proposal before you, the people of Ann Arbor will lose space that could be used for pickleball, tennis, field hockey, soccer, basketball, baseball, and any number of alternate recreation uses. The space could be enhanced with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants for additional positive benefit. If you approve the resolution, those options will be lost.

4. **Inadequate explanation of Parks management issues:** The Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment report indicates that Parks will maintain some aspects of the property that will be converted to a parking structure. Some questions remain about the responsibilities. Will Parks be managing snow removal? Security? Parking management? Mowing? What happens to the revenue provided by the parking lease agreement with University of Michigan? Will 150 parking spaces identified as for park users be converted to use for University employees? Answers to these questions and others are needed before an informed decision can be made about repurposing park land to a non-park purpose. Parks may become responsible for services for which the Unit is not prepared.
5. **Prudent and feasible options to use of Fuller Park for a parking structure exist:** We are told that your decision is unrelated to the cost of the project. If that assumption is correct, please consider all of the alternatives equally in terms of their effect on Ann Arbor's parks. The Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment indicates (p. 202) that Alternatives 2A and 2B, both located on Depot Street use no park land at all. Construction for these two alternatives would temporarily affect two recreational resources which will return to community use.

Ann Arbor Station Alternative 3A will affect Fuller Park, in significant ways, and will remove a park resource that has potential for community benefit in the future.

Your decision will influence our community significantly for a long time. I ask that you, as Park Advisory Commission members, reject the resolution presented to you and recommend use of one of the project Alternatives that is located on Depot Street.

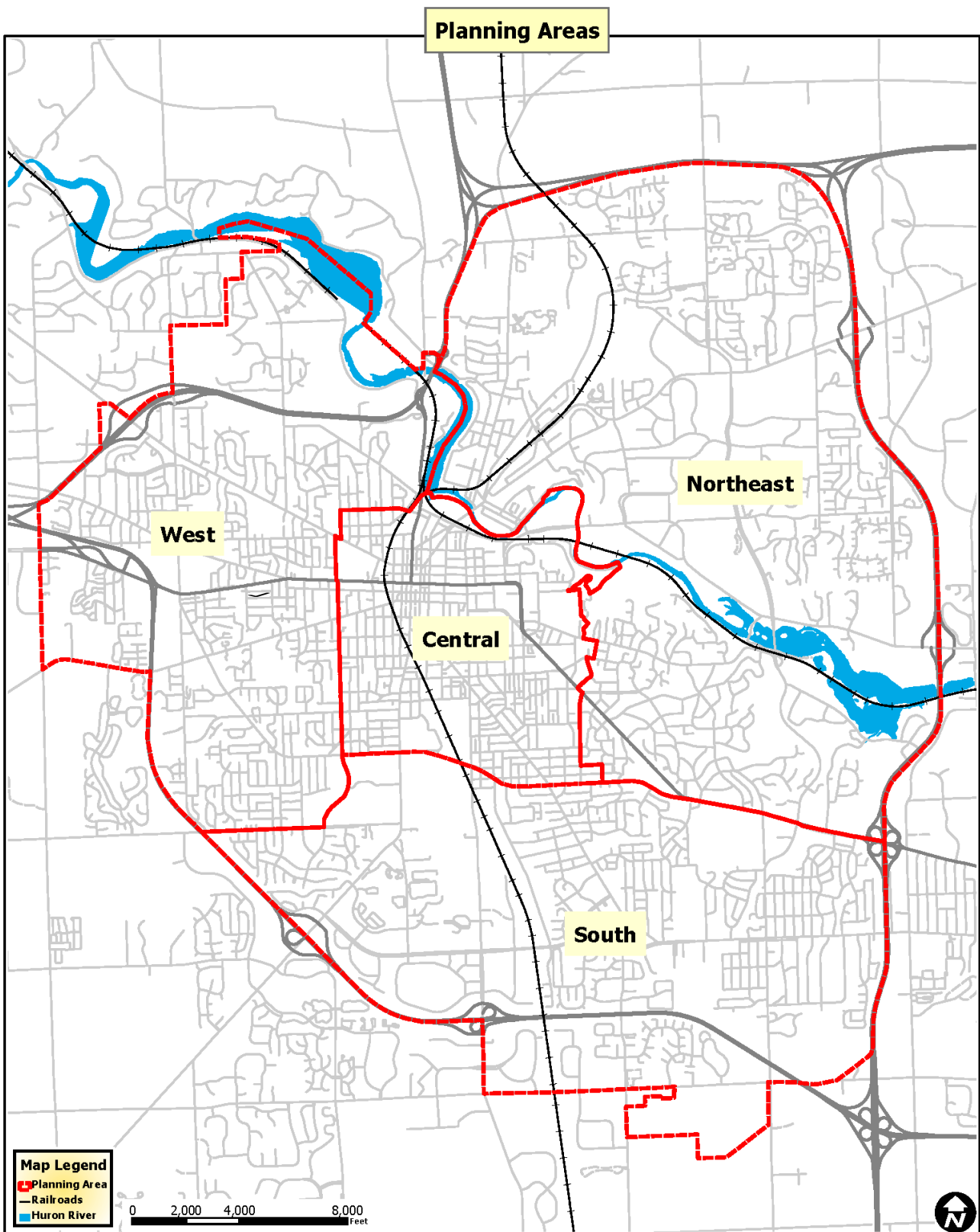
Sincerely,

Rita Mitchell
Member, Protect A2 Parks

Attachments:

- PROS 2016-220 Map of Planning Areas
- PROS 2016-220 Table of Population & Parks Resources
- Table 4.2: Summary of Section 4(f) Preliminary Determinations, from Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment Report

SECTION I: Community Description



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The following chart provides Census data from 2010, as well as statistics about the park system by planning area. The chart was modified slightly from the previous plan in that the non-city open space category was eliminated, and the greenbelt acreage was added. The non-city open space category was removed because accurate representative data is not available. Neither the Ann Arbor Public Schools nor the University of Michigan, for example, categorize or quantify open space versus other land use types.

STATISTICS FROM 2010 CENSUS

Planning Area	Central	Northeast	West	South	Outside City ⁽¹⁾	Citywide
Population	33,620	32,713	21,190	26,411		113,934
Number of dwelling units	11,578	14,063	10,427	13,721		49,789
Owner occupied	2,454	5,979	6,550	6,080		21,063
Renter	8,520	7,259	3,283	6,935		25,997
Average household size	2.24	2.17	2.18	2.16		2.19
Median income	35,809	63,119	79,274	54,691		58,223
Person density per acre	17	4	5	5		7.66
% of households with children	7%	22%	25%	21%		19%
Disability status - ages 5-64	8%	8%	10%	13%		10%
Disability status - ages 65 & up	37%	30%	32%	39%		35%
Minority composition - African-American	4%	7%	8%	13%		8%
Minority composition - Asian	12%	24%	4%	13%		13%
Percent student population						37%
Number of Parks	24	55	37	40	3	159 ⁽²⁾
Acreage of Parks	152.40	877.22	609.81	339.03	131.31	2109.77
Acreage parkland/1000 Residents	4.53	26.82	28.78	12.84		18.52
Greenbelt acreage					4,800	

(1) Outside city refers to the 3013 Huron River Drive, Marshall and Forest natures areas which are outside of the official city limits of Ann Arbor, but are still part of the park system as well as the Greenbelt.

(2) Includes the Ellsworth Storage Facility and the Tree Nursery in the South Planning Area, which are not open to the public.

Build Alternative 2C would result in an adverse effect on the resource under Section 106 of the NHPA. The FRA’s preliminary determination is that acquisition of property from the district, and the adverse effect recommendation under Section 106 of the NHPA, would constitute a Section 4(f) use.

4.7 Summary

As shown in Table 4.2, the preliminary determination at the Depot Site is that Alternative 2C would result in a use of the Michigan Central Depot and the Division Street Historic District. Feasible and prudent alternatives to these uses are Build Alternative 2A and 2B. At the Fuller Park site, the FRA’s preliminary determination is that Build Alternative 3A would result in a *de minimis* use of Fuller Park.

Table 4.2: Summary of Section 4(f) Preliminary Determinations

Section 4(f) Property	Depot Site			Fuller Site
	Build Alternative 2A	Build Alternative 2B	Build Alternative 2C	Build Alternative 3A
Broadway Park	No use	No use	No use	—
Wheeler Park	No use	No use	No use	—
Fuller Park	—	—	—	<i>de minimis impact</i>
B2B/Iron Belle Trail	Temporary Occupancy; No use	Temporary Occupancy; No use	Temporary Occupancy; No use	No use
Huron River Water Trail	Temporary Occupancy; No use	Temporary Occupancy; No use	Temporary Occupancy; No use	No use
Detroit Edison Energy Argo Station	No use	No use	No use	—
Anson Brown Building	No use	No use	No use	—
Casey’s Tavern/ Wood and Perrin	No use	No use	No use	—
Michigan Central Railroad Depot/Gandy Dancer	No use	No use	Use	—
Old Fourth Ward Historic District	No use	No use	No use	—
Division Street Historic District	No use	No use	Use	—

4.8 Section 6(f)

If a project requires that land within the Section 6(f) boundary of a property be converted for non-recreation activities and/or results in activities that impact the public outdoor recreation utility of an