

Huron Highlands Committee for Area Planning

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March 24, 2017

Jeffrey Kahan, AICP
Planning & Development Services
City of Ann Arbor

Dear Mr, Kahan,

Earlier this year, Trinitas Ventures presented a conceptual site plan for a proposed development just north of Huron Highlands. This public meeting, held at Traverwood Branch of the Ann Arbor District library, overflowed with approximately 60 concerned citizens.

During the presentation by the architect and developer's representative, it became clear that the initial concept plan did not take the soil conditions of the site into account, and would need to be revised in a manner that will likely reduce the buffer between Huron Highlands and the proposed student housing. The Huron Highlands Committee for Area Planning met soon after this public presentation to discuss the concerns of neighbors adjacent to this proposed development. In order to adequately represent the community, we conducted a survey of ninety-one households in the immediate vicinity. The survey was well received by residents and we had a thirty-six percent response rate.

The results of this survey have been summarized into five areas of primary interest:

- Community Compatibility
- Traffic and Transportation
- Safety
- Access
- Environment

For the purpose of this report, I have focused on responses that had the greatest agreement or disagreement.

Community Compatibility

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Because of the unique qualities of Huron Highlands neighborhood, it is not surprising to find that the most acceptable type of development would build on this collaborative and welcoming community environment and include a mix of housing that includes single family homes (66%), or single family homes (54%), with a component of affordable housing (45%). Conversely, survey respondents strongly disagree or disagree that this is an appropriate location for student rental housing (88%)

An overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) prefer a fifty foot minimum wooded buffer north of Skydale rather than the small buffer presented in conceptual design.

Traffic and Transportation:

Since the northeast area transportation plan was completed several thousand units have been constructed or approved for development near this proposed development and area residents expressed concerns about the amount of traffic and difficulty entering and leaving the subdivisions. A strong desire for the development's impact on traffic volume to be fully understood was expressed with ninety-seven percent of respondents agreeing that traffic volume must be at safe level for drivers, and pedestrians, including schoolchildren.

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Safety:

The local public schools have been focused on children walking and biking to school and providing "Safe Routes to School." Sidewalks and non-motorized paved paths were highly favored (88%) to improve safety as motorized and non-motorized traffic increases with a new development.

Another safety consideration involves storm water retention and potential flooding. As recent storms have increased in severity, seventy-nine percent of respondents want assurance that the proposed storm water management system will retain increased projected capacities and not merely meet minimal City requirements.

Access:

The conceptual design presented during the public meeting on February 2nd, 2017, included open motor vehicle connection between the proposed development and Huron Highlands. Survey respondents recognize the need for emergency access, but suggest that this be included in the development to the north of the proposed development rather than a stable development with young families and small children (97%). Proposed Emergency vehicle and pedestrian access still met with disagreement at seventy-two percent.

Environment:

Developers proposed to protect the remaining landmark trees on the property and ninety-seven percent of respondents agreed. Unfortunately, no designated parkland was indicated in the proposed concept plan, and since small neighborhood parks are typically included in new Ann Arbor developments, eighty-two percent of respondents would like to see this parkland designated as such and ideally provide more than the six acres proposed.

Attached you will find the raw survey data and several pages of comments from respondents. I'm sure you will see how invested our community is in the success of the appropriate development of this property. The Huron Highlands Committee for Area Planning respectfully submits our suggestions, and the strong preferences of our community, in hopes that the City of Ann Arbor, landowner, and developer will consider the integrity of our existing environment and compatibility of any new development with our well-established community.

Respectfully,

Marianne Bach
Edward G. Dawson
Ken Garber
Tracy Jensen, JD
Jane Landefeld
Kathleen Pepin, AICP
Jane Pollack
Jessica Prozinski

cc: Sumi Kailasapathy; Jason Frenzel, Brett Lenart, Scott Betzold