

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For Planning Commission Meeting of March 15, 2022**

**SUBJECT: Ann Arbor Chinese Christian Church Site Plan for Planning Commission Approval (1750 Dhu Varren Road)  
File No. SP21-019**

### **PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission approves the Ann Arbor Chinese Christian Church Site Plan dated March 8, 2022, as the site plan complies with all applicable requirements of the Unified Development Code, and other applicable laws, ordinances, standards, and regulations.

The Planning Commission approves the following Landscape Modifications:

1. Allow existing landscape islands to remain without bio-retention capacity.
2. Allow parking lot to continue with greater than 15 spaces in a row without a landscape island.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that this petition be **approved**, because the development would limit the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land; comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations.

### **LOCATION**

The site is located on the south side of Dhu Varren Road, east of Pontiac Trail and just west of the railroad tracks.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PETITION**

This petition was previously considered by the Planning Commission in December of 2021, in which a recommendation of approval was provided. With the adoption of Ordinance 21-37, which modifies site plan review authorities, this site plan is returning to the Planning Commission for action vs. recommendation.

The Special Exception Use that accompanies this petition was approved by the Planning Commission (PC) in December of 2021. The site plan that was recommended by the Planning Commission was conditioned upon the granting of two variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA):

1. The project requires a total of 80 parking spaces and the applicant requested to provide 63 spaces, requesting a 17-space variance. **APPROVED**
2. The project requires 28 electric vehicle parking spaces, and the applicant is proposing to install 8 EV Capable spaces and 2 EV Ready (Total of 10 EV spaces) for an 18-space variance. The property is zoned R4A Multiple-Family Residential District. **APPROVED**

Both of the variances requested were approved by the ZBA in February of 2022. The site plan has been modified to reflect the approved variances. After the Planning Commission meeting in December the petitioner added an additional 6 EV capable spaces to the site plan. This increase was suggested during the Planning Commission meeting and will extend for the length of the parking lot excavation. Also, because of the Planning Commission discussion, the limit of grading was slightly increased in the parking lot to allow for a more gradual slope toward the new building addition and adjacent sidewalk.

The petitioner seeks site plan approval for construction of a 9,161 square foot two-story multi-purpose addition to the existing 8,219 square foot church building. The parcel is 8.51 acres and zoned R4A (Multiple-Family District). Religious Institutions are allowed with Special Exception Use approval (SEU) by Section 5.29.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. A revised SEU based on the proposed site plan was approved in December of 2021.

There are only minimal changes proposed to the existing 64 car parking lot. One space will be removed to allow for the relocation of the solid waste enclosure. There are also some modifications to curb and aisle widths to meet required dimensions. The project is requesting two Landscape Modifications. These Landscape Modifications were approved by the Planning Commission in December 2021; however, they were directly linked to the site plan recommendation for approval. They are included again for approval in conjunction with the updated site plan. There is no change in the scope of the modification requests. The first modification is from the bio-retention island requirement to leave the existing trees and landscaping within the island undisturbed. The second modification will permit the parking lot to exceed the maximum 15 parking spaces in a row without a landscape island. The parking lot currently has one large landscape island in the center. The total area of this landscape island exceeds the area required by code; 3,403 sf existing, 1,263 square feet is required. All other landscaping code requirements will be met with the addition of 8 new street trees and 58 new shrubs within the ROW buffer area. One landmark tree will be removed for the new building construction. This tree will be mitigated with the addition of five new trees to the site.

Storm water management will be provided in a surface storm water detention system that will be upgraded to meet requirements for the additional impervious area. The system does allow for infiltration of storm water. As noted, a Landscape Modification is being requested to avoid removing existing vegetation for bio-retention landscape islands.

The new building will be used to support existing church functions and member gatherings. These include programs such as youth outreach during weekend services, Wednesday night prayer groups and fellowship sessions Friday and Saturday nights. There will be no renting of the facility for external catered group events such as weddings.

The original Special Exception Use was approved in December 1996 along with the site plan for the existing building. The SEU was approved with a maximum capacity of 160 people. The church would like to expand this to 240 people. This increase in capacity was approved as part of the most recently approved SEU request in December 2021.

There are 80 parking spaces required after the proposed expansion. There will be parking provided for 63 cars on the site. The petitioner has a variance approved for the remaining 17 spaces that are required.

The petitioner also requested a variance from the EV Parking requirements. They proposed to add two EV Installed spaces and eight EV Capable spaces. The code requires 8 EV Installed, 8 EV Ready and 12 EV Capable. This variance was approved in February 2022.

Planning staff also requested information regarding any sustainable items provided for the new building. The following statement was provided in response: 'The church commends the City for its strong stance on environmental protection. We have explored solar panels on the south facing roof line, but the tall trees we are maintaining will limit sun exposure with the shade they provide. Geothermal site capability will be explored further to determine size of field required based on the building's needs. Our findings will be submitted with our Detailed Engineering Plan submittal.

The estimated cost of construction is \$1,500,000.

### SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

	LAND USE	ZONING
NORTH	Residential, Office and Warehouse	PUD (Planned Unit Development)
EAST	Residential	R4A (Multiple-Family Residential)
SOUTH	Vacant	Township
WEST	Vacant	Township

### COMPARISON CHART

		EXISTING	PROPOSED	REQUIRED
Zoning		R4A Multiple-Family District	R4A Multiple-Family District	R4A Multiple-Family District
Gross Lot Area		8.51 Acres (370,696 sq ft)	8.51 Acres (370,696 sq ft)	21,780 sq ft MIN
Minimum Open Space		~90%	89%	65%
Setbacks	Front	206 ft	206 ft	40 ft
	Side(s)	~200 ft (east) 115 ft (west)	87 ft (east) 115 ft (west)	20 ft
	Rear	444 ft	444 ft	40 ft
Height		Approx. 22ft	27 ft 9 in (midpoint)	30 ft
Parking - Automobiles		64 spaces	63 total spaces	63 MIN*
Parking – EV		0 spaces	2 EV Installed 0 EV Ready 8 EV Capable	2 EV Installed ** 8 EV Capable **
Parking – Bicycles		20 Class C	20 spaces Class C	6 space MIN Class C

\* Variance approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals February 2022

\*\* Variance approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals February 2022

## PLANNING BACKGROUND

The 2009 City Master Plan: Land Use Element identifies this site in the Northeast Area as a Single and Two-Family use. The Land Use Element does encourage mixed uses adjacent to neighborhoods when the uses are compatible with residential.

## STAFF COMMENTS

Planning – The use and proposed expansion are consistent with the residential zoning district and with the adjacent land uses of single-family residential. The new facility will be used to improve existing church functions with a multi-purpose room, classroom and office space. There is no full kitchen in the facility, and it will not be a banquet hall for rental to large groups. The petitioner has indicated they would be supportive of neighborhood uses of the new building for community gatherings.

Per requirements of the Citizen Participation Ordinance, the petitioner held a virtual neighborhood meeting to present the project and gather feedback from the neighboring residents. There were four neighbors in attendance, a link to the final report is [here](#).

Prepared by Matt Kowalski  
Reviewed by Brett Lenart  
3/8/22

Attachments: Zoning and Parcel Map  
Aerial Photo  
[Site Plan](#)

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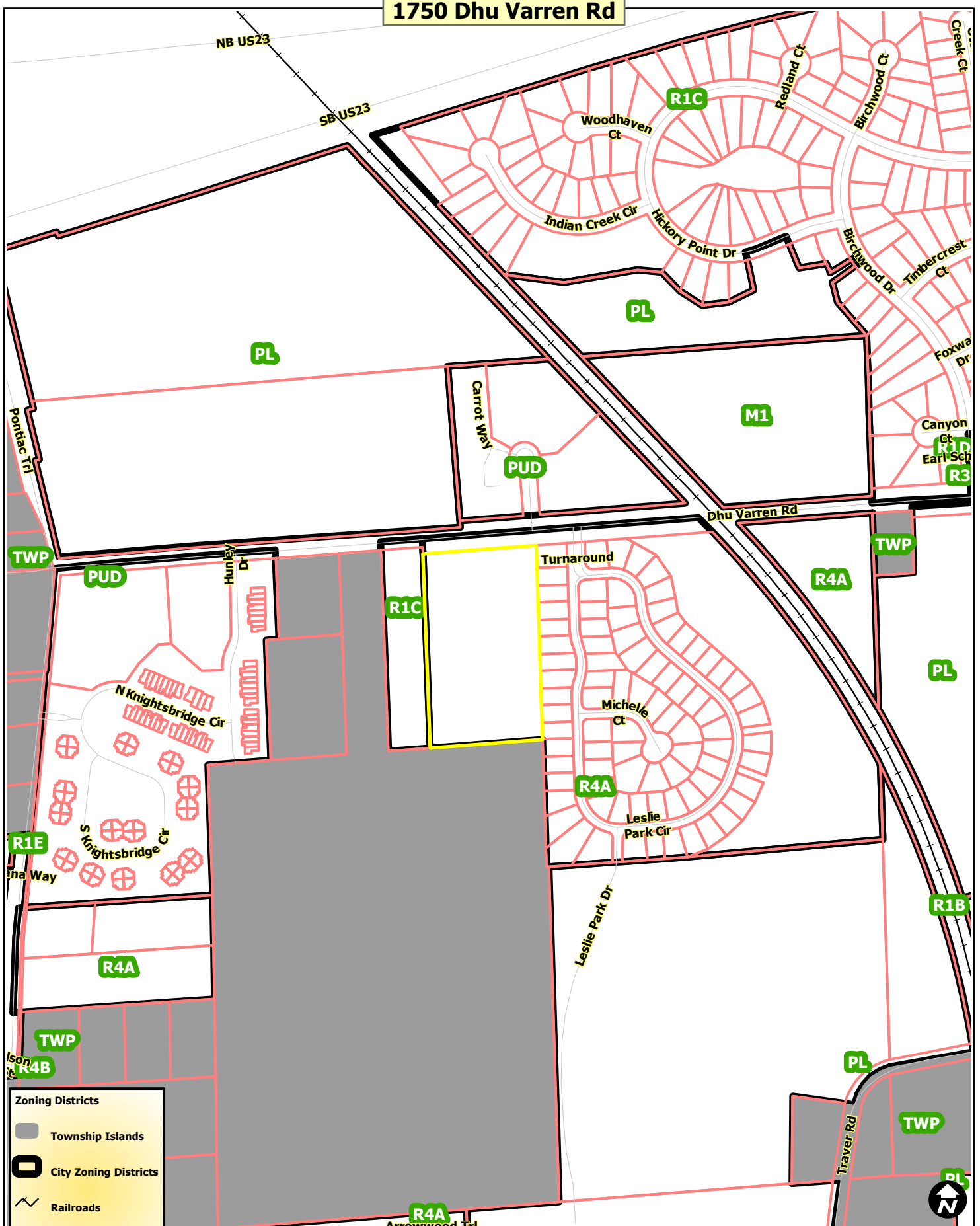
Civil Engineer: Sue Dickinson PE  
Midwestern Consulting, LLC  
3815 Plaza Drive  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Petitioner: Howard Huang  
Building Expansion Committee  
Ann Arbor Chinese Christian Church

Owner: Ann Arbor Chinese Christian Church, Pastor Dennis Wong  
1750 Dhu Varren Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Systems Planning  
File Nos. SP21-019

**1750 Dhu Varren Rd**



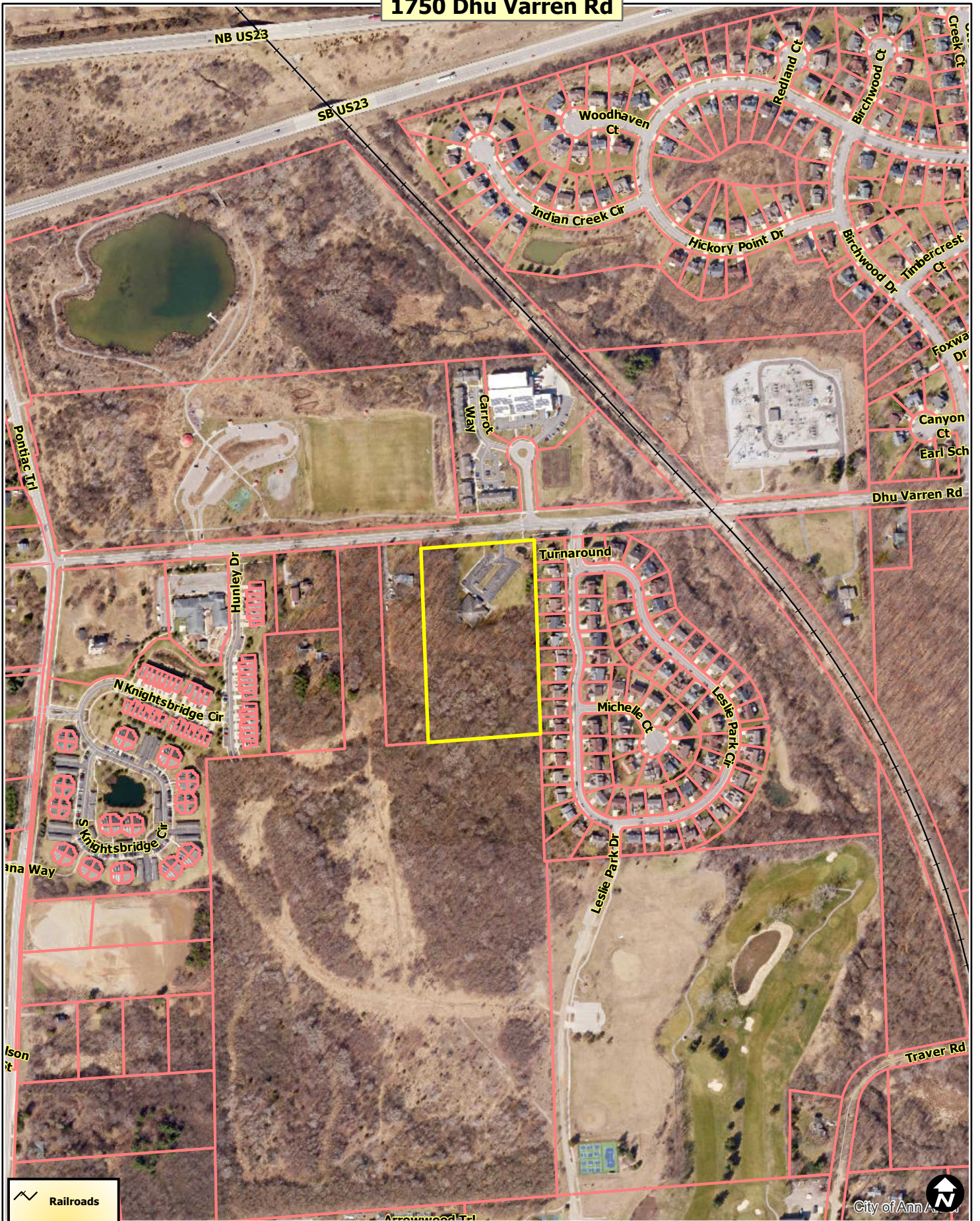
Map date: 3/8/2021

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# 1750 Dhu Varren Rd



- Railroads
- Huron River
- Tax Parcels



Map date: 3/8/2021  
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1750 Dhu Varren Rd

Dhu Varren Rd

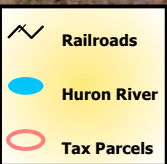
Carrot  
Way

Turnaround

Leslie Park Ct

Michelle  
Ct

City of Ann Arbor



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