

From: Ken Clark <kenclark@ameritech.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 07, 2022 11:59 AM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: Planning Commission - Re: The Village of Ann Arbor Project

Dear Commissioners,

I intend to attend public comment for the meeting tonight, but thought I'd send in written notes as well.

In general, I think this project is about as good as we'll get for that site. However, there are some comments from the developer that I think should be reviewed, and some things in the overall plan and traffic study that may need more consideration.

1. Overall, recall that Ann Arbor has adopted a resolution (A2Zero) to get our city-wide GHG emissions to zero by 2030. My concerns about this project are largely that the developer could do a lot more toward that goal. They're providing too much parking for our goal of 50% reduction in VMT, they're doing little to increasing biking when our second transportation goal is 25% of in-town trips by bicycle, they're proposing much less on-site solar than they could readily install, and they're declining to make the units all-electric, by ignoring relevant technology.

2. The traffic study has a few glaring errors. I live off of Pontiac Trail, close to the proposed development, and about half of my trips per week are by bike. From a cyclist perspective, the traffic study seems to be talking about a different road than Pontiac. There are no continuous left turn lanes on Pontiac, and there are bike lanes on most of (not all) of Pontiac. But all diagrams for Pontiac show a three lane cross-section with no bike lanes. That's actually important - we have many motorists driving in the bike lanes on Pontiac, mostly when passing someone turning left, by illegally driving in the bike lane to pass on the right. This endangers cyclists, and also discourages people from using the bike lanes. If the traffic study doesn't consider this, and they don't seem to have because they're looking at an incorrect cross-section, they're missing an important consideration.

3. Also, they show the Pontiac/Barton intersection as fine for biking (always a reasonable bike level of service), but I suspect they're assuming the bike lanes go through the intersection. If they actually analyze that intersection at peak times, they'll find a high level of speeding, and some very harassing behavior toward cyclists. They'll also see fairly few cyclists staying in the road there, because it's a very low level of service for cyclists, in reality.

4. There's no particular reason they couldn't install solar on most or all south-facing roofs in the development. I have 7kW of solar on my roof. The best time to put solar on a roof is when the roof is re- or newly-shingled. Then the solar panel lifetime corresponds to the lifespan of the shingles, and the roofing will last longer because the solar panels bear most of the heat. That would also be the least cost way to install the solar, because they could have a large single quote for all the roofs being upgraded, and could build in the solar charge controlling/grid tie infrastructure into the buildings.

5. The developer claims heat pumps won't make sense in this development, and that's because they're largely looking at the wrong heat pumps. While low-temperature air-based heat pumps are available, there's a much better technology available for northern climates - ground-loop heat pumps. And importantly, ground-loop heat pumps require a drill rig (a standard well-drilling system is fine), and that drilling is best done before the building is built. While it might be a concern over an old landfill, it often makes sense to put the pipes in a well casing anyway, which would prevent problems with external leakage.

6. Likewise, the developer claims gas furnaces would produce lower emissions than heat pumps, but DTE is planning to be net zero by 2050, and below the emissions level of natural gas for their electricity production by 2040, and possibly by 2030. Their production is relatively dirty right now, but they're a

leader in the midwest in installing wind production. If it weren't for their four remaining coal plants, they'd have a relatively clean production profile now. If the units don't have heat pumps now, the developer should at least plan for 200+ amp service for a future heat pump in all of the units, with 240v service to the furnace/heat pump area for the unit, several 240v service lines for the water heater, dryer, and other appliances in the same area, and two to any garages. They really should drill the ground loop wells now, and if the ground loop is there, why not go to a very-efficient ground-loop heat pump?

7. The developer is planning a large number of EV-ready parking locations. That is excellent. However, they're providing a tremendous number of parking spots, and discounting the concept of car sharing. They're right that car sharing like ZipCar won't make sense there, but that's because they're providing so much car parking. They should strongly consider cutting the parking by 25%, and adding several car-sharing locations. Bike sharing wouldn't make much sense in a location this distant from any commercial development, but car sharing would make a lot of sense, if they weren't oversupplying parking. Remember, our A2Zero goal for automobiles is a 50% reduction in VMT. Providing much less parking, and relying more on car-sharing, transit, and biking, would be in-line with that goal, whereas the current heavily supplied parking isn't.

8. Note that the Lowertown Mobility Study recommended a roundabout at the Pontiac Trail entrance to this development. Was that considered? The wetland makes it difficult to move the entrance south, but a roundabout was considered important to help deal with the speeding problems on Pontiac, and turning movements for this development.

9. Finally, what about the long-planned commercial at the corner of Pontiac and Dhu Varren? It's terrific that the developer is proposing to set aside \$1.2 million for a roundabout at that intersection, but it would be more valuable to have that commercial development. Is it possible to have the \$1.2 million be split between the roundabout and the commercial development, to encourage someone to put in that retail? The area needs that as much as we all need a roundabout at Pontiac / Dhu Varren (which we absolutely need.)

Thanks for your consideration,
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