

Ann Arbor Student Advisory Council

Representing Student Interests in Local Governance

To Ann Arbor City Council,

As the University of Michigan Student Advisory Council, we oppose the proposed Barton Green development project and recommend the project not pass Ann Arbor City Council until the project is revised to better situate the needs of both students and residents of Ann Arbor.

We recognize and agree with the assessment of those who live near the proposed Barton Green development that this is a flawed development. The proposed development lacks the amenities which students need and desire such as coffee shops, grocery stores and other businesses, and additionally is far from campus. Furthermore, this development would likely necessitate students to own cars for transportation, causing both traffic issues in the area as well as creating greater environmental pollution. In our view, this project does not optimally address the needs of students, who are the intended market for this development.

We would like to see the proposed development improved in a number of ways. First, we would like to see the development include the aforementioned amenities that students both want and require, such as a grocery store, coffee shops, eateries and other retail spaces. The development should have some mixed use beyond just housing to support the students who will live there. Secondly, greater consideration should be given to improving transportation safety in the area of the proposed development. The development will likely increase traffic, with some students bringing cars while those who do not have cars will need to take a bus or bike to get to campus. The development should consider both the safety of drivers and cyclists; this proposal as is does not take into account the lack of infrastructure in the area. Additionally, the dorm-like structure of the housing plan does not adequately provide for all students, particularly those with families.

As both students, city council members, and the citizens of Ann Arbor recognize, the city is in dire need of student housing. Just as Ann Arbor residents understand this, so too do the developers who seek to supply the market demand. This development's proposal is the result of the Ann Arbor housing market's limited space, and stringent building and zoning restrictions for downtown student housing, pushing more development further from campus and into locations undesirable for all residents of Ann Arbor. If the city would like to prevent the proliferation of developments following this model, the realities of the housing market must be changed. While the Student Advisory Council aims to increase the amount of student housing to meet the demands of students in Ann Arbor, the ways in which this demand is met should not be against the interests of the community, nor the students themselves.

Therefore, we oppose the approval of this project and request that the city negotiate with the developer to address the concerns of both neighbors and students.

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Resolved,
The Ann Arbor Student Advisory Commission