

Dear Trevor---

Having shared with my neighbors what happened at the meeting this week concerning the design of the Skate Park, it is fair to say that everyone I spoke with is very concerned. Our neighborhood was never brought into the discussion about the impact to our property. The City neglected to send any materials advising us as to the Park's potential location. It never sought our input, which is unlike every other event that has occurred concerning environmental impacts in the 17 years I've lived here. We have received notifications and requests for feedback when landlords increase rental properties blocks away from us, for instance. Someone in the City government dropped the ball. We had heard rumors about the Skate Park but could get no specifics. When I contacted the City and was in e-mail contact with Jeff Straw since February concerning the disappearance of the walking paths in the Park, he directed me to an e-mail list to receive information about meetings involving the Skate Park---apparently the wrong e-mail list as no postings happened until we all received the mass mailing about the Design Meeting where I spoke with you.

I was shocked to see the size and scope of the Park, dismayed that there was no Maintenance Budget in place, and not at all happy about the "multi-purpose plaza" which my neighbors are also alarmed with. We are very angry that no one consulted with us. We have all invested heavily in our homes and neighborhood. We feel the Skate Park's location is misguided. It's too close to residential properties, too close to the ball field on Dexter Road and too consuming of every inch of the greenspace that is the very lovely corner of Maple and Dexter. That is the last of the flexible spaces after the re-configuration of the ball fields that occurred this year. The entire neighborhood uses that area to sit and read, watch the ball games, fly kites, picnic and walk their dogs.

I called Amy Kuras after walking the Park again yesterday. I told her that my neighbors and myself want the various parties involved to consider the simple solution of moving the Skate Park to the southwest corner of the park, specifically the amphitheater-shaped area just below the Veterans Memorial Park sign and the last ball field on Maple. She was not happy to hear this. I asked her if that corner had been considered and she said "no". When I asked her why not, she didn't have any answer at all.....I asked her why we hadn't been notified directly by mail months ago when the site was under consideration. She answered that the meetings had been posted on bulletin boards and websites---of which no one here had any awareness. Why wasn't the actual site posted with a picture of the proposed project and contact information for concerned parties?

The southwest corner is bordered by commercial properties only. It is easily as large, if not larger, than the location you chose near us. It has an incline, trees and parking lot with easily accessed bus lines---3 lines directly on Maple itself. It has the benefit of a traffic light on Maple which allows parents who are dropping skaters off to safely negotiate the process. It also has a crosswalk with a traffic light for skaters who come by bus. I don't think you understand the potential across from Aldi's and Knight's driveways. The plan I saw has a drop-off directly across from where a lot of left turns are made into Knight's in particular. The improvements to Dexter Road have eliminated what had been an informal left turn lane across from Knight's. The road is now two lanes only with a bike lane on either side and curbs where there once was an unpaved shoulder that served as an unofficial lane around left-turning traffic.

The SW corner of Veterans additionally offers easily accessed restrooms in the Shelter located nearby. This is a necessity Amy Kuras said the City had no budget for at this time for the Skate Park. The natural contours of the area would also very much showcase the Park. Tony Hawk's own website states that skate parks should be placed in prominent areas to keep as many "eyes on the park" as possible and to build morale. Of course it's a big challenge at this point, but we want all options on the table. The Skate Park is very big and very permanent. It is fully intended as a National Destination Skate Park. Our neighborhood input was not sought out which is regrettable and negligent, but but we feel there's still time to rectify the situation. Our neighborhood is, after all, just that: a neighborhood-- not a tourist destination as the website for the Skate Park announces as a potential benefit for Ann Arbor. There is exactly one chance to get this right. We're willing to start a petition to underscore our concerns. Knight's and many others have already told me they are ready to sign it. We're calling it the "Friends of Veterans Park Petition".

Please be assured that everyone I've spoken to would very much like to see a "win-win" resolution to this situation!