

Date: Fri, 23 Jul 2010 23:00:29 -0400

To the Mayor and Members of the Council, City of Ann Arbor:

As a life-long resident of the city of Ann Arbor, I want to voice my opposition to the current proposal to build a parking structure, dedicated for use by the University of Michigan Hospital, on parkland belonging to the city of Ann Arbor, without placing this proposal before the citizens, on a ballot, for a vote.

As proposed, this is not a "transportation center". Rather, it is, as described by Tony Denton, the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, UMHHC and Tom Peterson, Associate Director for Operations, UMHHC, "... a new parking deck near Fuller Road that could include the addition of about 1000 staff parking places". Nowhere in this June 23, 2010 "Latest update about UMHS Parking & Transportation" report is mentioned the concept of a "transportation center" nor is anything more than parking for automobiles implied or expressed. The "WALLY" will never be able to use this site. We already have an Amtrak station, with free parking, less than a mile away. It takes more than a bus stop, of which there is one already at this location, and a bike rack, to qualify this development as anything more than a building desired by the U of M.

If you support this current proposal, then all Ann Arbor parkland will become vulnerable to claims of higher and better uses, as merely city owned public land, by other groups that have their own agendas and will press the City to dedicate property for their own projects.

Why should our tax-paying citizens support future park millage proposals if it is demonstrated that parkland can be used for other purposes, as merely public land. The voters of our city strongly supported (by more than 80%) a ballot measure, less than two years ago, mandating a public vote on the sale of parkland. This proposed long term, "not sale", "not lease", but a "joint agreement" with an outside entity violates the spirit, if not the letter, of that measure.

It has been clearly demonstrated that development of any kind, in our city, does not take place easily or quickly, but only after extensive public discussion and planning. So should be the case with such a major development as a new community transportation center.

Is this the best location for a regional transportation center? The WALLY and Amtrak lines do intersect at North Main Street, at the river and very close to the highway interchange. Or, a new station could be built directly across the tracks from the current station, on the recently vacated DTE property across the Broadway bridge, with ample room for parking and a bus station. Additionally, there is Mitchell Field, the University's own property, located directly to the east of the currently proposed site, with a stoplight already in place on Fuller Road, the rail tracks in the

back, more land to work with, and none of the problems presented by building on city parkland.

Why the rush? The University has the recently acquired the Pfizer property on North Campus with a lot of immediately available parking; shuttle buses could easily be put into service to the hospital for U of M staff. If this is really such a good idea, then it merits more community input and debate, a better deal for our valuable resources and a more comprehensive and complete plan to place before the voters to approve.

Thank You - George Gaston.