

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

OHMHA NEWSLETTER

February 2007

PUBLIC HEARING ON CHANGES TO PLYMOUTH MALL

TUESDAY, FEB 20, 7:00 PM, AT CITY COUNCIL

***This is our only chance to influence this plan.
We need your help!***

At the January OHMHA meeting, Matt Kowalski of the Ann Arbor Planning Department presented a preview of a proposed development for the Plymouth Mall parking lot. The owners of Carpenter Brothers Hardware and Bello Vino Marketplace also attended the meeting to voice opposition and to express their concerns that the development would put their businesses and needed customer parking at risk. After discussion, the Board voted unanimously to oppose the current project on the following grounds.

This project, as proposed, does not meet conventional city code regarding setback and open space requirements. Still, City Council can approve the proposal by deciding that the planned paved public plazas qualify as a desired **public benefit**, thus justifying special treatment as a Planned Project.

This project will create a traffic flow mess at Plymouth Mall and will jeopardize the viability of existing businesses—a bad trade-off for a small roadside sitting area that will at best be used in warm weather.

We need to make our concerns known. We are late to learn the details of this plan and the Public Hearing will be held this Tuesday night. **We encourage you to send e-mail messages to the Mayor and all City Council Members. WE ALSO NEED NEW FACES TO COME OUT TO THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

Brief History and Description of our Concerns

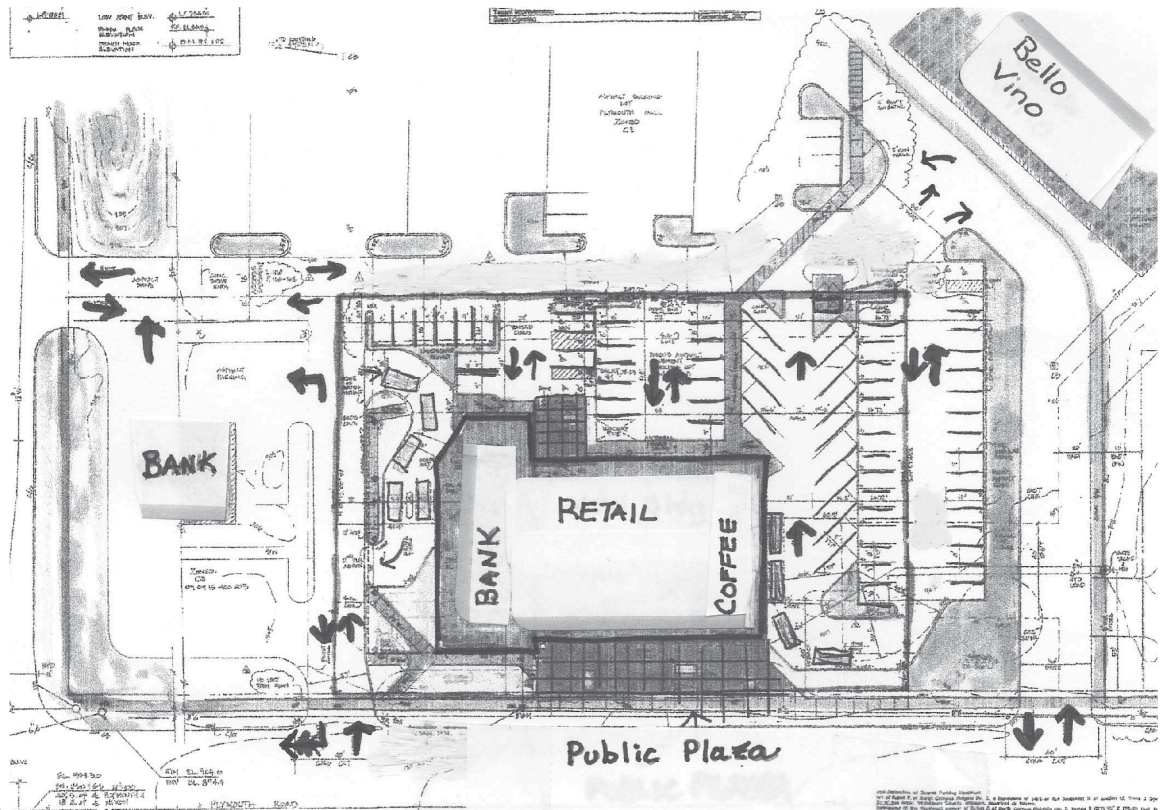
The owners of Plymouth Mall have divided off an acre of the parking lot at the front of Bello Vino, creating a separate legal parcel. They've formed a new limited partnership, which submitted plans to build a flat-roofed, 20,000 ft², two-story building. This acre currently contains 110 parking spaces, the asphalt lane that runs parallel to Plymouth Road along the southern edge of the parking lot, and a landscaped berm.

The developers anticipate that the new building will house another drive-up bank, retail space on the ground floor (including a Starbucks Coffee with a drive-up window), and a travel agency on the second floor.

As currently proposed, the acre isn't large enough to both construct the future building *and* provide the parking, landscaping, and setbacks from Plymouth Road that are required by city code. The new building will be at 22 feet rather than the required 40 feet from the right of way, and a paved public plaza will cover those 22 feet. This portion of the existing berm and roadside trees will be eliminated.

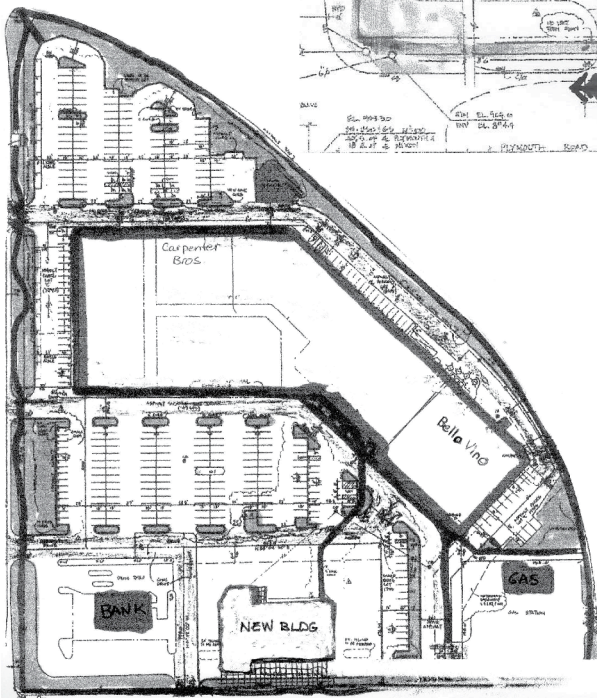
To respond to these deficiencies, the developers have agreed to configure the remaining mall parking to have 18 excess parking spaces based on the current city codes and then give the new lot legal permission to use those excess spaces. They have also asked City Council to grant the project special status as a Planned Project. Under Planned Project status, a development can get "automatic variances" from the required lot area, height and placement rules if it can meet certain requirements. The expectation is that the modifications of city codes result in the ability of a project to provide one or more listed public benefits.

see next page



(above) Proposed development and parking lot configuration.

(below) View of entire mall with proposed development.



In this case, the developers suggest that the lack of required open space and the reduced setback in this project will allow the provision of a pedestrian plaza that merges with the sidewalk in front of the new building and a small plaza facing the parking lot. They also claim that the proposed plan is a public benefit because it makes the parking lot layout more efficient.

The Board has concerns about whether the Mall will really have excess parking spaces appropriately placed to serve the needs of the existing tenants, and has concerns about the way the new parking lots will be designed. The construction of the project as proposed would cause the existing traffic pattern within the parking lot to be reconfigured. The new layout has a complicated traffic pattern that will make navigating the parking lot much more of a challenge than it is now. The new parking lot configuration will include:

- 6 spaces for the new building that must back out into the new through-lane entering from Nixon Road at the TFC Bank and traversing the entire site;
- 2 short dead-end sections of parking, which could be dedicated to the new building or act as mini-parking lots within the bigger parking lot;
- additional required parking spaces in the back of the building where the loading docks are located;
- 2 aisles of parking to the east of the new building;
- a three-way intersection in front of Bello Vino;
- restrictions on the direction one can access the eastern 2 aisles of parking, especially for people entering from Nixon Road;
- placing the dumpster for the new building 80 feet from the building, where trucks servicing the dumpster can access it only with difficulty;
- a traffic pattern for the Starbuck's drive-up window that anticipates patrons entering only from Plymouth Road, and snaking through a two-way parking aisle to access a one-way parking aisle that gets the car up to the drive-up window, while avoiding cars backing out of spaces opposite the drive-up lane;
- prohibiting left turns onto Plymouth Road from the drive-way near the TFC Bank;
- no provision of space in the 2 parking aisles nearest Bello Vino for shopping cart returns;
- shifting parking for employees to the back of the building, where patrons of Carpenter Brothers park.

If you would like more information or wish to express your comments to the OHMHA Board, please e-mail Wendy Carman at wjcarman@umich.edu.

Footing Drain Disconnection (FDD) Program

Although some of our neighbors may have been informed with regard to the City of Ann Arbor's FDD Program, others may have been wondering about what has been happening on the easement. The OHMHA Board believes it might be helpful for our community to receive some information about what has been done so far, and what is yet to come.

As part of the citywide FDD Program, the City of Ann Arbor hired Bidigare Contractors, Inc., to install a six-inch curb drain pipe system in Orchard Hills and Maplewood (not including Cedarbrook). This curb drain is being installed between the sidewalk and curb to accept the flow from new sump pumps that will be installed in our homes. We have been informed by one of the construction managers that the installation of the curb drain has been completed everywhere south of Bluett.

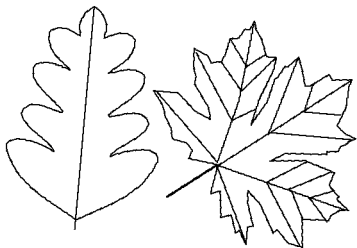
Footing drains are small, perforated drainage pipes located near the foundations of our houses. They are intended to keep rainwater that seeps through the ground from building up along the foundation or basement walls and causing basement wetness. The purpose of disconnecting footing drains is to keep this rainwater out of the sanitary sewer system. Instead, this water will be routed to the storm water system via the new curb drain collection system to an on-site retention area such as a rain garden.

Disconnection of the footing drains from the house lead will be done in the basements, where a section of the floor will be removed to access pipes, and to install a sump pump. Also, a new electrical circuit will be provided. Outside, in the

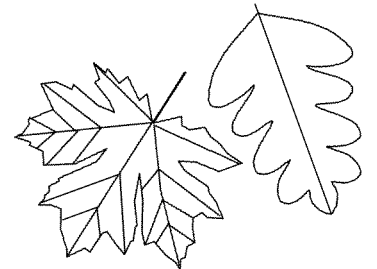
yard, a small pipe will be installed to carry footing drain water from the sump pump to a rainwater collection system or an approved alternative. There will be cleanup and restoration of any grassed areas impacted by the installation. The city will pay up to \$3700 for the "core" work, which will be financed ultimately through sewer use fees.

Homeowners will be responsible for anything beyond what is required for basic installation. They will also be responsible for the cost of a backup sump pump. Homeowners are strongly advised to consider a backup system because in the event of a power failure, the primary sump pump obviously will not function. The backup sump pump can be either battery- or water-powered. Homeowners will need to decide whether they want to pay for this additional level of protection, taking into consideration potential damage to their belongings, and the frequency of power failures during storms.

Parts of this article are extracted, in greatly condensed form, and by permission, from a fourteen-page homeowner information packet published by the City of Ann Arbor's Public Service Area. The entire packet can be viewed at www.a2fdd.com or at the Ann Arbor Public Library. The website is extensive, and will give you information on everything you will ever want to know about footing drains. In addition to the homeowner information packet (PDF), there are many FAQs, construction photos, and instructions on how to view a video presentation.



Lingering Leaves



Ever wondered about the city's fall leaf collection schedule? Well, that may not be the hottest topic of conversation in the neighborhood, but this year—with winter taking its time to arrive—some residents have questioned why the last leaf collection came so early, long before the leaves stopped falling.

The city is divided into twelve sections for leaf pickup purposes. The Orchard Hills-Maplewood subdivision falls into two different zones. Residents on the west side of (and west of) Georgetown are in section one. Those on the east side of (and east of) Georgetown are in section twelve. The pickup dates this past fall were October 24 and November 14 for section one, and October 23 and November 16 for section twelve. These were the earliest and third earliest pickup dates in the city.

By contrast, section ten—which roughly encompasses Burns Park—had its last pickup on December 6.

According to Kirk Pennington of the city's Field Operations Unit, the city rotates the pickup dates annually so that a neighborhood will have a later date each year until it becomes the last pickup, and then starts over at the beginning the following year.

For more details regarding this year's dates, the pickup schedule can be found on the city's website at <http://www.a2gov.org/PublicServices/FieldOperations/Street/leaf/schedule.html>. For those of you who have bagged leaves with no place to go, the Washtenaw County Compost Drop Off station at 2950 Ellsworth will accept them. They can be reached at 971-7400.

Plymouth Green Crossings

[The following is an edited, paraphrased and rearranged account of potential environmental implications and mitigation plans that have been made in connection with the ongoing construction of Plymouth Green Crossings on the northwest corner of Plymouth and Green Roads, compiled from two websites, <http://www.aamillerscreek.org/plymouth.pdf> and <http://www.plymouthgreencrossings.com/wetlands-enhancement.html>, and other background information, by Neal Foster, member of the Huron River Watershed Council's Millers Creek Action Team.]

Plymouth Green Crossings is a mixed-use development, on 8.8 acres, that will contain 3 fifty-foot tall buildings with first-floor retail uses (21,336 ft²) and 35 residential units on the second and third floors (47,697 ft²). Proposed retail uses will be primarily smaller neighborhood retail stores. There will also be an eighteen-foot tall, one-story restaurant (5,900 ft²); a twenty-foot tall bank building (4,116 ft²); and either 261 or 264 parking spaces (some in one and one-half story garages). Vehicles will be able to access the site from Green and Plymouth Roads but Plymouth Road will only allow “right turn only” for ingress and egress. There will be many sidewalks, paths and plazas. The proposed uses will have peak parking periods that are somewhat staggered from each other (for example, retail during weekends, residential 7-8 am and 5-6 pm, and restaurant 5-8 pm). Each resident will have a garage to store vehicles on the ground. There will be a shared parking easement with Ave Maria Law School for a limited number of spaces.

The most significant natural feature is a 54,759 ft² wetland on the east side of the site, and although mitigating potentially adverse impacts of development on this wetland is a daunting task, careful plans have been made in consultation with experts and officials from various city, county, and state agencies and other stakeholder groups to do just that. A total of 19,190 ft² of the natural

features open space buffer will be disturbed during the construction of a new wetland, outlet structures, and a Green Road access drive, and for the removal of invasive tree species on the south side of the wetland. A total of 1,300 ft² of wetland will be disturbed by the construction of the outlet structures as well as slight regrading along the eastern edge of the wetland to blend existing and proposed grades. Storm water runoff from Plymouth Park, Ave Maria and Green Road will be handled by a detention system under the parking lot and a surface detention pond adjacent to the wetland. The detention facilities will empty into the existing wetland, which in turn empties southward into the east branch of Millers Creek via a culvert beneath Plymouth Road.

Expanding the Wetland

Some in our neighborhood have been concerned over the many trees cut down and the clearing of wetland vegetation. The overall plan is to not only preserve the wetland, but to expand it; native plants will eventually replace the existing mostly invasive and non-native species. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Washtenaw County, the City of Ann Arbor, and the Huron River Watershed Council have reviewed the developer's plans to manage and enhance this resource. In response to the Millers Creek Watershed Improvement Plan, the petitioner received MDEQ permission to expand the size of the wetland to reduce water level fluctuations and to protect the flora and fauna that grow, dwell in or use the wetland as a habitat or feeding area. Midwestern Consulting is attempting to control existing invasive plant species to improve the wetland's appearance. The contractor will also get a permit to burn the existing vegetation, and will oversee with a native plant mix. A walking trail will be installed around the perimeter of the wetland.



THEN. . .



AND NOW

Plans call for the wetland to be expanded on its eastern side by an additional 28,243 ft², thereby providing an additional million gallons of storm water detention capacity. Expanding the wetland also should improve its ability to filter contaminants from storm water and reduce both the frequency and severity of flash floods downstream in fragile Millers Creek. The MDEQ has permitted this activity and requires a five-year monitoring program, with annual stewardship reports, to ensure the proper management of the created wetland. OHMHA also will be provided with a detailed plan, acceptable to the city's Land Development Coordinator, for maintenance of the wetlands, wetland mitigations, and natural features. This plan will be consistent with current city ordinances and best management practices for wetland protection, including maintenance of buffer zones, fertilizer use and mowing practices. The developer also will provide a conservation easement for the wetland to ensure perpetual protection and maintenance of the wetland system.

Plans for Trees

A total of 96 trees will be removed, including red pine, Norway spruce and Norway maple (invasive). Most of the trees are evergreens, ranging from 10 to 14 inches in diameter. Most are landscaping trees that probably were planted about 30 years ago. One landmark tree proposed for removal is a 26 inch pignut hickory, but a replacement will be provided. The developer is required to provide 24 interior landscaping trees; 33 are provided. A proposed 82 new trees are to be planted onsite, with additional street trees as well.

OHMHA Board

Our board consists of twelve members. As we are still one board member short, we invite any current OHMHA member to consider joining us. Please contact us or attend an upcoming meeting and see whether you would like to contribute to our neighborhood by serving as an OHMHA board member.

COMING BOARD MEETING

**Thursday, March 8
Thurston School Library
7:30 pm**

Please join us!

**ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2006 ~ MAY 31, 2007**

(Make check for \$20.00 payable to OHMHA ~ additional contributions gratefully accepted.)

NAME _____

TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT PAID _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please remove my name from your email list.

COMMENTS (we welcome suggestions and/or offers to volunteer on OHMHA projects):

Mail or deliver your dues to: Wendy Carman, OHMHA Treasurer, 2340 Georgetown.

OHMHA BOARD MEMBERS

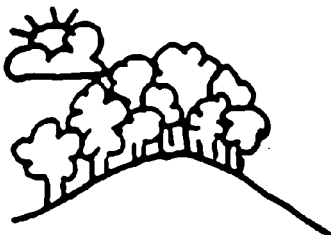
Stuart Baggaley	3111 Cedarbrook	332-1874	Vice President/Neighborhood Watch
Henry Brysk	3032 Cedarbrook	369-2986	
Wendy Carman	2340 Georgetown	761-8693	Treasurer
Jack Cederquist	2145 Ardenne	665-2285	
Emily Eisbruch	2561 Bunker Hill	665-0533	Webmaster
Neal Foster	2115 Georgetown	663-0756	
Anita Jones	3359 Yellowstone	761-2748	
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	President
Jill Rheinheimer	2518 Georgetown	663-1489	Newsletter (zooina2@sbcglobal.net)
Daniel Smith	2377 Georgetown	320-4494	
Sandy Smith	3188 Rumsey	769-2663	Secretary

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

John Hieftje (Mayor)	1800 Traver	996-0493	jhieftje@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us
Joan Lowenstein (Council Member, Ward 2)	502 Burson	761-5248	jlowenstein@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us
Stephen Rapundalo (Council Member, Ward 2)	3106 Bluett	476-0648	SRapundalo@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us

OHMHA

**3352 Yellowstone Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105**



NEWSLETTER

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
