DHU VARREN - NIXON - GREEN RD INTERSECTION ALTERNATIVES
DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date: Thursday, December 11, 2014
Time: 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Location: Clauge Middle School, 2616 Nixon Rd
Attendees: Public Present: 114; refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheets.
Council members present: 4; Sabra Briere (Ward 1), Sumi Kailasapathy
(Ward 1), Jane Lumm (Ward 2), Kirk Westphal (Ward 2)
City staff present: 7; Kayla Coleman, Alexis DiLeo, Nick Hutchinson, Jeff
Kahan, Igor Kotlyar, Wendy Rampson, Cynthia Redinger
Consultants present; OPUS International: Andrew Ceifetz, Gareth McKay,
Joyce Yassin

Re: Dhu Varren – Nixon – Green Rd Intersection Alternatives

MEETING NOTES AND FEEDBACK FORM RESPONSES
Note: this is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This summary has been
prepared from notes taken during the meeting and feedback forms submitted (15
feedback forms were received).

Common themes and key points identified through the discussion are shown in bold,
related comments are paraphrased below themes. Where staff responses or
clarification were provided they are shown in italics; additional detail from staff not
discussed at the meeting are denoted as a ‘post meeting clarification.’

A video recording of the meeting is available on the CTN website
(a2govtv.pegcentral.com).

Intersection Alternatives
• Roundabout
  – Regarding Argonne Drive, there are not enough gaps to get out onto Nixon
    Road right now; there will be no gaps at all with a roundabout. Traffic impact
    studies have indicated that sufficient gaps will be provided.
  – ADA compliance/concerns with roundabout? Post meeting clarification: If
    roundabout is determined as the appropriate improvement for this intersection
    ADA compliance will be adhered to.
  – How many vehicles could use the main roundabout to get from Dhu Varren to
    Nixon? What number would be needed to avoid building the bypass? I am
    also concerned about the movement from Dhu Varren to northbound Nixon.
    Post meeting clarification: The traffic volumes considered for the proposed
    concepts were 2035 future volumes, which would require a bypass lane on
    Dhu Varren for the roundabout concept.
A large roundabout can accommodate more traffic. The small one at Huron Parkway is too confusing. All European ones much larger, and function much better. There is a good, large roundabout in Marshall, MI you should look at. This is not a finished product. It is still a work in progress. We are looking at the options and sizes needed for each choice.

Prefer roundabout like on Nixon/Huron Parkway over stop lights.

Thank you, I remain convinced that a roundabout is the best solution. The bypass lane is an excellent idea too.

I have observed gridlock at Huron Parkway roundabout…. Pedestrians cause delays for vehicles at roundabouts.

**Signalized intersection**

- Why isn't a signal with a bypass lane being considered as well? *We are looking for the best balance for the intersection among the different travel modes and level of service for those modes.* Post meeting clarification: Operationally, a bypass lane is not needed in conjunction with a signal to accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes nor to improve operations. Additionally, a bypass lane would increase the footprint of the intersection and potentially pose a safety hazard to pedestrians and bicyclists as there would be an uncontrolled lane of traffic to cross.

- I could be wrong, but a stoplight might give more of a break to get out onto Nixon when exiting Argonne and turning left (south to Plymouth).

- I want a smart light that responds to traffic flow.

- Will the signal at the intersection be fully actuated? I believe it is safer for pedestrians and bikes at traffic lights. *Post meeting clarification: Signal timing and actuation will be dependent on traffic volume, flow, and level of pedestrian/bicycle activity.*

**Natural Features**

- The tree at the northwest corner of the intersection (possibly an oak) has health concerns. It should be evaluated and possibly removed from intersection option evaluation criteria. *The tree will not be affected by how the road would be constructed. The tree will be taken into account.* Post meeting clarification: City staff has been monitoring this tree for several years. The tree’s health is declining and will continue to be monitored to determine if removal is necessary.

- Tree on the NW corner does appear dead/dying widening to the west and losing the tree, though sad, may be an option.

**Other intersection comments**

- Both the aligned light and roundabout options look like excellent options. I am hopeful plans proceed in a timely manner as the current situation is extremely unsafe and frustrating. Thank you for the thorough presentation.

- The presentation indicated the current intersection operates at Level of Service (LOS) C/D, and identified that a C/D LOS is inadequate; yet, the proposed improved intersection will also operate at LOS C/D. So the proposed improvements seem only to maintain status quo. *Current analysis results indicate that there will be enough gaps to help with getting out onto*
Nixon. We do not want to over build because we don’t want to lose the corridor’s current character. Post meeting clarification: There are differences in Level of Service (LOS) for traffic movement in each the north, south, east and west direction though overall intersection operation may be comparable.

- How will the safety of bus riders and pedestrians be assured with the intersection improvements or any corridor improvements? Post meeting clarification: The Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) has expressed that the proposed intersection modifications should not have a significant impact to bus operations. Both a signalized intersection and roundabout have been analyzed using the Highway Safety Manual and show significant safety improvements over a stop-controlled intersection for all modes of transportation – both motorized and non-motorized.

- I noticed the Modeling data goes to 2035? What is the basis for your data? SEMCOG prediction is low growth for the City, so I question the basis for the growth assumptions in your model. The Washtenaw Area Transportation regional growth model was used to approximate growth from unknown sources for future traffic volumes. This background growth has to be used for this type of study in addition to known developments. A traffic signal would be designed to give the right amount of “green” time to help with traffic flow. The signal would operate on its own and would respond to the vehicles and pedestrians using the intersection. No decision has been made on whether the intersection will be a traffic signal or roundabout yet. Post meeting clarification: A 20-year forecast is common and the standard accepted practice when conducting traffic modeling.

New Development

- Developer involvement/ relationship
  - What does “developers” mean? Developers are people who have an interest in land who are going to proceed with a proposal for change in land use (i.e housing).
  - Can the City require developers pay in total for the intersection improvements? How many lanes are proposed for Nixon Road when the intersection is improved? We cannot require the developers to pay or fix the road. But the City can require that the intersection is fixed to a satisfactory level of service before approving the developer to build, add units or construct on the land. Post meeting clarification: At this time, no changes are proposed for Nixon Road (it would remain one lane in each direction) other than the addition of left-turn lanes at the intersection.
  - Why do you rely on developer studies to make decisions? The developers should pay for 100 percent of the cost of their externalities.
  - Fix/Improve the intersection before considering the new developments. Current situation is not acceptable along Dhu Varren Road for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - City has built developments without adding necessary infrastructures. I have no confidence in the City meeting the needs of the citizens. Idealistic policies
have replaced best practices and traffic engineering standards. The lack of lighting at crosswalks and in school walk zones represents gross negligence.

- **Traffic congestion impacts**
  - The Nixon Farms streets might be blocked by traffic backing up at the intersection. The Nixon Farms developments should only have streets to Dhu Varren Road, and not on Nixon Road. Based on street configurations that the developers have provided, we believe bypass lanes will alleviate the congestion. Future traffic impact from the developments is being considered. Post meeting clarification: The proposed site plans for the planned developments will follow the City plan review process and do include access to Dhu Varren Road.
  - My wife and I downsized to condo on Nixon Road which we picked carefully. But we are now terrified by new developments and traffic increases. We have serious misgivings about our choice to move to Nixon Road area. We are also concerned about the impacts of the new Traverwood Apartments.

**Corridor**

- **Further improvement: ideas and questions**
  - Is it possible to consider opening up other roadways for vehicles from Nixon (particularly from new development) to lead to Green Rd./Dhu Varren without going through the intersection being considered? Thank you for the public comment session; it is helpful. *Post meeting clarification: The site plan for Nixon Farms South shows proposed roads within the project and is available for public review.*
  - Can the corner of Windermere be cut to reach Dhu Varren Rd. Perhaps the corner purchased? Also, if apartments will be built north of Barclay Park—perhaps there should be an on and off ramp for 23 from Nixon Road. *Post meeting clarification: because US-23 is a State Highway the City does not have jurisdiction modify the entrance and exit ramps.*
  - In addition to the improvements to this intersection I hope that plans include some areas for commercial retail (food etc, services) for either end of Dhu Varren, i.e. at the corner of Pontiac Trail/Dhu Varren and/or Dhu Varren and Nixon. This would make the area more workable and available. Thank you.
  - Request as part of intersection upgrade connect pedestrian and bicycle to Olsen Park.
  - Within ½ mile of Green Road there are 1,000 households with no other way out of their neighborhoods but Nixon Road and Green Road. During peak hours exiting/entering for these homes will be monstrous. You need to provide gaps in traffic for the residents of cul-d-sac neighborhoods to get out of their neighborhoods.
  - Is repaving Dhu Varren part of the project? A *repaving project on Dhu Varren from the railroad to just west of the intersection is presently scheduled for 2015.*
  - My concern is about pedestrian/cyclist access from Dhu Varren. How far west will sidewalks and bike lanes run? And will they be proper bike lanes and not glorified shoulders as they are now? *Post meeting clarification: The currently
proposed improvement are specific to the intersection; however, there are existing bicycle lanes along Dhu Varren Road west of the wetlands. The markings designating these bicycle lanes appear to have been placed in accordance with the policies and procedures in place at the time of their marking.

- **Scope of Study/ Corridor evaluation needed**
  - Disappointed the study didn’t include all of Nixon. The current bike lanes stop, the sidewalks stop, there is poor visibility over hill near Haverhill Court on Nixon. There should be a comprehensive study from M-14 to Bluett or even Huron Parkway. An operational and safety study is currently being conducted by the developer in this corridor. Sidewalk gaps are being filled for safe rides to school; bike lanes are dependent on road width and will be looked at when planning occurs; sign distance concerns are being reviewed. A traffic impact study on the whole corridor could be conducted to consider all analyses being completed by the City of Ann Arbor and developers, since they are required.
  - Support for a full study of the corridor- concern that school children can’t cross Nixon already, right now. Please take school children crossing into consideration. The improvements must protect the resident’s interests. We acknowledge the need to improve compliance with the requirement that drivers stop for pedestrians.
  - The entire Nixon Road corridor needs to be studied for improvements. We understand there is an interest to study the whole corridor.
  - Concern that we are not looking at the entire corridor. Opposition toward the piecemeal approach. Expect for better analysis of problem. There is a real safety problem near Logan and Clague schools.
  - There is very limited sight distance at Gettysburg; a signal is needed at the intersection to stop cars.
  - This piecemeal approach to studying the intersection and the rest of the Nixon Road corridor benefits the developers and is not what residents want or expect. You must look at entire corridor now. The traffic impact study completed by the developers goes from the intersection all the way down Nixon to Plymouth. We review and check their work and see if it is correct. The city staff reviews the analysis.
  - Our message is clear; we need an integrated study for corridor. City Council should direct the staff to get a full study right away. Did anyone check Nixon Farms and Woodbury Club data and reports? The Nixon Farms and Woodbury Club developers have provided the traffic impact studies that they completed to City of Ann Arbor staff to review, it is a process done over time. Data and reports were provided from the developers to the City and have been checked and approved by the City.
  - What I heard today is that the current intersection is not acceptable and will still be unacceptable even with the improvements. The study’s premise is incorrect. The residents expect to get an excellent LOS from the
improvements. Please stop the study. A new, comprehensive study should focus on the next 10 years.

- Make the Toll Brothers and Woodbury Club development traffic analyses (claimed to be at the corridor level) publicly available.
- This is an incomplete study and needs to be more comprehensive in regards to the greater. I don’t trust estimates made from Toll brothers!
## APPENDIX A: Sign-in Sheet:

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- Allen Oberhauser  
- Barbara Underwood  
- Shuei Ng  
- Shuwei Ma  
- Ray Chay  
- John Cardwell  
- Kay Miene  
- Bill Milne  
- Sandy & Rod Smith  
- Jon S. 
- Kenneth Hillenbug  
- Richard & Ann Doughty  
- Rika Goldblatt  
- Sara Bryesk  
- Sonia Chawla