

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Amber Miller, Ann Arbor DDA Planner
Regarding: 611 East University drive opening variance
Date: 1.20.2017

After reviewing the 611 E. University project plans and discussing the project with planning and engineering staff we support the developer's variance request for the reasons outlined below.

The South University area is a special commercial district within downtown Ann Arbor. As with many downtown streets, its success depends on vibrant ground floor retail and a walkable, safe environment. Driveway openings interrupt this enjoyable experience and should be limited; pre-existing drives should be as narrow as practical.

611 East University seeks to limit the width of its existing driveway opening to 20 feet to coordinate with the 20-foot driveway needed for service access. Current code requires a 24-foot opening for projects of this nature. Meeting this requirement would cause the project to take up an additional four feet of sidewalk and curb space for an over-sized opening for the driveway.

It is our understanding that this 24-foot requirement will soon be removed from zoning code to accommodate new best practices and encourage narrower openings. In the interim, we support the request from the 611 E. University team to seek a variance to install a 20-foot drive opening.