

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of September 19, 2023

**SUBJECT: The Village of Ann Arbor Zoning and Site Plan
(Located at 1710 Dhu Varren and within the southeast quadrant of Pontiac Trail and Dhu Varren Road)
Project No. REZ23-0005, and SP23-0009**

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Village of Ann Arbor R4A Zoning and Site Plan (located at 1710 Dhu Varren and within the southeast quadrant of Pontiac Trail and Dhu Varren Road).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the site plan because the project complies with all applicable local, state, and federal ordinances, standards, and regulations; will not cause a public or private nuisance; and will not have a detrimental effect on public health, safety, and welfare.

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed R4A zoning because it is consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan: Land Use Element and is compatible with zoning in the surrounding area.

LOCATION

This site is located east of Pontiac Trail and south of Dhu Varren Road in the southeast quadrant of Pontiac Trail and Dhu Varren Road in the Traver Creek watershed.

DESCRIPTION OF PETITION

This petition includes an amendment to the 2022 approved site plan to add 120 apartment units in four new buildings in the northern portion of the site that is adjacent to Dhu Varren Road. The new development will include an amenities park area and parking area. Also included in this petition is a rezoning of two parcels (5.9 acres) along Pontiac Trail from Township to R4A (multiple-family residential). These parcels were annexed in 2022 with the intent to be added to the overall project. The added parcels enable the addition of the units along Dhu Varren while still meeting density and Open Space requirements.

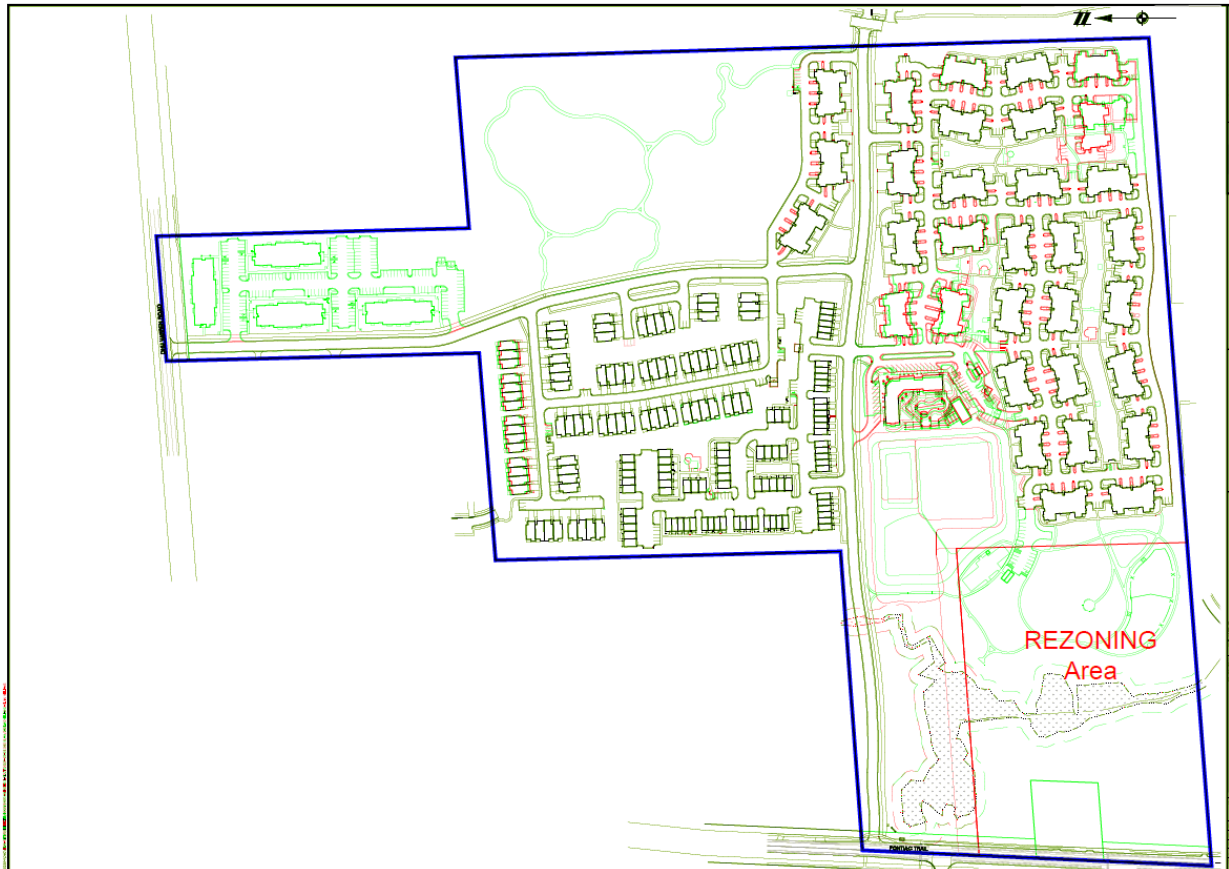
The updated plan includes a surface parking lot with 185 spaces for the new apartments. Small adjustments have been made to the buildings and drive aisles in the southern apartment section to enhance circulation (see plan below). These changes don't increase impervious surface or affect natural features. With more land included, a park area has been added to the west of the apartments, offering walking paths, community gardens, a dog park and open spaces. The petitioner is also working with Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) to introduce walking trails in the former landfill area, now reflected on the plan.

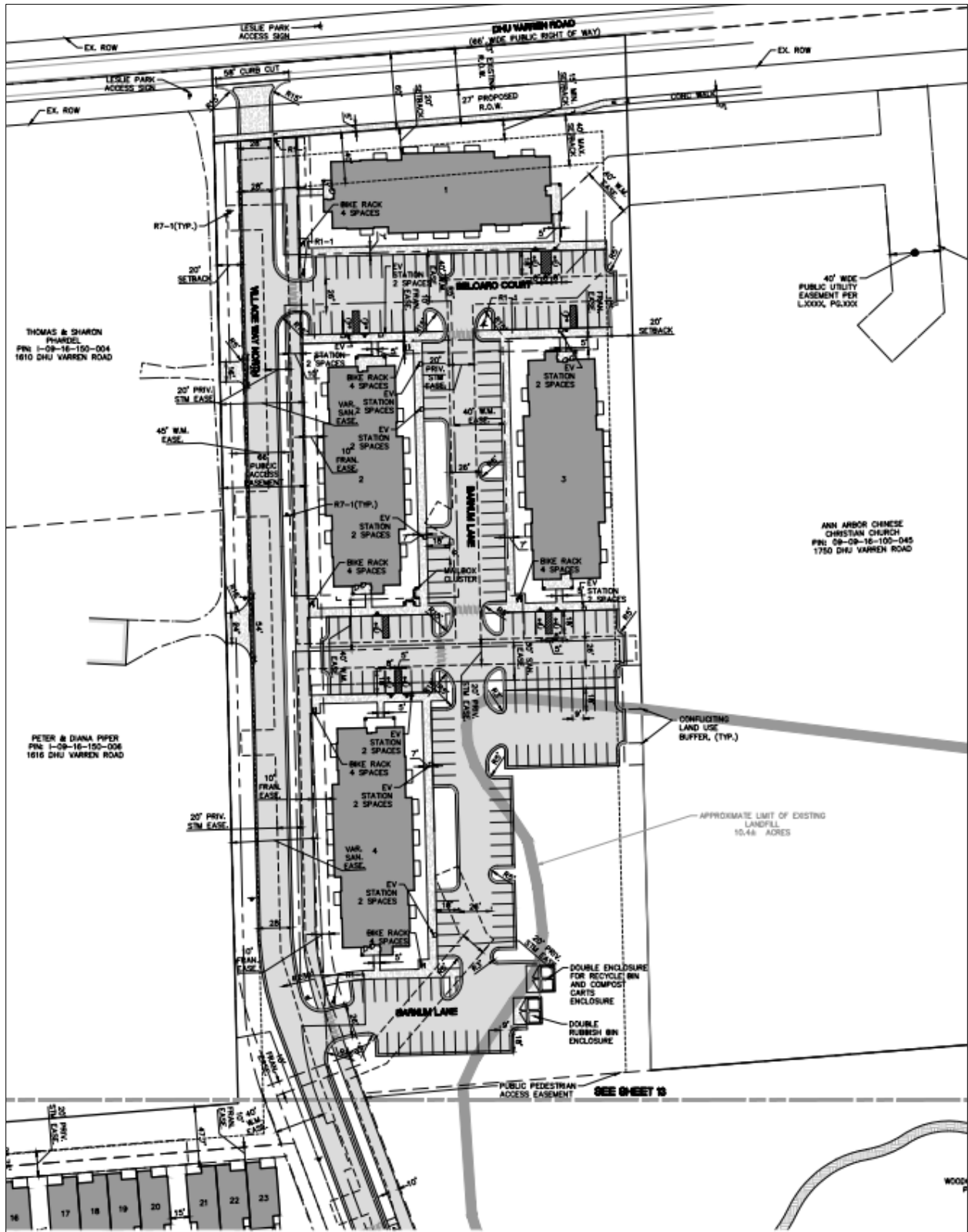
The originally approved plan from September 2022 outlined 484 residential units: 164 for-sale townhomes and 320 rental apartments, spread over approximately 68 acres. After approval of

The Village of Ann Arbor Site Plan and R4A Zoning
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this petition, the proposal will encompass 604 units on a 78.5 acre site. The complete site development is shown in the graphic below.

All new features are show in lime green text, and the rezoning area is outlined in red.





Amendment to the site plan

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

	LAND USE	ZONING
NORTH	Single Family, Church	PUD (Planned Unit Development), R1C (Single Family), R4A (Multiple Family), and Township
EAST	Single Family, Park	R4A and PL (Public Land)
SOUTH	Multiple Family	R4A and PL
WEST	Multiple Family	PUD, R4A, and Township

COMPARISON CHART

		EXISTING	PROPOSED	REQUIRED
Zoning		Unzoned and R4A	R4A (Multiple Family)	R4A (Multiple Family)
Gross Lot Area		78.4 acres	78.4 acres	.5 acres (21,780 sq ft)
Net Lot Area (without Landfill)		66.7 acres	66.7 acres	.5 acres
Setbacks	Front (North)	None	20 ft	15 ft MIN 40ft MAX
	Side(s)	None	30 ft (East) 27 ft (West)	29.60 ft MIN (East) 26.25 ft MIN (West) (includes additional setback for building length above 50 feet)
	Rear	None	67.83 ft (South)	36.25 ft MIN (includes additional setback for building length above 50 feet)
Height		NA	35 ft (mid-point)	35 ft MAX
Parking - Automobiles		0 spaces	1,051 spaces (667 garage, 384 surface) EV-C: 378 EV-R: 567 EV-I: 106 (100% of garage spaces will be EV-R or EV-I)	0 spaces MIN 90% EV-C (or greater) 10% EV-I
Parking – Bicycles		0 spaces	667 spaces – Class A 78 spaces – Class C	65 spaces – Class A 65 spaces – Class C

HISTORY

Substantial areas on the site have been used for landfill purposes in the middle part of the 20th century. No structure currently exists on the site. The original site plan, annexations and zoning were approved in January 2023.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element recommends residential uses on the site with densities of between 7-10 dwelling units per acre. A mixture of housing type is recommended including stacked, multi-family units and townhomes which is consistent with the recommendations of the Land Use Element. The petitioner is currently providing a density of 9.1 dwelling units per acre.

SERVICE UNIT COMMENTS

Planning – Staff supports the addition of extra units to the site and the rezoning of the additional parcels to R4A. The minor modifications to the previously approved plan do not result in any additional impact to natural features or added impervious surface. The site is highly challenged because of the existing landfill conditions. The petitioner is proposing a path system through the wooded landfill area to provide walking opportunities if permitted by EGLE. Staff supports the proposed access easement to Leslie Park which will provide members of the public additional recreational opportunities. Planning supports the proposed uses and density of the project since they are consistent with the approved Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element.

Transportation Impact – The petitioner provided updated trip generation information based on the additional units on the site. No additional traffic improvements were required beyond the scope of the original recommendations.

Storm Water – The plan has received preliminary approval from the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission.

Park Fee-in Lieu – The petitioner has agreed to contribute park donation for the project. The current number of dwelling units proposed is 604 which would result in a contribution of \$377,500. The funds would be used for improvements to nearby parks such as Leslie or Olson Parks.

Sustainability Initiatives – The petitioner is proposing the following sustainability initiatives as part of the overall project:

- All 164 'for-sale' units will be 100% electric, no natural gas connection.
- All buildings and homes within the project will include electric cooking appliances and washers & dryers.
- Each unit will include a 220v plug to accommodate a future electric furnace or heat pump. The electric grid for the project will be sized for future transition to all electric power.
- Solar power will provide electricity for street lights and parking area lighting. Solar panels will also be provided on the clubhouse to provide electricity.
- Energy Star rated appliances will be provided including ranges, dishwashers, microwaves, refrigerators, and stackable washers/dryers.
- Plumbing fixtures will be "Watersense" labeled including toilets (1.28 gpf), bath faucets, kitchen faucets, and shower heads.

- Construction contractors will partner with Recycle Ann Arbor for off-site sorting of recyclable material which can reduce landfill material by 50%.
- All garages will have EV-Ready or EV-Installed infrastructure.
- The building envelope systems will include a “performance method” of sealing (2 stage energy sealing followed by a blower test). Code requires less than 4.0 air changes per hour at 50 pascal. The proposed townhomes are designed to have less than 3.0 air changes per hour.
- Non-motorized infrastructure is proposed including a 10 foot wide non-motorized path from Pontiac Trail to Leslie Park. Additionally, the petitioner is proposing to provide an AAATA bus shelter with four bicycle parking spaces near the main entrance on Pontiac Trail.

Citizen Participation – The petitioner held a Citizen Participation meeting on March 27, 2023 via Zoom prior to submitting the site plan. A total of 1,263 post cards were mailed to adjoining residents. Twelve individuals attended the meeting. The main items of discussion included: traffic mitigation, access, landscaping, building height and setbacks, and sustainability opportunities. The petitioner also had a follow-up meeting with neighbors on August 18, 2021. The Citizen Participation report is attached.

Development Agreement – A development agreement for the overall site development plan was drafted to address a variety of development related issues including transportation mitigation, park contribution, park access, and wetland mitigation. This agreement is in review by the City Attorney's Office.

Prepared by Matt Kowalski
Reviewed by Brett Lenart
9/14/23

Attachments: Parcel and Zoning Map
Aerial Photo
[Site Plan](#)
[Citizen Participation Report](#)

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Systems Planning
Project Management
Project No. REZ23-0005; SP23-0009

