



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Matthew Kowalski, City Planner and Julia Shake, City Planner

DATE: May 7, 2024

SUBJECT: PUD Pre-Petition Conference
1146 South Maple Road PUD (Hickory Way III)

A pre-petition conference is a required step to applying and receiving approval for a new PUD (Planned Unit Development) Zoning District or amending existing PUD Supplemental Regulations. This PUD conference discusses the request to designate 1146 South Maple Road as a PUD. The parcel is currently within Scio Township and does not have a City of Ann Arbor zoning designation. An annexation proposal request is also pending and will run parallel with this PUD request.

Background

The proposed project site is a 45,200 sq ft parcel on the west side of South Maple Road, between Liberty Road and Pauline Boulevard. Currently containing a single-family home in Scio Township, the site is planned for annexation into Ann Arbor and rezoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD) for a multi-family residential building. Surrounding uses include multi-family residential to the north and east, and Hansen Nature Area city park to the south and west. Avalon Housing proposes to develop and own the parcel, purchasing it from the City of Ann Arbor after site plan approval and funding. The proposed 4-story building would include elevator access to upper floors and common interior hallways, and feature:

- 39 one-bedroom units of 1,050 sq ft each
- 20 parking spaces (18 electric vehicle capable, 2 electric vehicle installed)
- 10 bicycle parking spaces (6 Type A, 4 Type B)
- Total of 37,451 sq ft of floor area

The proposed affordable housing development would target low-income tenants earning up to 60% of Area Median Income. Up to 35% of units would be designated as supportive housing for formerly unhoused residents. All units are planned to meet affordability standards.

Petitioner Justification for PUD Zoning

In their PUD application, the petitioner states that the purpose and additional benefit for the City of the proposed PUD is:

“Given the dire need for affordable housing in Ann Arbor and broader Washtenaw County, the developer believes the PUD designation will be pivotal in addressing the creation of this new housing.”

In their PUD Application, the petitioner justifies the need for using a PUD and not another zoning designation in that:

“...the PUD designation will allow the development team to flexibly respond to the density requirements necessary to create a sustainable low-income housing development, while also making best use of the existing site features and acreage.”

The petitioner, in their application, states that the proposed PUD is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan states:

“There are four single-family homes fronting on Maple Road, leaving a long, narrow portion at the rear that could potentially be divided and developed. Multiple-family uses exist across Maple Road, and Hansen Park is immediately south of this site. I-94 is the western boundary, while the Pinelake Village Cooperative is to the north. It is recommended that a high density, single-family subdivision be created. Single-family development at this location will serve to provide diversity in the area and offer additional housing options. A secondary recommendation would be the expansion of the Pinelake Village Cooperative housing development onto this site. Higher density multiple family uses of this nature are appropriate if affordable housing is being provided. This would serve as an additional opportunity to provide affordable housing in the neighborhood. The woodlands on the western portion of the site should be protected and appropriate buffering from I-94 should be included in the site design. The Parks and Recreation Department requests the provision of an access easement through the site to Hansen Park.”

Staff Analysis

The project site is adjacent to multi-family residential zoning, and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element recommends multi-family development for this area. Based on this existing context and the Plan's guidance, staff suggest comparing a potential PUD against the R4E (Multiple-Family Dwelling) District as an alternate existing zoning district for this development. This is the only R zone which would accommodate the proposed density.

The Unified Development Code describes the R4E district as:

"intended to permit high-density, Multiple-Family development along signature transit corridors, as identified in the City's Master Plan, with nearby access to public land, schools, shops, and Personal Services outside the DDA boundary. The elements of land use planning and Site design should ensure that the impact of such intensity of land use on adjacent property and on the community as a whole is minimized."

Applying the R4E standards presents some challenges for achieving the petitioners desired project layout. While the project could meet the standard 10-foot side setback on the north side of the proposed project, the building's length and height trigger additional setback provisions requiring 28 feet on the sides. Meeting this on the north side of the proposed building and within R4E would likely necessitate modifying the proposed site plan, either by decreasing the building footprint and therefore unit count, or eliminating on-site parking south of the proposed building. A significant detail is that the adjacent property to the north is also an Avalon Housing property where Hickory Way Phase I and II are located; these buildings will have a common owner and manager.

A PUD offers the petitioner more flexibility on setbacks. Reducing the side setback to 10 feet within a PUD would allow retaining the proposed 20 on-site parking spaces and/or 39 residential units. The trade-off presented to the Planning Commission is whether to utilize a PUD and its flexibility to allow the desired layout, or reject the PUD petition in favor of applying R4E zoning which could require eliminating some parking, decreasing proposed units, or other unforeseen modifications to meet the larger setbacks.

Increasing affordable housing availability is a priority for the city and is also an explicit purpose of PUD District (5.13.9 UDC).

PUD Process

As provided in Section 5.29.11 of the Unified Development Code, the PUD process involves five steps: citizen participation, a pre-application conference with staff, a pre-petition conference with Planning Commission, PUD zoning district review and PUD site plan review. Staff began working with the applicant several months ago and continue to guide them through the application preparation, submittal, review, and approval process. At pre-petition conferences with the Planning Commission, applicants present the proposed conceptual plan and development program. The Planning Commission may offer *“their comments regarding the appropriateness of the proposed land uses, the proposal’s conformance with adopted master plan and policies, and the beneficial effects to be achieved”* (5.29.11.C.3).

F. Standards for PUD Zoning District Review⁹⁹

The Planning Commission shall recommend approval, approval with conditions, or denial, and City Council shall approve or deny the proposed PUD zoning district based on the following standards:

1. The use(s), physical characteristics, design features, or amenities proposed shall have a beneficial effect for the City, in terms of public health, safety, welfare, aesthetics, or convenience, or any combination of those impacts, on present and potential surrounding land uses. The beneficial effects for the City that warrant the zoning include, but are not limited to, features such as:
 - a. Innovation in land use and variety in design, layout and type of Structures that furthers the stated design goals and physical character of adopted land use plans and policies.
 - b. Economy and efficiency of land use, natural resources, energy, and provision of public services and utilities.
 - c. Provision of Open Space.
 - d. Preservation and protection of Natural Features that exceeds the requirements of this chapter, especially for those features prioritized in this chapter as being of highest concern, or that preserves existing conditions instead of merely providing mitigation.
 - e. Employment and shopping opportunities particularly suited to the needs of the residents of the City.
 - f. Expansion of the supply of Affordable Housing Dwelling Units.
 - g. The use and reuse of existing Sites and Buildings that contributes to the desired character and form of an established neighborhood.

UDC section 5.29.11.F

Attachments: PUD Pre-Petition Conference Application Form
 Site Plan (includes Site Data Charts)
 Zoning Comparison Table