



TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Milton Dohoney Jr., City Administrator

CC: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator
John Fournier, Deputy City Administrator
Brett Lenart, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: January 22, 2024 Council Agenda Response Memo

DATE: January 18, 2024

C - 1 – An Ordinance to Amend Sections 5.20.3, 5.20.4 and 5.20.6 of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor (Conflicting Land Use Buffer) - CPC Recommendation: Approval (6 yes, 0 no)

Question: For the agenda item on "Unified Development Code Amendment (Conflicting Land Use Buffer)" could staff please provide examples where the current requirements create undesirable consequences that will be improved by the changes? (Councilmember Akmon)

Response: 132 Hill Street (trakit SP18-014) is site plan approved in 2018 for a six-unit apartment on an 11,446-square foot lot measuring 66 feet wide by 173 feet deep zoned R4C and surrounded by the same. An 8-space vehicle parking lot was proposed at the rear of the site accessed by a 24-foot wide driveway shared with 140 Hill Street, adjacent to the east. A 15-foot conflicting land use buffer was required along both sides and the rear of the site because it is zoned R4 and abutting residential uses. The required buffer would have used 30 of the 66 feet of lot width and would have made a shared driveway impossible. A variance was granted to eliminate one side of the required conflicting land use buffer in order to approve the proposed site plan.

A few years later, 140 Hill Street (trakit SP21-040) also proposed a site plan for a similar redevelopment of a four-unit apartment building on a 9,006-square foot lot measuring 66 feet wide by 132 deep zoned R4C and surrounded by the same. It already shared a driveway with 132 Hill Street. Again, a current conflicting land use buffer was required along both sides and the rear of the site taking up 30 of the 66 feet of lot width. The shared

driveway would have needed to be removed and relocated inside of the 140 Hill Street site but leaving an unusable remanent on the 132 Hill Street side. That site plan was ultimately withdrawn because of a code amendment allowing up to four dwelling units to be built prior to site plan approval and a variance was granted to eliminate one side of the conflicting buffer and retain the shared driveway intact for use by both lots.

Together, these two projects illustrate the density inefficiency and unnecessary for conflicting land use buffers for parcels zoned R4 adjacent to parcels used for residential purposes. A six-unit apartment building and a four-unit apartment building, each on a 66-foot wide lot in the R4C district, each require a 15-foot buffer on the sides and rear because they are defined as conflicting land uses. If a buffer was provided as required, those apartment buildings would be at least 30 feet apart from each other and could never share a driveway.