

April 11, 2012

Dear City Council Members,

We are writing to you concerning the petition to rezone 1320 South University from D2 to D1, which is on your agenda for first reading on April 16, 2012. We are very much against this petition and strongly support the unanimous vote of the Planning Commission and the Planning Department staff report that both recommended that it be denied.

We live at 1321 Forest Court, a single-family residential property that abuts 1320 South University on the south. Our family has lived in this house since 1982, or thirty years. This length of time hardly describes us as transient, as the owners of 1320 South University portray the population of our neighborhood.

During the long and carefully considered A2D2 planning process, the City decided that residential properties would have an interface zone of smaller buildings designated D2 between them and the denser D1 areas. Our house has only one property that buffers it from the D1, 14-story 601 Forest or Landmark project, now under construction. If 1320 South University were to be rezoned as D1, this would strip away any buffer between the small residential houses of Forest Court, as well as of the adjoining neighborhood, and dense D1 development on South University. We would have no interface and no buffer at all, violating one of the main principles of the A2D2 Plan.

The staff report closely examines the history and rationale for the D2 designation for this property and the merits of the petitioner's request. It repeatedly finds that the designation of D2 was and is warranted by the A2D2 plan and that it was very carefully considered in full by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2009. There was and is no error, despite the petitioner's claims, in designating 1320 South University as D2. As the staff report states, there have been no changes in our neighborhood in the short time since A2D2 was adopted that would in any way support the petitioner's claims.

The owners of 1320 South University have petitioned at least twice before to have their property rezoned D1. Their request has been carefully considered by the Planning Commission and by City Council and has been rejected. No changes have occurred in our neighborhood since their request was last denied. We therefore see no reason for the owners' petition to be granted. We urge each of you to support the unanimous Planning Commission vote and the strong recommendation of the Planning Department and to deny this petition.

Respectfully,
Marc Gerstein and Eleanor Linn
1321 Forest Court
Ann Arbor 48104