

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of March 18, 2014

**SUBJECT: 278-280 Collingwood Site Plan for City Council Approval
(278-280 Collingwood Drive)
File No. SP13-059**

UPDATED STAFF REPORT

After the staff report for this project was completed for the packet, Planning received comments from the Urban Forest and Natural Resource Planning Coordinator that the required shrubs for the right-of-way buffer and the required tree for the interior parking landscaping should not be planted in the critical root zone of the two landmark trees located at the northeast corner of the parking lot. As suggested by staff, the petitioner submitted a Landscape Modification request to relocate these proposed plantings from the critical root zones of the trees and to areas south of the driveway and along the edge of the proposed entry walkway to this site.

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends the Mayor and City Council approve the proposed landscape modifications according to Chapter 62 (Landscape and Screening Ordinance), Section 5:608 (1)(a), subject to planting of the required landscaping materials in alternative locations, as recommended by the Urban Forest and Natural Resources Planning Coordinator.

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the 278-280 Collingwood Site Plan.

Staff recommends that the proposed landscape modification be **approved** because the changes are consistent with the intent of the ordinance and protect the health of the existing landmark trees.

Staff recommends that the site plan be **approved** because, with the requested modifications, it would comply with all local, state and federal laws and regulations; the development would limit the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land; and the development would not cause a public or private nuisance and would not have a detrimental effect on public health, safety or welfare.

LANDSCAPE MODIFICATION: STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL

Flexibility in the application of the landscape and screening regulations may be allowed if certain standards are met. The modifications must be consistent with the intent of Chapter 62; be included on a site plan and in a motion approved by the City Planning Commission or City Council; and be associated with specific site conditions as listed in Section 5:608(2)(c).

Petitioner responses in regular text.

1. What are the specific site conditions that necessitate this request and how do they warrant the modifications of Chapter 62 requirements? (See Section 5:608(2)(c)) List relevant subsection and explain how and to what extent the modifications are justified.

The landscaping proposed for the right-of-way screening and the tree required for the interior parking lot landscaping requires planting in the critical root zone of two existing landmark trees, which would damage the root systems.

2. How does the proposal meet the spirit and intent of Chapter 62? (See Section 5:600)

There is landscaping proposed to meet the requirements where feasible without damaging the critical root systems of the existing landmark trees, namely on the south side of the existing driveway along the proposed walk, and along the northern property line where existing pavement is being removed.

STAFF COMMENTS

Systems Planning – Urban Forest and Natural Resource Planning – Staff supports the landscape modification request submitted by the petitioner to waive the required interior landscape and right-of-way landscaping requirements in the area north of the southern curb cut to protect the two landmark trees located in this area. The majority of trees roots are within the first 18-inches of the soil and the planting of landscaping within the critical root zone of these landmark trees can damage the root system and adversely affect the health of these trees. The petitioner is proposing more trees and shrubs in the right-of-way buffer on the south side of the driveway than are required.

Prepared by Chris Cheng
Reviewed By Wendy Rampson
3/18/14

Attachments: 3/17/14 Revised Landscape Plan
3/18/14 Planning Staff Report

c: Systems Planning