

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For Planning Commission Meeting of July 7, 2020**

**SUBJECT: Liberty Townhomes Site Plan for City Council Approval  
2658 West Liberty Street  
Project No. SP19-020**

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Liberty Townhomes Site Plan and Development Agreement.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Liberty Townhomes Site Plan and development agreement be **approved** because it complies with all applicable local, state, and federal ordinances, standards and regulations; it does not cause a public or private nuisance; it does not have a detrimental effect on public health, safety or welfare; and, the development would limit disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land.

**SUMMARY:**

This project is a site plan for 52 dwelling units in 9 three-story buildings on a 4.6-acre site zoned R4B (Multiple-Family Dwelling). Each unit has a garage on the ground level with space for two vehicles (just one of which counts toward the off-street parking requirement because they are in tandem). There are an additional 53 surface parking spaces along the driveway. The site has 105 required off-street parking spaces and can unofficially accommodate 157 vehicle in all.

The site plan application was postponed by the Planning Commission following a public hearing at its June 2, 2020 meeting. Staff recommended postponing to allow time to review a newly prepared driveway for the site which addressed access requirements for emergency vehicles. Staff has since found the proposed driveway to meet the International Fire Code for access. Additional improvements are also included in the proposed development for even better design controls to restrict turning movements, responding to Transportation Engineering concerns.

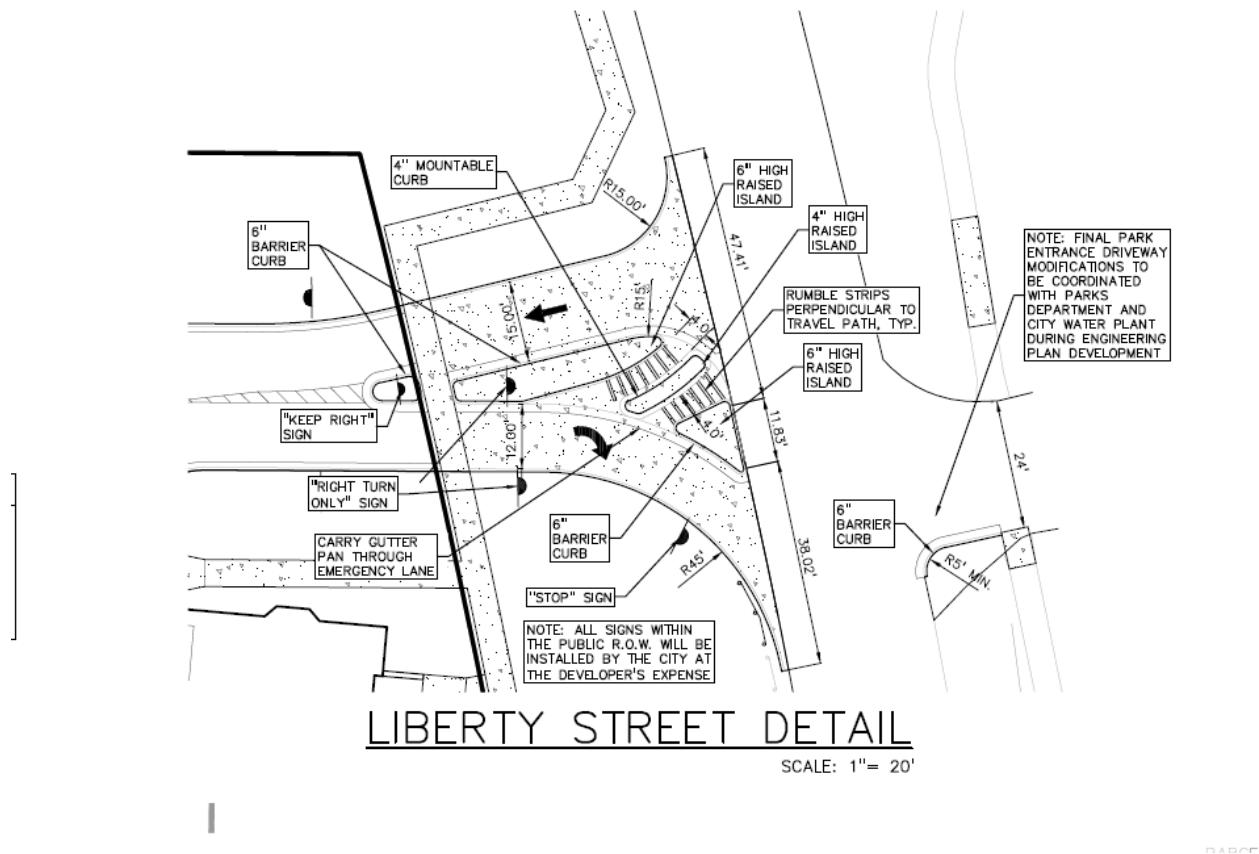
A development agreement has been newly prepared to address traffic controls as well as a parkland contribution and sidewalk gap completion beyond the site.

**REPORT:**

Driveway Design – Staff found the previous driveway design, restricting left-turns out of the site because there is not enough sight-distance to the Liberty Street bridge over I-94, did not allow emergency vehicles to return to service in an acceptable timeframe. Staff and the Planning Commission also expressed concern about driver behavior and not respecting the left-turn restrictions.

The applicant's engineer has designed a driveway treatment to direct vehicles to exit right onto Liberty but allow large wheel base vehicles such as fire trucks and ambulances to exit left if needed. As before, the guard rail across the site will be pulled back for the new driveway opening. In addition, this project will reconstruct the driveway approach to South Maple Park across the street from this site to be a narrower, curbed approach. Pavement will be removed from the park driveway's west side so that it is further offset from the Liberty Townhomes driveway.

Figure 1 - Proposed Driveway Treatment Detail (Site Plan #4)



Staff Comments -- These changes make the proposed project comply with the International Fire Code standards, specifically the need to turn left out of the site to return to service as quickly as possible.

Transportation Engineering continues to remind the Planning Commission that residents must turn west, away from downtown and nearby shopping and services, without a convenient way to return to easterly travel. Nearby side streets may be used to turn around.

Planning staff confirm that the proposed site plan layout meets all applicable requirements in Article IV Development Standards of the Unified Development Code, including area, height and placement regulations; parking standards; landscaping, screening, and buffering requirements;

streets and access standards; storm water management and soil erosion requirements; and natural features regulations.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo  
Reviewed by Brett Lenart  
6/26/20

Attached: June 26, 2020 Draft Development Agreement  
Site Plan #4  
June 2, 2020 Planning Staff Report

c: Applicant – MCP Liberty Devco, LLC (Tony Randazzo, 2617 Beacon Hill Dr, Auburn Hills, MI 48326)  
Applicant's Agent – PEA, Inc. (Jon Curry)  
Owner – Wickfield Properties, 230 Huronview Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
Project No. SP19-020