

# City of Detroit

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## HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

**RE:** Request of Henry Ford Health Systems to amend Article XVII, District Map 7, of the 2019 Detroit City Code Chapter 50, *Zoning* by showing a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification where an R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification is currently shown on 26 parcels generally bounded by Pallister Avenue, the John C. Lodge Freeway Service Drive, Seward Street and Poe Street. **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

## BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from Henry Ford Health Systems requesting that the City of Detroit amend Article XVII, District Map No. 7 of Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *Zoning*, to show a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification where an R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification currently exists on 26 parcels generally bounded by Pallister Avenue, the John C. Lodge Freeway Service Drive, Seward Street and Poe Street.

The subject property is currently developed with a surface parking lot with approximately 300 parking spaces. The property is located on the city's west side in City Council District 5.

### ***Proposed Development***

Henry Ford Health Systems (HFHS) proposes to build and operate a new parking structure, generally for employees who currently park in surface lots several blocks away and are shuttled to the main hospital. The proposed garage would consist of seven levels and accommodate approximately 2,000 vehicles. Previously, a garage for the hospital's shuttle busses was proposed on the northernmost portion of the site adjacent to Seward Street; but that has been eliminated from the proposal. That portion will remain a surface parking lot as shown on the submitted plans.

A landscaped setback of 14-30 feet is proposed around the new structure, similar to the existing setback of the parking lot. The proposed structure would be clad primarily with brick and concrete panels with some metal panels on the stair towers. The brick coordinates with surrounding structures which are primarily brick, and the concrete panels echo the cladding of the adjacent apartment building to the west.

### ***Public Hearing – June 20, 2019***

On June 20, 2019 the City Planning Commission (CPC) held a 5:15 P.M. public hearing on the subject rezoning. Four members of the public spoke, all in opposition. They were generally concerned with additional air pollution, blockage of sunlight and views, increased taxes, decreased property value, security and storm water management. Questions were also raised regarding whether the parking structure could be built in another location that isn't immediately adjacent to residential dwellings.

### ***Community Outreach***

In preparation for the City Planning Commission public hearing, HFHS walked the neighborhood surrounding the proposed parking garage to discuss the project with residents. HFHS then held four public meetings throughout summer and fall of 2019 to receive feedback from neighbors and propose alterations to the project. Additional details about the meetings such as dates and locations are included in the attached memo from HFHS.

As a result of feedback received from neighbors, HFHS made several alterations to the proposal and offered additional benefits to the surrounding community:

- The northernmost portion of the garage that would house the shuttle busses was eliminated.
- The north façade was redesigned based on neighborhood feedback to include more brick and smaller openings.
- A row of trees was added between the garage and the alley.
- HFHS will partner with neighbors to beautify the alley between the proposed garage and the homes on Seward Street.
- A sunlight study was conducted to explore the amount of sunlight that would be blocked by the proposed structure.
- HFHS offered to pay the fees for the neighborhood to participate in the residential parking permit program (which would restrict or eliminate employee parking on the surrounding residential streets).
- Health and wellness classes will be offered at Lexington Village (the apartment building to the west) and open to all neighbors.
- Initially, extensive construction was thought to be required in the alley to re-route a water main. HFHS did additional research and found that the water line could be re-routed to the south, thus preventing significant disruption of traffic in the alley adjacent to the Seward Street houses. Although this was not the easiest option, as HFHS was required to get an easement from Lexington Village, they felt that it would be better for the Seward Street residents.
- A representative from the City's Office of the Assessor spoke at one of the meetings regarding property values and the numerous factors that influence them.

Generally, the nearby residents did not feel that the changes addressed their concerns and continued to oppose the project. HFHS didn't see any further opportunity for compromise or that any additional conversation would be productive. Last fall and winter, several community members appeared before Your Honorable Body during public comment to speak in opposition to the project.

CPC staff continued to meet with HFHS representatives to get a better understanding of their near and longer term development needs and to find a compromise that would resolve the parking issue without the majority of the impact affecting a few residents. HFHS provided additional context regarding recent developments such as the construction of the Cancer Center and the sale of several parking lots for development by other entities. CPC staff requested the submission of additional information to provide more context, including:

1. A **comprehensive vision and master plan** for the entire hospital campus and all properties under HFHS control in order to provide the City with documentation to evaluate the hospital's needs and corresponding requests;
2. A **parking study** establishing current and projected parking demands and exploring the means by which to address them;
3. A **traffic study** reflecting the current and projected future needs of the hospital including options such as street closures to segregate traffic and protect the surrounding neighborhood;
4. A **redesign of the proposed parking structure** to be lower in height, stepping down to meet the neighborhood. Also, to ensure ample intake capacity at the southern entrance and proper traffic flow along Pallister Avenue;
5. **Additional engagement** with the immediately impacted community members including appropriate City agencies such as City Planning Commission and Planning and Development Department staff.

HFHS discussed each of these requests but declined to submit additional information. They concluded that the proposed parking garage is already the minimum size that would be reasonable for the project and any further decrease would render the project infeasible. Staff had hoped the submission of the requested information would fully justify the current request, while presenting the City and general public with a better understanding of the future needs and plans.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Surrounding Zoning and Land Use***

The zoning classification and land uses surrounding the subject area are as follows:

North:	R3 (Low Density Residential) – Child Care Center, Residential Dwellings
East:	John C. Lodge Freeway (immediately adjacent) Across freeway – R1 (Single Family Residential) and SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed-Use) – Vacant Elementary School, Union Hall
South:	R6 (High Density Residential) – Parking Structure (owned by Henry Ford Hospital)
West:	PD (Planned Development) and R3 (Low Density Residential) – Multi-Family Dwelling (12 story, Lexington Village Apartments), Single Family Dwelling

### ***Zoning Ordinance Approval Criteria***

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact. *The proposed amendment does meet the challenge of a changing condition. The hospital needs additional on-site parking to replace surface parking lots which have been sold for development and to accommodate the repair or replacement of existing parking structures which are nearing the end of their useful life.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. *While the proposed amendment may harm the residents directly adjacent to the site by reducing access to natural light and adding to traffic congestion and vehicle emissions; the general public will benefit from the map amendment due to decreased hospital parking on residential streets, and more generally by the continued presence of the hospital.*

- Whether the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, including air, water, soil, wildlife, and vegetation and with respect to anticipated changes in noise and regarding stormwater management. *The proposed development will have a positive impact on stormwater management as the site currently drains to the combined sewer system and the proposed parking garage would mitigate stormwater run-off onsite as required. The proposed development also will have slightly more landscaping than the current surface parking lot as additional trees are specified along the alley where none currently exist.*

As a PD district, this proposal is also subject to the approval criteria in Section 50-3-96. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- Whether the subject site covers a minimum of two acres of contiguous land under the control of one owner or group of owners; and is capable of being planned and developed as one integral unit. *Yes, the site meets the size requirement and will be one development.*
- That no other zoning district classification would be more appropriate. *No existing zoning district would allow a parking structure of this size by-right.*
- That the development will result in a recognizable and substantial benefit to the ultimate users of the project and to the City, where such benefits would otherwise be unfeasible or unlikely to be achieved. *Urban planning theory generally promotes parking structures over surface parking lots as creating more walkable areas and better urban design. As this proposed parking structure will eliminate the need for several surface parking lots in the area, it is beneficial to the City. The intended users of the parking structure will benefit by being able to park closer to the hospital and not having to spend additional time shuttling back and forth.*
- Whether the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate. *There are several other properties in the area that are zoned PD including the apartment building directly to the west.*

### ***Master Plan Consistency***

The subject site is located within the Rosa Parks area of Neighborhood Cluster 6 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows "Institutional" & "Low-Medium Density Residential" for the subject property. The Planning & Development Department submitted a formal Master Plan interpretation that the proposed rezoning conforms to the Future General Land Use characteristics of the area.

### **CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

Henry Ford Hospital has been an important anchor and community institution for more than 100 years. As the flagship location of Henry Ford Health System, it both provides medical care for Detroit residents, and draws patients from the metropolitan region and beyond for innovative treatments and specialized care. As the campus continues to change and grow to meet staff and patient needs, additional parking capacity is essential.

Several developments in the last number of years, including the cancer center to the south and the sale of several surface parking lots for development have accelerated this parking deficit. Existing parking structures are nearing the end of their life expectancy and will require substantial rehabilitation or replacement in the next decade. On-street parking is a burden on the surrounding community. Constructing a new parking garage is necessary for the hospital to continue to serve its mission and to attract both employees and patients.

Although HFHS partially illustrated the immense need for a new parking structure, surrounding residents, businesses and property owners must also be considered. Balancing and evaluating these sometimes conflicting demands is difficult. Regarding the proposed parking garage, too much of the burden seemed to fall on just a few residents. CPC staff felt that despite a great deal of effort from HFHS representatives, that a satisfactory compromise couldn't be reached and that the rezoning should be denied. When the matter finally returned to the City Planning Commission, staff presented the project and recommendation to the Commission, they disagreed and concluded that the needed parking and benefit to the greater community outweighed the issues of the immediately impacted residents.

On February 20, 2020, the City Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of this rezoning request with the following condition:

1. That final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscape, and signage plans be submitted by the developer to the staff of the City Planning Commission for review and approval prior to submitting applications for applicable permits.

The ordinance establishing the map amendment has been reviewed and approved as to form by the Law Department and is attached for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

ALTON JAMES, CHAIRPERSON



Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director  
Jamie J. Murphy, Staff

Attachment: Rezoning Ordinance  
PDD Master Plan Interpretation  
Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations  
Memorandum from HFHS  
Sun/Shade Studies

cc: Arthur Jemison, Group Executive for Housing, Planning & Development  
Katy Trudeau, Deputy Director PDD  
Karen Gage, PDD  
David Bell, Director, BSEED  
James Foster, BSEED  
Kim James, Law Dept.  
Lawrence Garcia, Corporation Counsel