

City of Detroit

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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Christopher Gulock, AICP, Staff

RE: **Request from Hamilton Corridor, LLC to rezone part of several blocks west of Thomson Street between Ford Street to the north and the Lodge Service Drive to the south from a R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification to a M2 (Restricted Industrial) zoning classification to allow for the establishment of a parking lot for commercial vehicles**

DATE: November 30, 2020

On December 3, 2020, the City Planning Commission (CPC) is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the request of Hamilton Corridor, LLC to amend District Map No. 58 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by showing a M2 (Restricted Industrial) zoning classification where a R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification currently exists on property generally bounded by Ford Street on the north, Thomson Street/the border with the City of Highland Park on the east, the Lodge Service Drive/Auburndale Street on the south, and a north/south line approximately 120 feet west of Thomson Street on the west. Please see the attached rezoning application and public hearing notice which includes a map of the subject location.

The change in zoning is being requested to allow for the establishment of a parking lot for the parking of commercial vehicles. The parking lot would be accessory to a proposed warehouse building to be built on adjacent land within the City of Highland Park.

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

Hamilton Corridor, LLC is made up of two primary entities: the Means Group, Inc., a development company based in Detroit, and Ashley Capital, a real estate investment company based in New York with offices around the United States, including Detroit.

The subject area is generally located just north of the Davison Freeway between Hamilton Avenue on the east and the Lodge Freeway on the west. In the past, this area was primarily developed with single-family houses, but over the years, many of the houses have been

demolished. Hamilton Corridor, LLC has been acquiring and assembling approximately 27 acres of land in Highland Park and an adjacent five acres in Detroit.

Regarding land within the City of Detroit, it is a triangular-shaped area generally bounded by the north side of Ford Street on the north, Thomson Street on the east, and the Lodge Service Drive on the south. It appears this area used to contain approximately fifty houses, but only four houses remain, all of which are being acquired by the developer. There are four parcels on the western edge of the area, along the Lodge Service Drive, that the developer has not been able to acquire and are not part of the overall development.

The developer is proposing to clear the site of over thirty dangerous structures, vacate the existing internal streets, and construct a new 446,500 square foot warehouse. Please see the attached site plan for reference. The developer indicates that this is a speculative build (a tenant has not yet been identified), but it is expected the facility will be used for light assembly or logistics/distribution. The developer expects 400 to 500 new employees to be hired.

The site plan shows several parking areas surrounding the building, including employee parking to the east side along Hamilton Avenue, truck docks at the northeast corner of the building, and parking areas for commercial vehicles on the north, west, and south sides of the site. The developer is proposing landscaping surrounding the site, including expanded landscaped setbacks at the northwest and northeast corners of the site, as well as in several stormwater management areas. There will be three driveway entrance/exits to the site, including one off of Hamilton Avenue and two at the south end of the site off of Auburndale Street.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

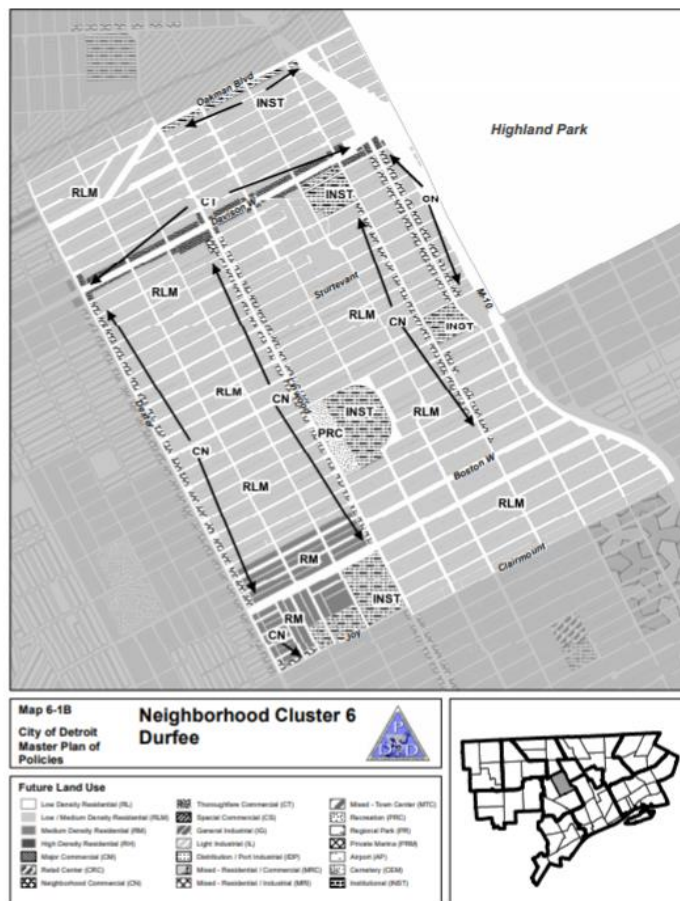
The zoning classification and land uses surrounding the subject area are as follows:

North: R2; developed with vacant land
East: R-UV (Urban Village Residential) in Highland Park; developed with vacant land
South: Intersection of John C. Lodge and Davison Freeways
West: R2; developed with vacant land

The developer is petitioning the City of Highland Park to rezone the Highland Park land from R-UV to IRD (Industrial Research and Development District).

Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Durfee area of Neighborhood Cluster 6 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows RLM Low Medium Density Residential for the subject area. CPC staff has requested the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) comment regarding the consistency of this proposal with the City's Master Plan.



Zoning Considerations

Surrounding land uses to the north include residential houses on LaBelle Street and the Village of Oakman Manor (14000 Woodrow Wilson) at the northeast corner of LaBelle Street and Woodrow Wilson. Oakman Manor is a 4-story senior building developed in a collaboration between Presbyterian Villages of Michigan and Focus Hope.

The developer is proposing to keep the western and northern edge of its development as R2, which according to the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department, allows stormwater management areas and landscaped buffering. The proposed parking area for commercial vehicles is not allowed in R2. The parking of operable commercial vehicles is first allowed as by-right in B6 (General Services District), conditional in M1 (Limited Industrial District), and by-right in M2 through M5.

Community Input

The proposed rezoning is located within City Council District 2. CPC staff has forwarded the request to Council Member McCallister Jr.'s office and the Department of Neighborhoods' District 2 representative. Prior to the CPC hearing, the developer has scheduled three virtual community meetings held on November 12, 2020, November 18, 2020, and November 30, 2020. Some of the concerns raised by the community, included:

- Acquisition of surrounding houses outside the project footprint (the developer indicated they are not actively acquiring surrounding houses, but will talk to interested sellers)

- Access to new jobs (the developer said it will work with the City of Highland Park and City of Detroit to assist with filling new jobs)
- Lighting (the developer indicated lighting will be shielded downward)
- Truck access to the site (the developer indicated trucks visiting and leaving the site would use Hamilton Avenue)
- Hours of operation (the developer indicated, because a tenant has not been selected yet, it could not rule out the warehouse operating at night)

Staff will provide a full presentation including the latest information on the proposal and community engagement at the Commission's next meeting.

Attachments: public hearing notice and application for zoning change

cc: Katy Trudeau, Interim Director PDD
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