

City of Detroit

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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Christopher Gulock, Staff

RE: **Request of the Planning and Development Department to amend the Future General Land Use map of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies for Cluster 5 for portions of land within Riverside Park and land adjacent to Riverside Park (Master Plan Change #31)**

DATE: March 1, 2021

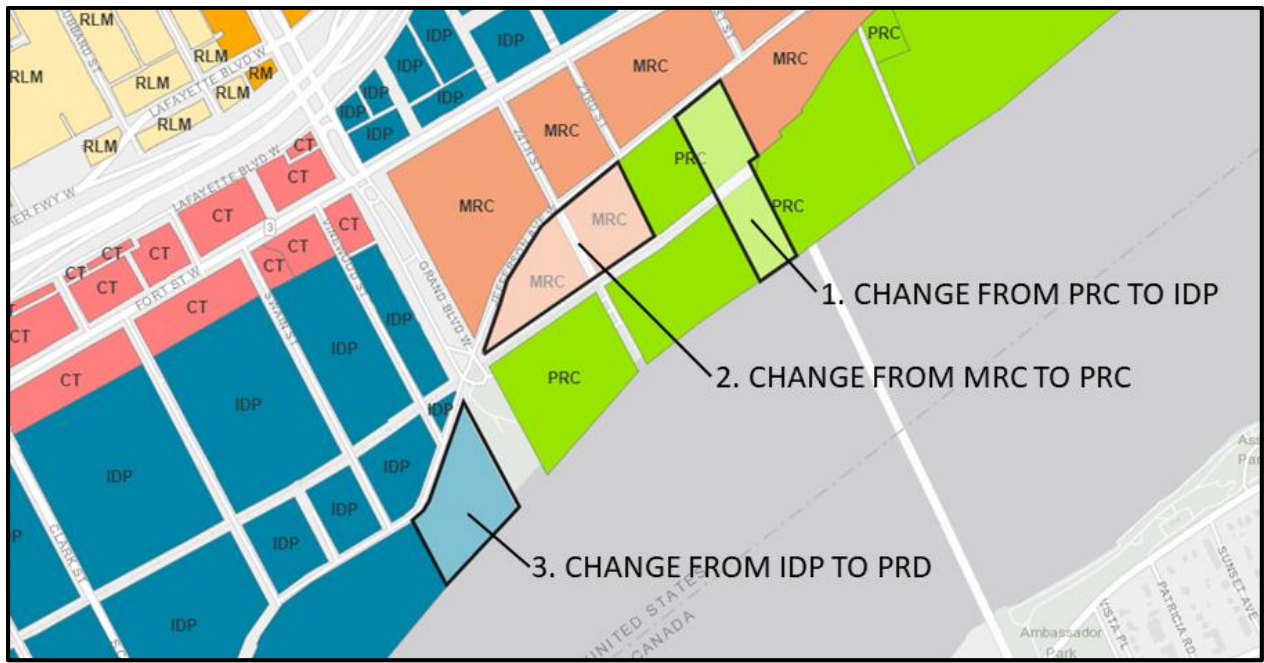
A public hearing is planned to be held at 5:15 PM on March 18, 2021 to consider the request of the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) to amend the Detroit Master Plan of Policies for portions of Riverside Park and land adjacent to Riverside Park. The P&DD report and request are attached for reference. P&DD is requesting to present the proposed change to the City Planning Commission on March 4, 2021, with the request for same day action on March 18th.

BACKGROUND

Riverside Park is in southwest Detroit and generally located at the foot of West Grand Blvd near its intersection with West Jefferson Ave. just west of the Ambassador Bridge. For the last several years, the City's General Services Department has been making improvements to the park. The existing park, which is about 20 acres, is shown below:



The park includes land along the Detroit River as well as parcels above the east/west rail line that bisects it. The park is located in Master Plan Cluster 5, the Hubbard Richard and West Riverfront Areas. The maps below show the existing Master Plan of Policies for Riverside Park which includes PRC (Recreation), MRC (Mixed-Residential/Commercial, and IDP (Distribution/Port Industrial) designations.



REQUEST

The proposed amendment includes three changes summarized as follows (more detailed maps may be found in P&DD's attached request):

1. Land within the Hubbard Richard Area of Cluster 5 at **3085 West Jefferson Ave.** (referred to as the Conversion Parcel), which is generally bounded by West Jefferson Ave., the Ambassador Bridge, the Detroit River, and 22nd St. (extended), where the Future General Land Use Map depicts a PRC land use designation would be amended to show an IDP land use designation. This site, which is owned by the City and presently developed with open recreation space, is proposed to be conveyed to the Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC) in exchange for the News Parcel (discussed later in this report as the Land Exchange Agreement).
2. Land within the Hubbard Richard Area of Cluster 5 at **3401-3601 West Jefferson Ave.**, which is generally bounded by railroad right-of-way, 23rd St., West Jefferson Ave., and West Grand Blvd., where the Future General Land Use Map depicts a MRC land use designation would be amended to show a PRC land use designation. This site, which will continue to be owned by the City, is part of Riverside Park and presently developed with a playground and accessory parking.
3. Land within the West Riverfront Area of Cluster 5 at **3801 West Jefferson Ave.** (referred to as the News Parcel), which is generally bounded by railroad right-of-way, 23rd St., West Jefferson Ave., West Grand Blvd., the Detroit River, and Swain St. (extended)

where the Future General Land Use Map depicts and IDP land use designation would be amended to show a PRC land use designation. This property is owned by the DIBC, part of the former Detroit News warehouse site, and presently vacant. This site is proposed to be conveyed to the City, in exchange for the Conversion Parcel. In return, the DIBC will provide a \$2 million grant to develop a new park at the News Parcel and to be combined with Riverside Park.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proposed Park Improvements

The following information is reported on the City’s website for Riverside Park:

In 2015, pursuant to an agreement reached between the City and the DIBC the City created a new master redevelopment plan for Riverside Park and began an extensive renovation project for the entire park. The first phase of construction was on the Northeast section of the park on West Jefferson, completed in 2018. This area is about six acres, three of which were added to the park, this includes in part a new softball diamond, soccer field, shelter, playground, basketball court, etc. In 2019, the park was expanded by an additional three acres on to the site of the former city-owned Animal Control Shelter and vacant land, adding the largest dog park in the city and a skate park. In 2020, the southeast section of the park was completed, with a renovated picnic area, boat launch, parking, horseshoe and table tennis game area, as well as new Riverwalk. Beginning in Spring 2021, the City will renovate the remaining 13 acres of the park, creating a promenade for festivals, a great lawn area, fishing boardwalks, sledding hill, picnic shelter, fitness equipment, play area and splash pad as well as a concessions facility. The renovated park will have a total of 29 acres. In addition to all these renovations extensive environmental remediation has taken place, to ensure that the park is safe for all future users.

The site plan for the renovated Riverside Park is attached for reference.

Land Exchange Agreement

In July 2015, the Detroit City Council approved the Land Exchange Agreement between the City and the DIBC. Subsequently, in June 2018, the City Council adopted a resolution expressing its support for the City’s application for conversion of the federal grant restrictions, thereby removing the restrictions from the eastern portion of Riverside Park and applying them to the property west of West Grand Blvd.

The proposed Master Plan amendments would cause the Master Plan designations at Riverside Park to reflect the land uses foreseen by the conversion process.

Surrounding Master Plan, Zoning, and Land Uses

North: Master Plan - Mixed Residential Commercial (MRC)
Zoning - M4, Intensive Industrial
Land Use - industrial and vacant land

East: Master Plan - Mixed Residential Commercial (MRC) and Recreation (PRC)
Zoning - M4, Intensive Industrial
Land Use - Ambassador Bridge, railyard, vacant land, and industrial

South: Detroit River

West: Master Plan – Distribution/Port Industrial (IDP);
Zoning - M4, Intensive Industrial
Land Use - vacant land and industrial

Community Feedback

On February 15, 2021, the City of Detroit Department of Neighborhoods hosted a virtual community meeting regarding the proposed Master Plan and Riverside Park changes, as well as the proposed Master Plan change for Fort Wayne which was previously before the Commission. One hundred and fourteen participants attended the zoom meeting. (any additional? Questions, reactions?) This community engagement follows a number of community meetings in 2014 and 2015 when this project was first conceived.

Attachments

cc: Katy Trudeau, Acting Director, P&DD
Karen Gage, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
Donald Rencher, Group Executive for Housing Planning and Development
Meagan Elliott, GSD
Juliana Fulton, GSD
Bruce Goldman, Law
Daniel Arking, Law