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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Christopher Gulock, AICP, Staff

RE: **The initiative of the Detroit City Planning Commission and the request of Midtown Detroit, Inc. and Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of the Ferry Street Development Company to rezone 90 and 110 East Ferry Street from a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification to a SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use) zoning classification**

DATE: June 11, 2021

On June 17, 2021, the City Planning Commission (CPC) is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the init and the request of Midtown Detroit, Inc. and Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of Ferry Street Development Company to amend District Map No. 6 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by showing a SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use) zoning classification where a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification currently exists at 90 and 110 East Ferry Street. The subject block is generally located on the south side of East Ferry Street west of John R Street. 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 the existing historic buildings on the site to be developed with uses consistent with the SD1 zoning classification.

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

The block area to be rezoned is located within the Art Center neighborhood which includes residential uses along with other uses, such as the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) and College for Creative Studies (CCS). The subject section of East Ferry Street was developed in the late 1800s as an upscale residential area with numerous Victorian style mansions - many of the houses are named for the prominent first residents. The proposed rezoning involves the following five houses and two rear carriage houses:

Address	Name
60 E. Ferry	Pungs House
60 ½ E. Ferry	Smith Carriage House
70 E. Ferry	Roehm House
84 E. Ferry	Scott House
100 E. Ferry	Owen House
110 ½ E. Ferry	John R. Carriage House
110 E. Ferry	Jackson House

After World War II, the Merrill Palmer Institute (housed at 71 E. Ferry in the Charles Lang Freer House on the north side of Ferry Street) purchased several of the subject houses, hoping to expand its operations. However, in the late 1960's, the Institute decided to sell the houses to the DIA for its proposed expansion. In 1980, the subject area was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1981, the City approved the East Ferry Avenue Historic District.

In the mid-1990s, the DIA eventually sold the houses, and the Ferry Street Development Company (an affiliate of Midtown, Inc.) proposed developing four of the houses and two carriage houses as an inn/bed and breakfast type use with 40 rooms. As a result, in 1997, the block was rezoned from PC (Public Center) to PD (via Ordinance No. 38-97) to allow for the Inn to be developed. At the time, the PD zoning district was selected because the City's Zoning Ordinance did not specifically allow bed and breakfast/inn type uses and the site uniquely involved the use of several historic houses. The PD included the four houses and two carriage houses redeveloped as the Inn at Ferry Street (referred to as 90 East Ferry) and 110 E. Ferry which, at the time, was occupied by Your Heritage House, a museum and cultural center for youth. 110 E. Ferry, although not part of the Inn, was included in the PD, because the rear carriage house was part of the Inn campus.

REQUEST

The Inn at Ferry Street has operated successfully over the past twenty years. In 2005, Your Heritage House at 110 E. Ferry closed and Midtown, Inc. then marketed the building for different uses. In 2018, 110 East Ferry was purchased by Tellevation II LLC, which converted the building into office space for multiple small tenants and shared working space.

Unfortunately, the Inn at Ferry Street was forced to close its doors in March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. Furthermore, the travel industry was and continues to be hard hit by the pandemic. As a result, the owners of the Inn are exploring all of its options for moving forward. Options could include reopening the Inn as is, reopening the Inn with fewer buildings/rooms, or exploring adding new uses, such as residential, commercial, or office space.

As the CPC is aware, any change to the structures or uses within a PD require review and approval by the City's legislative branch. In order to keep all options open, the current owner is requesting to rezone the block from PD to SD1, which allows a variety of small-scale, pedestrian and transit-oriented uses. For example, SD1 allows multi-family dwellings, museums, and offices as by-right uses and allows bed and breakfast inns, hotels, and single-family houses as conditional uses. This district also encourages multiple uses combined in one structure. The current owner of 110 E. Ferry Street was contacted and agreed to be part of the request to change from PD to SD1.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

- North: PC (Public Center); developed with the Wayne State University Charles Lang Freer House and Pauline Knapp Building
- East: R5 (Medium Density Residential); developed with the former Lewis College of Business and now owned by CCS

South: PC; developed with the International Institute of Metro Detroit, DIA parking lot and Hellenic Museum of Michigan
West: B4 (General Business); developed with Kids-TALK Children’s Advocacy Center at 40 E. Ferry

The surrounding zoning is shown on the following map:



Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Lower Woodward area of Neighborhood Cluster 4 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows Mixed Residential/Commercial (MRC) for the subject block. CPC staff submitted a request to the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) requesting its comments regarding the consistency of this proposal with the City’s Master Plan. P&DD responded that the proposed rezoning complies with the Master Plan of Policies.



Zoning Considerations

Planned Development Districts shall be substantially in accord with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, and the regulations of the district are designed to accomplish this by permitting flexibility in overall development while ensuring adequate safeguards and standards for public health, safety, convenience, and general welfare.

The SD1 Special Development District is designed to encourage a complementary mixture of small-scale pedestrian and transit-oriented uses that are compatible in a neighborhood setting. It is intended to ensure a neighborhood character and place a proper balance of activities within walking distance of one another while serving the day-to-day needs of residents.

Community Input

The subject rezoning is located within City Council District 5. To date, CPC staff has not received any feedback regarding the rezoning. CPC staff has informed the off of the District 5 Council Member, as well as the Department of Neighborhoods of the proposed rezoning. On June 15, 2021, the petitioner is planning to hold a community meeting to present the proposed rezoning.

Attachments: Public hearing notice
Application for zoning change

cc: Katy Trudeau, Acting Director, P&DD
Karen Gage, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED