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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: George A. Etheridge, Staff

RE: **Request of the City of Detroit, Planning and Development Department, Motor City Blight Busters, and CHN Housing Partners, to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-76, District Map No. 74 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by showing an R3 (Low-Density Residential District) zoning classification where an R1 (Single-family Residential District) zoning classification currently exists on forty-eight (48) parcels generally bounded by Santa Clara Street to the north, Bentler Street to the east, Orchard Street to the south, and the north-south alley first east of Lahser Road to the west.**

DATE: July 19, 2021

On July 22, 2021, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will hold a 5:30 P.M. public hearing on the subject rezoning request. Please see the attached copy of the public hearing notice with a map showing the location of the subject property.

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The CPC has received a request from the City of Detroit's, Planning and Development Department as a co-petitioner with Motor City Blight Busters and CHN Housing Partners, to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-76, District Map No. 74 of Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, 'Zoning,' to show an R3 (Low-Density Residential District) zoning classification where an R1 (Single-Family Residential District) zoning classification currently exists on forty-eight (48) parcels generally bounded by Santa Clara Street to the north, Bentler Street to the east, Orchard Street to the south, and the north-south alley first east of Lahser Road to the west.

The subject properties are located in Council District 1 and measure approximately 6.34 acres in area. The subject block currently consists of 17 single-family residential structures, one of which is vacant. The balance of the subject block consists of contiguous and scattered vacant lots. Twenty-five of the forty-eight parcels is privately held. Twenty-three parcels are currently in the inventory of the Detroit Land Bank Authority.

According to Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code 'Zoning':

The R1 Single-Family Residential District is designed to protect and preserve quiet, low-density residential areas now primarily developed and those areas which will be developed with single-family detached dwellings and characterized by a high ratio of homeownership. The regulations for this district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district and to promote and encourage a suitable environment for activities associated with family life. To these ends, development is limited to a relatively low concentration, and uses permitted by

right are limited to single-family detached dwellings which provide homes for the residents of the area. Additional residential uses such as religious institutions, neighborhood centers, and utility uses necessary to serve the immediate area may be permitted on a conditional basis.

The R1 zoning classification is most closely aligned with the Master Plan of Policies designation of “RL Low - Density Residential” which encompasses the R1 (Single-family residential district), R2 (Two-family residential district), and R3 (Low-density residential district) zoning classifications as areas which should have an overall density up to eight dwelling units per net residential acre. These areas are often characterized by single-family homes with front yard setbacks and driveways with garage or off-street parking.

The R3 Low-Density Residential District is designed as a low-density multi-family district. The regulations are designed to promote and encourage town and terrace house development, courts, and garden apartments. It is intended that this district be used primarily on local thoroughfares, thereby encouraging a suitable environment for family life. Among others, uses permitted by right include single- and two-family dwellings, townhouses, multi-family dwellings, and community facilities necessary to serve a residential district.

The R3 zoning classification is most closely aligned with the Master Plan of Policies designation of “RLM Low / Medium - Density Residential” which encompasses the R3 (Low-density residential district), R4 (Thoroughfare residential district), and R5 (Medium-density residential district) zoning classifications as areas which should have an overall density of 8 to 16 dwelling units per net residential acre. These areas are often characterized by two- or four-family homes with small yards, on-street parking, or garages with alley access.

Proposed Development

The proposed map amendment is the result of a successful response to a request for proposals issued by the City of Detroit in January 2021, primarily to accommodate a multi-family residential development on 1.4 acres of land, consisting of nine parcels. Responses to the RFP were reviewed, interviews were conducted, and the development team of CHN Housing Partners in conjunction with Motor City Blight Busters was selected in January 2021. The proposed “multi-family dwelling (with fewer than 50 percent of the units in the structure being efficiency units)” would be permitted on a by-right basis in the proposed R3 zoning classification per Section 50-8-74(4). The petitioner also wishes to establish a “non-profit neighborhood center” “Kid’s Camp” which will focus on fitness and nutrition for the area’s youth, which would be permitted on a by-right basis in the proposed R3 zoning classification per Section 50-8-75(6).

The City of Detroit, Planning and Development Department has opted to co-petition on this request in order to further intensify the zoning of the subject block and to prevent what might be perceived as a spot zone. The subject 1.4 acres of vacant land slated for the CHN Housing Partners and Motor City Blight Busters development are located mid-block fronting on Orchard Street and Santa Clara Street, respectively. The proposed development is anticipated to have a total of 48 residential units, resulting in a population density of 10.09 units per acre which is right in the middle of the Master Plan of Policies range for Low-density residential of 8-12 units per acre.

The proposed development is being undertaken with the intent of stabilizing and repurposing vacant Detroit Land Bank Authority owned land; providing modern multi-family housing in the Old Redford community in response to the Grand River Northwest Neighborhood planning study initiated in 2017; providing affordable housing in close proximity to neighborhood amenities; and reinforcing investments in the public realm such as streetscapes, parks, and greenways.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

- North: R1 & B4; developed with single-family residential along Santa Clara, and a Michigan Department of Corrections facility.
- East: R1 & PD; developed with single-family and multi-family housing (Bentler Arms Apartments).
- South: R1, B3 & B4; developed with scattered single-family residential dwellings, a former Michigan Department of Health and Human Services office and the Redford Theater/Artist Village.
- West: B4; developed with the Redford Mart convenience store located at 17440 Lahser Road, Grub Detroit, Genie Hookah, and surface parking lot.

Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Evergreen area of Neighborhood Cluster 8 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows “RL - Low-Medium Residential” for the subject properties. Although this proposed development is in response to an RFP issued by the City of Detroit the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) has been requested to provide an official opinion in regards to the appropriateness of the requested rezoning and its conformance with the Master Plan of Policies.

Community Input

The petitioner has been actively engaged with residents of the community. Extensive flier distribution through the surrounding neighborhood has been ongoing. An in-person community engagement meeting took place on Wednesday, July 15, 2021, at Artist Village located at 17336 Lasher Road, at which approximately 54 members of the public were in attendance. An informational presentation was given by the Planning and Development Department, CHN Housing Partners, Motor City Blight Busters, and City Planning Commission staff about the pending project and rezoning request. In preparation for the July 22, 2021, public hearing, notice has been published as well as posted and provided to 173 adjacent property owners and residents in an effort to inform them of the pending rezoning request.

To date, staff has received no additional communications via mail or telephone either in opposition or support of the requested rezoning.

Attachment

cc:

Katy Trudeau, Interim Director PDD
Greg Moots, PDD
Karen Gage, PDD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
Julie Schneider, Acting Director, HRD
Donald Rencher, Group Executive for Housing Planning and Development