

# City of Detroit

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**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Jamie Murphy, Staff

**RE:** Request of DTE Energy to rezone one parcel commonly known as 7630 East Edsel Ford Service Drive from the R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district classification to the B4 (General Business) zoning district classification.  
**(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

**DATE:** February 1, 2022

## **RECOMMENDATION**

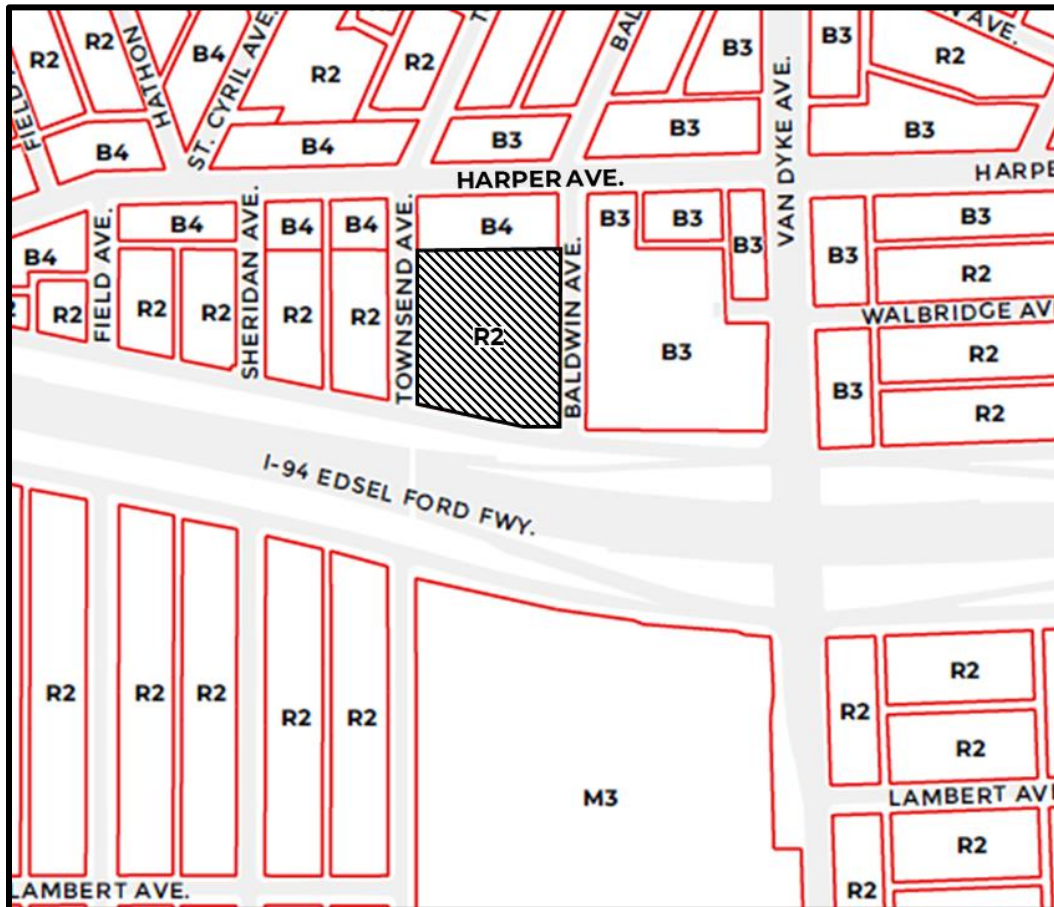
The City Planning Commission staff recommends APPROVAL of the request of DTE Energy to rezone one parcel commonly known as 7630 East Edsel Ford Service Drive from the R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district classification to the B4 (General Business) zoning district classification.

## **BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL**

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from DTE Energy to amend District Map No. 24 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by showing a B4 (General Business) zoning district classification where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district classification is currently shown for the property located at 7630 East Edsel Ford Service Drive, generally bounded by Harper Avenue to the north, Townsend Avenue to the west, East Edsel Ford Service Drive to the south, and Baldwin Avenue to the east.

The proposed map amendment is being requested to permit the development of an electrical substation to serve the I-94 Industrial Park and surrounding area. The R2 zoning district does not allow the proposed use; the B4 zoning district allows the use conditionally which means that a public hearing will be required at the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department.

The site is located in City Council District 3 and measures almost 3 acres. It was previously the site of Trombly Alternative High School which was demolished about 15 years ago.



*Current Zoning map with proposed rezoning hatched*

## **PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

On November 18, 2021, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on this rezoning request. At the hearing, two members of the public spoke—one with general questions about community engagement and sustainability, and one DTE employee with information about the community engagement conducted. No letters of support or opposition were received. City Planning Commissioners had extensive questions including:

- What was the community notification and engagement process?
- What are the potential health impacts on nearby residents?
- What is the potential effect on property values?
- How much activity will take place at the site?
- Will there be any effect on utility rates?
- Will the new substation improve reliability?
- Were alternative locations considered?
- How much noise will the substation generate?
- What will happen to decommissioned substations?
- How long will construction last?
- Will the substation cause any environmental concerns?

DTE addressed some of the questions at the meeting and has provided more thorough answers in the attached presentation.



*Aerial view of proposed rezoning*

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

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

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

- North: B3 (Shopping) – vacant land
- East: B3 (Shopping) – vacant commercial buildings, vacant land
- South: M3 (General Industrial) – Dakota Integrated Systems auto supplier (previously Kettering High School)
- West: B4/R2 (General Business/Two-Family Residential) – Church, vacant land

### ***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 will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. *The proposed DTE substation is needed to improve reliability for customers and provide additional capacity for new developments. This is a suitable location for the substation as there are no directly adjacent residential properties. The nearest houses are about 180' away across Harper to the north.*

- The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification. *The location of this property between Harper Avenue and the I-94 Freeway makes it a good candidate for more intense zoning as the significant traffic makes it less desirable for new residential development.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract. *No significant impacts on nearby property is anticipated. The proposed DTE substation will be screened by a wall that is set back from the property line. The setback area will be landscaped. The substation will generate some noise that will sound like a low hum at the sidewalk. The substation will not generate any traffic as it will be unmanned.*
- Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal “spot zone.” *As several nearby and adjacent blocks are zoned B4, this rezoning will not create a spot zone but will merely expand existing B4 zoning.*

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

The subject site is located within the Airport area of Neighborhood Cluster 1 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows “CN – Neighborhood Commercial” for the subject property. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) has reviewed this proposed rezoning and determined that it will not change the overall character of the area and is therefore generally consistent with the Master Plan.

### ***Community Input***

An in-person community meeting was held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at Alkebu-lan Village. There were about 10 people in attendance. Two specific concerns were raised: the beautification of the screen wall around the proposed facility and the routing of construction traffic to avoid the Van Dyke & Harper intersection. DTE will be addressing both.

### ***Conclusion***

Based on the above analysis and consistent with the approval criteria of Section 50-3-70 of the Zoning Ordinance, CPC staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the rezoning request.

Attachment: DTE Presentation  
PDD Master Plan Interpretation

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD  
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