

City of Detroit

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TO: City Planning Commission

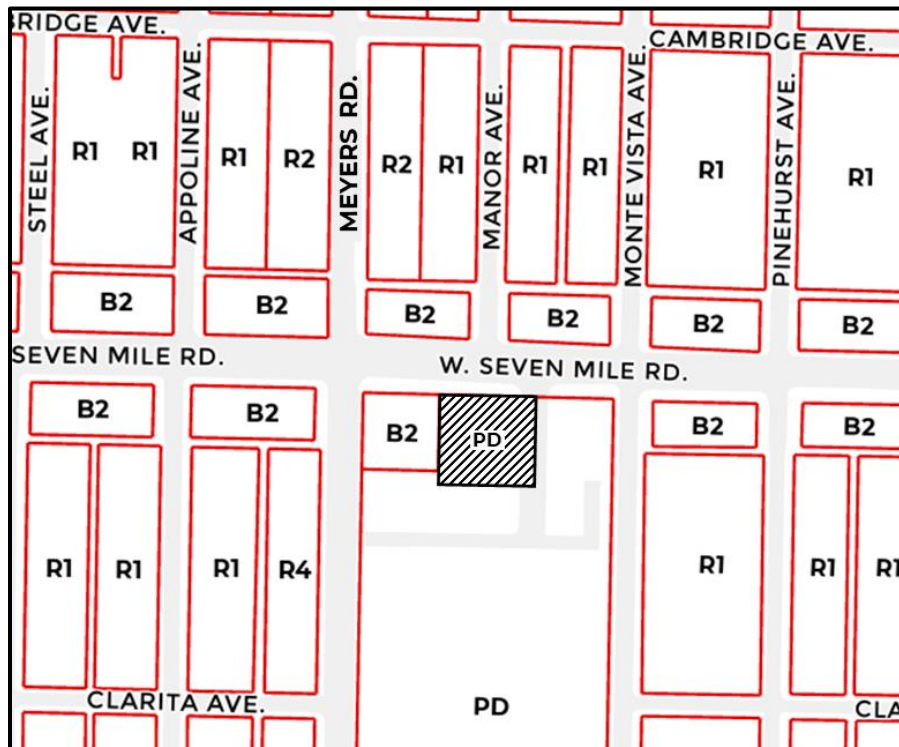
FROM: Jamie Murphy, Staff

RE: Request of Bilal Jawad to modify the plans of an existing PD (Planned Development) zoning district at 10755 West Seven Mile Road between Meyers Road and Monte Vista Street. **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS)**

DATE: July 14, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

The City Planning Commission (CPC) staff recommends APPROVAL of the request of Bilal Jawad to modify the plans of an existing PD (Planned Development) zoning district at 10755 West Seven Mile Road between Meyers Road and Monte Vista Street to permit the development of a car wash.



Existing Zoning Map showing subject site and surrounding area

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The CPC has received a request from Bilal Jawad to amend District Map No. 61 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by modifying the plans of an existing PD (Planned Development)

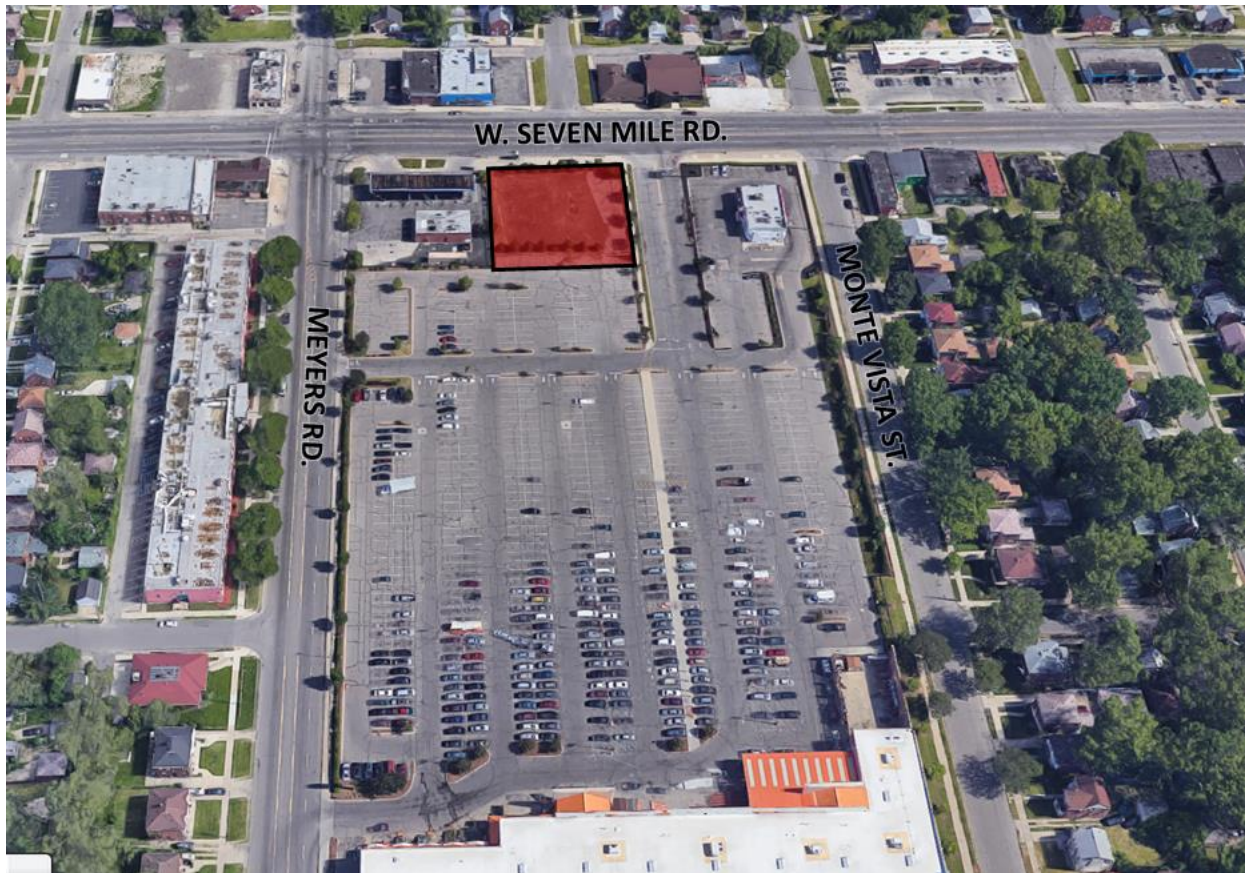
zoning district for one parcel at 10755 West Seven Mile Road. The property is located on the south side of Seven Mile between a Mobil gas station and a Checkers restaurant. Home Depot is located directly to the south of the site.

The site is located in City Council District 2 and measures slightly more than ½ acre. Except for the northwest corner where the gas station is located, the block bounded by Seven Mile, Meyers, Margareta, and Monte Vista was rezoned from B2 (Local Business and Residential) and R6 (High Density Residential) to PD by Ordinance No. 15-97 in 1997 to allow for the development of a Kmart store which was later converted to a Home Depot. Prior to this development, Grace Hospital’s northwestern branch was located on the block until it was demolished in the early 1990s.

The applicant owns the gas station next door to the site and it has been owned and operated by his family for decades. He bought the parcel under consideration in 2021 with the intention of building an automated, drive-through-style car wash. It would also offer a subscription service where a monthly fee would cover unlimited washes. Self-serve vacuums would be an additional service available onsite.

Aerial view of property under consideration

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use



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

- North: B2 (Local Business and Residential) – Businesses (dentist, office, dry cleaner)
- East: PD (Planned Development) – Home Depot driveway and Fast-Food Restaurant with drive-through
- South: PD – Home Depot
- West: B2 – Gas Station

PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS

On February 16, 2023, the CPC held the statutorily mandated public hearing to consider the proposed amendment. Two members of the public spoke, neither was in support or opposition but asked questions and expressed concerns. One letter was received from the Monte Vista Block Club also with questions and concerns. A summary of these follows:

- Too many car washes already in the area
- May increase traffic both during construction and during operation of the business
- Traffic control for entering & exiting business?
- Signage location and size?
- Too much surface parking, why not share with Home Depot?
- Will there be enough room for drying without blocking traffic?

Commissioners also asked a number several questions including:

- Will the development include stormwater mitigation?
- What are similar car washes in the area (with gates)?
- Could the queue to enter the car wash come from Meyers or the gas station?
- Will the development have any sustainable features?

Additionally, two DDOT employees spoke about the existing bus stop in front of the proposed car wash and the infeasibility of moving it to another location.

Response to Questions and Concerns

While there are several car washes in this area, the proposed car wash would be a more modern type with better traffic flow. The two closest existing car washes are either the type where employees wash the cars by hand or self-serve where the customer washes their own vehicle. An example of the type of car wash that is proposed is the Tommy's Express car wash chain which has metro Detroit locations in Royal Oak (Woodward & Hunter Avenues) and Westland (Ford & Newburgh Roads).

Since the public hearing, the proposed site plan has changed to eliminate the curb cut from Seven Mile Road and instead to have all traffic enter and exit through the Home Depot site, similar to the way that the Checkers restaurant operates. The applicant entered into an agreement with the owners of Home Depot to permit this layout which is part of the reason for the delay in coming back to the City Planning Commission. This change solves the problem of the bus stop location—it does not need to be relocated as all traffic will be utilizing the existing curb cuts. It also simplifies traffic flow by not introducing another entrance/exit onto this block of Seven Mile.

The signage proposed at the site will conform to Chapter 4 of the City Code, Advertising and Signs (informally known as the sign ordinance). Currently, a twenty square foot monument sign is proposed along with several wall signs on the building. While most of the site is paved, much of the space is needed for line-up space for vehicles waiting to enter the car wash. Only three off-street parking spaces are proposed other than the spaces to access the vacuums which seems adequate without being excessive. The parking requirement for car washes is 2 spaces per 3 employees.

The city's stormwater mitigation regulations are triggered when a proposed project creates or replaces ½ acre (21,780 square feet) or more of impervious surface. This project is slightly less than that threshold and therefore is not required to manage its stormwater runoff. The applicant is proposing a rain garden on the site where the parking lot will be drained to in order to reduce runoff and slow its entry to the sewer system. Details of the installation are shown on page SP-3 of the attached plans.

Although the proposed car wash will certainly increase traffic in the vicinity, any development at this site will increase traffic somewhat. By using the existing curb cuts instead of establishing new

ones, traffic will be more organized and safer for both vehicles and pedestrians. The applicant has explored and considered countless layouts for the site, striving to find the best solution despite several constraints including an existing sewer main that cannot be built over. The fact that the site has remained undeveloped for many years is at least partially due to the difficulties with vehicular access and its small size. While this proposal may not be perfect, it is a workable solution that would bring a new business to the area and provide a service that is not currently offered.

STAFF ANALYSIS

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 corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact. *The proposed amendment will correct the error of the existing PD site without approved plans associated with it.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. *The proposed car wash will provide a needed service to the surrounding community and develop a long-vacant site.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract. *Adverse impacts to surrounding properties are not expected. Because the development will use existing curb cuts instead of adding new ones, traffic problems will be mitigated to the extent possible.*

PD District Design Criteria

In addition to the approval criteria for map amendments, Section 50-11-15 of the Zoning Ordinance lists design criteria for the evaluation of Planned Developments. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- Scale, form, massing, and density. Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development. *The scale and massing of the proposed development is consistent with that of surrounding development.*
- Compatibility. The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function, and should not adversely affect the value of properties in the immediate vicinity. *The proposed development is compatible with surrounding development—the uses to both sides are also auto-oriented.*
- Circulation. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation facilities should be adequately designed to meet expected demands. Disruption of traffic flow in surrounding areas should be minimized, and truck traffic should be carefully planned and controlled, especially to avoid use of residential streets. *Extensive effort has been made to ensure that circulation for the site is not disruptive to the surrounding area.*

Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Bagley area of Neighborhood Cluster 10 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows “CRC – Retail Center” for the subject property. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) has reviewed this proposed rezoning and determined that it is generally consistent with the Master Plan. They also suggest that Seven Mile has adequate capacity to handle future development and that the proposed car wash fits with surrounding commercial development.

Community Input

The applicant has consulted with several nearby business owners regarding the proposed development. The proposal was also presented at a District 2 Department of Neighborhoods meeting on February 7. There were many questions and comments from residents—most revolved around traffic/congestion, number of employees, panhandlers, how often the area would be cleaned, and safety. Kim Tandy, District 2 Manager, stated that the applicant is a good community partner. Also, the MacDowell Community Council has submitted a letter of support which is attached for reference.

CONCLUSION

CPC staff recommends approval of this PD modification request with the following conditions:

1. The applicant does not wish to install a fence at this time but if it becomes necessary due to security issues, staff is authorized to review and approve a decorative fence similar to the existing fence around the Home Depot property.
2. That staff is authorized to continue working with the applicant to refine the design of the building in conjunction with Planning & Development's Design Review team.
3. That final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscape and signage plans be submitted by the developer to the staff of the City Planning Commission for review and approval prior to submitting applications for applicable permits.

Attachment: Community Support Letter
PDD Master Plan Interpretation
Proposed Plans

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD
Karen Gage, PDD
Greg Moots, PDD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
James Foster, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Bruce Goldman, Law Department
Daniel Arking, Law Department