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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: M. Rory Bolger, City Planner
Kimani Jeffrey, City Planner
Timarie Szwed, City Planner

RE: **Proposed map amendment to Chapter 50, Zoning, Article XVII, Section 50-17-6 and Section 50-117-8, Map Nos. 5 and 7, to show an M2 (Restricted Industrial District) and an SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed-Use) zoning classification where a PD (Planned Development District) and an M4 (Intensive Industrial District) zoning classification are currently shown in the industrial portion of the former Research Park West Rehabilitation Project area bounded by the railroad on the north, Trumbull Avenue on the east, Edsel Ford Freeway on the south, and Rosa Parks Boulevard on the west**

DATE: July 18, 2023

On July 20, 2023, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will convene a 5:15 PM public hearing to consider the rezoning of 28 lots in the industrial portion of the former Research Park West Rehabilitation Project area north of the West Edsel Ford Freeway and west of Trumbull Avenue. The subject properties are located in City Council District 5.

The PD Project

As the City Planning Commission (CPC) will note from staff's presentations at several previous CPC meetings, some 403 locations in the city of Detroit are zoned in the Planned Development (PD District) classification. Because the authorizations for those PDs have a limited "shelf life," and because PDs require an approved development plan, staff is identifying those locations that do not comport with the current Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *Zoning*, and for which a rezoning may be needed. Earlier this year, the CPC recommended approval of the rezoning of the "lapsed PD" on zoning district map No. 44, the Salvation Army property (Selden, 18th, Magnolia, and Humboldt Streets) to a more appropriate R5 District classification and on Map No. 26, the "no-plan" formerly RMA PD on Conner Avenue between Sanford and St. Patrick Avenues.

Research Park West - "Urban Renewal Era PD"

The 28 lots west of Trumbull and north of the Ford Freeway present a somewhat different scenario than the Map No. 44 Salvation Army properties and the Map No. 26 Conner Avenue block—the Research Park West Planned Development was part of an "urban renewal" initiative.

Following the civil uprising/disturbances of July 1967, the Research Park West Rehabilitation Project (Mich 4-88) was one of numerous “urban renewal areas” established and for which a development plan was adopted to guide the redevelopment of a distressed area.

The urban renewal program came out of the President Lyndon Johnson “Great Society” initiative and, in the case of Research Park West, included detailed plans to address blight, remove dilapidated and substandard structures, provide relocation services to those uprooted by demolitions, provide a mix of new residential types, a shopping center and various public facilities, as well as opportunities for expansion of existing industries. Significant federal dollars were allocated to Detroit’s urban renewal areas and the expenditures of the funding were required to be reviewed and recommended by elected Citizens’ District Councils (CDC). In the case of Research Park West, it was the University City CDC which advised the City.

Significant residential development east of Trumbull and along Elijah McCoy Drive resulted from the urban renewal project—a multi-story apartment building and townhouses on land rezoned to the PD District. The land use plan and zoning scheme for the area west of Trumbull allowed for “light industrial” with many lots being rezoned to PD (19) and other lots remaining as M4 (9).

The activities permitted under the Light Industrial PD heading were listed as “...uses with a minimum of undesirable effects on residential districts, such as lithographing, bookbinding, small parts assembling, shops for plumbing, electrical, heating or air conditioning repair, etc.”

Zoning Map Nos. 5 and 7

The Research Park West area straddles two zoning district maps: Map No. 5 and Map No. 7. The dividing line between these two maps is Stanley Avenue—Map No. 5 to the south, Map No. 7 to the north.

The land included in the Research Park West Rehabilitation Project was rezoned to a Planned Development District zoning classification by Ordinance No. 693-G with an effective date of May 23, 1972. The industrial portion of Research Park West, west of Trumbull, was rezoned from R2 (*Commonwealth and Trumbull*) and M4 (*Hecla and Avery*) to PD on Map No. 5; on Map No. 7, several lots were rezoned from M4 to PD. East of Trumbull, the largely residential portion of Research Park West, Stanley Avenue was replaced and reoriented by what is now Elijah McCoy Drive—property which is not affected by this proposed rezoning.

The development plan, which guided the land use and zoning of the area, was prepared and subsequently modified by the then Community and Economic Development Department (C&EDD) for the Research Park West Rehabilitation Project (Mich R-88) and was dated February 20, 1975. The development plan is referenced in Ordinance No. 707-G, effective 7-6-1972, and Ordinance No. 34-H, effective 5-1-1975.

Emergency Manager

Between June 18, 1957 and December 16, 1981, 25 urban renewal “District Areas” were established pursuant to Section 74 of the Michigan Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act, being MCL 125.74. Over the years, numerous urban renewal areas were redeveloped to greater or lesser degrees but funding for their Citizens’ District Councils declined with municipal budget-

tightening and was eventually ended. With bankruptcy pending, an emergency manager was appointed for Detroit who possessed extraordinary powers. As noted in Section 50-4-3 of the 2019 Detroit City Code:

“During the pendency of the City's bankruptcy proceedings, the City's Emergency Manager issued Order No. 36, titled ‘Order to Repeal Chapter 14, Article VI, of the 1984 Detroit City Code,’ which, through Ordinance No. 34-14, explicitly repealed Chapter 14, Article VI, of the 1984 Detroit City Code, Citizens' District Councils , and, as a result of the repeal ..., extinguished by operation of law any zones or designated areas established pursuant to Section 74 of the Michigan Blighted Areas Rehabilitation Act, ..., thereby implicitly repealing the 25 District Areas....”

As noted in Section 50-4-4 of the Zoning Ordinance, that same Emergency Manager’s Ordinance No. 34-14 also implicitly repealed the 38 development plans that were linked to the urban renewal districts and that had been adopted and amended between June 18, 1957 and December 16, 2009, including Research Park West. These extinguished development plans were the underpinnings for the Planned Development (PD) zoning.

CURRENT LAND USE

Map No. 5

The major structures south of Stanley Avenue (Map No. 5) are the 2-story building on Trumbull at the Edsel Ford (5671 Trumbull) occupied by LeCom utility contractors and the two buildings that comprise the Hecla Warehouse (5470 Hecla). Much of the paved open area between Hecla Warehouse and the LeCom building is taken up by the bucket and service trucks related to LeCom and other contractors and by the trucks and semi-trailers of Martin Transportation Systems.

Map No. 7

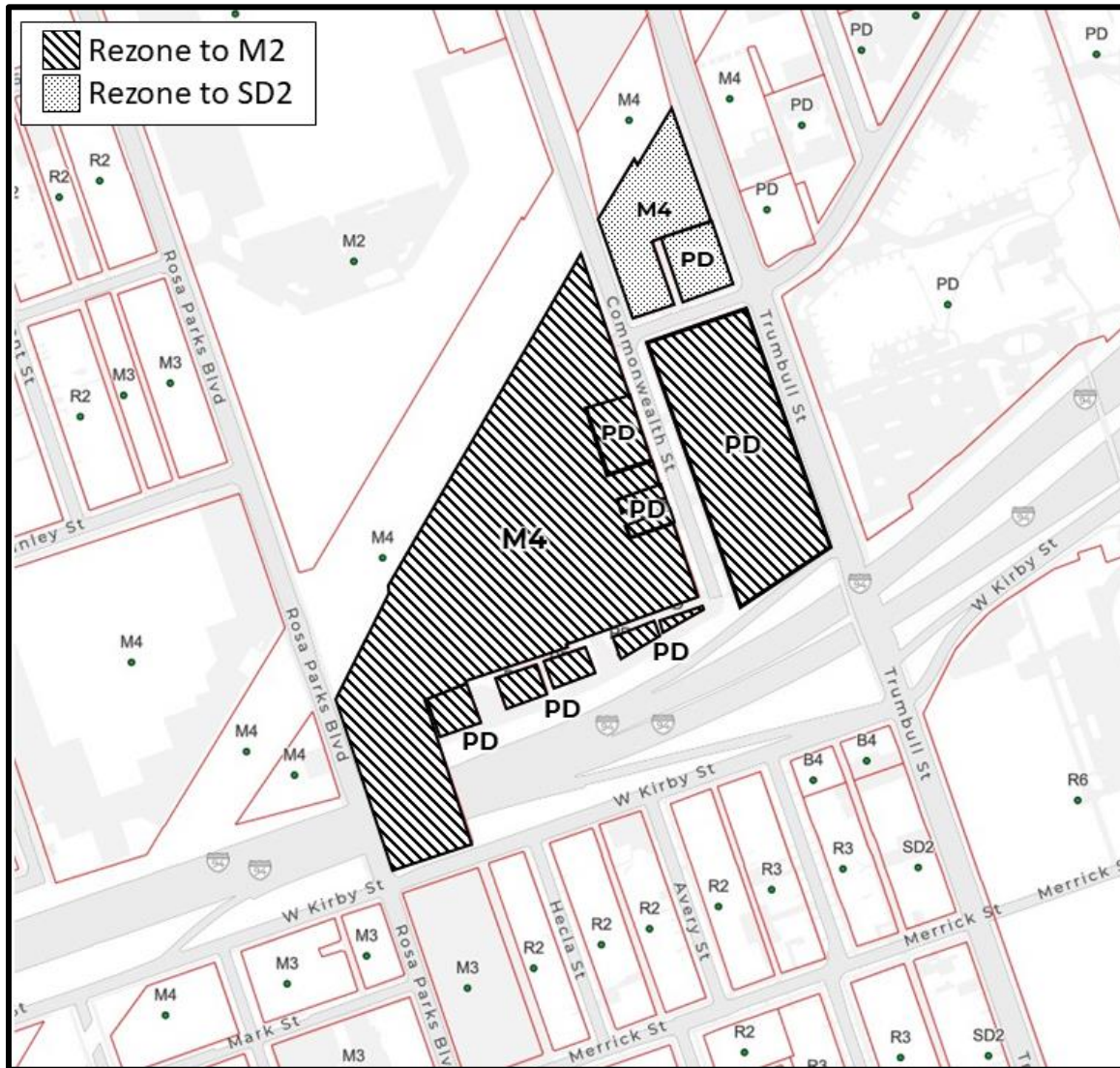
North of Stanley Avenue (Map No. 7) is the large 4-story industrial building abutting the railroad (5757 Trumbull) that is currently occupied by Iron Mountain for medical records storage. Similar to the industrial building opposite it on the east side of Trumbull, this building is suitable for future adaptation for lofts. The vacant lots abutting 5757 Trumbull on Stanley are under the same ownership as the existing 4-story building but are zoned differently.

RATIONALE FOR REZONING

The industrial portion of Research Park West was never unified under a common set of regulations since both M4 and PD (light industrial) lots dot the landscape as evidenced in the vicinity map below. Certain property owners find adjacent lots of theirs zoned differently making it unclear which regulations govern current activity and future development.

Since today’s Zoning Ordinance requires land zoned PD to follow a development plan and since the development plan was extinguished by the Emergency Manager, a replacement zoning district classification is merited. Prior to 2014, the identification of an appropriate zoning classification for an urban renewal area would be aided by the advice of the Citizens’ District Council. Now that there is no CDC for Research Park West, we rely on the Master Plan.

Both the proposed M2 District for the properties located on Map No. 5 (south of Stanley Avenue) and the proposed SD2 District for the properties located on Map No. 7 (north of Stanley) are zoning districts consistent with the “Light Industrial” Master Plan classification.



MASTER PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

The subject area is located in Cluster 6, the Rosa Parks subsector. The Future Land Use map for this subsector identifies the area between the Edsel Ford Freeway and the railroad and between Trumbull and Rosa Parks Boulevard as “Light Industrial.”

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Current Zoning

M4—Intensive Industrial District

The M4 Intensive Industrial District permits uses which are usually objectionable and, therefore, the district is rarely, if ever, located adjacent to residential districts. A broad

range of uses is permitted in this district. New residences are prohibited with the exception of loft conversions of existing buildings and of residential uses combined in structures with permitted commercial uses. These requirements are to protect residences from an undesirable environment and to ensure reservation of adequate areas for industrial development.

PD – Planned Development District

The PD district will permit planned developments throughout the City and will be particularly useful in urban renewal areas. Such planned developments shall be substantially in accord with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, by having a major land use that corresponds to the most general category of land use, which are Residential, Public/Civic/Institutional, Retail/Service/Commercial, Manufacturing and Industrial, and Other, proposed in the Master Plan for the area involved. Such planned developments shall provide a desirable environment for the uses proposed and shall not be out of harmony with their general surroundings. 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 and, where applicable, encouraging historic preservation.

Proposed Zoning

M2—Restricted Industrial District

The M2 Restricted Industrial District is designed for a wide range of industrial and related uses which can function with a minimum of undesirable effects. Industrial establishments of this type provide a buffer between residential districts and intensive industrial districts. New residential construction is excluded from this district with the exception of loft conversions of existing buildings and of residential uses combined in structures with permitted commercial uses. These requirements are both to protect residences from an undesirable environment and to ensure reservation of adequate areas for industrial development.

SD2—Special Development District, Mixed-Use

The SD2 Special Development District, Mixed-Use is designed to encourage a complementary mixture of more intensive pedestrian and transit-oriented uses that may be compatible with a neighborhood center or with a location along major or secondary thoroughfares. Parking requirements are reduced in certain circumstances to promote use of transit and non-motorized transportation; shared parking and a district approach to parking are encouraged to lessen demand for off-street parking spaces. Certain establishments that serve alcohol for consumption on the premises are permitted without a spacing requirement in order to attract increased pedestrian traffic to the area.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

The zoning classification and land uses for nearby properties are as follows:

North: M4 (Intensive Industrial), Railroad, active industrial.

East: PD (Planned Development, Residential) loft conversions, townhouses, apartment building.

South: Edsel Ford Freeway; R3 (Low-Density Residential) and R2 (Two-Family Residential) houses, vacant land and SD2 (Special Development District, mixed-use) commercial and vacant commercial in Woodbridge across the freeway.
West: M4 (Intensive Industrial), vacant land, vacant commercial.

OUTREACH

All properties within 300 feet of the subject have been mailed notification of the July 20th hearing. The taxpayers of record for the 28 subject lots consist of eight different parties, including two City of Detroit agencies and the Detroit Land Bank Authority. All these parties received letters from the CPC earlier in the year alerting them to the eventual, proposed rezoning and were invited to contact the office for further discussion. Two of the three major property owners have been in direct contact with staff to ensure a full appreciation of the intent of and impact from the proposed rezoning; one major property owner has not responded. None of the parties has voiced objection to the rezoning.

Working with the Department of Neighborhoods, CPC staff previewed the rezoning to a broad audience during a District 5 webcast on Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, P&DD
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Detroit Land Bank Authority
Detroit Housing Commission

Attachment: Notice of Public Hearing