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# City of Detroit

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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Kimani Jeffrey, City Planner

**RE: Request of Henry Ford Health Systems and its affiliated companies as well as the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department as co-petitioner to amend Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Zoning, by amending Article XVII, Zoning District Maps, Section 50-17-8, District Map 7 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance to show a B5 (Major Business District) zoning classification where the R1 (Single-Family Residential District), R2 (Two-Family Residential District), R5 (Medium Density Residential), SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed-Use), B4 (General Business District), M4 (Intensive Industrial District), and PD (Planned Development District) zoning classifications are currently shown on the area generally bounded by West Grand Boulevard, Milwaukee Avenue (newly constructed), Sterling Avenue, Holden Street, and the John C. Lodge Freeway.**

**The proposed map amendment is being requested by the Henry Ford Health Systems to allow for the expansion of the hospital campus and the construction of new facilities. The request of the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department is specific to the parcels commonly known as 1115 West Milwaukee Avenue, 6310 Lincoln and 6480 Sterling Street, in order to bring them into conformance with the Master Plan of Policies and to unify the zoning classification of all properties within the rezoning footprint (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

DATE: December 5, 2023

## RECOMMENDATION

On November 2, 2023, the City Planning Commission heard the petition of Henry Ford Health Systems for their proposal to rezone the land described above in order to expand the HFHS hospital campus. After receiving a presentation that covered a wide range of issues regarding the project, several Commissioners asked questions and made favorable comments to the project, eventually having their questions addressed. The developer also responded to the public's questions, which were answered as well. For these reasons and given the finding stated below, CPC staff **RECOMMENDS APPROVAL** of the subject request.

## **BACKGROUND**

Again, the CPC held a public hearing on November 2, 2023 for the request of Henry Ford Health Systems (HFHS) and affiliated companies to show a B5 zoning classification where R1, R2, R5, SD2, B4, M4, and PD zoning classifications exist on the area generally bounded by West Grand Boulevard, Milwaukee Avenue (newly constructed), Sterling Avenue, Holden Street, and the John C. Lodge Freeway (see map below).

The petitioner, HFHS and associated companies is requesting this map amendment to allow for the expansion of the hospital campus and the construction of new supportive facilities. The Planning and Development Department is co-petitioning for parcels in the described rezoning that are not under the ownership of HFHS. This is being requested in order to bring those parcels into conformance with the Master Plan of Policies and to unify the zoning classification of all properties in the subject request. More details of the proposal can be found in CPC staff's report dated October 31, 2023.

## **PROPOSAL**

The project is led by Henry Ford Health Systems, Michigan State University and the Detroit Pistons. The proposal plans to expand the current HFHS campus by building a new 995,000 square foot hospital tower with approximately 16 floors to accommodate 360 patient beds. The plan would include inpatient and outpatient services, an emergency department, diagnostic and treatment, and a sterile processing department.

The Shared Service Building (SSB) will host logistical operations such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing and infrastructure, dining offices and bio-waste facilities for the new hospital tower.

The Parking Garage is planned to host approximately 1,200 spaces and a 2<sup>nd</sup> skywalk to connect the old and new buildings across West Grand Boulevard.

The Central Utility Plant will hold mechanical and electrical operations for the tower in addition to community space and other amenities.

The project is undergoing a Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) process and began meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

During the November 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing, after entertaining a presentation from the development team, there were four (4) speakers who spoke at public comment.

The first speaker raised concerns regarding how the project construction phase will affect the Department of Transportation bus routes. The commentor wants to ensure that if the routes are temporarily impacted during the construction, that the developer will fund mitigation efforts for disruption.

Another public commentor had questions related to the property addresses that are proposed for rezoning. Of the last two speakers, one spoke in support of the project citing that it will draw new activity, while another speaker had comments unrelated to the project. Midtown Detroit Inc submitted a letter of support for the public hearing.



Proposed rezoning footprint

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### *Proposed Zoning*

The **B5 MAJOR BUSINESS DISTRICT** is designed to provide adequate regulations within the Central Business District, the New Center Area, and may be successfully utilized in other regionally oriented shopping and office areas.

The zoning classification generally allows commercial uses conducive to a high density area. Permitted dimensional standards also accommodate higher scale buildings such as the tower that HFHS is proposing in this development. The helipad use permitted in B5 is another one that would allow the new hospital tower to facilitate its emergency services.

## ANALYSIS

### *Zoning Ordinance Approval Criteria*

According to Sec. 50-3-70, Approval criteria, recommendations, and decisions on an amendment of a zoning map in Article XVII shall be based on consideration of all of the following criteria:

- (1) Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact;*

The area underwent a rezoning to B5 in 2014 that was requested by HFHS. Since then, there have been some changing conditions as the hospital has acquired more properties in the area. This allows for the zoning to be unified under one zoning classification that

will generally support the goals of the Master Plan. The proposed B5 zoning classification will also allow for the hospital expansion.

This request also includes PD-zoned land proposed to be rezoned to B5. A explanatory letter has been submitted stating the following:

*On September 4, 2014, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Number 27-14, Map 7 of Chapter 61 of the 1984 Detroit City Code was amended to reflect the following:*

- (i) PD zoning classification where an R1 zoning classification existed on property known as 6430 through 6472 Sterling;*
- (ii) PD zoning classification where an R2 zoning classification existed on property known as 1532 Holden through 1550 Holden and 6331 through 6355 Trumbull Avenue and 6429 through 6465 Sterling; and,*
- (iii) PD zoning classification where a B4 zoning classification existed on property known as 1494 Holden and 6420 Sterling Avenue.*

*The above referenced PD, known as “Grand Trunk Crossing” was requested in connection with an anticipated affordable housing project to be developed by The Community Builders, Inc. After the applications for an award of housing tax credits were denied, Henry Ford Health was advised that The Community Builders would be unable to complete the anticipated project.*

*The current proposed project involving the expansion of the existing Henry Ford Hospital and a rezoning of the PD to B5 will not involve affordable housing; therefore, Henry Ford Health is requesting the repeal of the existing PD-zoned parcels within the subject site by amending the zoning to reflect the requested B5 zoning classification.*

- (2) *Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of this chapter;*

The Planning and Development Department has submitted a letter regarding the project’s consistency with the Master Plan and has provided the following: “A portion of the site is designated as Mixed Residential/Commercial (MRC), while much of the industrially zoned area to the south is designated as Light Industrial (IL) in the Master Plan’s Rosa Parks neighborhood. MRC “areas consist predominantly of medium-to-high density housing developed compatibly with commercial and/or institutional uses. This classification is well suited to areas proximal to existing centers of major commercial activity, major thoroughfares, transportation nodes, or gateways into the city.” IL “areas should generally consist of industrial uses of low intensity that have minimum undesirable effects on adjacent residential or commercial land uses.”. The proposed rezoning is **consistent** with the MRC designation, and **generally consistent** with Master Plan’s IL designation , as it is not anticipated to change the character of the much larger IL-designated surrounding area”

- (3) *Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;*

It is expected that the addition of a hospital of this nature will add to the public health and safety, not only in this community but citywide. Therefore, the zoning change will

facilitate the proposal leading to increased community assets that will help the general public.

- (4) *Whether the City and other service providers will be able to provide adequate public facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining adequate levels of service to existing development;*

A Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department Pre-Plan meeting was held for this proposal, which includes all departments that deal with public utilities and infrastructure, such as DTE Energy and the Department of Public Works. The developer has hired consultants that are working with appropriate City Departments to ensure that street services and infrastructure can support this project. Additionally, the proposal will include ancillary buildings that will help to provide services for the new hospital.

- The Shared Service Building (SSB) will host logistical operations such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing and infrastructure, dining offices and bio-waste facilities for the new hospital tower.
- The Parking Garage is planned to host approximately 1,200 spaces and a 2<sup>nd</sup> skywalk to connect the old and new buildings across West Grand Boulevard.
- The Central Utility Plant will also hold mechanical and electrical operations for the tower in addition to community space and other amenities.

- (5) *Whether the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, including air, water, soil, wildlife, and vegetation and with respect to anticipated changes in noise and regarding stormwater management;*

The proposal is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment. A good portion of the site is currently impermeable area in the form of surface parking. These buildings will improve these vacant sites and also add greenspace and vegetative landscaping that will contribute to the environment as much as possible.

- (6) *Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract;*

There are no significant adverse impacts expected on property in the vicinity of the project. Currently, the surrounding property is largely owned by HFHS, and is also mitigated by the Freeway on the east. Because the hospital will be moving some of its operations south of Grand Boulevard, it's expected that it will help the properties to the west of the existing HFHS hospital by shifting activity away from the residential area.





- (7) *The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification;*

The existing zoning classifications would not allow for the Future of Health proposal to come to fruition. Conversely, the proposed zoning classification is suitable for the subject properties because it will unify the zoning on the site and in the area. It will allow the height maximum for the new hospital tower. The helipad use is permitted through B5 to allow for the emergency room care.

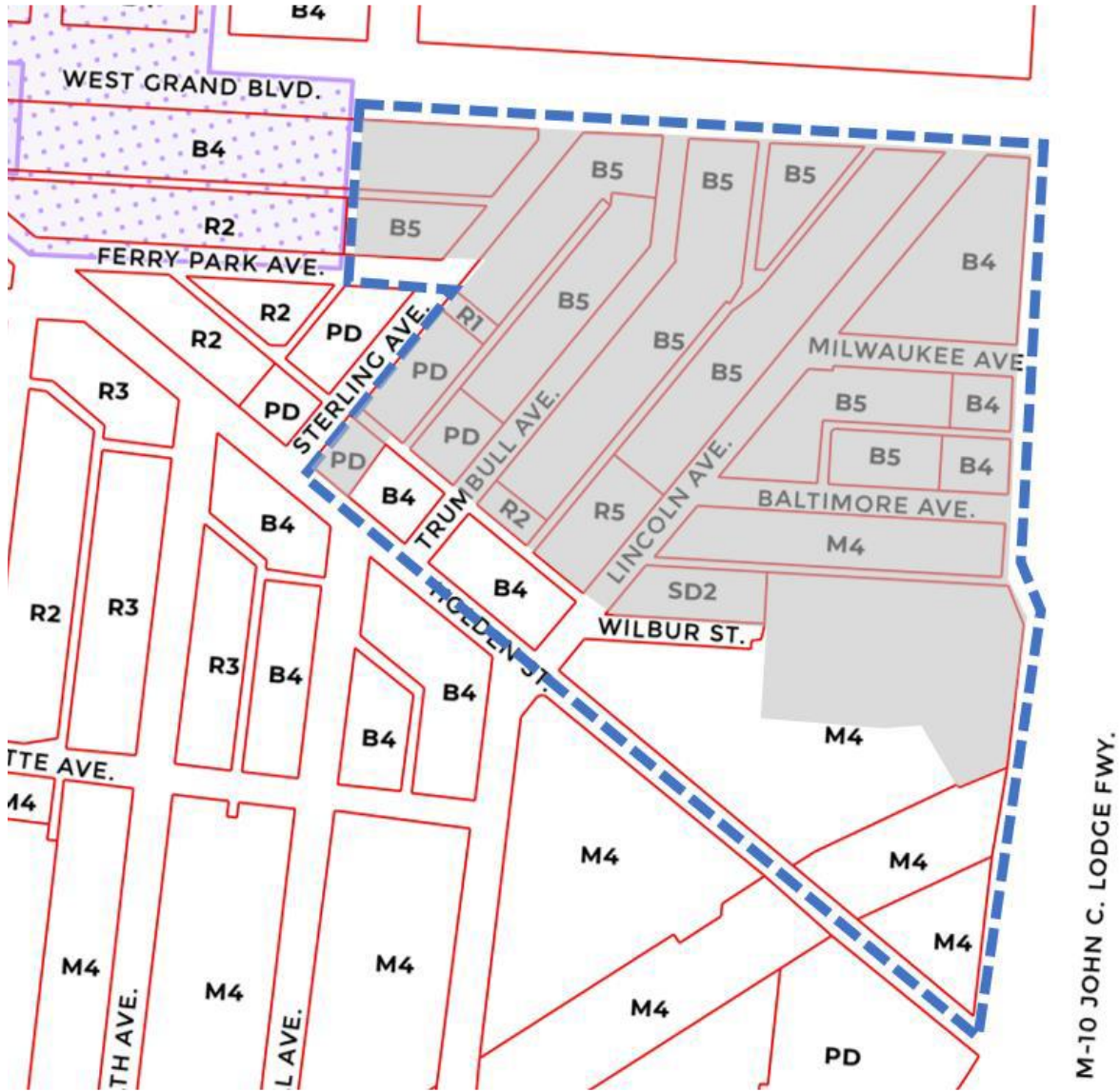
- (8) *Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal "spot zone."*

The proposed rezoning will not create an illegal spot zone.

## CONCLUSION

The development team has conducted extensive engagement in the community for this project, even prior to the CBO process which is expected to conclude soon. Specifically for the zoning request, HFHS has held 3 virtual meetings since the time of the CPC public hearing. As it relates to the zoning proposal, there has been a generally good response from the community. The zoning proposal has been shared with all of the citizens that are also following the CBO process via the Future of Health CBO website and communications.

Lastly, there are a few properties that are not under HFHS' site control. City staff have reached out via mail to those property owners, but have not heard any responses to our notices and outreach efforts. No negative impact is expected to come to those parcels as a result of the rezoning, since it will potentially add more value to the currently vacant properties due to the increased number of uses that will now be permitted if rezoned to B5.



**Proposed parcels to be rezoned are within the boundary on the map**

Attachment: Proposed Plans  
 CBO documents  
 Support Letter

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD  
 Greg Moots, PDD

David Bell, Director, BSEED  
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel  
Bruce Goldman, Law  
Daniel Arking, Law