

# City of Detroit

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**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Dolores Perales, City Planner

**RE:** **The request of Ronald Hatmaker and the Detroit City Planning Commission as a co-petitioner to rezone the properties located at 4344 McGraw, 4338 McGraw, 4332 McGraw, 4324 McGraw Street, 4320 McGraw Street, 4314 McGraw Street, 4306 McGraw Street, and 4302 McGraw Street where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification is shown to an SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use) zoning classification. (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

**DATE:** January 14, 2024

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the public hearing results, community engagement, the below analysis, and review of the Section 50-3-70 criteria of the 2019 Detroit City Code, CPC staff recommends **approval** of the rezoning request.

## REQUEST

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from Ronald Hatmaker and the Detroit City Planning Commission as a co-petitioner to permit the current vacant building and vacant parcels to be utilized as an indoor commercial recreation facility. More specifically, the request amends Article XVII, Section 50-17-47, District Map No. 45 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show an SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use) zoning classification where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification is shown at 4344 McGraw, 4338 McGraw, 4332 McGraw, 4324 McGraw Street, 4320 McGraw Street, 4314 McGraw Street, 4306 McGraw Street, and 4302 McGraw Street. The subject properties are generally bound by an alley to the north, Hartford Street to the east, McGraw to the south, and John E Hunter Street to the west.

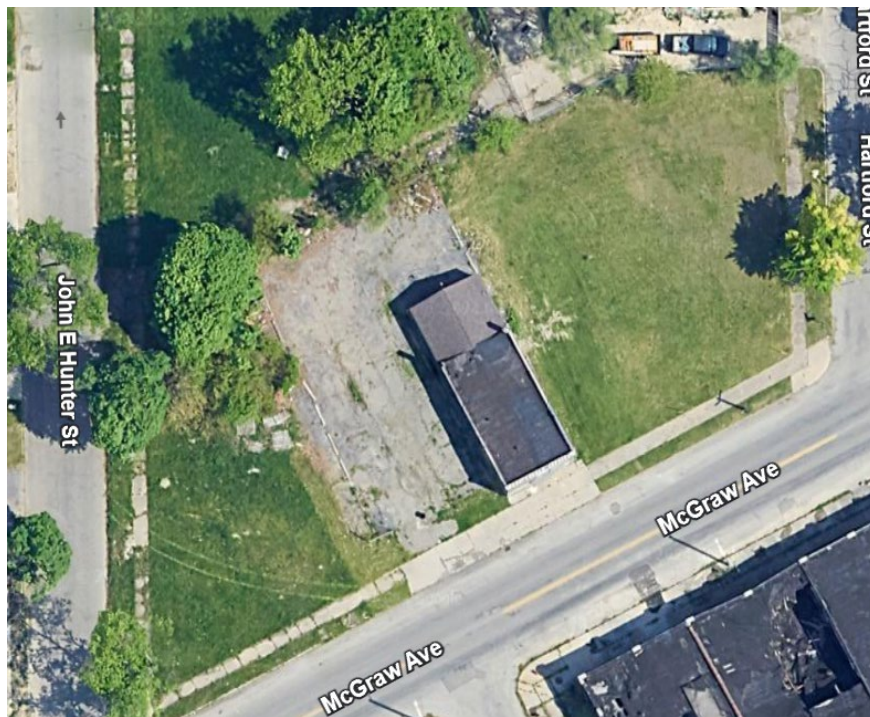
## BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

The properties located at 4324 McGraw Street, 4320 McGraw Street, 4314 McGraw Street, 4306 McGraw Street, and 4302 McGraw Street have been owned by Ronald Hatmaker and William Parker

since December of 2022. Prior to its acquisition, the site was home to Miracle Temple Church of Deliverance. However, between 2011-2012 the church dissolved, leaving the building vacant for nearly a decade. In 2022 the building and adjacent parcels excluding 4344 McGraw, 4338 McGraw, 4332 McGraw were sold to Mr. Hatmaker and Mr. Parker with the understanding that the site was suitable and could be used for commercial purposes.

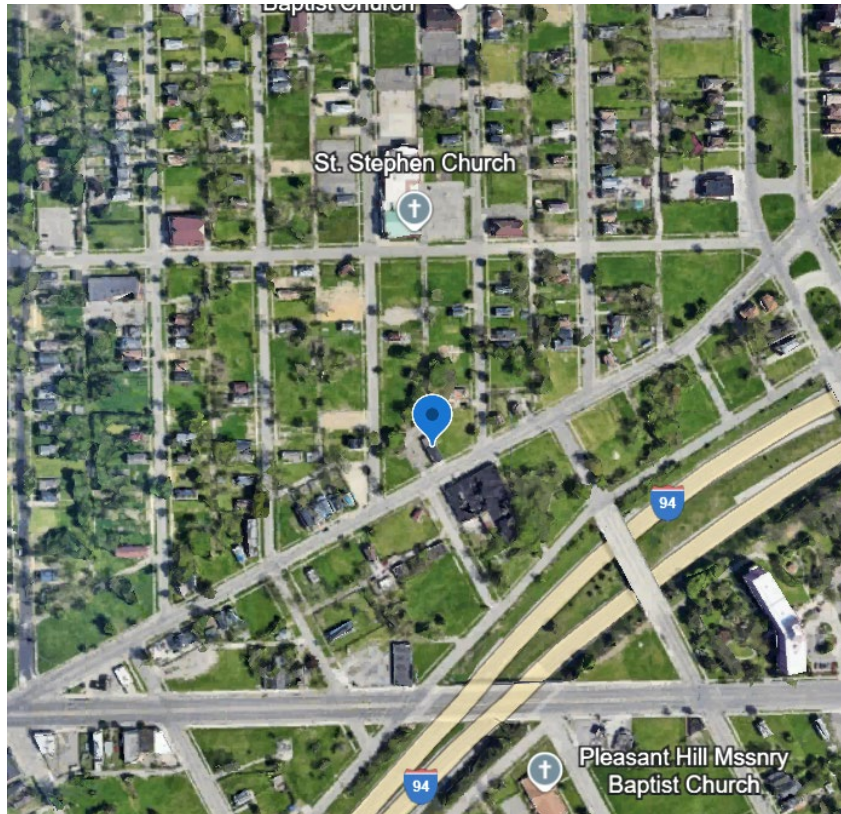


*Existing site as viewed from the corner of Hartford Street and McGraw (looking southwest).*



*Existing site as viewed from an aerial perspective.*





*Existing rezoning area as viewed from an aerial perspective.*

In 2023 work on the vacant building began transforming the site into a fitness center known as “Southwest Fight Club”. Southwest Fight Club (SWFC) aims to provide a space for youth and adults to explore and participate in combat sports such as boxing and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) all while providing a safe and community-oriented environment for them to explore and participate in these types of sports. Additionally, Southwest Fight Club will aid in community participation and youth development by offering free training and use of the site to youth under the age of 13 to help encourage the exploration and participation in these sports. In 2023 the petitioner began site renovations where these renovations were completed in 2024. It is important to note that throughout 2023 the petitioner did not have permits to begin renovations on site, however in July of 2024 permits were applied for. In mid to late 2024 Southwest Fight Club learned that they were unable to open their doors due to the current R2 zoning prohibiting this use classification from existing on this site.

The City Planning Commission is serving as a co-petitioner for the rezoning of three parcels located at 4332 McGraw Street, 4338 McGraw Street, and 4344 McGraw Street. These parcels are not owned by the primary petitioner. Specifically:

- 4338 McGraw Street and 4344 McGraw Street are owned by the Detroit Land Bank Authority.
- 4332 McGraw Street is owned by the Temple of Peace Church.

Both the Detroit Land Bank Authority and Temple of Peace Church were notified about the proposed rezoning and the public hearing scheduled for December 5th. This rezoning request encompasses the entire block face to ensure consistency and avoid spot zoning. The petitioner owns five of the eight parcels on this block face.

The subject properties are generally bound by an alley to the north, Hartford Street to the east, McGraw to the south, and John E. Hunter Street to the west. The location of the proposed rezoning is indicated as the hatched area on the zoning map below:



The proposed map amendment is requested to establish the appropriate zoning classification for the proposed development. Under the Zoning Ordinance, the proposed development is classified as a by-right retail, service, and commercial use (recreation, indoor commercial and health club) in the SD1 district.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

On December 5, 2024, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the petitioner’s request. Prior to the hearing, the petitioner gathered a petition with 24 community signatures in addition to 1 letter submitted by Steps2Change, a non-profit based in Dearborn, Michigan, in support of the opening of Southwest Fight Club. Beyond the petition, prior to December 5<sup>th</sup> the petitioner engaged with the community by canvassing the neighborhood, discussing the project, and building additional support for the initiative. Additionally, both Kronk’s Boxing Gym and Steps2Change have expressed interest in collaborating with Southwest Fight Club to develop fitness-focused programs for the community, contingent upon the site’s rezoning.

At the December 5<sup>th</sup> hearing, four individuals spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning. Many of their concerns were centered on the lack of involvement and engagement with the Midwest Tireman community regarding the proposed site. Additionally, some commenters expressed reservations about the presence of a boxing gym within the community, questioning how it aligns with the vision and character of their neighborhoods.

Prior to the hearing CPC staff reported it had received three letters of concern about the proposed rezoning. During the hearing, the Commission had the following questions and requests:

- The Commission asked for additional information regarding whether there were explicit screening requirements for outdoor accessory operations.
  - *CPC staff have found there are no specific requirements regarding screening requirements for the petitioners' proposed outdoor accessory use . However, according to Section 50-3-113 (7) due to the proposed location in SD1 and the nature of the existing site alterations to an existing structure that do not involve additions, or major structural alterations require a site plan review and qualify for "expedited review" as provided for in Section 50-3-131(b).*
- The Commission asked for further engagement with the community prior to the item reappearing before this honorable body.
  - *The petitioner agreed to further their engagement with the community where an open house was hosted on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.*
- The Commission asked if there were any conversations to expand the rezoning area to vacant land across the street from the proposed rezoning location.
  - *CPC staff have found that while there is a potential to expand the rezoning to vacant parcels across the street from the proposed rezoning site in the future to add any other parcels outside of what was noticed would trigger a completely new hearing delaying the application process.*

Following the December 5th hearing held by the City Planning Commission (CPC), the petitioner organized a community open house on December 21, 2024. The event was attended by CPC staff, residents, and approximately 20 individuals, including Eva Torres, the District 6 Manager, who expressed her support for the rezoning and the SW Fight Club during her attendance as well as Burnette Baptist Church who heavily vocalized their support.

At the open house, the petitioner provided clarity on their proposed gym site, addressed resident questions about the gym's purpose, safety measures, and youth engagement efforts, and listened to concerns. One key concern was the site's name, "SW Fight Club," which many residents felt was misleading and did not clearly convey its identity as a boxing gym for youth and adults.

CPC staff addressed additional concerns about the SD1 rezoning. Staff clarified questions about other allowable uses under the zoning designation and emphasized that only the parcels specifically listed were being considered for rezoning. This clarification helped alleviate confusion about whether the rezoning applied to the entire neighborhood.

Staff also explained the distinction between the City Planning Commission and the Planning and Development Department (PDD), as some residents mistakenly believed that CPC staff had been part of the team working on the Midwest Tireman Framework with PDD, which was not the case. To address concerns regarding the Framework and the proposed rezoning, CPC staff provided information on PDD's Master Plan Interpretation, noting that the proposed rezoning was generally consistent with the plan and would not disrupt or alter the character of the neighborhood.

Following CPC's December 5<sup>th</sup> hearing, as of January 14<sup>th</sup>, CPC staff received a total of seven letters expressing concern, including three submitted prior to the hearing. Additionally, five letters of support have been received, including one submitted before the December 5<sup>th</sup> hearing.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### *Surrounding Zoning and Land Use*

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

North: R2; developed as single-family homes across the alleyway

East: R2; residential vacant land

South: R2; residential vacant land

West: R2; residential vacant land

The parcels located to the north, east, south, and west of the subject parcel are zoned R2 Two-Family Residential. The surrounding area is primarily residential with a few blocks on McGraw Street and Milford Street designated as B4 General Business and R5 Medium Density Residential along West Grand Boulevard.



### *Zoning Classifications*

The pertinent zoning district classifications are described as follows:

#### **R2 – Two-Family Residential**

This district is designed to protect and enhance areas developed or likely to be developed with single- or two-family dwelling units. This district promotes a suitable environment for homes and for activities with family life.

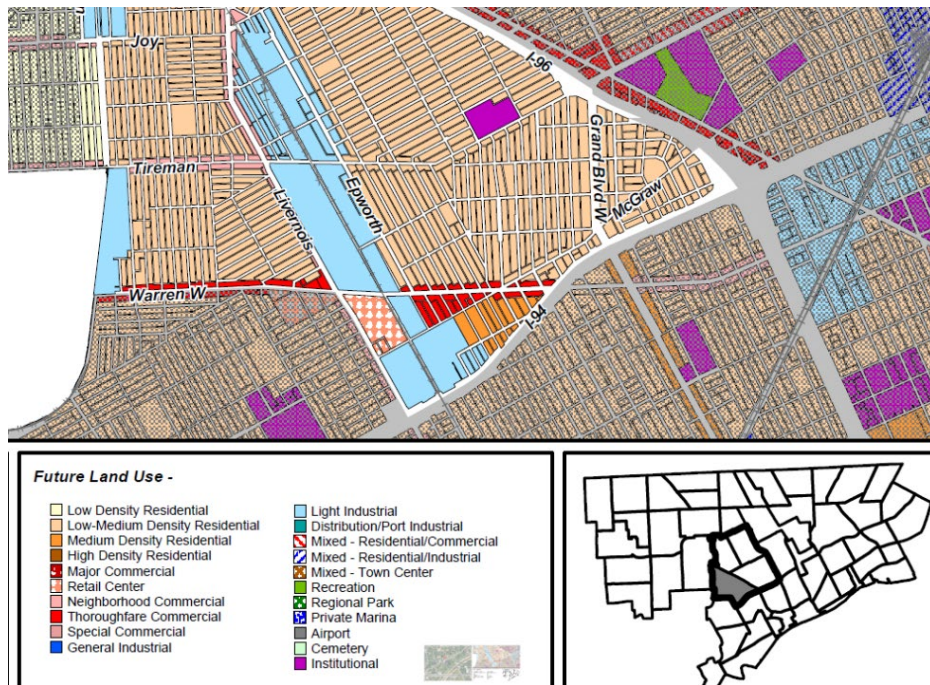


### SD1– Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use

The SD1 Special Development District encourages small-scale, pedestrian- and transit-oriented uses that complement a neighborhood setting. It aims to balance diverse, walkable activities for residents while preserving neighborhood character. Parking requirements are reduced to promote transit and non-motorized transportation, with shared and district-wide parking approaches encouraged. Certain alcohol-serving establishments are permitted without spacing requirements to boost pedestrian activity.

### Master Plan Consistency

The proposed rezoning site is designated as *Low/Medium Density Residential* in the current Master Plan. The Planning and Development Department found the proposed rezoning to be **generally consistent** with the Master Plan of Policies Future Land Use designation for the subject parcel.



### Zoning Ordinance Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based. The following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff analysis.

- *Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of this chapter.* The Master Plan designates the site as "Low/Medium Residential." The rezoning to an SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale, Mixed-Use) classification aligns with this designation, allowing for business and commercial uses suited to the area.
- *Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.* The proposed rezoning would support the general welfare of the public by allowing the proposed recreational facility. The site will provide space for physical activity, mentoring, and professional development for youth, which can benefit residential overall public health and safety.

- *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.* It is not anticipated that the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment.
- *The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification.* The proposed rezoning is suitable for the subject property and is consistent with the adjacent properties and others in the immediate vicinity.
- *Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal spot zone.* The proposed rezoning will not create a spot zone. Aligning with the Master Plan, the proposed upzoning will not be introducing an incompatible or disruptive land use.

Attachments: Public Hearing Notice  
Application for Zoning Change  
Site Plan  
Master Plan Interpretation  
Letters of Support  
Letters of Opposition  
12-21-24 Engagement Photos

cc: Dara O’Byrne, Deputy Director, P&DD  
Karen Gage, P&DD  
Greg Moots, P&DD  
David Bell, Director, BSEED  
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