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# City of Detroit

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**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Kimani Jeffrey, City Planner

**RE:** Request of Rock Economic Development Group to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-3, District Map No. 2 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, for a Planned Development (PD) modification to modify the terms and conditions of the PD zoning classification established by Ord. 42-95 at the property commonly known as 1326 St. Antoine.

The proposed PD modification is being requested in order to allow for the construction of a proposed multi-story building referred to as the Gratiot Life Sciences Building (RECOMMEND APPROVAL).

**DATE:** April 29, 2025

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This PD modification to allow for the Gratiot Life Sciences Building will allow for improvement to a site that has had a tumultuous history in terms of stalled development. The larger site has now become defunct and this project will help reinvigorate the area, being the first piece of a larger evolving plan to bring innovative services that will add to the City of Detroit's health and science landscape.

CPC staff believes the project would benefit from the incorporation of the use provisions of the B5 Major Business District zoning classification. This approach has been taken with other buildings such as the Renaissance Center - Tower 600. This would allow a building that has a PD zoning classification to enjoy the same entitlements as adjacent properties that have a B5 zoning designation, while retaining control over the site plan and elevations. Retaining the current PD will allow for a speedier process that the development team currently desires. In the future, the goal will likely be to rezone 1326 Gratiot as well as other parcels in the overall plan, to the B5 zoning district in order to unify all parcels under one zoning classification.

Based upon the above analysis, CPC staff recommends approval of the requested PD modification inclusive of all the uses allowed in the B5 Major Business District zoning classification. This recommendation also includes the following conditions:

1. That the developer continue to work with the Planning and Development Department and the staff of the City Planning Commission toward the finalization of the site plan and elevations, and

2. That the developer submit final site plans, elevations, landscape, lighting and signage plans for review for consistency with this approval prior to the making submission for applicable permits.

## REQUEST

A public hearing was held for this proposal on April 17<sup>th</sup> before the City Planning Commission (CPC) regarding the petition of Rock Economic Development Group. The request is to modify the PD zoning classification established by Ord. 42-95 at the property commonly known as 1326 St. Antoine, generally bounded by St. Antoine, Clinton Avenue, I-375 Freeway and Macomb Street (shown in map below). The proposed PD modification is being requested in order to allow for the construction of a proposed multi-story building referred to as the Gratiot Life Sciences Building.



Proposed Gratiot Life Sciences Building

## BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The subject site is located within the Central Business District south of Gratiot and north of the Hollywood Casino in Greektown. The larger area has come to be known as the “failed jail site,” which sits across from the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice. The Gratiot site has gone undeveloped since budget shortfalls eventually led to abandoned the Wayne County Jail project at that location. A [long history of proposals](#) have preceded the project that is currently before the CPC and the subsequent proposal to come. Ordinance No. 42-95 that established the PD for the subject property, was adopted in 1995 and allowed for the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility to be built.

The proposal that is currently before the CPC only pertains to one parcel of the larger area. The site that is currently planned to be developed is bounded by Clinton Ave., I-375, Macomb Street and Clinton Ave. The full block is planned to undergo a parcel split to separate the western portion of the block to be developed now, from the eastern portion to be developed in the future once a project is identified. The subject site is to be developed as the Gratiot Life Sciences Building with the primary occupant BAMF Health.

## **PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

No members of the public spoke at the public hearing. However, many questions were raised by the Commission with regard to the proposal at hand. Below are Bedrock's responses to the questions the Commission asked about the development. The Bedrock development team asked Turner Construction a clarifying question and hopes to hear back from them prior to the CPC's May 1 meeting

1. Regarding our plans to engage local Detroit organizations, especially in relation to workforce hiring during construction and engaging with local construction firms. How do these groups find out about opportunities to bid on projects?
  - a. We awarded the charge of Construction Manager to Turner Construction through an RFP.
  - b. Demolition of the existing Juvenile Detention Facility was awarded to a local Detroit company, the Farrow Group.
  - c. Turner brings national experience to this subject matter which benefits the project.
  - d. While Turner is a national company with a local presence, their role is to manage and coordinate the subcontractors who will be performing the work itself. The subcontractors who will be performing the construction work will be local to the metro Detroit area.
  - e. We are committed to ensuring the local community benefits from this project by actively partnering with workforce development agencies, participating in local job fairs, posting opportunities through local colleges, encouraging local apprentice hiring through trade unions, and actively seeking local vendors.
2. Does BAMF Health have any existing or prospective partnership locally?
  - a. BAMF Health collaborates with all health systems and academic systems throughout the state of Michigan with the goal of ensuring that this type of care is accessible and affordable to all.
  - b. BAMF Health receives patient referrals, so if a patient is receiving treatment or working with a doctor from Corewell Health or Henry Ford Health, for example, they may be referred out to BAMF Health for specific treatment.
  - c. BAMF could also refer to these other institutions. In this way the healthcare providers and BAMF collaborate to provide the best treatment option based on the patients' unique needs.
3. Does BAMF intend to facilitate access to care for Detroit residents?
  - a. The goal of BAMF's expansion into Detroit, especially given the geographic proximity of the existing Grand Rapids location, is to provide care for Detroit residents. BAMF plans to work with local and regional health systems and community leaders to achieve this.
4. What are our plans to engage the local Detroit community and our site neighbors?
  - a. We have received support from Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) and Greektown Neighborhood Partnership (GNP).
  - b. We have reached out to Lafayette West and look forward to engaging with them regarding our plans.

5. What are our plans for sustainability within the building and area?
  - a. We are pursuing LEED certification on this project and studying building materiality focused on sustainability.
7. Do we have any plans for water reuse within the building and/or adjacent park?
  - a. The entire Gratiot district will be served by a district stormwater tank that will detain up to the 100 year storm event for all parcels. This district-wide approach has been coordinated with DWSD and is scheduled to commence construction this summer. Inclusive in the district stormwater design is an innovative, automated control valve. This technology will close the outlet structure to retain stormwater for non-potable reuses in the park above, and then automatically release water prior to a rain event to ensure there is adequate detention capacity.

## PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Recommendations and decisions on a zoning map amendment shall be based on consideration of the below criteria. Staff comments are provided following each criteria:

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

The proposed amendment will meet a changing condition. The subject site was once used as the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility. The area to the north was once planned for a new Wayne County Jail, but those plans did not come to fruition. The [Wayne County Criminal Justice Center](#) was finally completed at another site on Russell St. between E. Warren Avenue and East Ferry Street.

The proposed Gratiot Life Sciences Building is now being proposed to be erected at the site that was once used as the former juvenile detention center. The surrounding land will be used to create the Gratiot Innovation District. This is a changing condition that will benefit the surrounding areas and bring health services to Detroit.

- 2) *Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of the zoning code.*

The subject rezoning site is located within the Central Business District area of Neighborhood Cluster 4 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies (MP). The Future Land Use map for this area shows Institutional (INST). The zoning classification is not proposed to be changed since it will remain PD. Additionally, the health and science focused nature of the proposal is consistent with the intent of the institutional designation. According to the Master Plan, the status applies to educational, religious, health, or public use. This proposal fits the character of these activities.

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

The proposed PD modification will not be detrimental to the health, safety or general welfare of the public. BAMF Health will be the primary tenant service provider which will add to the welfare of the public by providing specialized molecular and

radiopharmaceutical therapy for cancers and Alzheimer's and other diseases. Personalized diagnosis and treatment plans will be provided to patients utilizing AI. So ultimately the surrounding area and entire City of Detroit will benefit from having closer access to these life saving services, and it will be added to the Detroit health ecosystem.

- 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.*

The proposed activities will not have a negative impact on public facilities. A Preliminary Plan Review meeting has been held for this project which includes all necessary departments such as the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), DTE, the Planning and Development Department, and others. Generally, the site and services will be adequate for this proposal.

- 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.*

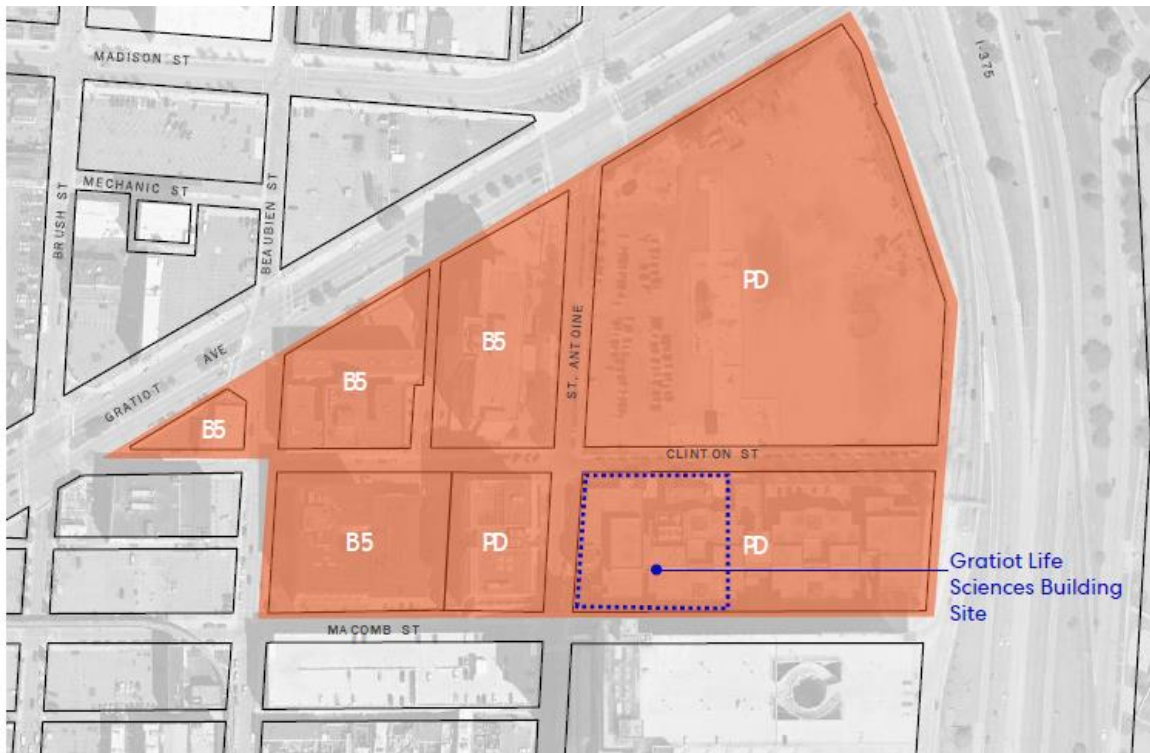
The rezoning is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment. Stormwater management facilities are being planned for and will meet the DWSD requirement for sites that disturb more than half an acre of land.

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

The proposed amendment will allow for a development that will have significant impact on the area, but none of those impacts are expected to adversely affect the surrounding properties. It should instead positively impact the surrounding land, by spearheading the larger transformative innovation district.

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

The subject property is suitable for the proposed zoning classification as the zoning district will remain the same, although the terms and conditions of the PD district will be modified from what Ord. 42-95 originally gave permissions for, which was the Wayne County Juvenile Facility. Staff plans to craft the PD ordinance to allow for all of the B5 uses, except for a select number that may be undesirable for the site. This approach will allow for modifications of the uses to allow the new building to be more flexible with tenants in case any unforeseen changes might arise.



8) *Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal “spot zone.”*

The proposed rezoning will **not** create an illegal spot zone because it is already zoned PD.

Attachment:

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