

Donovan Smith, AICP
Chairperson
Rachel M. Udabe
Vice Chair/Secretary

Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director
Christopher Gulock, AICP
Deputy Director

City of Detroit

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-6225 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cpc@detroitmi.gov

Adrian-Keith Bennett
Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Gwendolyn A. Lewis, MBA
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Dolores Perales, City Planner

RE: The request of the Detroit Land Bank Authority in conjunction with the Detroit City Planning Commission as co-petitioner to rezone the property located at 4838 Trumbull where a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification is shown to an R5 (Medium Density Residential) zoning classification in addition to the properties located at 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln where a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification is shown to an SD1 (Special Development District Small Scale, Mixed Use) zoning classification. (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)

DATE: July 30, 2025

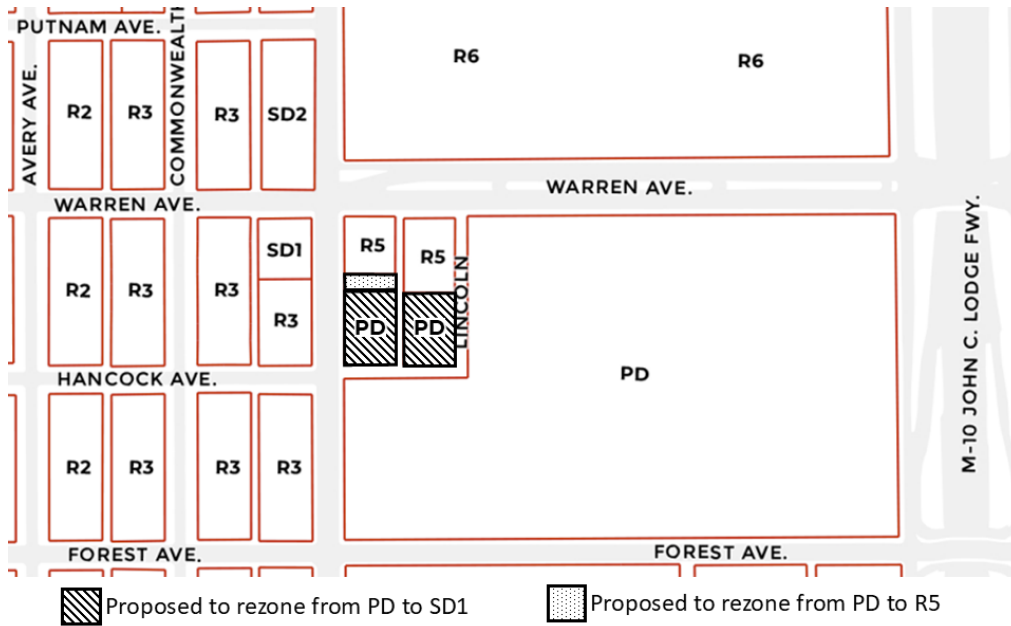
RECOMMENDATION

The City Planning Commission (CPC) staff has completed its review of this request and based upon the foregoing report recommends **APPROVAL** of the rezoning request.

REQUEST

The CPC has received a request of the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) in conjunction with the Detroit City Planning Commission as co-petitioner to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-6, District Map No. 5 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning. The DLBA is requesting to rezone 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln from PD to SD1 where the City Planning Commission is proposing to rezone 4838 Trumbull from PD to R5. The subject properties are generally bound by a north/south alley to the east, West Warren Street to the north, Trumbull Street to the west, and West Forest Avenue to the south. The proposed rezoning is indicated as the shaded area on the accompanying map.

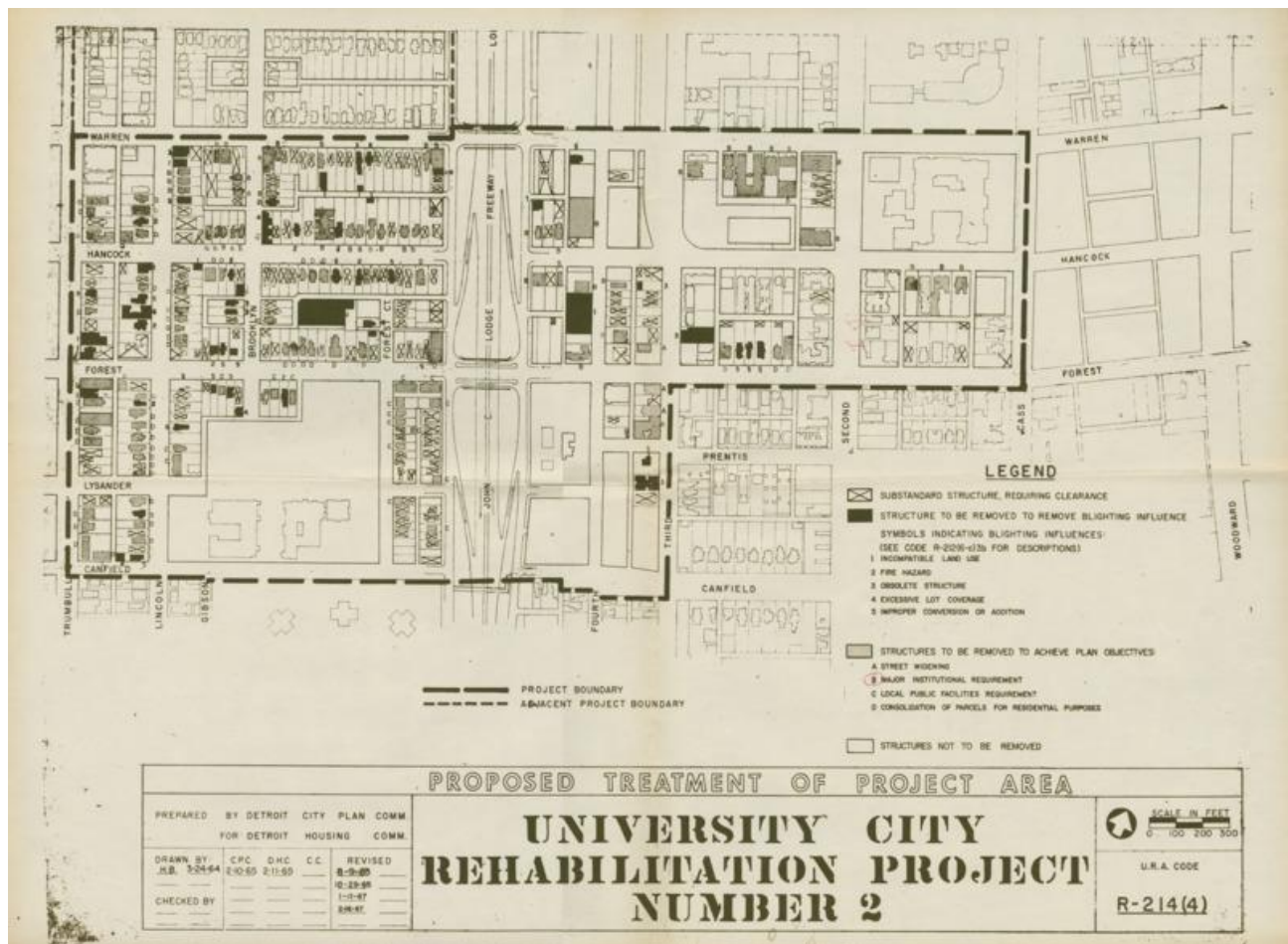
The proposed map amendment is requested to allow the DLBA to pursue small-scale, pedestrian- and transit-oriented, mixed-use development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, the amendment would permit the existing adjacent church, Citadel of Faith (CoF), to continue using an existing parking lot for parish-related parking. The subject property is approximately 1.58 acres and is located in City Council District 6.



BACKGROUND

Urban Renewal Area

The subject site is located within the former University City Rehabilitation No. 2 (University City 2) urban renewal area.



Initial University City 2 project map circa 1967.

The parcels located at 4838 Trumbull, 4830 Trumbull, and 4827 Lincoln were originally part of "Parcel 3" within the University City 2 development plan. Parcel 3 was intended to provide mixed-use residential land, including a community center and housing units. While part of Parcel 3 was developed where present-day Freedom House is located, the remaining Trumbull and Lincoln parcels were never developed. As a result, they have remained vacant for over 50 years.

Past Zoning

Prior to their rezoning to PD in 1973, the parcels at 4838 Trumbull, 4830 Trumbull, and 4827 Lincoln as well as nearby lots underwent several zoning changes. From 1940 to 1964, the area was zoned RM (Multi-Family Residential); between 1965 and 1972, the parcels were zoned B4 (General Business) and R3 (Low-Density Residential). In 1973, the zoning was changed to R5 and PD to align with the anticipated development of University City 2.

Parcel Background Info

Since 2018, the DLBA began for the planning and development of the subject lots for a mixed-use affordable housing structure. Initially, 4830 Trumbull included a total of 12 unique parcels where the Land Bank in order to move any potential development forward needed to acquire all 12 parcels before any rezoning was requested. Once all of the parcels were acquired and ownership transferred, the DLBA combined 4830 Trumbull in April of 2025 into one parcel.

It is important to note that the DLBA has acknowledged an error in the recent lot combination process. The address 4830 Trumbull was mistakenly designated as the primary parcel for the combination of 12 formerly separate parcels. However, the DLBA's original intent was to use 4822 Trumbull as the primary address for the combined parcel and include 4827 Lincoln as a part of the lot combination.



This error is significant because 4830 Trumbull includes a parking lot currently under split ownership: one half located at 4838 Trumbull is owned by Citadel of Faith (CoF) and the other 4830 Trumbull by the DLBA. The DLBA had intentionally planned to exclude 4830 Trumbull from the consolidation as an act of good faith, with the intent to potentially transfer its half of the lot to CoF. The image above highlights all three parcels, with the purple-shaded area indicating the portion of the parking lot owned by the DLBA.

Due to the mistaken inclusion of 4830 Trumbull, the DLBA will need to complete a lot split in the future removing 4830 Trumbull from the combined parcel and correctly incorporating 4827 Lincoln instead. In the interim, the current 4830 Trumbull parcel (Parcel ID: 06005976) must undergo both rezoning and split zoning. Specifically, the 4830 parcel will need to be rezoned to R5, separate from the SD1 rezoning request that applies to the remaining parcels.

Proposal

The proposed rezoning is intended to allow the DLBA to pursue the development of small-scale, pedestrian - and transit-oriented mixed-use affordable housing through a formal RFP process. This process will be facilitated by both the DLBA and the City of Detroit's Housing and Revitalization Department.

Additionally, the rezoning would permit Citadel of Faith to continue utilizing an existing parking lot for church-related parking; a use not currently supported under the existing PD zoning. The amendment is necessary because either the current PD classification would need to be amended to accommodate either the proposed residential development and CoF's ongoing parking use or rezoned.



Existing site as viewed from the corner of Trumbull and W. Hancock (looking northeast).



Existing site as viewed from an aerial perspective.

The City Planning Commission is serving as a co-petitioner for the rezoning by adding one parcel located at 4838 Trumbull. This parcel is owned by Citadel of Faith

The present-day Citadel of Faith property was formerly St. Dominic's Catholic Church. CoF acquired the property from the Archdiocese of Detroit in 2012, following the parish's closure in 2005 after nearly 80 years of operation at the site, which began in 1926. Before St. Dominic's, the church was operated by Brewster Congregational Church, which built the original parish in 1906 and remained at the location until 1925.

Citadel of Faith was notified about the proposed rezoning and the public hearing scheduled for June 26, 2025, and in response has given verbal support regarding the rezoning of their property. CoF recognizes that in order to utilize both their parcel and the adjacent Land Bank-owned lots, rezoning is necessary due to the current PD designation. Under the existing PD zoning, the parcels are restricted to the original Planned Development uses (parcel 3 of the original PD specifies it shall be used for a community center and between 400-600 residential units via townhouses, garden apartments, and mid- and high-rise structures for University City), which limits new community uses and development opportunities.

The Citadel of Faith has tried to purchase the parcels from the DLBA three times since 2018. The DLBA has denied the purchase requests because the adjacent Land Bank-owned parcels at 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln were not available for sale. DLBA regional partners (an internal review team) have determined the properties are of market value and must go through an RFP process for future mixed use and affordable housing development.

This rezoning request covers the majority of the block face to promote zoning consistency and replaces the existing Planned Development (PD) designations on the block.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS

On June 26, 2025, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the petitioner's request. Prior to the hearing, the DLBA conducted various forms of community engagement. Informational flyers about the proposed rezoning were strategically distributed across the Woodbridge neighborhood, including locations along Canfield, at Scripps Park, and on the Woodbridge Development Corporation's outdoor bulletin board.

In March 2025, the DLBA staff r presented to the Woodbridge Citizen Council to discuss the proposed rezoning and its goals for the future use of the currently vacant parcels. The primary concerns raised during the information session centered on parking. However, it was explained at this stage, parking and design-related questions cannot be addressed, as the parcels must undergo an RFP process following the rezoning. Despite these limitations, participants generally responded favorably to the proposal, particularly because it seeks to resolve concerns around long-term vacancy, an issue constrained by the current PD zoning.

Additionally, a letter of concern was submitted to CPC staff on June 23, 2025, echoing these parking concerns. The letter highlighted the limited parking space along Trumbull Avenue and noted that parking issues worsen during events at CoF Church, which has very limited on-site parking.

CoF Concerns

Further engagement was conducted with Citadel of Faith Church. CPC staff and DLBA staff met with CoF leadership to discuss the rezoning of both their lot and adjacent Land Bank-owned parcels. CoF expressed interest in eventually selling their properties and noted that they have maintained not only their lot but also the neighboring Land Bank parcels specifically 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln since 2012, including general mowing and upkeep.

The DLBA confirmed that the City of Detroit is contracted to perform five "rough cuts" (basic maintenance) annually on all Land Bank-owned properties, including the aforementioned parcels. Outside of those five service visits, CoF may have assisted with additional maintenance. As a result of this ongoing care, CoF has stated they believe they have a claim to ownership of the 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln parcels under adverse possession. Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln parcels under adverse possession. However, under Michigan state law, CoF does not meet the legal requirements to claim ownership through adverse possession due to the following:

- The 15-year continuous possession requirement has not been met
- Use of the land has not been exclusive or clearly defined as ownership
- Possession must be visible, uninterrupted, and treated openly as one's own property for the entire 15-year period
- Physical indicators such as fencing or structures that demonstrate exclusive use are lacking

Regardless, according to MCL 600.5821 publicly owned properties are immune from claims of adverse possession.

With regard to selling their property, CoF acknowledges that rezoning their PD-zoned parcel to R5 is necessary to avoid complications related to mixed zoning classifications, which would otherwise hinder future development. As such, they are in support of the rezoning for their own parcel. However, CoF has expressed conflicting views regarding the rezoning of the adjacent parcels at 4830 Trumbull and 4827 Lincoln. While they recognize that rezoning is required, they are reluctant to express support for DLBA owned parcels, as they hope to eventually acquire the parcels. Their position appears to be that, if the parcels are not rezoned, they may have a better chance of taking possession and including them in a future adverse possession case though this is not legally feasible.

At a community meeting hosted by the Woodbridge Citizen Council on June 12, 2025, CPC staff provided an update on the public hearing scheduled for June 26. Citadel of Faith leadership, including Pastor Harvey Carey, was present and introduced themselves to community members. He reiterated CoF's history of maintenance and use of the parcels but did not indicate any intent to sell CoF's property at that time. CoF leadership also stated that community members affiliated with the church would likely speak in support of their interests regarding the Land Bank parcels.

Public Hearing Results

At the June 26th hearing, 7 individuals spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning. Many of their concerns were centered around CoF and their desire for the church to acquire ownership of the proposed lots. Additionally, some commenters expressed reservations about future affordable development, questioning how it aligns with the vision and character of their neighborhoods.

During the hearing, the Commission asked for further engagement with the community specific to CoF prior to the item reappearing before this honorable body. *The petitioner agreed to further their engagement with the community where a meeting was had with CoF leadership prior to returning to CPC.*

On July 11th, 2025, the DLBA staff met with CoF leadership to discuss the future of the lots below:

- 4830 Trumbull (parking lot portion of pending lot split)
- 4827 Lincoln (parcel immediately behind the parking lot)

The DLBA expressed a willingness to sell these parcels to CoF and provided contact information for their Disposition team to CoF leadership. However, as of this writing, CoF has not initiated contact, nor has the Land Bank received an application for the two parcels in question. Additionally, during the meeting, CoF leadership reiterated their intent to pursue an adverse possession claim against the Land Bank to acquire all lots currently proposed for rezoning. The Land Bank's legal team clarified that, under Michigan law, governmental entities are not subject to adverse possession.

Since the June 26th hearing the proposed rezoning has received a total of 9 letters of support; 8 from community members and 1 from a local nonprofit, Woodbridge Neighborhood Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

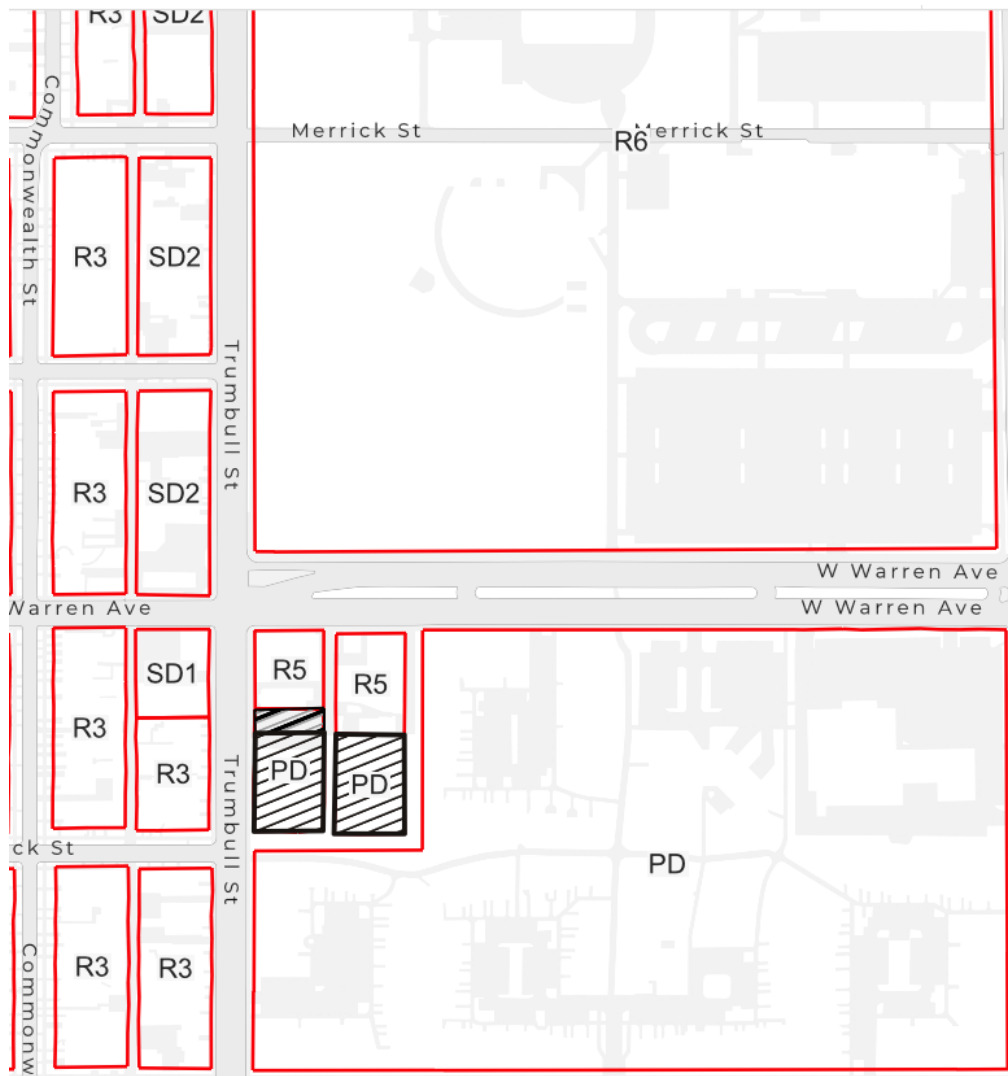
North: R5; developed as a religious institution

East: PD; multi-family residential

South: PD; developed multi-family residential

West: R3 and SD1; developed as single-family and two-family homes and vacant land

As shown on the zoning map below, parcels in the subject area are mostly R3, R5, and SD2. The parcels located to the north of the subject parcel are R5, while a stretch of R3, SD1, and SD2 can be found along Trumbull. The surrounding area is primarily business and residential.



Zoning Classifications

The pertinent zoning district classifications are described as follows:

PD – Planned Development

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.

R5 – Medium Density Residential

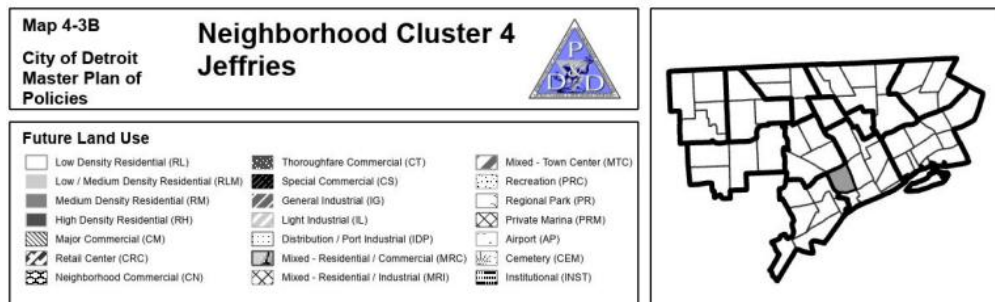
This district is intended to accommodate a range of residential developments, from single-family detached homes to medium-density multifamily dwellings. The district primarily supports rental apartment buildings while allowing certain non-residential uses that can be appropriately integrated into the community.

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 *Medium Density Residential* in the current Master Plan, as seen on the map below. The Planning and Development Department provided a Master Plan Interpretation, stating that the rezoning is generally consistent with the Master Plan.



Zoning Ordinance Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of 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 "Medium Density Residential." The rezoning to an SD1 classification aligns with this designation, allowing for residential, business and commercial uses suited to the area.
- *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. The subject area is developed with low density mixed-uses. The proposed rezonings would allow the subject property to be redeveloped via RFP by the DLBA without the PD restrictions.
- *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 rezoning will not be introducing an incompatible or disruptive land use.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the above review and findings CPC staff has no objection to the requested rezoning and believes rezoning to be necessary to return this property to a viable state of readiness for use.

Attachments: Public Hearing Notice
Application for Zoning Change
Lot Combination Confirmation
Master Plan Interpretation
DLBA Community Rezoning Flyer
Letter of Concern
Letters of Support

cc: Alexa Bush, Director, P&DD
Karen Gage, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
James Foster, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Daniel Arking, Law Department