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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Timarie DeBruhl, City Planner

RE: The request of T. Van Fox (on behalf of MHT Housing, Inc.) and Tyler Hardy (on behalf of the Detroit Housing Commission) to modify the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification created by Ordinance No. 50-10 on Zoning District Map No. 40 at the former Herman Gardens public housing site now known as Gardenvue Estates to allow for the construction of a new multi-family housing complex including 53 apartments and 120 townhomes.

DATE: October 31, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

The City Planning Commission (CPC) staff recommends **approval** of the request to modify the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification created by Ordinance No. 50-10 with the following conditions:

1. That a separate landscape plan be submitted, subject to review and approval by CPC staff,
2. That the site plan be revised to designate, within the 4-story building a multi-purpose room as a "Community Space" and that the use be limited to residentially scaled social gatherings,
3. That the exterior materials and color palette for all buildings be compatible with the existing development within Gardenvue Estates;
4. That the final site plans, elevations, landscape, lighting and signage plans be submitted for CPC staff approval prior to submitting applications for applicable permits.

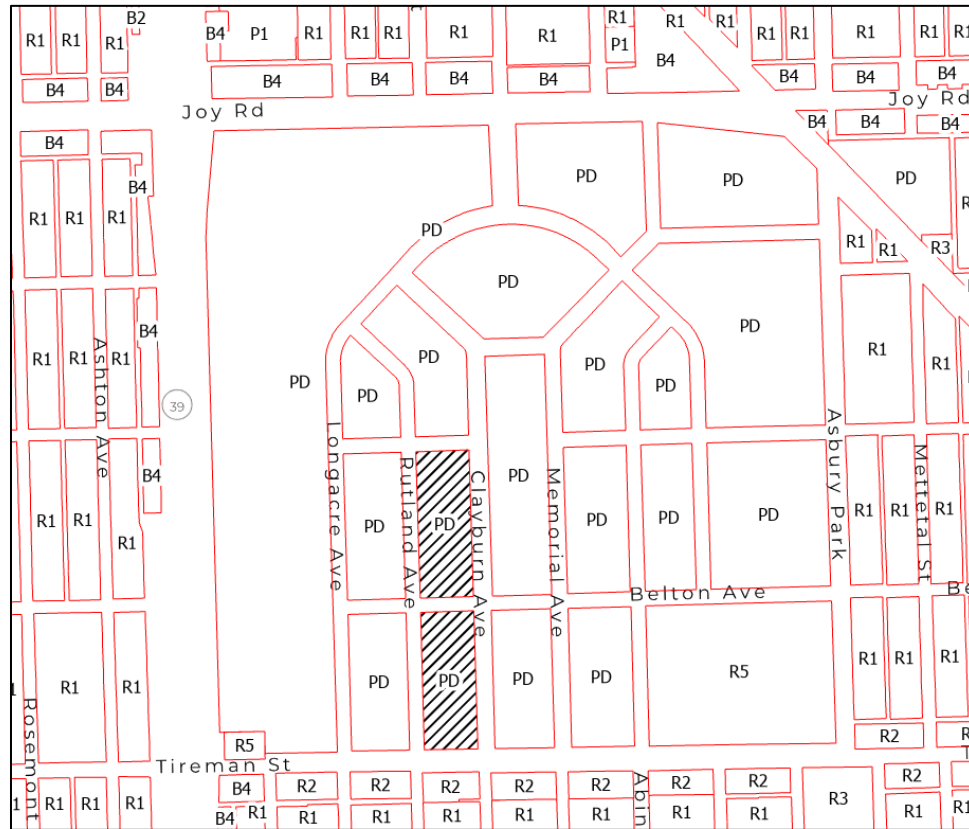
BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

Gardenvue Estates is generally bounded by Joy Road to the north, Asbury Park to the east, Tireman Avenue to the south, and Southfield Freeway (M-39) to the west. The subject request would modify the existing PD created by ordinance No. 15-10 of and amend Article XVII, Section

50-17-42, District Map No. 40, Chapter 50, *Zoning*, of the 2019 Detroit City Code. The subject property is indicated on the map below.

The proposed PD modification is for the construction of new multi-family residential structures over two blocks, to include 120 townhomes and a 53-unit 4-story apartment building.

MAP OF PROPOSED PD MODIFICATION



The subject request involves two vacant blocks within the Gardenview Estates under control of the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC). The area was previously developed with the Herman Gardens public housing project which was demolished in the late 1990s. At the time, the federal government proposed redeveloping the entire site with a mixed-income multi-phase housing development. In 2007, the eastern part of the area was rezoned to PD to allow for 234 residential units. In 2010, the remainder of the site was cleared, streets and lighting installed, and the remaining 100 acres were rezoned to PD (Ordinance No 15-10) to allow for an additional 231 units. Over the years, a variety of housing types have been built, including townhouses, duplexes, as well as senior housing. However, the mid and western parts of the project have remained vacant. There were plans to develop some single-family housing, but that did not materialize.

EXISTING AIREAL PHOTO



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

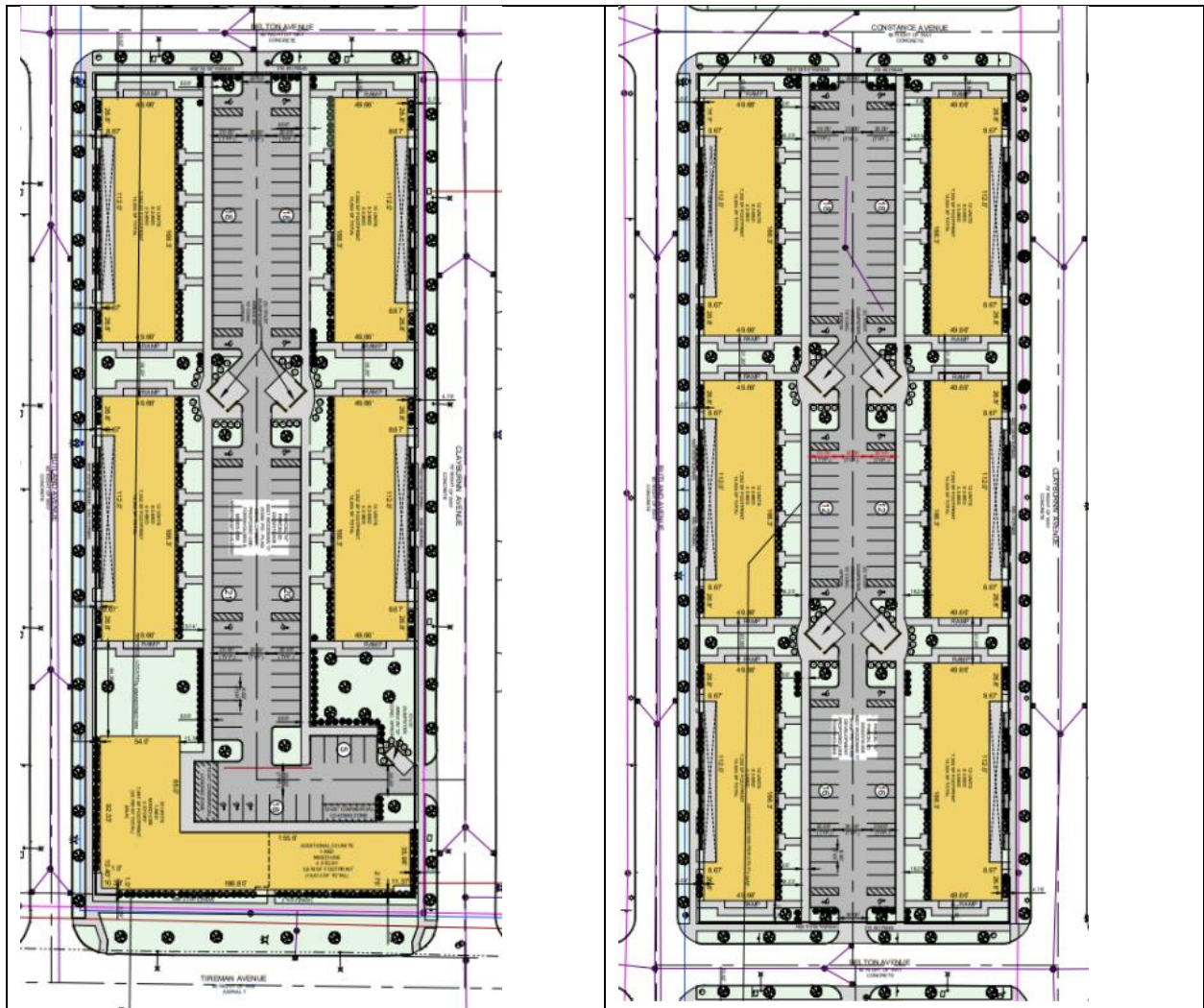
In the Fall of 2024, the DHC released a request for proposals toward the completion of the remaining vacant blocks and MHT Housing, Inc. was selected. The proposal is the first of a four phase completion project. Overall, the proposed multi-family housing structures will include a mix of apartments and townhomes, with 173 units total, 53 one bedroom units, 80 2-bedroom units, and 40 three bed-room units.

On the south block bound by Tireman, Rutland, Belton and Clayburn Avenues, MHT Housing is proposing the following:

- An L-shaped 4-story buidng with 53 one-bedroom units and small commercial space
- Four separate bulidngs each with 12 townhouse units (8 two-bedrooms and 4 three-bedrooms) for a total of 48 units
- An internal parking lot with 100 parking spaces
- Greenspace

On the north block bound by Belton, Rutland, Constance, and Clayburn Avenues, MHT Housing is proposing the following:

- Six separate bulidngs each with 12 townhouse units (8 two-bedrooms and 4 three-bedrooms) for a total of 72 units
- An internal parking lot with 92 parking spaces
- Greenspace



PUBLIC HEARING AND FOLLOW-UP

On September 4, 2025, the CPC held the statutory public hearing on the proposed modification of the PD.

Public Comment and Communications

One member of the public spoke during the public hearing, to inquire about MHT Housing, Inc. The commenters questions are below, with the petitioners responses in italics.

- Is MHT housing a new company? *MHT housing was founded 30 years ago*
- What state is MHT Housing head quartered? *MHT housing is based in Bingham Farms, Michigan*
- Has MHT Housing developed other projects in Detroit? *Yes, MHT has developed and manages a number of affordable and senior housing developments in the City of Detroit, as well as other locations.*

Commissioner Comments and Concerns

During the public hearing, the CPC discussed the following (staff and petitioner responses are included in italics).

Questions pertaining to MHT Housing, Inc.:

- Does MHT Housing, Inc. seek out Detroit contractors when developing in Detroit? What is the average number of Detroit head quartered contractors used on during construction of MHT Developments in the City of Detroit?

MHT seeks out Detroit based companies when developing in the city of Detroit.

Contractors are selected using the bidding process requirements set forth by MISHDA.

An average of 75-85% of all contractors and subcontractors are/will be Detroit-based. At least 20%+ are/will be minority and/or female-owned organizations.

- What is the current occupancy rate of existing MHT housing developments?

The current occupancy rate of MHT Housing developments is 94.4% across their portfolio. Please see attached report.

- Commissioners requested a list of MHT developments located in the city of Detroit.

There are currently 23 existing properties, with a total of 1,987 units in the City of Detroit. Additionally, there are nine projects under construction/rehab, with a total of 531 units.

Questions pertaining to the proposed design and materials:

- What is the specific type and brand of the metal panels to be used on the proposed apartment building?

Please see the attached metal siding document. The siding has historically been sourced from Berridge Manufacturing (specific manufacture may change in future developments). The building will be fully insulated to ensure that outside noise does not affect residents.

- Will each set of town homes be the exact same? Commissioners expressed concern over the buildings looking “cookie cutter.”

Structurally the buildings will be identical. The interior and exterior designs will not be identical. The interior common spaces/shared spaces will all be designed with different artwork, paint colors, etc.

Questions pertaining to the existing Gardenview housing complex located east of the proposed development:

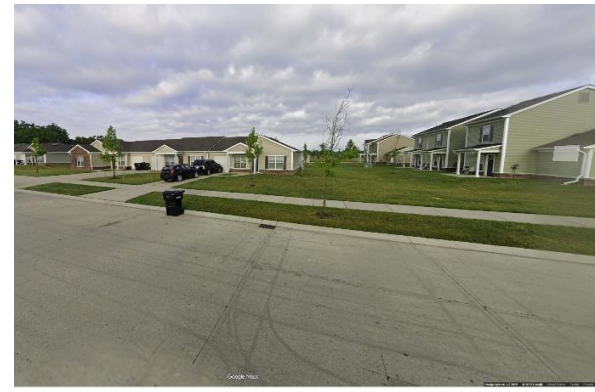
- How well is the existing Gardenview Estates doing in terms of occupancy?

The existing Gardenview Estates development has an occupancy rate of 92.5%.

- Are there plans for the remaining undeveloped portion of the existing PD, covering the remainder of the former Herman Gardens public housing complex?

A health center has recently opened on the former public housing site, located near Joy Road and the Southfield Freeway Service Drive. The health center is successfully operating. Additionally, there are plans for a school to be developed on the former public housing site, located west of the proposed development.

In addition to the questions and concerns above, Commissioners asked that images of the existing Gardenview Estates, which are shown below.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On July 17, 2025, the petitioners hosted a community engagement meeting. The petitioners indicate residents of the Gardenview Estates attended, and expressed support for the proposed rezoning and residential development. Additionally, the petitioners indicate they attended and spoke at Council Member Durhal's monthly coffee hour, where the community once again expressed support for the proposed project.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

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

North:	PD – Undeveloped
East:	PD – Undeveloped and multi-family townhouse units
South:	R2 – Developed with a church and residential neighborhood
West:	PD - Undeveloped

The area surrounding the proposed PD modification area is primarily zoned for residential uses, with varying degrees of density. In addition to residential uses there are some parcels east of the Gardenview Estates that are zoned M4 (Intensive Industrial) zoning along the rail corridor. See zoning map below.

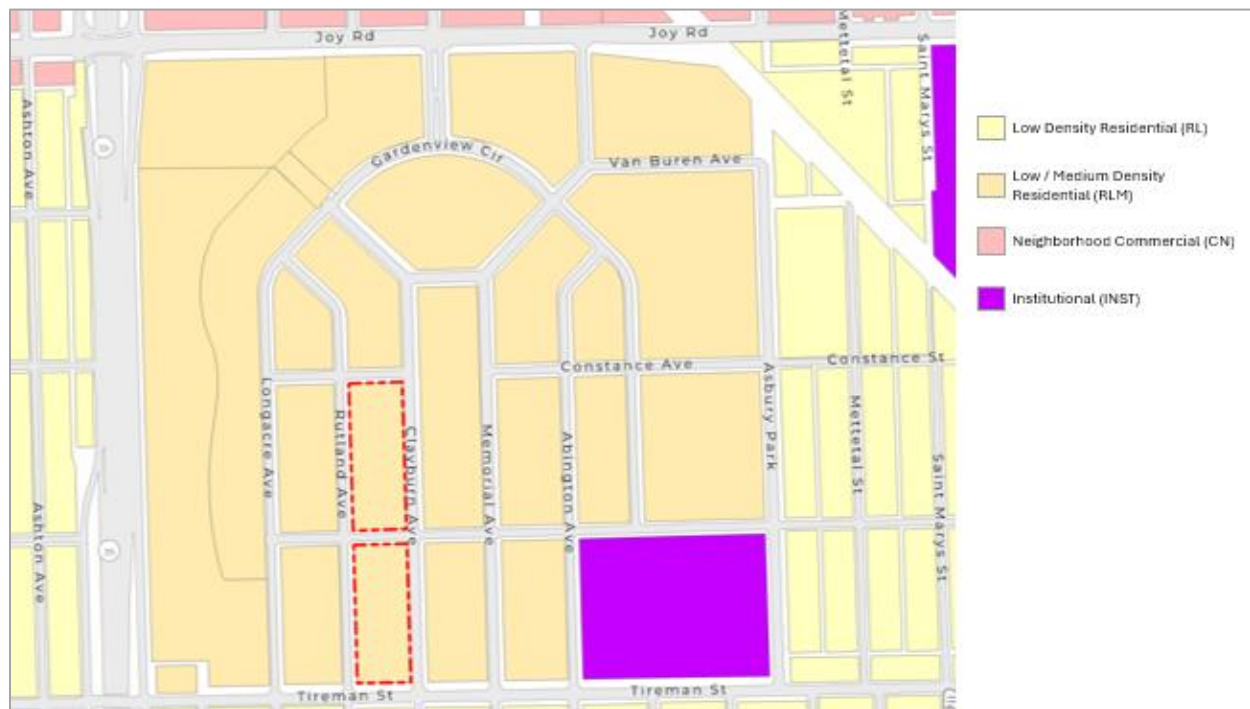
CURRENT ZONING MAP



Master Plan

The current Master Plan Future Land Use Map (FLU Map) shows the subject site as Low / Medium Density Residential (RLM). The surrounding area consists of properties designated for low – medium density residential, as well as institutional and commercial. The Planning & Development Department (PDD) will be providing a Master Plan interpretation

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



STAFF ANALYSIS

The Zoning Ordinance provides criteria with which all zoning map amendments and planned developments are to be considered. Below is CPC staff's analysis of the map amendment and PD modification criteria listed in Sections 50-3-70 and 50-3-96 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Map Amendment Approval Criteria

The Zoning Ordinance provides eight criteria to be considered in determining the appropriateness of a zoning map amendment, as specified in 50-3-70. The applicable criteria with staff analysis in italics are found below.

- Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact. *The subject site was part of a larger PD created by Ordinance No. 15-10. The subject site was not developed per the PD, and has remained vacant since the demolition of the former Herman Gardens public housing complex. By modifying the existing PD it will allow for denser residential development to move forward.*
- Whether the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, including air, water, soil, wildlife, and vegetation with respect to anticipated changes in noise and regarding stormwater management. *Staff does not anticipate any significant adverse impacts on the natural environment as a result of the proposed amendment.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract. *Staff does not anticipate any significant adverse impacts on other property in the vicinity of the subject tract as a result of the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment would allow for the development of parcels that have remained vacant since the demolition of the former Herman Gardens housing project, reactivating the existing vacant land.*
- Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal "spot zone." *Staff does not anticipate the proposed amendment will create an illegal spot zone.*

Planned Development Approval Criteria

The Zoning Ordinance provides eight criteria to be considered in determining the appropriateness of a Planned Development, found in Section 50-3-96. The applicable criteria with staff analysis in italics can be found below.

- Whether the subject site:
 - Covers a minimum of two acres of contiguous land under the control of one owner or group of owners, except, that upon determining that an adequate development can be accomplished on a parcel of lesser size, the City Planning Commission may waive this requirement; and *The subject site does cover a minimum of two acres, divided among two blocks.*

- Is capable of being planned and developed as on integral unit, except in unusual circumstances. *The proposed development will consist of one housing complex, to include ten townhouse structures and one apartment building.*
- The that the development will result in a recognizable and substantial benefit to the ultimate users of the project and the City, where such benefits would otherwise be unfeasible or unlikely to be achieved. The benefits can be accomplished through a higher quality unified design that would be required by the typical regulations of this chapter. These benefits shall be demonstrated in terms of preservation of natural features, unique architecture, extensive landscaping, special sensitivity to land uses in the immediate vicinity, particularly well-designed access and circulation systems, and/or integration of various site features into a unified development. *Staff anticipates that the proposed development will result in recognizable and substantial benefits both to the future residents of the housing development as well as to those residents in the general vicinity and the City. The proposed development will provide low-income housing units needed in the City, and create financially accessible housing options for a variety of households. In addition the proposed development includes community greenspaces, ADA accessible units, and a first floor community space. The petitioner aims to support community development and cohesion through these communal spaces.*
- Whether the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate. *Staff finds that the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate. The subject site has historically been used for residential purposes. The existing PD created by Ordinance No. 15-10, which was never seen through to fruition, was for mixed income housing.*
- Whether the proposed planned development substantially responds to the intent of Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, being MCL 125.3503, to:
 - Permit flexibility in the regulation of land development;
 - Encourage innovation in land use and variety in design, layout, and type of structures constructed;
 - Achieve economy and efficiency in the use of land, natural resources, energy, and the providing of public services and utilities, encourage useful open space; and
 - Provide better housing, employment, and shopping opportunities that are particularly suited to the needs of the residents.

Staff finds that the proposed PD modification does substantially respond to the intent of Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The proposed PD will consist of a variety in design choices, that will include stacked townhouses as well as apartments, and will include a coherent housing complex that offers variety in design throughout. The PD will provide housing at a variety of price points making it accessible and meeting the needs of many Detroit residents. Additionally, the PD will create employment opportunities during the construction phase.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the above analysis and the review of approval criteria listed in Sec. 50-3-70 and Sec. 50-3-96 of the Zoning Ordinance, CPC staff recommends approval of the rezoning request with the conditions listed at the beginning of this report.

Attachments: Public hearing notice
 Application for zoning change
 Updated site plans