

City of Detroit

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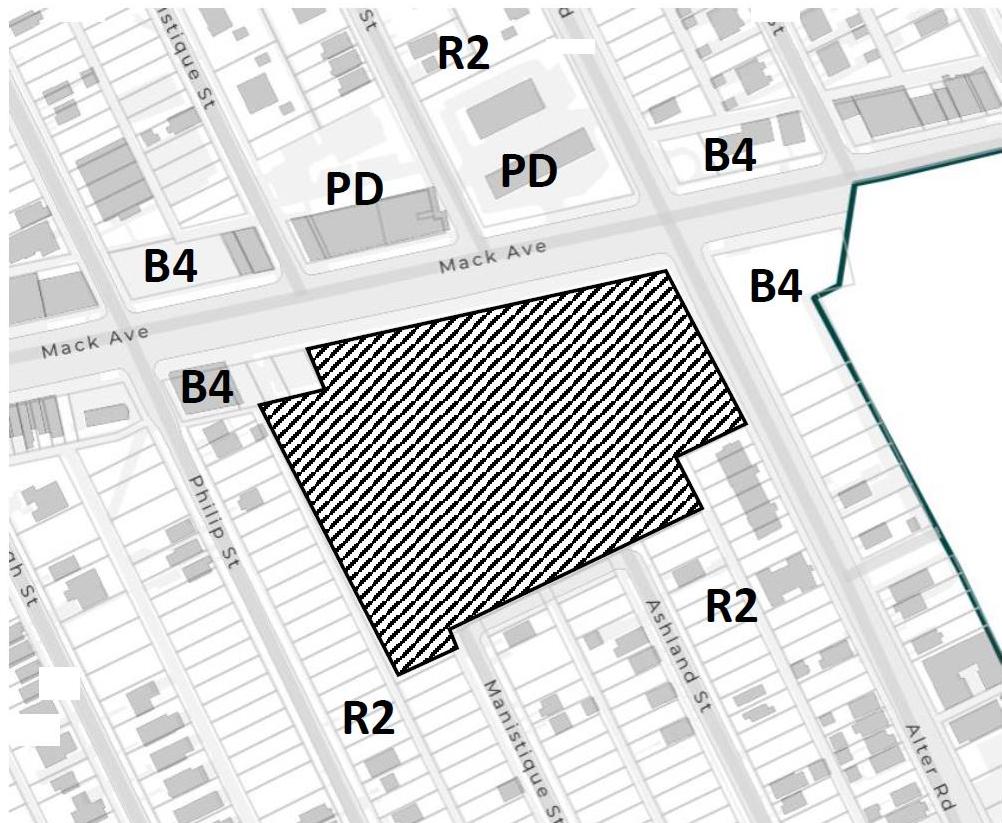
TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Eric Fazzini, Staff

RE: Request of Michael A. Curis, Mack-Alter, LLC, to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-34, District Map No. 32 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a B4 (General Business District) zoning classification where a PD (Planned Development District) zoning classification is shown at 14632 Mack Avenue, OR to modify the plans for the existing PD zoning classification created by Ordinance No. 16-04 at 14632 Mack Avenue, generally located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Mack Avenue and Alter Road, commonly referred to as the Mack-Alter Square shopping center. **(PUBLIC HEARING)**

DATE: January 14, 2026

On January 15, 2026, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will hold a 6:15 p.m. public hearing on the subject zoning map amendment (rezoning) request. Below is a map indicating the area proposed to be amended.



The existing PD area proposed for amendment or modification is shaded above

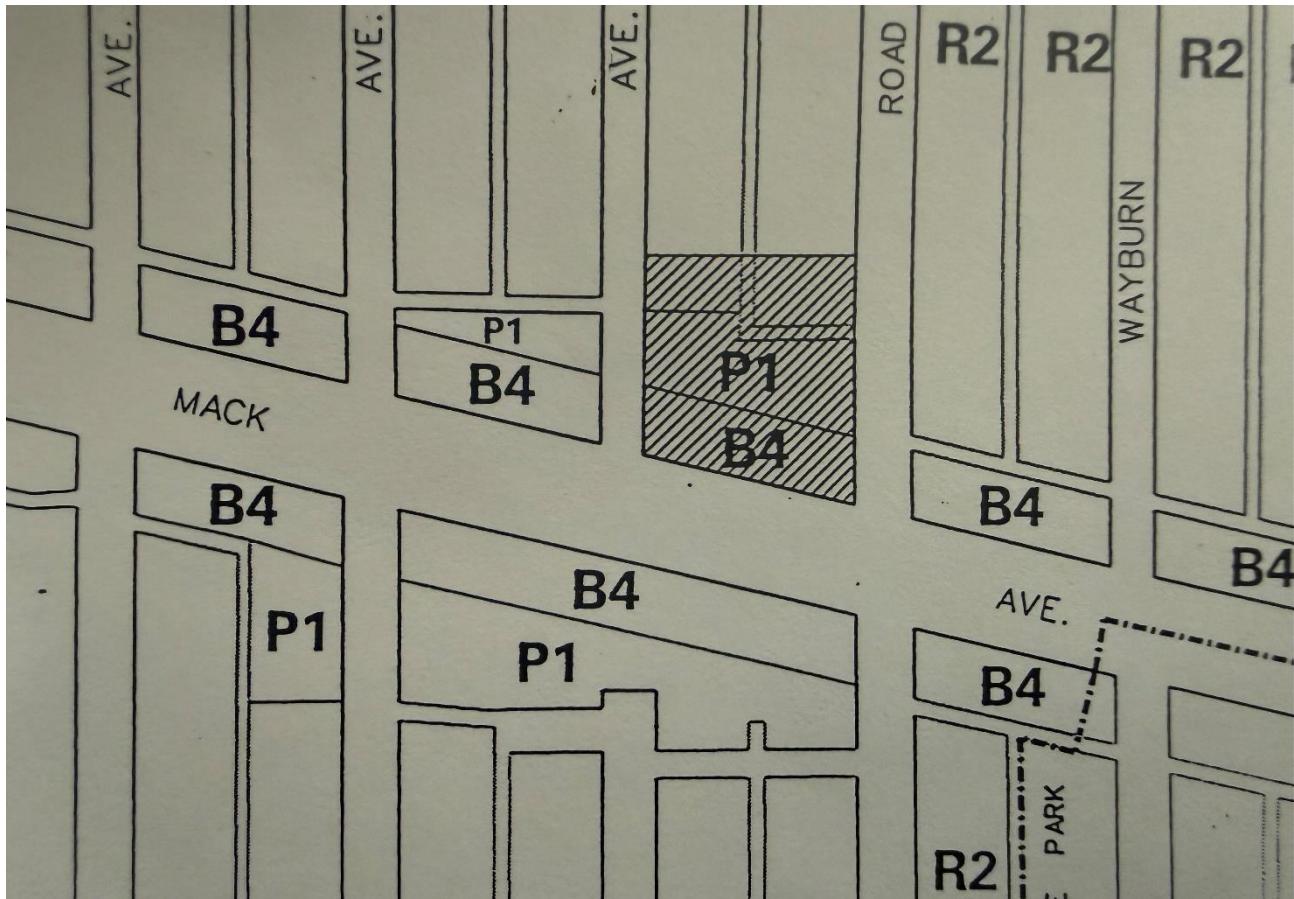
This zoning map amendment is being requested to permit the addition of a commercial child care center to a vacant lease space in the existing shopping center. The applicant has requested to rezone the shopping center portion of the existing PD to B4. Additionally, the public hearing notice included the option of modifying the plans for the existing PD should the city desire to keep the PD zoning classification. The B4 zoning classification permits child care centers as a by-right public, civic, and institutional use (use category). Alternatively, a PD modification could allow for uses permitted by-right in the B4 District to be allowed in this planned development. So, there are two options that can be considered for permitting a child care center in this existing PD.

BACKGROUND

Construction of the Mack-Alter Square development began in 2003 and included the development of several retail, service, and residential uses along both sides of Mack Avenue immediately west of Alter Road. The development occurred over three phases.

Phase One – Gas Station and Convenience Store PD (Ord. No. 09-03)

In January 2003, the Planning and Development Department (P&DD), on behalf of Land, Inc., submitted a petition to rezone 1.3 acres on the north side of Mack Avenue between Alter Road and Ashland Street from a mix of B4 (Mack Ave. frontage to alley), P1 Open Parking District (parking to rear of B4), and R2 Two-Family Residential (residential north of B4 and P1), to PD (Planned Development) to permit a 20-pump gas station with a coffee shop and convenience store on formerly vacant property. The convenience store and Marathon gas station area remain in operation at this corner. No changes are proposed to this portion of the PD north of Mack Avenue (located on Zoning Map 34).



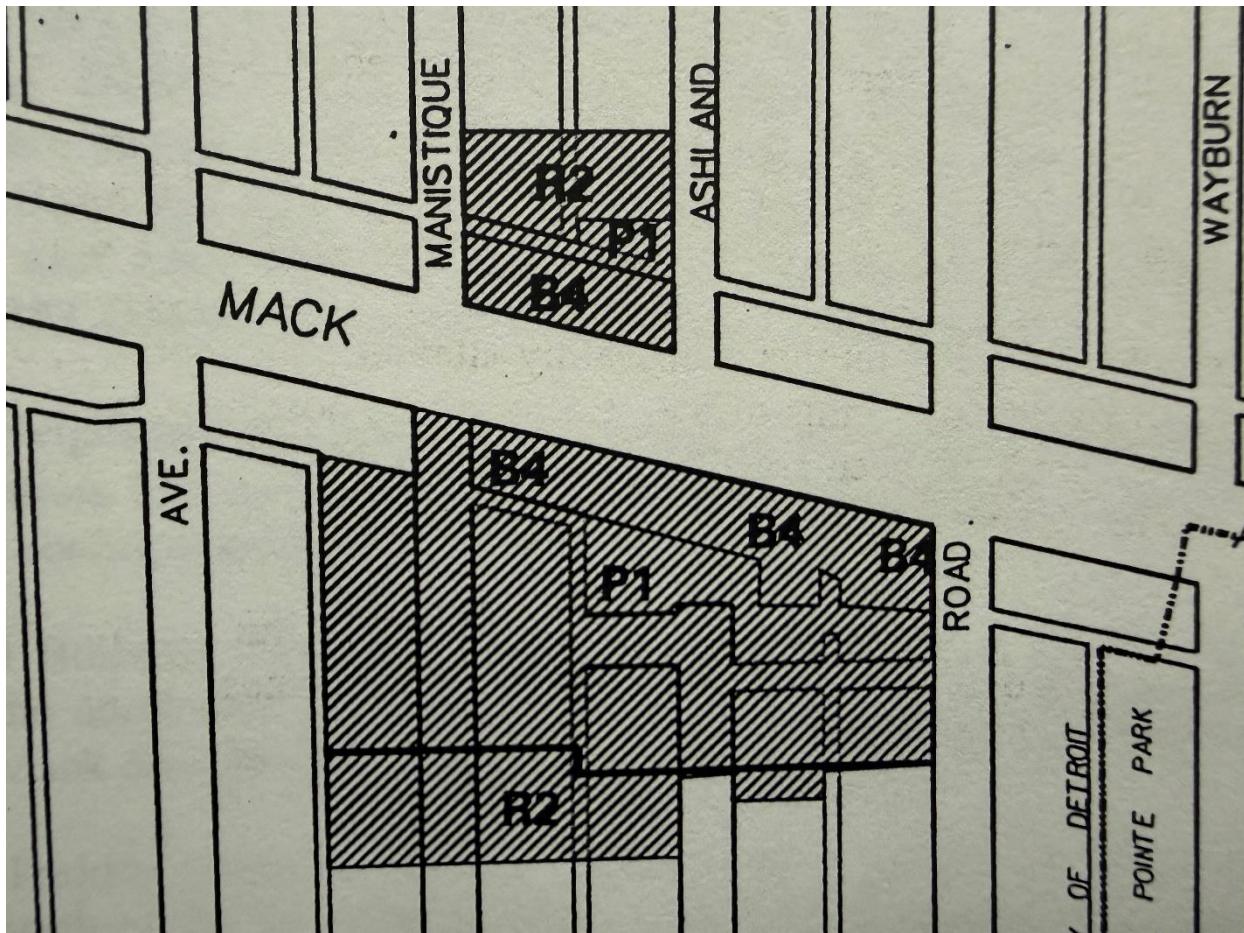
Zoning Map included in 2003 CPC Report – Hatched area indicates initial area rezoned PD for ph. 1

Phase Two – Shopping Center and additional north of Mack PD (Ord. No. 16-04)

In May 2004, City Council approved a rezoning of approximately six acres on the south side of Mack Avenue between Alter Road to the east and the alley between Phillip Street and Manistique Avenue to the west for the development of a retail shopping center consisting of three new buildings to accommodate up to 16 stores, including a national grocery chain, national pharmacy, and a larger Family Dollar store. The shopping center has a traditional L-shaped layout of buildings with a large, shared parking area in the front along Mack Avenue. All buildings are one story and include attractive brick facades and minimal signage. Two of the buildings currently contain anchor uses (Aldi and Family Dollar) with adjacent multi-tenant retail and service spaces. The westernmost multi-tenant building currently includes a DPD mini station and a Secretary of State main branch. The third building is a standalone single tenant building near Alter Road that was formerly a Rite Aid that has since been occupied by a Five Below store. Regarding one purpose of PD zoning, the 2004 CPC staff report analysis to City Council states:

“The site plan proposes approximately 266 parking spaces. If the site were not zoned PD, approximately 307 parking spaces would be required (calculating each building separately), depending on the exact mix of office to retail uses. It is felt that there will be some shared parking between the retail uses, so the deficit from what would be required (under non-PD zoning) should not negatively impact the surrounding area.”

Additionally, this 2004 rezoning included approximately one acre on the north side of Mack Avenue between Ashland Street to the east and Manistique Avenue to the west, which is immediately west of the phase one gas station and convenience store PD. This additional area on the north side of Mack Avenue was developed later as a third phase of the Mack-Alter Square development. No changes are proposed to this portion of the PD north of Mack Avenue (Zoning Map 34).



Zoning Map included in 2004 CPC Report – Hatched area indicates areas rezoned PD

Shopping Center additional three lots (Ord. No. 10-06)

In April 2006, City Council approved a rezoning to PD for three lots on the east side of Ashland Street that were purchased and developed after the phase one and two PD rezonings were approved. This area is in the southeast corner of the shopping center development and is a part of the rear truck loading area and dumpster enclosure. This area was rezoned to bring the entirety of the shopping center development site under PD zoning. This approval (Ord. No. 10-06) included City Council's approval of the shopping center site plan dated December 2, 2004, and included with this report as an attachment.

Phase Three – PD Modification for Mixed Use (Ord. No. 09-12)

In June 2012, City Council approved a major modification to the PD that was established in 2004 for phase two. This modification was limited to the one-acre area on the north side of Mack Avenue between Ashland Street to the east and Manistique to the west and did not impact the gas station site to the east across Ashland Street or the shopping center to the south. This modification was approved to provide for the construction of a three-story mixed use building with 39 residential rental units and 6,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 48 parking spaces as a third phase of the Mack-Alter Square development that has since been developed. Plans in 2004 indicated a proposed 9,000 square foot retail building and parking for this area that was conceptual at the time. No changes are proposed to this portion of the PD north of Mack Avenue.

2003 Master Plan Amendment

In April 2003, City Council considered a resolution to amend the Detroit Master Plan of Policies to accommodate the Mack-Alter Square commercial development that was planned for development in three phases. For phase one, the gas station convenience store, and phase two, the shopping center, the Master Plan of Policies was amended to show a GC, General Commercial designation. The Master Plan of Policies for this area has since been updated and now shows a NC, Neighborhood Commercial designation along Mack Avenue. P&DD's report dated April 4, 2003, provides context:

“The Planning and Development Department is requesting the proposed Master Plan Amendment to revive the Mack-Alter commercial strip and bring much needed retail options to the surrounding lower east side neighborhood. The proposed retail development is the culmination of ongoing efforts for many years to revive this commercial strip involving public, private, and community interests. The new retail will complement the new residential development in the area (Morningside Commons), with potentially more new residential units to follow as a part of the Far East Side development initiative. The subject area, which centers on the northwest and southwest corners of the Mack-Alter intersection, includes adjacent residential parcels currently in blighted condition. The additional residential parcels are needed to create larger sites to accommodate modern retail uses. Presently, there are only two commercial storefronts along this portion of Mack, both on the southwest corner, one of which is vacant. Vacant land abounds throughout the area, particularly adjacent to the Mack commercial strip. This vacant land will make the proposed expansion of the commercial footprint much less intrusive on the neighborhood.”

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing a commercial day care within existing tenant space in the middle shopping center building. The majority of this portion of the building previously contained a Foot Locker retail location and is now vacant. Additionally, the proposed day care would also include an area currently occupied by a Cricket Wireless retail location – please see the end of this report for photos. The proposed building plans indicate the following improvements:

- Three classrooms and a reception area in the front
- Three additional rooms for infants, toddlers, and teen after school in the middle and rear areas
- Staff break room, restrooms, and storage areas in rear
- Outdoor play area 2,000 square feet adjacent to the rear door of the child care space
 - To accommodate the outdoor play area, a 60-foot by 28-foot area of existing pavement adjacent to the rear of the building would be removed and excavated to be replaced with four

inches of brown mulch over four inches of compact sand. This area would be enclosed by a four-foot-tall black steel metal fence with gates for emergency access. Playground equipment would be located in this area, and it would have direct access from the building interior.

Based on the proposed building plans, it does not appear that any alterations, except new signage, are proposed to the exterior of the building, which at the front includes a brick façade, curtain wall windows, and fabric awnings.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Zoning District Descriptions

Below are the Zoning Ordinance descriptions for the applicable zoning districts.

PD – Planned Development District

This district will permit planned developments throughout the City and will be particularly useful in district areas established in accordance with Section 74 of the Michigan Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act, being MCL 125.74, for urban renewal. Such planned developments shall be substantially in accordance 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, retail and local services, industrial, mixed use, parks and open space 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.

B4 – General Business District

The B4 General Business District provides for business and commercial uses of a thoroughfare-oriented nature. In addition to these uses, other business, which may benefit by drawing part of their clientele from passing traffic are permitted. Additional uses, which may be successfully blended with permitted by-right uses, are conditional.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses

North (across Mack Ave):	PD – Retail and mixed-use multiple-family building
East (across Alter Rd):	B4 – Huntington Bank branch
South:	R2 – New 14-unit multiple family building along Alter and single family
West:	B4 and R2 – Mixed use building along Mack and two single family

Master Plan Consistency

P&DD has submitted a letter indicating that rezoning to B4 is generally consistent with the Master Plan classifications for this site. As a part of this review, CPC staff discovered that the Master Plan map for this Neighborhood Cluster did not capture the 2003 Master Plan amendment approved by City Council. Staff is working with the Law Department to identify if this map can be corrected administratively or should go through a more formal process. Regardless of this oversight, the P&DD letter states that the proposal would generally be consistent.

Community Engagement

Attached are letters of support the applicant has provided from Eastside Community Network, the D4 Community Advisory Council, and the Riverbend Community Association.

Rezoning and PD Approval Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based. Staff will provide findings regarding each criteria at a future CPC meeting.

- 1) Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend, or fact.
- 2) Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of the zoning code.
- 3) Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the 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.
- 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.
- 6) Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract.
- 7) The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification.
- 8) Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal “spot zone.”

As stated in Section 50-3-97, previously approved PD site plans, elevations, and other development proposals, including proposed uses, may be amended, pursuant to the same procedure and subject to the same limitations and requirements by which said plans and proposals were initially approved.

Sec. 50-3-96 – PD Approval Criteria

In addition, Section 50-3-96 of the Zoning Ordinance lists the following approval criteria for planned developments:

- 1) Whether the subject site:
 - a. Covers a minimum of two acres of contiguous land under the control of own 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
 - b. Is capable of being planned and developed as one integral unit, except in unusual circumstances.
- 2) That no other zoning district classification would be more appropriate.
- 3) That the development will result in a recognizable and substantial benefit to the ultimate users of the project and to 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.
- 4) Whether the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate.
- 5) Whether the proposed planned development substantially responds to the intent of Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, being MCL 125.3503, to:
 - a. Permit flexibility in the regulation of land development.
 - b. Encourage innovation in land use and variety in design, layout, and type of structures constructed.
 - c. 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
 - d. Provide better housing, employment, and shopping opportunities that are particularly suited to the needs of the residents.
- 6) That the proposed type and density of use shall not result in an unreasonable increase in traffic or the use of public services, facilities and utilities, that the natural features of the subject site have the capacity to accommodate the intended development, and that the development shall not place an unreasonable burden upon surrounding land or landowners.
- 7) That the proposed planned development is consistent with the Master Plan, as determined by the Planning and Development Department.

- 8) Whether uses and structures that are planned for the Planned Development District comply with all applicable site design standards and use regulations which are specified in Article XI, Division 2, of this chapter.

Staff will provide its conclusions and recommendations incorporating the results of the public hearing at a future CPC meeting.

Attachments: 2004 Approved Site Plan (Ord. 10-06)
Proposed Building Plans
Proposed Crosswalk Plan
Letters of Support
P&DD Master Plan Interpretation

cc: Alexa Bush, Director, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
James Foster, BSEED
Conrad L. Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Bruce Goldman, Law
Office of Latisha Johnson, City Council Member, District 4



Front of Shopping Center in area of Proposed Day Care



Rear of Shopping Center in area of Proposed Day Care