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# City of Detroit

## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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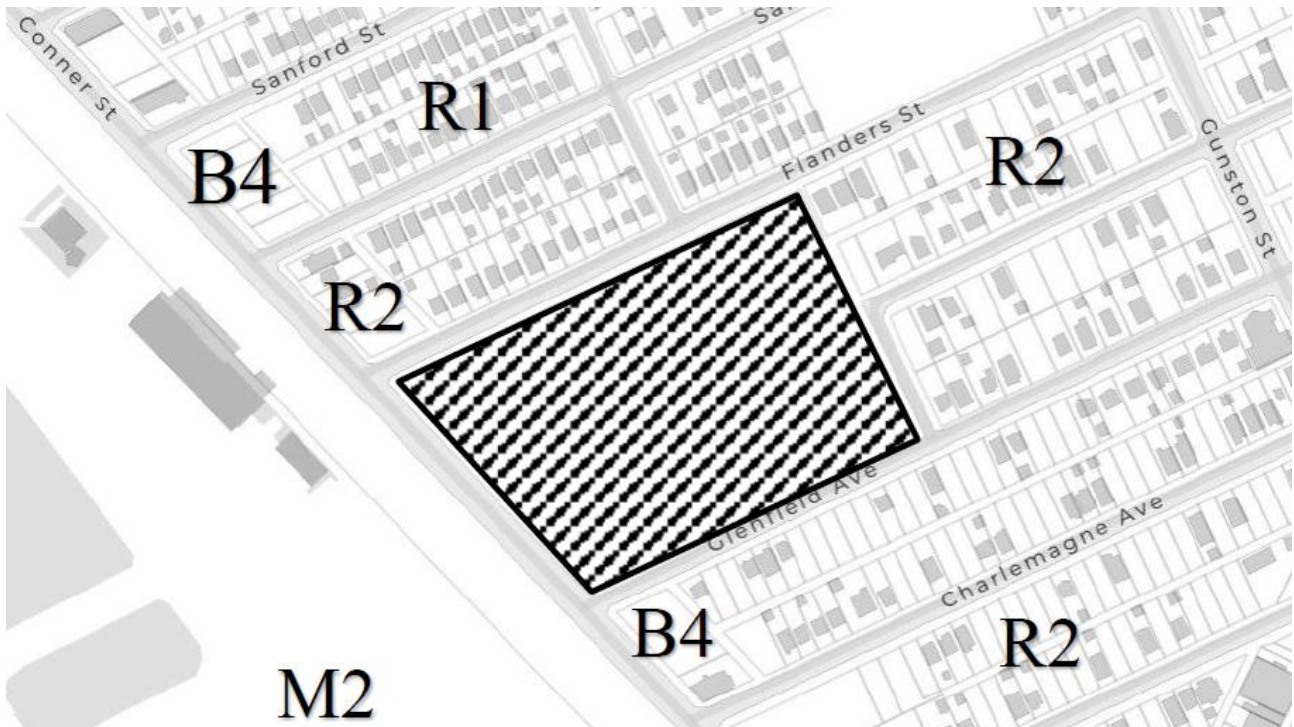
**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Eric Fazzini, Staff

**RE:** Request of Jason Watt, Director of Coleman A. Young International Airport, on behalf of the Airport, to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-28, District Map No. 26 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a R5 (Medium Density Residential District) OR B4 (General Business District) zoning classification where a R3 (Low Density Residential District) zoning classification is shown at 11400 Conner Street and 11055 Glenfield Avenue, generally located on the east side of Conner Street between Glenfield Avenue and Flanders Street. **(PUBLIC HEARING)**

**DATE:** May 20, 2026

On May 21, 2026, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will hold a 6:00 p.m. public hearing on the subject zoning map amendment (rezoning) request. Below is a map indicating the area proposed to be rezoned.

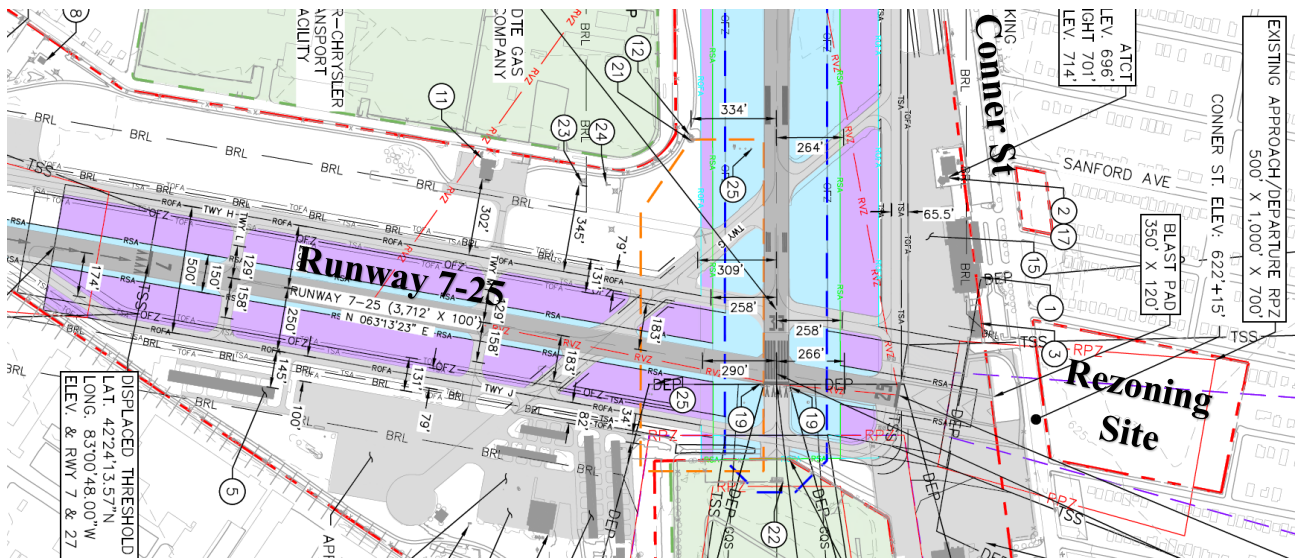


Outlined area is proposed to be rezoned from R3 to R5 or B4

## BACKGROUND & PROPOSAL

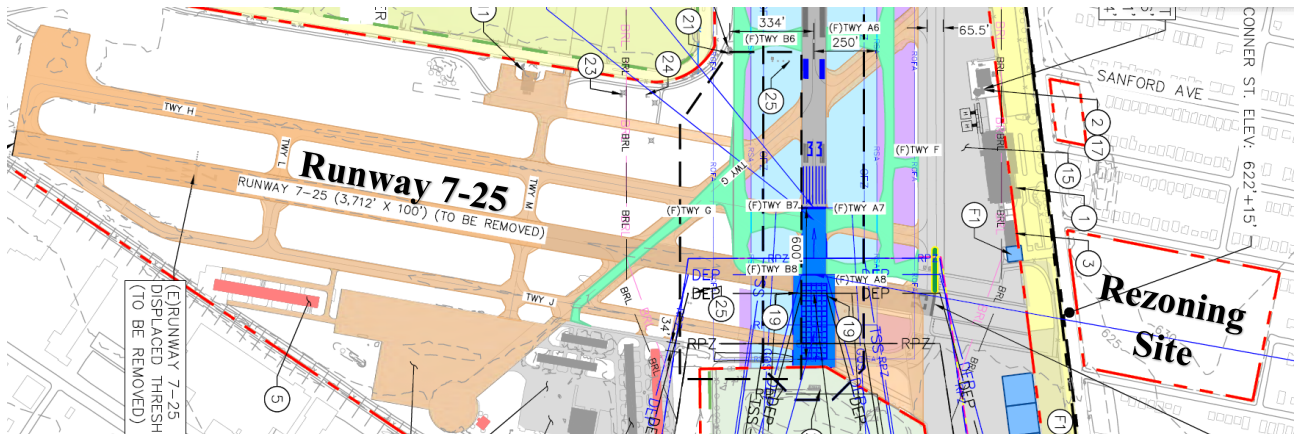
This zoning map amendment has been requested to permit the development of a commercial trade school. The existing R3 zoning classification does not allow for this use. The R5 zoning classification is the first zoning classification that allows for this use.

The site consists of two vacant parcels totaling just under 10 acres in area. The property owner and the petitioner is the Airport which has requested a B4 zoning classification. The application states that the Airport acquired the site in November 2000 using Federal Aviation Administration money as airports are obligated to own or control runway protection zones. Airport existing and proposed improvements are regulated by an "Airport Layout Plan" (ALP) that the Airport creates and submits to the FAA via MDOT for review and approval. Attached are the Existing and Proposed ALP's dated May 2022. The Existing ALP dated May 2022 indicates that the site is within runway protection zones opposite of northeast/southwest Runway 7-25 across Conner Street to the west.



**Existing ALP showing Runway 7-25 opposite Conner St of Rezoning Site (in flight path)**

The Proposed ALP indicates that Runway 7-25 is to be removed, which eliminates the runway protection zones that would have previously existed over the rezoning site. The Airport has confirmed removal of this runway and the corresponding runway protections zones over the rezoning site.



**Proposed ALP showing Runway 7-25 To Be Removed**

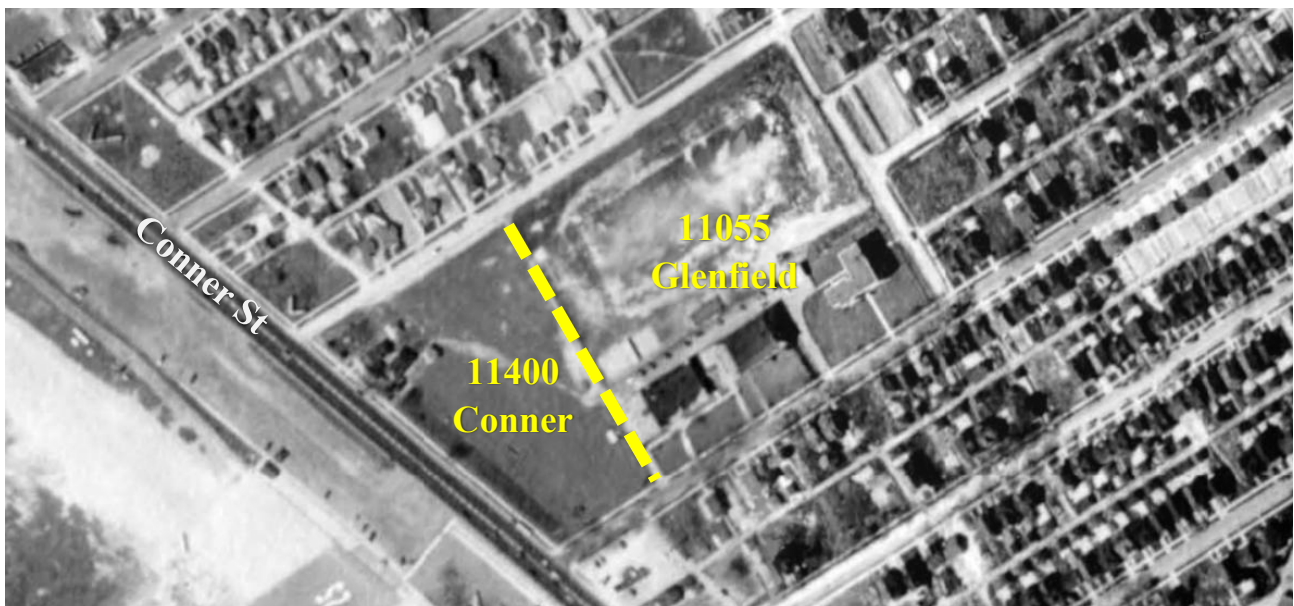
### ***History of the Site***

From 1926 (prior to zoning) until 1982, the site contained a parochial school – the former De La Salle High School. From the De La Salle website is the following (delasallehs.com):

*De La Salle Collegiate is an all-boys Lasallian Catholic high school run by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Founded in 1926, the school was located on the east side of Detroit before moving to its current location in Warren, Michigan in 1982. The school first opened on September 15, 1926 across from a river called Conner Creek, but Detroit City Airport opened soon after the building of the school. The airplanes taking off would often cause the building to shake, later necessitating a change in location.*



**Undated (post-1927) Aerial looking North parallel to Conner St (source: Facebook)**



Based on the above aerials and other historic aerials reviewed by staff, buildings and track fields developed by De La Salle were contained primarily to the east parcel subject to this rezoning request (11055 Glenfield), with the school fronting Glenfield Avenue and track fields along Flanders Street. Development of the west parcel historically included two residential structures along Conner Street and a building and parking addition to the west of the historic building along Glenfield Avenue.

It appears that the buildings and site improvements were cleared sometime between 2002 and 2005. The zoning district classification of the site has not changed since city zoning was implemented in the 1940's. The 1945 zoning ordinance indicates the site as zoned RM (Two and a Half Story – Multiple Dwellings), which was renamed to R3 by the 1968-69 zoning ordinance. The 1945 zoning ordinance allowed “Elementary public and parochial schools” as a permitted use in the R1, R2, and RM residential districts. The 1969 zoning ordinance allowed “Schools, excepting commercially operated vocational or trade schools” as a matter of right in the R3 district.

### ***R5 OR B4 Zoning***

While the Airport has requested B4 zoning, the public hearing notice includes R5 Medium Density Residential zoning as an option for consideration instead of B4 General Business. Staff has included this option should there be a desire by the city to approve a zoning district that is less intense than B4. The R5 zoning classification is the first zoning district that allows “commercial trade schools” (as a By-Right Use). Conditional Use approval would not be required for this use under R5 or B4 zoning. Conditional Use approval is required in the B3 Shopping District.

### ***Proposed Use for the Property***

The Airport is requesting B4 to allow for the redevelopment of the site to support the airport's mission. With one of the Airport's goals to increase local youth exposure to the aviation industry and potential career opportunities, the Airport is currently negotiating with the Aviation Institute of Maintenance (AIM) to bring one of its hands-on trade schools leading to careers in aviation. AIM would develop a trade school on the site and sign a long-term lease with the City. Staff notes that the operation of the school will include the running of turbine engines occasionally during school hours. We are seeking to better understand the school's operation with particular concern for this component and the potential impacts on the adjacent neighborhood. AIM presently operates 15 campuses across 13 states and would like to bring one of its new campuses to Detroit.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Zoning District Descriptions***

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

#### **R3 Low Density Residential District (Current)**

The R3 Low Density Residential District is designed as a low-density multi-family district. The regulations are designed to promote and encourage town and terrace house development, courts, and garden apartments. It is intended that this district be used primarily on local thoroughfares thereby encouraging a suitable environment for family life. Among others, uses permitted by right include single- and two-family dwellings, townhouses, multi-family dwellings, and community facilities necessary to serve a residential district.

#### **R5 Medium Density Residential District (Option)**

The R5 Medium Density Residential District is designed to provide for a range of residential development from the single-family detached dwelling to medium-density multiple-family dwellings. The primary use in this district will be the rental apartment structure. In addition to permitted residential uses, certain specified non-residential uses which can be properly blended into this district may be permitted.

#### **B4 General Business District (Proposed)**

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.

#### ***Airport Operations***

The City has an Airport Department that operates to provide a safe and serviceable airport facility for commercial and general aviation compliance with Federal, State and City regulations. The Airport is also included in the Capital Agenda planning process. From the 2024 Proposed Capital Agenda (FY 2026-2030):

*The Airport Department continues to evolve by bringing costs in line with revenue and improving services. The emerging strategy is to accelerate the growth of Detroit as a commercial and industrial transportation center and maximize the Coleman A. Young Airport's economic benefit to our community and region.*

#### ***Strategic Priorities***

1. *Enhance the Airport's image as a premier gateway to Metropolitan Detroit.*
2. *Provide a safe and secure operating environment for our customers.*
3. *Eliminate subsidization of the Coleman A. Young Airport by the General Fund.*
4. *Promote community development.*
5. *Increase local youth exposure to the aviation industry and potential career opportunities.*

#### ***Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses***

Surrounding zoning and land uses include the following:

North (across Flanders St):	R2 – Single-family detached dwellings
East (across Wilfred Ave):	R2 – Single-family detached dwellings
South (across Glenfield Ave):	B4 at Conner St – small vacant commercial building and parking lot R2 – Single-family detached dwellings (>50% of lots vacant)
West (across Conner St):	M2 – Coleman A. Young International Airport

#### ***Master Plan Interpretation***

The site is located in the Master Plan's Conner neighborhood. The current plan shows Institutional (INST) for the site. "This status applies to areas of approximately 10 acres or more with educational, religious, health or public uses, including: churches, libraries, museums, public or private schools, hospitals, or government building, structure or land used for public purposes." The Planning and Development Department (P&DD) has provided a Master Plan interpretation which states ...

*Master Plan GOAL 3: "Increase the vitality of commercial thoroughfares" includes Policy 3.1: "Take advantage of traffic volumes along Harper, Gratiot, and Conner, south of Gratiot, to attract intense commercial activity."* The B4 is consistent with the INST designation, as the proposed use also seems to be. Given the adjacency to the airport and location on a major street, the proposed

rezoning is generally consistent with the Master Plan. As a part of the ongoing Master Plan amendment, this site will be examined for future designation.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

On May 4, 2026, the City’s Department of Neighborhoods hosted a virtual meeting in coordination with Administration staff, Airport staff, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), the Aviation Institute of Maintenance (AIM), and planning staff. This meeting included CPC staff providing a general zoning process overview and an introduction of the Airport’s rezoning petition. The meeting was well attended, with about 30 participants including staff. Several attendees provided comments and engaged staff, the Airport and AIM in questions about the proposal. Questions included how AIM originally made contact with the city; if there would be jet engine noise, construction noise, and design alternatives; existing environmental issues with plane exhaust from the airport; support for development action on the site; what the closest existing AIM facility is to proposal (Charlotte, NC); orienting plane bays towards Conner Street and the airport; that large (semi-) truck traffic is not expected; and the closure of runway 725 that creates ability for the site to be redeveloped.

Letters of support have been provided to date from the following which will be shared with the Commission:

- Beverly Kindle-Walker, Executive Director, Friends of Detroit City Airport
- B.O. Davis Technical Advisory Committee (Davis Aerospace Technical H.S.)
- Black Pilots of America Detroit Chapter
- Captain O’davie Buford Jr., Detroit 100<sup>th</sup> Composite Squadron
- Pastor Alonzo Bell, Redeem Detroit

## **REZONING 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.”

Attachments: Existing Airport Layout Plan  
Proposed Airport Layout Plan  
P&DD Master Plan Interpretation  
Letters of Support

cc: Dara O'Byrne, Interim and Deputy 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