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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Christopher J. Gulock, Deputy Director
Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director

RE: **Proposed map amendment to Chapter 50, *Zoning*, Article XVII, Section 50-17-33, Map No. 31, to replace the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification at 101 Lenox and 319 Lenox Avenue, the authorization for which has lapsed, with a new PD and site plan for a luxury housing development previously approved in 2007.**

DATE: May 6, 2026

On Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 5:15 PM, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will hold a public hearing to consider the request of Jerome Morgan and the CPC as a co-petitioner to replace the existing PD zoning classification at 101 and 319 Lenox Avenue, the authorization for which has lapsed, with a new PD and site plan. The proposed new PD would amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-33, District Map No. 31, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *Zoning*. The subject area is generally located on the west side of Lenox Avenue between Avondale Street and the Detroit River and shown on the map below.

In 2007, the Detroit City Council approved the site plan and sale of the land for Mr. Morgan to develop (both 101 and 319 Lenox) with 18 new single-family houses, but the project was never completed. The new proposal for the PD at 101 Lenox Avenue would be to redevelop the currently vacant site with 16 new single-family houses. The proposal for the PD at 319 Lenox Avenue, which is now owned by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, is to expand the adjacent Alfred Brush Ford park.



Existing Zoning Map showing subject site and surrounding area

BACKGROUND

The subject properties are presently vacant former urban renewal parcels located within the Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood. The site is waterfront land about 320 feet wide between the west curb of Lenox and the east edge of the Starboard Lagoon just north of the Detroit River. The site is south of the former Fisher Mansion. The site at 101 Lenox, which contains about 16.2 acres, is presently owned by Morgan Development LLC, which is controlled by Jerome Morgan, a long-time Detroit based developer. The site at 319 Lenox Avenue, which contains about 1.5 acres, is presently owned by the City of Detroit/Parks and Recreation Department.



101 Lenox

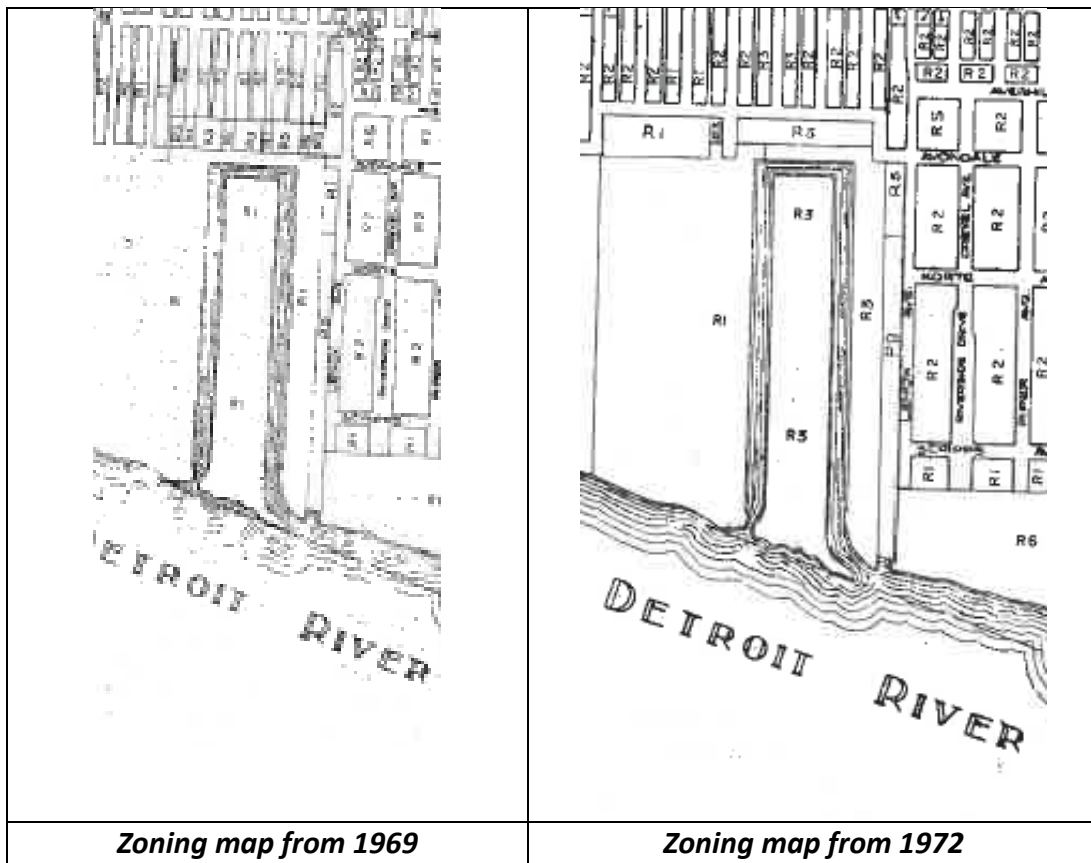


319 Lenox

Zoning History of the Site and Surroundings

Below is a brief history of the zoning for the site:

- Dating back to the 1940s, the subject site was zoned R1 (Single-Family Residential);
- It appears, in the 1940s, the immediate subject west side of Lenox (about 120 feet deep) was developed with single and two-family dwellings, like the east side of Lenox;
- In 1969, the City attempted to rezone the subject land along the subject west side of Lenox from R1 to multi-family residential; however, after a protest from the Gray Haven Property Owners Assoc., a compromise was reached and the west side of Lenox (about 120 feet deep) was rezoned to PD (via Ord. No. 416-G); the Fisher Mansion and the land to the west along the Starboard Lagoon remained R1;
- In 1972, the City approved the request of Keswick Associates to rezone most of the remaining Grayhaven Sub (including Grayhaven Island, the Fisher Mansion, and the subject R1 land on the east side of the Starboard Lagoon) from R1 to R3 (Low-Density Residential) (via Ord. No. 696-G) in order to encourage a marina near Maheras Park to the west and medium and higher density housing;



- In 1974, the Fisher Mansion to the north was rezoned from R3 to PD;
- In 1988, based on the City's request, the entire subject parcel (the remaining R3 land) via Ord. No. 8-88 was rezoned to PD;
- In ca 1996 the Planning and Development Department advanced the proposal of Jerome Morgan of Morgan Development LLC, essentially the same proposal for luxury housing before the Commission now, for PD site plan approval on the Lenox site. While, it was

eventually approved by the Commission and the City Council, it was subsequently halted due to a legal challenge;

- In 1997, Alfred Bush Ford Park was rezoned from R6 (High Density Residential) to PR (Parks and Recreation);
- In 2005 the Planning and Development Department advanced the proposal of Grand Sakwa to develop 73 single family detached units on the Lenox site, but this proposal was unable to be realized;
- The following year in 2006, the City Council approved the Administration's request to sell the entire parcel (both 101 and 319 Lenox containing 17.7 acres) to Jerome Morgan of Morgan Development LLC, returning to the development proposal of 1996; and
- On 2/14/2007, City Council approved via resolution the PD site plan approval for Jerome Morgan to redevelop the entire site with 18 residential units subject to 5 conditions listed later in this report.

Background on Development Proposal for the Site

The subject site has a long redevelopment history. In the early 1980s, the City included the Lenox property and Grayhaven Island as a package hoping to attract new residential development to fulfill the Urban Renewal Plan. Unfortunately, while making some progress this effort has faced a number of challenges over the decades as spoken to above. In 2006, the City released another request for proposals and selected Mr. Morgan to develop the Lenox site.

In 2007, Mr. Morgan was again approved to construct 18 luxury single-family houses in a gated community on the Lenox site. This approval included regrading the site and providing appropriate infrastructure regarding lighting, internal road, water and sewerage, etc. Potential buyers could select house types from a collection of designs by Scholtz Design (no longer in business). At the time, the property was largely overgrown, and there was concern about the impact of removing the natural buffer on the adjacent neighborhood. In 2007, the City Council approved the PD site plan with the following 5 conditions:

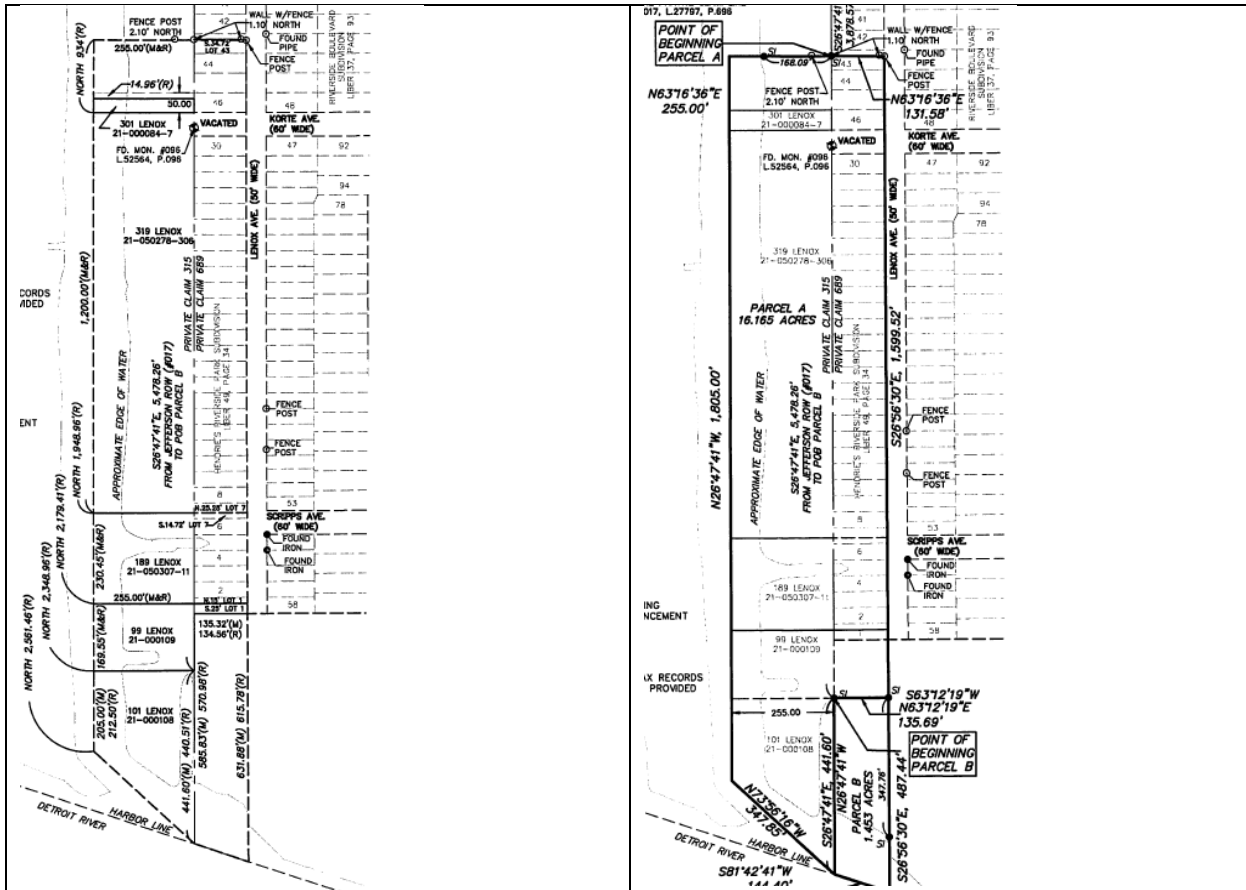
- 1. that the developer adheres to applicable regulations and apply best practices in addressing any significant, rare or protected form of plant and animal life;*
- 2. that the developer continue to work with the community, the City and other agencies as appropriate in the design and development of the greenway along the west side of Lenox;*
- 3. that the developer work with the City to insure that no adverse impacts on the surrounding community are realized as the result of any effort to remove this site or any portion thereof from the floodplain;*
- 4. that the developer maintain the property in a neat and orderly fashion, managing dust and collecting and disposing of debris and rubbish, throughout all phases of construction from site preparation through occupancy of the last dwelling; and*
- 5. that the developer submit final site plans and elevations, landscaping, lighting, and signage plans to the City Planning Commission staff for approval prior to the issuance of applicable required permits.*

City Council further resolved, that as it concerns the flood plain issues facing the larger community in this area, the responsible agencies of the City be creative and expeditious in the development and implementation of mitigation measures to address this concern.

Events Since the 2007 Approval

The following is a summary of events since the 2007 approval by City Council:

- A development agreement (DA) was entered into between the City and Mr. Morgan;
- The site was cleared in preparation for the 18 houses (it is unclear at this time whether any steps were needed regarding rare or protected plant and animal life or if a tree survey was conducted – the site has since become overgrown);
- Six foundations were started at the north end of the site, but the project stopped during 2008 economic downturn;
- In 2013, after the project was delayed, the City proceeded to revoke the DA for failure to complete the project;
- In 2016, a 2nd DA was drafted between Mr. Morgan and the City, but the project was still delayed;
- In 2017, the City proceeded to issue a default regarding the 2nd DA;
- Mr. Morgan sued the City in Wayne County Circuit Court;
- In 2022, based on the Circuit Court case, the City’s Law Department submitted a report and resolution to City Council which Council approved; some highlights from the resolution are summarized below:
 - The existing 2016 DA between the parties shall be terminated
 - The City will quit claim 99, 189, 301, and 310 Lenox to Morgan Development
 - For 101 Lenox (at the south end of the site), the City will quit claim deed Parcel A, and the City shall retain Parcel B (Mr. Morgan will provide a quit claim deed to the City for Parcel B)
 - 99, 189, 301, and 310 Lenox and Parcel A are now referred to as 101 Lenox; below are maps showing the agreed upon parcels



- Mr. Morgan will repair the fence currently enclosing those parcels or portions of parcels the City conveys to it (“the Development”) within 6 months after Morgan obtains title.
- *Morgan shall construct a fence surrounding the Development made of architectural landscape block and wrought iron. The architectural landscape block will be approximately 3 – 4 feet above grade with wrought iron fencing erected on top of the block*
- The City will apply for any lot splits or combinations as may be necessary to carry out the terms of the settlement
- Mr. Morgan will purchase and install playground equipment on the Retained Property of a type and cost as the parties subsequently agree
- The City will have no further obligations related to the properties comprising the Development

Status of the Current PD

Section 50-3-38 in the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists regulations for lapses of approval for PDs. This Section states in part, “The authorization for a planned development shall lapse and be of no further effect:

- (1) Upon the abandonment of a particular project that is approved under this division; or
- (2) Three years from the effective date of approval of a planned development where the planned development has not been completed; or
- (3) Upon the expiration of any extension of time that is granted by the City Planning Commission.

Where one of these conditions exists, the City Council shall act to rezone the property to the zoning district classification which existed immediately prior to the time of rezoning to planned development, or to another zoning district classification as deemed appropriate.”

It is CPC staff’s interpretation that the subject PD has lapsed and needs to be reauthorized by City Council.

2026 Proposed Development

Based on the Court’s directive and City Council’s 2022 resolution, Mr. Morgan is requesting approval to move the project forward at 101 Lenox. Below is a summary of some of the project features:

- The site would be developed as a site condominium project with 16 new single-family houses
- The project would include one access point off Lenox leading to an interior access road to each unit’s driveway
- There would be 9 houses facing the canal; 6 houses clustered near the south end; and 1 larger home at the river’s edge
- In general, there would be 6 building types to choose from; the houses will range from 4,200 to 5,200 square feet; due to the topography, the houses will be 2 stories in the front and 3 stories in the rear along the water
- The houses would consist of brick, pitched roofs and 4-car garages
- The project would replace and install a new sea wall along the water
- The developer does not propose to have a single freestanding dock like Shorepointe in the canal, but a homeowner could install their own dock off the seawall
- Mr. Morgan is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge Starboard Lagoon to allow better boat access and is

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PD District Classification

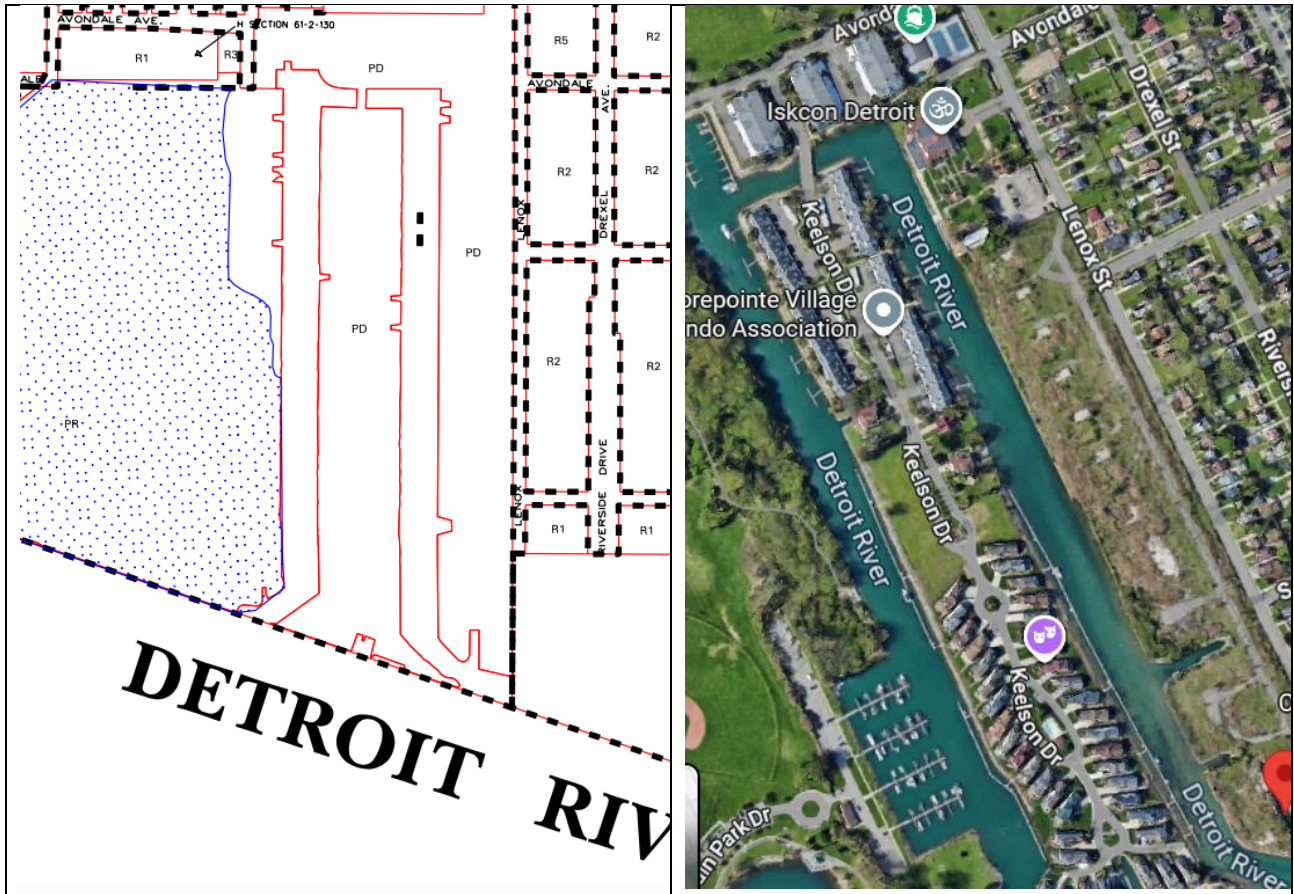
The existing description for PD's as listed in the Zoning Ordinance is summarized below:

“The PD Planned Development 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. ...”

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

The zoning classification and land uses for nearby properties are as follows:

North: PD – developed with the Bhaktivedanta Cultural Center at the Fisher Mansion
East: R1 (Single-Family Residential), R2 (Two-Family Residential), and PR – residential housing and Alfred Brush Ford Park and newly built community center
South: Detroit River
West: PD – Across Starboard Lagoon; developed with Shorepointe Village Condo Assoc. which includes single-family houses and multi-family residential



Maps of zoning and existing land uses

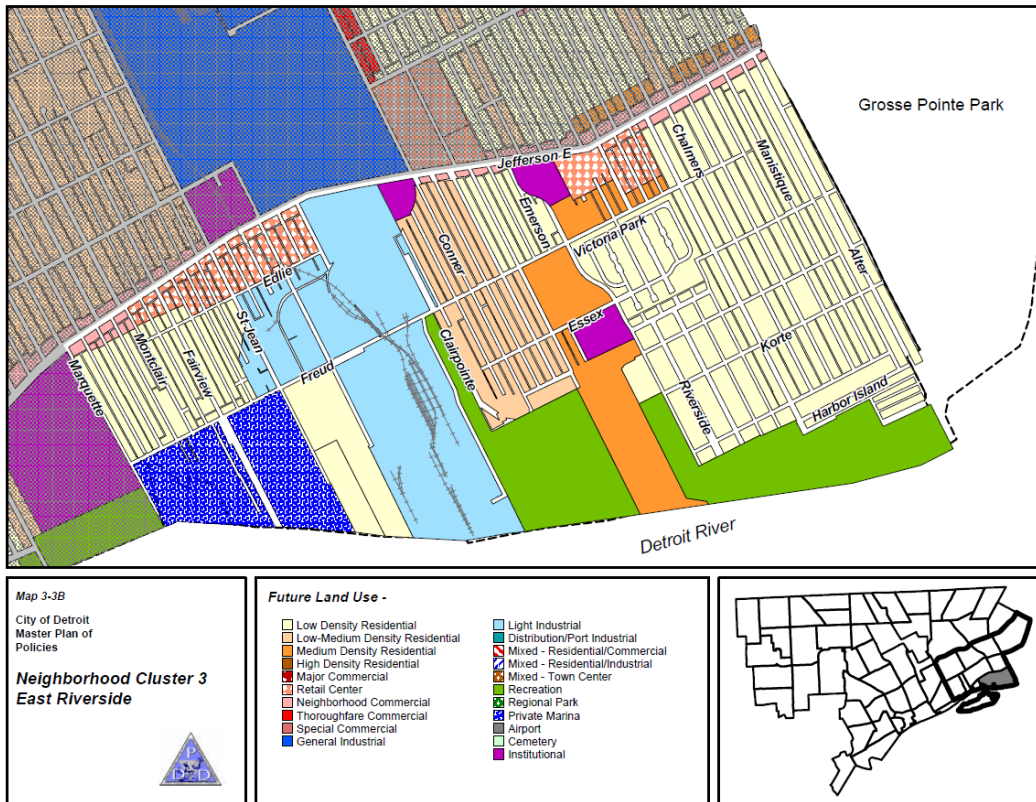
Master Plan and Urban Renewal Plan

In 2006, the proposed project was found to be compliant with the then Master Plan of Policies and the Jefferson-Chalmers Modified Development Plan.

It appears the Future General Land Use map in the City’s Master Plan from the 1980s, designated the subject area as “special residential-commercial”. The Jefferson Chalmers Modified Development Plan (which was nullified in 2014 under the Emergency Manager) dated from 2001 called for housing on the subject site.

In 2009, the current Master Plan was comprehensively updated. In the current Master Plan, the subject site is located within Neighborhood Cluster 3, East Riverside area. The Future Land Use map for this area shows Recreation for the subject site. CPC staff has requested a master plan interpretation from the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) but has yet to receive a response. This may have been an error or oversight, when the revised Master Plan was adopted in 2009, given that the designation is inconsistent with the Urban Renewal Plan and the City’s efforts to redevelop this site.

In general, PDs are supposed to cover a minimum of 2 acres and be consistent with the Master Plan of Policies. Oftentimes, vacant urban renewal land was proactively rezoned to PD, as in this case, in order to market the land and to ensure the development aligned with the urban renewal plan.



Floodplain Issues

The original 2006 review reported about 75% of the subject property is above the flood plain and shields the community from the 50 to 100-year flood event stemming from the Starboard canal, and the remaining 25% is in the floodplain.

2024 map data from the FEMA Flood Map Service Center (shown below), appears to show the subject area not in a flood hazard area. But it appears a small section of 319 Lenox at the south end of the site is within the floodplain.



Community Engagement

The developer's representative, Mr. Curtis Jordan, has done the following in preparation for the CPC public hearing:

- Provided a summary letter dated March 20, 2026, to the approximately 26 houses on the east side of Lenox across from the project
- Met with and discussed the project with Jocelyn Harris, Chairperson District 4 Community Advisory Council, and Jay Juergensen of the Jefferson Chalmers Water Project
- On Friday April 17, 2026, joined a zoom call with Council Member Latisha Johnson's office with other stakeholders regarding a Jefferson Chalmers Development Update
- On Thursday April 23, 2026, joined a zoom call with representatives of the Shorepointe Village Assoc. for a meeting to discuss the project

Attachments: Site Plan
Notice of Public Hearing
Application for Zoning Change

cc: Dara O'Byrne, Interim Director, P&DD
Greg Moots, PDD
Dave Bell, Director, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Daniel Arking, Law Department

