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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Christopher Gulock, AICP, Deputy Director
Dolores Perales-Lara, City Planner

RE: **Request of the City Planning Commission to rezone numerous parcels and blocks on Zoning Map No. 16 in the area generally bound by East McNichols Road and Jerome Street to the north, Conant Street to the east, East McNichols Road, Modern Street and Victor Street to the south, and I-75 to the west**

DATE: September 15, 2026

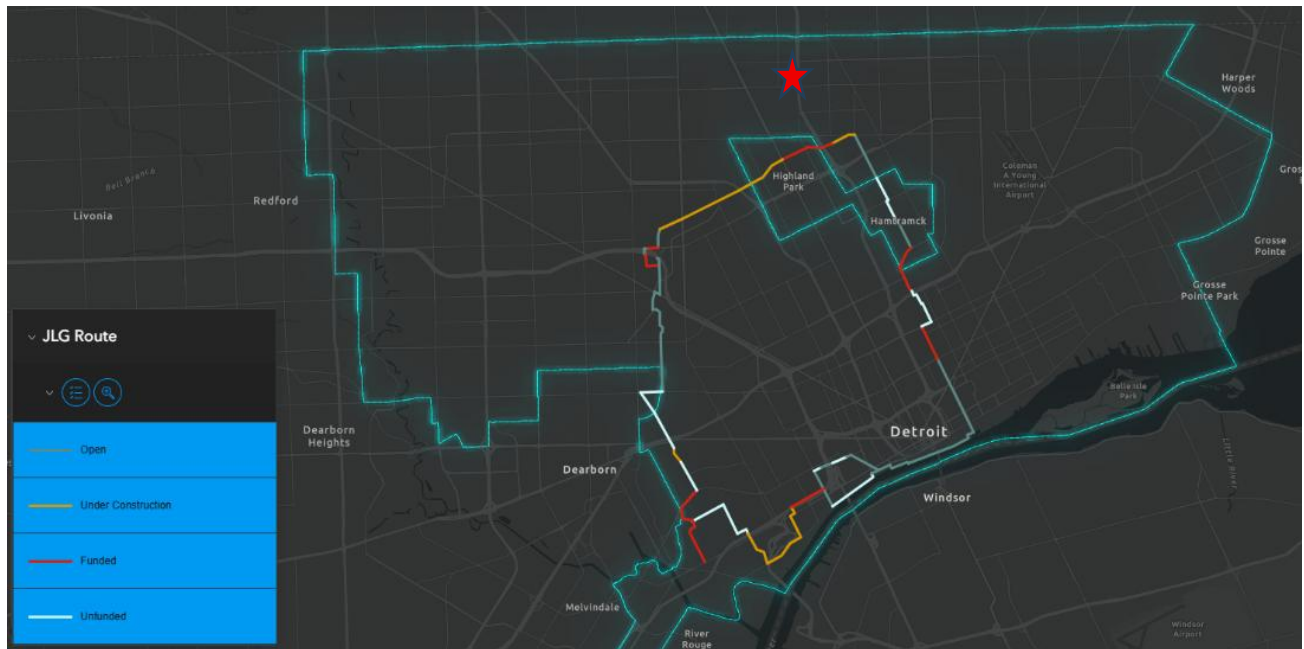
On September 17, 2026, the City Planning Commission (CPC) is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the subject rezoning request.

The CPC is requesting to amend Article XVII, District Map No. 16, Section 50-17-18 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, located in the area generally bounded by East McNichols Road and Jerome Street to the north, Conant Street to the east, East McNichols Road, Modern Street and Victor Street to the south, and I-75 to the west. The zoning changes are being requested in the subject area, in order to generally align zoning with the City's Master Plan of Policies, reflect long-established neighborhood uses, limit the impact of intensive industrial uses on adjacent residential areas and the newly developed Joe Louis Greenway (JLG), and allow for mixed-use residential and commercial development in appropriate areas.

Please see the attached copy of the public hearing notice with maps showing the location of the proposed rezonings.

BACKGROUND

The JLG is a 27.5-mile planned biking and walking trail that extends from the Detroit Riverfront, through Detroit neighborhoods and into Highland Park, Dearborn and Hamtramck. The JLG is currently under construction and is planned to be completed in 5 to 10 years depending on funding. Below is a map of the proposed route.



Map of proposed Detroit JLG route

As part of this new JLG development, the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) conducted a JLG planning study over a 2-year period with area residents and stakeholders. This included Neighborhood Playbooks for five areas of the City where the JLG is proposed to be built; one of the Neighborhood Planning Study Playbooks for the JLG Northeast was completed in November 2024. This Playbook is highlighted later in this report.

Furthermore, to support this new effort, Council Member Scott Benson, in a memo dated December 12, 2023, requested the CPC evaluate and prepare a formal recommendation regarding the potential down zoning of the industrial property that borders the JLG. Council Member Benson’s memo states in part,

“Given the development of the JLG, and its significance to the community, it is important to consider how the abutting land uses best align with the Greenway’s goals and the vision of the surrounding neighborhoods. Please provide a recommendation that reflects thoughtful planning and community input. Your expertise is critical in ensuring that the abutting land uses support sustainable development, safety and public health.”

The subject rezoning request involves the JLG’s path through Northeast Detroit in Council District 3. Below is a map of the subject area with the JLG path highlighted in red, which is already being constructed.



Map of proposed JLG path in northeast Detroit

PROPOSAL

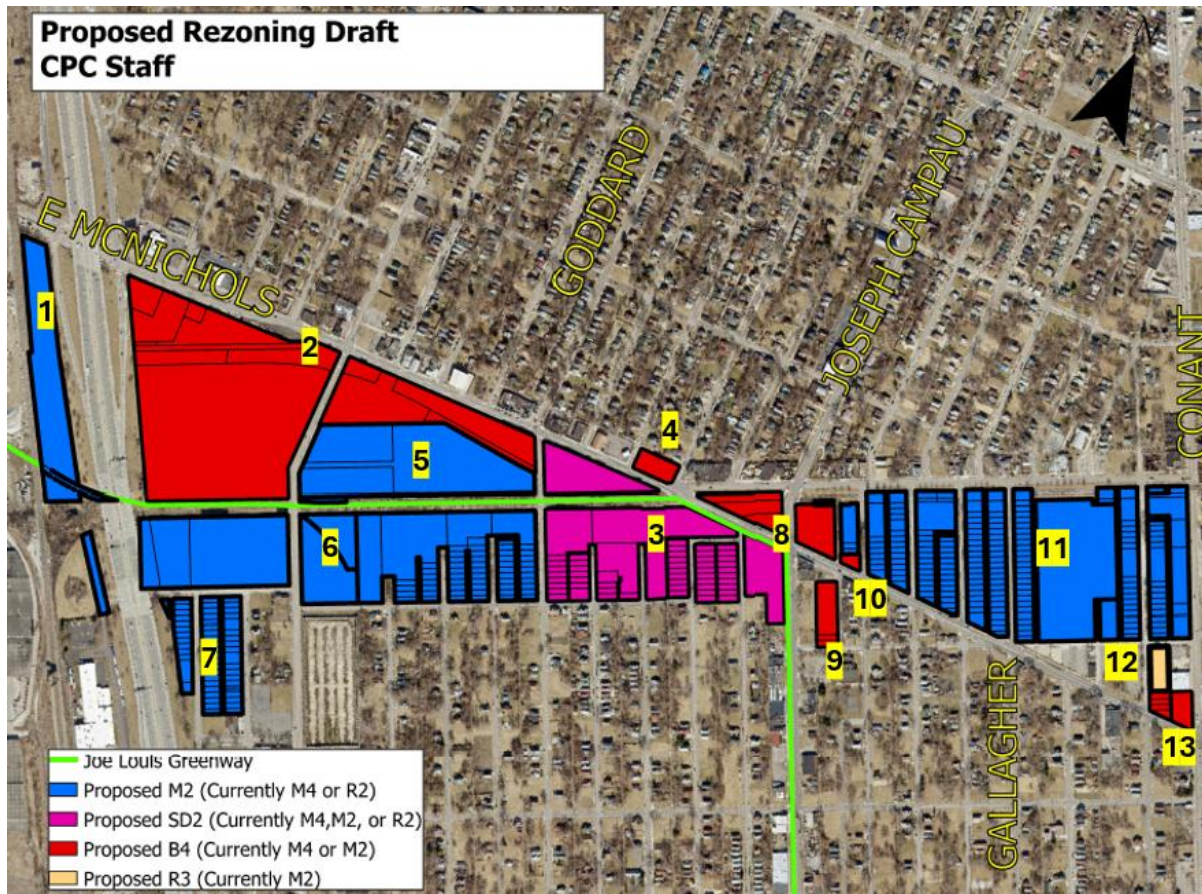
Since early 2024, CPC staff, in partnership with Council Member Benson’s Office, P&DD, and the General Services Department (GSD), have worked to develop and refine the boundaries of the proposed downzoning. Over the course of this process, staff from each department have provided feedback and analysis to establish appropriate boundaries and ensure the proposed zoning:

- Generally, aligns with the City’s Master Plan of Policies;
- Reflects long-established neighborhood uses;
- Protects the health, welfare, and safety of the surrounding community by reducing intensive uses currently permitted;
- Limits the impacts of intensive industrial uses on adjacent residential areas and the JLG trailhead; and
- Allows for mixed-use residential and commercial development in appropriate areas.

The proposed amendments are summarized below. The numbers below are also highlighted on the map at the end of this section.

1. Rezone land on the south side of E. McNichols west of the I-75 Expressway from a **M4 (Intensive Industrial)** to a **M2 (Restricted Industrial)** zoning classification, referred to as 1450 E. McNichols;
2. Rezone land on the south side of E. McNichols between the I-75 and Goddard Street from a **M4** to a **B4 (General Business)** zoning classification, which includes some of the following larger parcels: Kings Auto Parts at 1740 E. McNichols, Second Ebenezer Church at 14601 Dequindre, US Post Office at 14600 Dequindre, and NCADD-GDA at 2400 E. McNichols;
3. Rezone land generally bounded by E. McNichols on the north, Jos. Campau Street on the east, Modern on the south, and Goddard on the west from a **M4, M2, B4, or R2 (Two-Family Residential)** to a **SD2 (Special Development, Mixed-Use)** zoning classification, which includes some of the following larger parcels: One Stop junkyard at 2550 E. McNichols, vacant industrial at 14290 Goddard, vacant land at 2700 E. McNichols and 14049 Jos. Campau, and primarily vacant residential land north of Modern between Goddard and Anglin;

4. Rezone land generally located on the north side of E. McNichols between Maine and Mackay from **M2 to B4**, referred to as 2601 E. McNichols;
5. Rezone land on the north side of the former rail line (and now the JLG) between Dequindre and Goddard from an **M4 to M2**, which includes some of the following larger parcels: Republic Services Inc. at 14333 Goddard and an industrial building at 14650 Dequindre;
6. Rezone land on the north side of Modern between I-75 and Goddard from **M4 to M2**, which includes some of the following larger parcels: Caramagno Foods at 14255 Dequindre, Highland Park DPW yard at 13200 Dequindre, and several vacant industrial and residential blocks/properties between St. Aubin and Goddard;
7. Rezone land generally bound by Modern on the north, Orleans on the east, the east/west alley first north of Victor on the south and I-75 on the west from **R2 to M2**, most of which is vacant land formerly developed with residential houses;
8. Rezone the northeast and northwest corners of Jos. Campau and E. McNichols from **M4 to B4**, which includes some of the following parcels: 2801 E. McNichols and a gas station at 14060 Jos. Campau;
9. Rezone land generally located on the west side of Reynolds between E. McNichols and Gaylord from **R2 to B4**, which includes the following vacant larger parcel: 14011 Reynolds;
10. Rezone land at the northwest corner of E. McNichols and Mitchell from **M4 to B4**, developed with Paris Bar at 2961 E. McNichols;
11. Rezone land generally bound by Jerome on the north, Conant on the east, Gaylord and E. McNichols on the south, and the west side of Mitchell on the west (not including 2961 E. McNichols) from **M4 to M2**, which includes some of the following parcels: Kronos Concrete at 3405 Gaylord, an industrial building at 17301 Conant, and vacant former residential property between Mitchell and Gallagher;
12. Rezone the east side of Moran south of Gaylord from **M2 to a R3 (Low Density Residential)** zoning classification which is developed with residential houses; and
13. Rezone the northwest corner of Conant and E. McNichols from **M2 to B4**, which includes Buddy's Pizza at 17125 Conant and a parking lot.



Map of proposed rezoning

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

- North: B4 on the north side of E. McNichols and M2 along the north side of Jerome with R1 Single-Family to the north; developed with commercial uses on the north side of E. McNichols; developed with a mix of uses (business, light industrial and residential), along the north side of Jerome;
- East: B4 on the east side of Conant; developed with a mix of commercial, industrial, and vacant land
- South: R2 on south side of Modern and B4 on south side of E. McNichols with residential to the south; developed with residential neighborhoods on south side of Modern; developed with a mix of commercial uses, residential, and vacant land on the south side of E. McNichols
- West: I-75 and Highland Park beyond

Zoning Classifications

The pertinent zoning district classifications are described as follows:

R2 - Two-Family Residential: Designed to protect and enhance those areas developed or likely to develop with single- or two-family dwellings. The district

regulations are designed to promote a suitable environment for homes and for activities connected with family life.

R3 - Low Density Residential: 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.

B4 - General Business: Provides for business and commercial uses of a thoroughfare-oriented nature. In addition to these uses, other businesses, which may benefit by drawing part of their clientele from passing traffic are permitted.

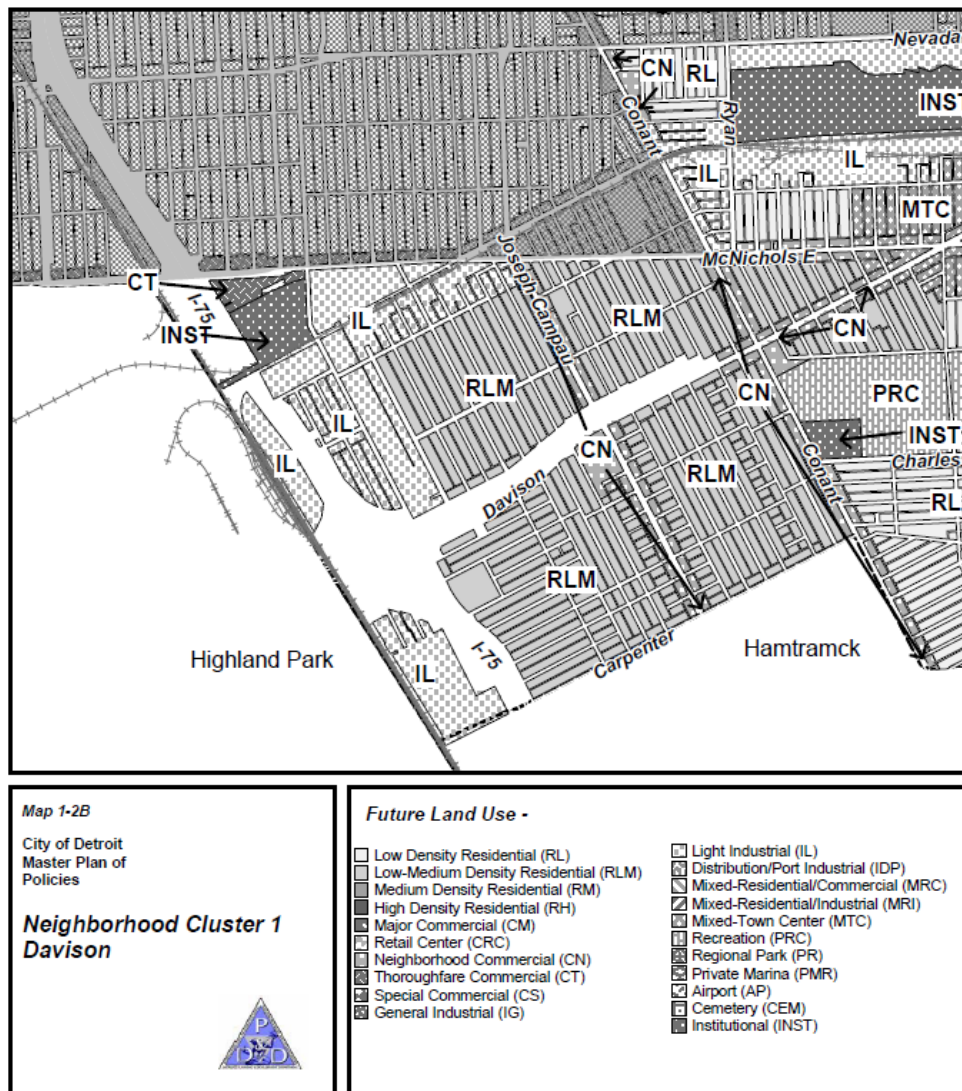
M2 - Restricted Industrial: Designed for a wide range of industrial and related uses which can function with a minimum of undesirable effects. Industrial establishments of this type provide a buffer between residential districts and intensive industrial districts. New residential construction is excluded from this district with the exception of loft conversions of existing buildings and of residential uses combined in structures with permitted commercial uses.

M4 - Intensive Industrial: Permit uses which are usually objectionable and, therefore, the district is rarely, if ever, located adjacent to residential districts. A broad range of uses is permitted in this district. New residences are prohibited with the exception of loft conversions of existing buildings and of residential uses combined in structures with permitted commercial uses.

SD2 - Special Development District, Mixed-Use: Designed to encourage a complementary mixture of more intensive pedestrian- and transit-oriented uses that may be compatible with a neighborhood center or with a location along major or secondary thoroughfares. Parking requirements are reduced in certain circumstances to promote use of transit and non-motorized transportation.

Master Plan Consistency

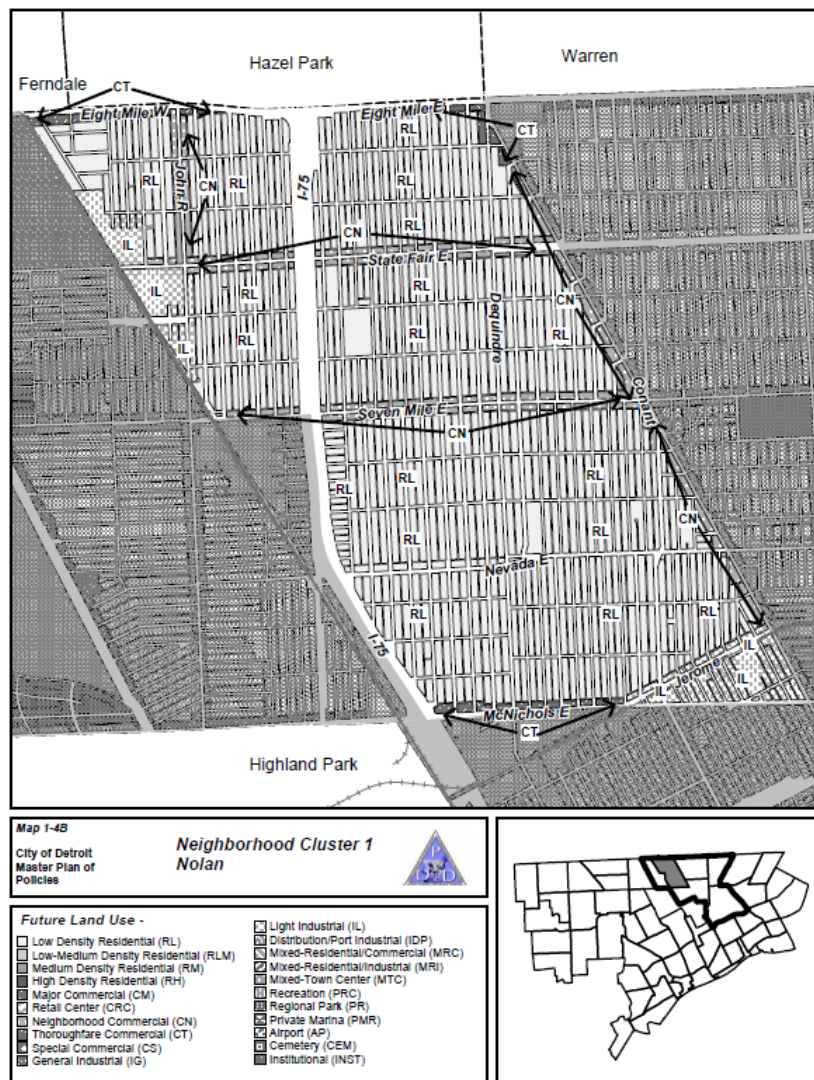
The subject rezoning is located within the Davison and Nolan areas in Neighborhood Cluster 1 of the 2009 Detroit Master Plan of Policies. CPC staff has requested a Master Plan Interpretation from P&DD, but has not yet received it. Below are the Master Plan maps that include the proposed rezoning.



Master Plan Map of Davison area

For the Davison area, the Future Land Use map in general shows:

- Thoroughfare Commercial (CN) on south side of E. McNichols just east of I-75
- Institutional (INST) for location of Second Ebenezer Church
- Light Industrial (IL) for area generally bound by E. McNichols on north, Jos. Campau on east, Modern on south and Dequindre on the west
- Light Industrial (IL) for area generally bound by the JLG on north, St. Aubin on the East, Davison on the south, and I-75 on the west



Master Plan Map of Nolan area

For the Nolan area, the Future Land Use map in general shows:

- Light Industrial (IL) for area generally bound by Jerome north, Conant on east, and E. McNichols on the south

P&DD Neighborhood Planning Study Playbook JLG Northeast

P&DD conducted a 2-year study resulting, in part, in the Neighborhood Planning Study Playbook for the JLG Northeast completed in November 2024. This Study aimed to identify policies and actions that could leverage and support investment near the JLG while uplifting existing residents and businesses to support neighborhood growth and stability.

The Study identifies a need to align industrial zoning with both existing and future neighborhood conditions. Within the JLG Northeast planning area, industrial uses only make up about 10 percent of parcel area with most being located immediately adjacent to the JLG. The Study highlights that underutilized industrial sites, low employment density, and high-impact industrial uses can weaken the long-term development goals. The Study also identifies how the transition of industrial areas toward compatible mixed-use development can be an opportunity to improve the relationship between industrial properties and the neighborhood.

More directly, the Study recommends “Downzone all M4 properties in the JLG Northeast to allow for light industrial or commercial/residential uses only, in order to transition away from heavy industrial uses along the JLG in the long term.” It also recommends considering a transition away from industrial uses along existing commercial corridors. The Study includes a JLG Northeast Zoning Changes map that identifies areas proposed for downzoning to light industrial/mixed-use and commercial/mixed-use.



Map of Study's recommended zoning changes

The Study also includes a broader Future Land Use framework, which calls for transitioning away from heavy industrial uses along the JLG, supporting commercial and mixed-use development near and adjacent to the Greenway. These recommendations support the reduction of the intensity of industrial zoned land where it may conflict with the desired future character of the Greenway and surrounding neighborhoods.



Map of Study's recommended future land use

The Study does not call for the complete elimination of industrial land and employment opportunities throughout the planning area. Rather, it recommends strategically preserving land for “*industrial living-wage jobs in strategic locations*” while improving the impacts of industrial activity along the JLG and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & FOLLOW-UP

Staff from P&DD and the GSD have had numerous community meetings regarding the completion of the aforementioned JLG Neighborhood Planning Study and implantation of the JLG. Additionally, City staff reached out several times to various business and other uses located within the proposed rezoning area.

On October 7, 2025, CPC staff, in cooperation with Council Member Benson’s Office, P&DD, and GSD, held a community meeting at Second Ebenezer Church to present the initial draft of the proposed JLG downzoning. The meeting provided an overview of the proposed rezoning of properties along the JLG within District 3 and an opportunity for community members to review the proposal and provide feedback.



Image of attendees October 7th, 2025, community meeting.

The primary questions, comments, and concerns raised by community members were focused on three key areas summarized below:

1. *Zoning and Land Use:*

Residents asked what zoning classifications would permit a concrete facility and why Kronos Concrete (located at 3401 E. McNichols) was not included in the proposed downzoning area. Several present expressed strong concerns regarding Kronos Concrete, including dust, air quality, exposed concrete piles, truck traffic, and potential impacts on neighborhood health and requested that the area surrounding Kronos be incorporated into the downzoning as part of an environmental justice and community protection effort.

2. *Greenway Development:*

Residents also raised questions regarding the development and maintenance of the JLG and surrounding area, including concerns about traffic, pedestrian safety, truck activity along St. Aubin, and potential impacts of the greenway and proposed trailhead on surrounding properties. P&DD explained that it was conducting studies and analyzing development potential along the greenway, while CPC's role was to ensure that proposed rezonings align with the City's Master Plan.

3. *Community Development:*

Residents emphasized the impacts of existing industrial uses on the surrounding neighborhood, particularly concerning dust and pollution from Kronos Concrete. Residents also expressed support for City cleanup efforts and neighborhood improvements, while requesting that the City work with existing businesses to support their continued operation where appropriate. Additional comments encouraged new housing investment and efforts to attract grocery stores and other neighborhood-serving uses.

During the year, staff have continued to analyze and meet with various stakeholders and Council Member Benson regarding the scope of the proposed downzoning, which is now being presented for consideration.

IMPACT ON EXISTING LAND USES

Within each zoning district, various land uses are designated as either a “By-right” or “Conditional” use, and those uses not listed are deemed, in general, as not allowed. When land is rezoned, sometimes the permissibility of the land use is changed.

The Detroit Zoning Ordinance defines nonconforming uses in part, as, “Uses that were legally established but which do not appear in, or are specifically excluded from, the listings of uses permitted by right or conditionally in the zoning district where they are located.”

Some of the uses within the subject rezoning are already legal nonconforming uses; some uses, if the proposed rezoning is approved, would become legal nonconforming uses; however, these newly created nonconforming uses can continue to operate indefinitely by the current or future owners.

Attachment:
Public Hearing Notice

cc:
Dara O’Byrne, Interim Director, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
James Foster, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Daniel Arking, Law Department
Bryan Coe, Law Department
Bruce Goldman, Law Department