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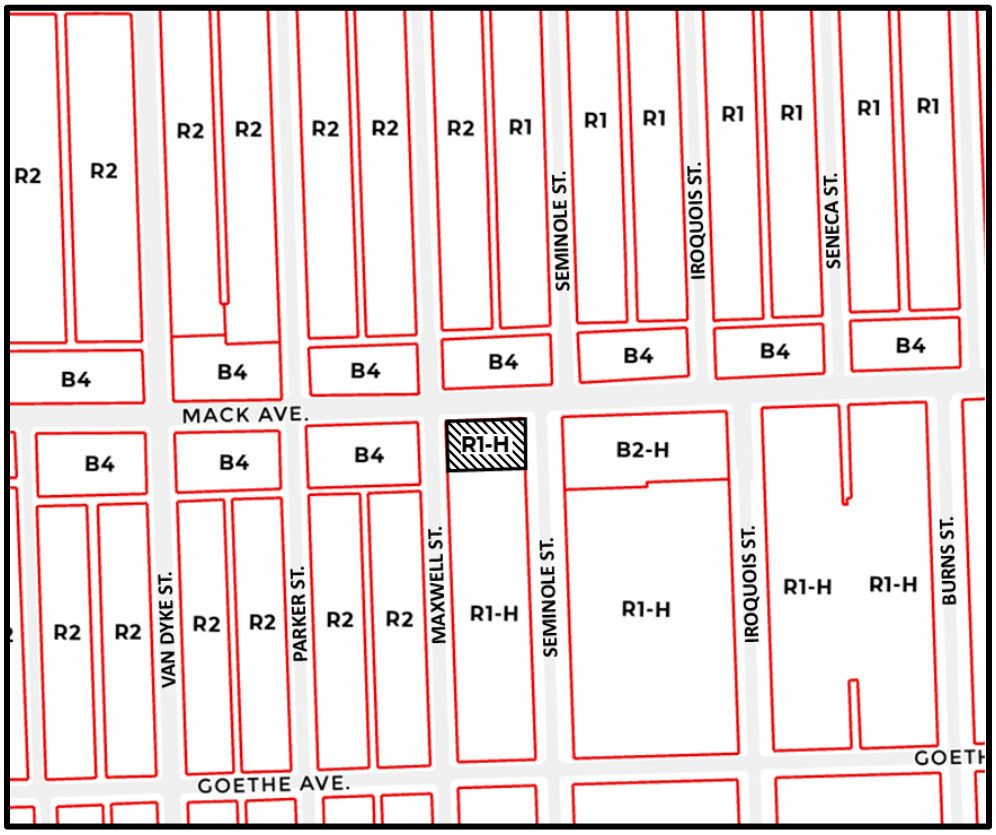
TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Eric Fazzini, City Planner

RE: Request of John P. Biggar, Integrity Building Group, to amend Article XVII, Zoning District Maps, Section 50-17-29, District Map No. 27 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a B4 (General Business District) zoning classification where a R1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning classification is shown at 8200 Mack Avenue **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

DATE: November 16, 2026

On November 5, 2026, the City Planning Commission (CPC) held a public hearing on the subject zoning map amendment (rezoning) request. Below is a map indicating the area proposed to be rezoned.



Hatched area is proposed to be rezoned from R1 to B4

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

Background

This zoning map amendment has been requested to support the renovation and reuse of an existing vacant historic building located at 8200 Mack Avenue. The historic Deutsches Haus building was constructed at this location in the 1920's as an ethnic hall for Detroit's German community. The original building had a variety of ethnic hall uses, including a bowling alley in the basement and commercial storefronts along Mack. The building is currently vacant and was most recently used as a church. The site is located in the northwest corner of the Indian Village Historic District, indicated with an "-H" on the zoning map on the previous page. No changes are proposed to the historic district.

Deutsches Haus history from detroiturbex.com:

> *In a document outlining the proposed building, the association building the Haus wrote that a Deutsches Haus was "...a community house which affords to Germanic Societies and in fact to all German Americans of the City primarily, but secondarily also to other citizens, an ideal place for meetings, recreation, amusement, entertainment and mutual co-operation. It is a center which draws all forces to it, a home which harbors all, a common ground upon which men and women meet and learn to gather strength for nobler effort and achievement." Though smaller than the previously planned Temple, the Haus was still a dominating structure, designed by Louis and Paul Kamper. The top two floors would be home to a massive theater, while the lower level would contain businesses and facilities for German clubs.*

Proposal

Ms. Joy Owens owner of Outsource Healthcare, LLC recently purchased the building and adjacent parking areas. Ms. Owens has an interest in architect Louis Kamper buildings and is proposing an adaptive reuse of the subject building. Other buildings designed by Louis Kamper include the Book-Cadillac Hotel and other large historic hotels, the Water Board (DWSD) building on Randolph Street, and the Book Tower. Attached are image boards that show the redevelopment vision for the building. The proposed project would have 91 off-site parking spaces as indicated on the proposed site plan, with additional parking available at 8330 Mack Avenue. A description of the proposed uses from Ms. Owens is as follows:

<u>Mack Avenue Retail at Street Level</u>
Social Hub
Art Gallery
Library and Tea/Matcha Bar
Salad Bar
Juice/Wine and Craft Beer
Other potential B4 uses

<u>Main Floor – 1st Floor</u>
Chef's Experience – Temporary Chef's and kitchen with dining available to rent

<u>Upper Floor</u>
Banquet Facility/Art Gallery

<u>Basement – Lower Level</u>
Bowling Alley and Game Room
Sports Bar

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Zoning District Descriptions

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

R1 – Single-Family Residential District (Current)

The R1 Single-Family Residential District is designed to protect and preserve quiet, low-density residential areas now primarily developed and those areas which will be developed with single-family detached dwellings and characterized by a high ratio of home ownership. The regulations for this district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district and to promote and encourage a suitable environment for activities associated with family life. To these ends, development is limited to a relatively low concentration and uses permitted by right are limited to single-family detached dwellings which provide homes for the residents of the area. Additional residential uses such as religious institutions, neighborhood centers, and utility uses necessary to serve the immediate area may be permitted on a conditional basis.

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.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses

Surrounding zoning and land uses include the following:

North (across Mack):	B4 – Vacant greenspace (proposed for Deutsche Haus parking)
East (across Seminole):	B2 – Vacant surface parking lot and building (within Historic District)
South (same block):	R1 – Single family residence (within Historic District)
West (across Maxwell):	B4 – Surface parking lot (proposed for Deutsche Haus parking)

Historic Zoning Analysis

The building opened approximately 13 years before the City's first Zoning Ordinance (ZO) was adopted in 1940. When zoning was first implemented in 1940, the site was given an R1 zoning district classification along with the residential area to the southeast that would later become the Indian Village Historic District in the 1970's. The choice of R1 for 8200 Mack Avenue was likely a historic mapping oversight. The RM4 (now R5) district was the least intense residential district that allowed for "private clubs, lodges, fraternities and similar uses, except those which are operated for profit," which is likely the use label that would have been applied to the Deutsches Haus or similar non-commercial social clubs. The site being historically zoned R1 would have limited the reuse of the building to public, civic, or institutional uses, such as the church that most recently used the building. Additionally, the R1 residential designation has prohibited the reuse of the site for commercial uses.

The rezoning application states that "the subject property never should have been zoned R1". Staff agrees with this sentiment as it appears the RM4 district would have been more appropriate, but this does not necessarily mean that the site should have been historically zoned business to permit a social club. The Mack Avenue corridor being zoned primarily B2 or B4 adjacent to this site, and 8200 Mack Avenue not being included in these B districts, is an indication that the site may have been purposely

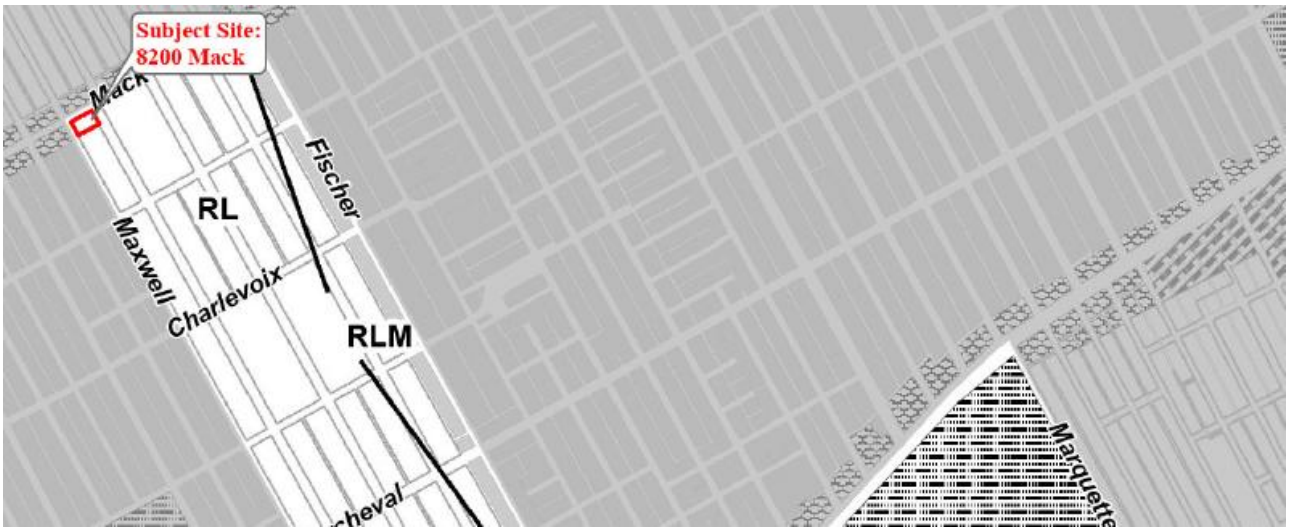
excluded from Business zoning in the past. However, as stated above, the R1 zoning of the site appears to be more closely tied to the Indian Village Historic District boundaries versus Mack Avenue corridor zoning. The benefit of adjacent B2 or B4 zoning is that this helps avoid any arguments that the rezoning of 8200 Mack Avenue to B4 would be an illegal spot rezoning as it would be a continuation of adjacent B4 zoning and a minor expansion of B4 zoning in the area.

8300 Mack Avenue Rezoning

The adjacent site immediately to the east across Seminole Street, 8300 Mack Avenue, is also within the Indian Village Historic District boundaries. This site was rezoned from R1 to B1 Business (now B2) in 1961 to allow for the development of a supermarket. The site was eventually used as a medical clinic and has been vacant for some time. The applicant has stated that the existing parking lot at this address would be available for use as shared or temporary parking for Deutsches Haus.

Master Plan Interpretation

The site is located in the Master Plan's Indian Village neighborhood and is designated as Low Density Residential (RL). Such districts "… have an overall density up to 8 dwelling units per net residential acre. The areas are often characterized by single family homes with front yard setbacks and driveways with garage or off-street parking." The Planning and Development Department (PDD) concludes that while the proposed zoning is not specifically aligned with the Master Plan, its very small size, the Master Plan's contemplation of neighborhood-scale commercial uses, location on a major corridor, and consistency with the commercial zoning along the corridor make it generally consistent with the Master Plan.



Community Engagement Summary

The petitioner provided the following summary of community outreach:

- Immediate Neighbors: The immediate land to the west, north and east are parking lots (or vacant). Met with the home owners immediately adjacent (rear) to the Deutsche Haus on 08/16/26. This became an informal community meeting as the neighbors, Tolulope and Marsha Henderson, invited 10 neighbors to join in the discussion.
- Indian Village Association: Presented to the Indian Village Association Board on 06/01/26.
- Joseph Berry Subdivision Association: Presented to the Board on 08/11/26. They offered their support - see the attached letter.
- D. Bailey Park NDC Resilience Hub: Presented the project to Katrina Keeby-Watkins on 07/14/26

- Genesis Hope: Presented to their monthly community meeting on 07/23/2026, and the director Jeanine Hatcher has provided a letter of support. Ms. Hatcher also set up a presentation to additional community groups in the area on 08/19/26.
- Villages Community Development Corporation: the developers have been in contact with Mac Farr, Executive Director of the Villages and provided a presentation on 08/18/26.
- The developer has also developed and implemented a unique program for individual outreach using flyers and postcards with a QR code on the flyer/card. People are able to access information on the project via the QR code and offer information and submit feedback.

November 5 CPC Public Hearing

At the public hearing, 11 people spoke regarding the project, with eight speakers in support and three with questions about the project. One asked if the bowling alley would be restored and another asked questions about the property owner, potential uses, development timeline, and if the building would be open to community events. Prior to the public hearing, letters of support were submitted by the Joseph Berry Subdivision Association, Genesis Hope, and 18 from nearby residents. Lastly, commissioners asked for a comparison of permissible uses between the B2 and B4 districts. Attached is a comparison table between retail, service, and commercial uses in these two districts.

Rezoning Approval Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based.

1) Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend, or fact.
   Staff Analysis:
   The rezoning would help meet the challenge of repurposing and preserving a historic building that has been vacant for several years.

2) Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of the zoning code.
   Staff Analysis:
   The Planning and Development Department (P&DD) has submitted a letter that states the rezoning is generally consistent as the site is very small in area, the Master Plan contemplates neighborhood-scale commercial, and that the site is located on a major thoroughfare and would be consistent with commercial zoning along the corridor.

3) Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.
   Staff Analysis:
   The rezoning will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public through the adaptive reuse and preservation of a vacant historic building.

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.
   Staff Analysis:
   It is expected that the city and other service providers will be able to provide adequate public facilities and services to the site as it is an existing building along Mack Avenue.

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.
Staff Analysis:
No adverse impacts on the natural environment are anticipated as the building is existing and covers the majority of the site.

6) Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract.
Staff Analysis:
To the west, north, and east, the building is buffered by existing streets and existing or planned commercial parking lots. Traffic and activity will likely be oriented along these frontages along or adjacent to Mack Avenue. On-street parking should be encouraged or regulated to Mack Avenue to minimize on-street parking on residential side streets.

While the building has a minimal setback from the residential area to the south as it predates zoning setbacks, the thick masonry construction of the building and orientation towards Mack Avenue should mitigate any noise that may be created with the reactivation of the building and proposed uses.

7) The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification.
Staff Analysis:
The site is not suitable for R1 zoning as the building has not historically been used for residential purposes and the form of the building is more urban than what is typically seen in the R1 district. The existing R1 zoning is likely a historic mapping error as the former use has not historically been permissible in this district. The proposed B4 district is suitable given the site's location on Mack Avenue and adjacent Business zoning along this corridor.

8) Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal "spot zone."
Staff Analysis:
The rezoning would not create an illegal spot zone as the rezoning is generally consistent with the Master Plan and denial of the request would not preclude the property from redevelopment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the public hearing, above analysis, and review of the Section 50-3-70 criteria of the Zoning Ordinance, CPC staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the rezoning request.

Attachments: Image Boards
P&DD Master Plan Interpretation
Letters of Support
Site Plan
B2 and B4 Retail Use Comparison
Supplemental Memorandum

cc: Dara O'Byrne, Interim Director, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED

James Foster, BSEED
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Bruce Goldman, Law
Office of Renata Miller, City Council Member, District 5