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# City of Detroit

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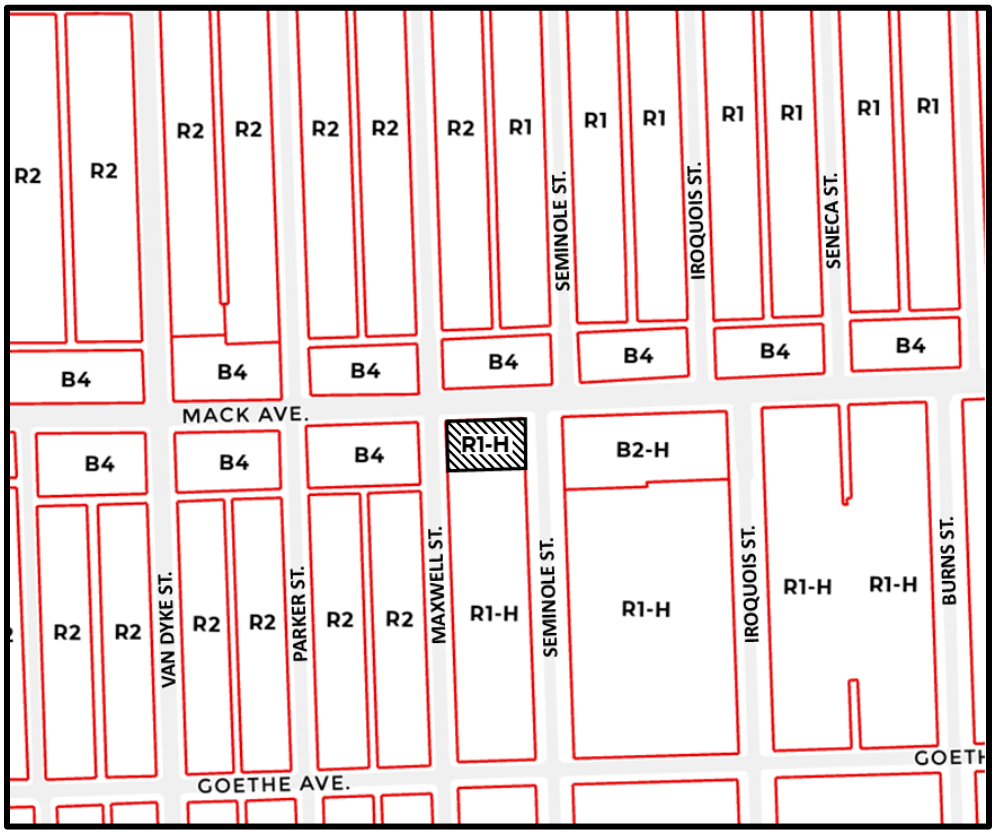
**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Eric Fazzini, Staff

**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 **(PUBLIC HEARING)**

**DATE:** November 4, 2026

On November 5, 2026, the City Planning Commission (CPC) will hold a 5:15 p.m. 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 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.*
>
> *Michigan Governor Fred W. Green, Detroit mayor John W. Smith were among the dignitaries on hand for the opening of the Deutsches Haus on April 2nd, 1927, as well as members of other German societies from around the country. The Haus became the social hub for 42 German societies in the city, featuring dining rooms, gymnasiums, billiard rooms, and bowling alleys. A Rathskeller, or council cellar, served as the main club room with paintings and murals of German figures and themes.*
>
> *Traditionally, a Rathskeller is a place for drinking or eating, but the Deutsches Haus opened in the middle of a nationwide prohibition on the consumption of alcohol. Despite the possibility of heavy fines, the grand opening celebration had plenty of liquor, leading a raid by federal agents and temporary closures. Over the years the German population declined along with other ethnic populations, leading to the eventual sale of the building to a church being displaced by urban renewal efforts underway near downtown. Greater Macedonia Baptist Church took over the building in 1963 and used it until around 2008.*

The building was constructed approximately 15 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. The choice of R1 for 8200 Mack Avenue may have been a historic mapping oversight as 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. The benefit of adjacent B2 or B4 zoning is that this helps avoid any arguments that the rezoning of 8200 Mack Avenue to B4 could be an illegal spot rezoning as it would be a continuation of the business zoning along the corridor.

***Proposal***
Ms. Joy Owens, owner of Outsource Healthcare, LLC recently purchased the building and adjacent parking areas. Ms. Owens has an interest in Kamper buildings and is proposing adaptive reuse of the subject building. Attached are image boards that show the redevelopment vision for the building. The proposed project would have an unspecified number of off-site parking spaces. No plans have been submitted with the application. A description of the proposed uses from Ms. Owens is as follows:

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

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

Upper Floor
Banquet Facility

Basement – Lower Level
Bowling Alley and Game Room
Sports Bar
Spoken Word Lounge
Original Speakeasy

**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

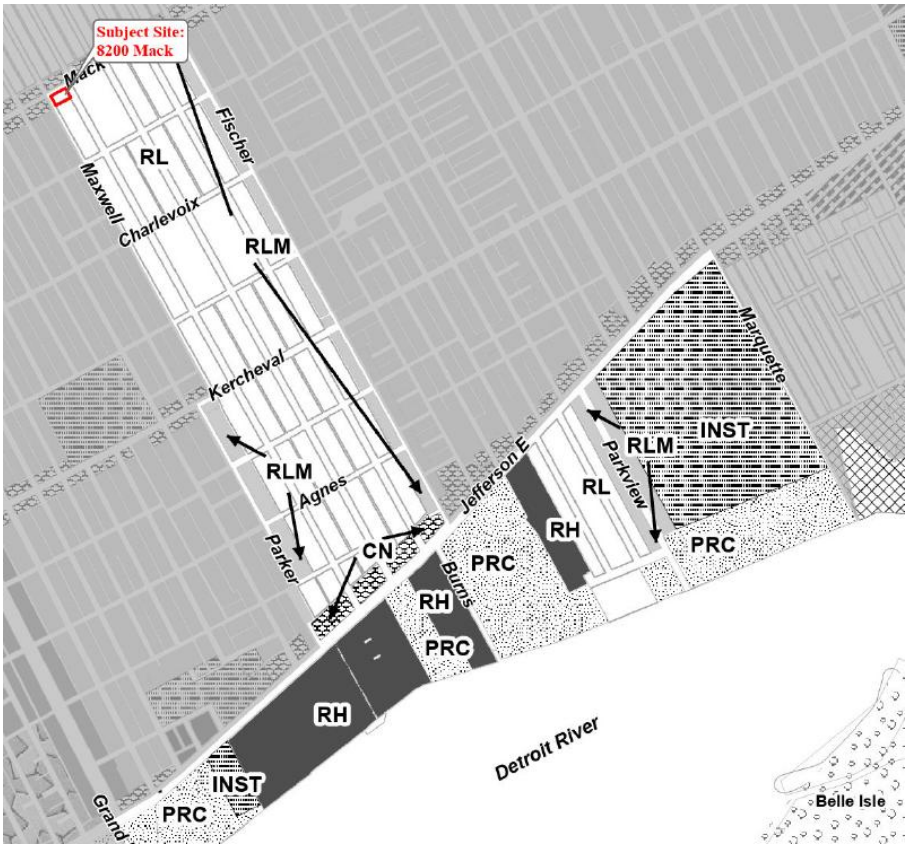
residential uses such as religious institutions, neighborhood centers, and utility uses necessary to serve the immediate area may be permitted on a conditional basis.

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) |

***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 set backs 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, it's 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. Met with the home owners immediately adjacent to the Deutsche Haus on 08/16/26. This became an informal community meeting as the neighbors, Tolulope and Marsha Henderson, invited ten (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 on 07/23/2026, and the director Jeanine Hatcher has provided a letter of support. Ms. Hatcher has offered and we accepted the invitation to present to additional community groups that she knows in the area. That presentation took place 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.

Staff will provide the remainder

Attachments: Image Boards
P&DD Master Plan Interpretation
Letters of Support

cc: Dara O'Byrne, Interim Director, P&DD
Greg Moots, P&DD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
James Foster, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Bruce Goldman, Law Dept.
Office of Renata Miller, City Council Member, District 5