

Alton James
Chairperson
Lauren Hood, MCD
Vice Chair/Secretary

City of Detroit
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-6225 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cc-cpc@detroitmi.gov

Brenda Goss-Andrews
Lisa Whitmore Davis
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Gregory Pawlowski
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Angy Webb

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Marcell R. Todd, Jr. Director

RE: The request of Detroit Entertainment, L.L.C. d/b/a MotorCity Casino for approval of a modification to the previously approved development proposal for a casino complex in the SD5 (Special Development District, Casinos) zoning classification in order to allow the addition of 700 new parking spaces via the construction of an eight (8) level expansion at the east end of the existing parking deck erected on the property bounded by Elm, Brooklyn, Temple and Trumbull

DATE: June 19, 2019

NATURE OF REQUEST

On Thursday April 4, 2019 the City Planning Commission will hold a public discussion to consider the request of Detroit Entertainment, L.L.C. d/b/a MotorCity Casino for approval of a modification to the previously approved development proposal for a casino complex in the SD5 (Special Development District, Casinos) zoning classification. This request will facilitate the addition of 700 new parking spaces via the construction of an eight (8) story expansion at the east end of the existing parking deck erected on the property bounded by Elm, Brooklyn, Temple and Trumbull.

PROPOSAL

MotorCity Casino has been operating at this site since 1999, first as an interim casino and finally as a permanent casino complex. Over that time period the casino has had the opportunity to evaluate the functionality and efficiency of the facility as well as the needs and the proclivities of its patrons. Of particular interest over that time has been the operation of the casino parking deck and the user experience. Various deficiencies have been noted in the materials provided by the casino leading to a major underutilization of the deck. In order to provide for an enhanced patron experience and obtain better utilization of their facilities The casino now proposes to construct an eight (8) level parking deck expansion at the east end of the existing parking deck along Brooklyn between Temple and Elm St. it will occupy the vehicular parking and circulation space north of the primary valet parking entrance.

The additional parking deck will provide 700 new parking spaces just across Brooklyn from the casino proper. It will provide pedestrian and vehicular connectivity to the existing deck and offer a second pedestrian bridge over Brooklyn to the third level of the casino. It will also feature LED interior lighting to match existing facilities. The plans also call for the Park Assist vehicle

count system, WiFi to work with autonomous vehicles and height sensor to protect against damage from oversized vehicles. For added security it will also introduce a license plate recognition system.

The exterior construction is proposed to be of colored precast concrete with stamped brick pattern to match the existing structured parking facilities. It will also include the gable end element (inspired by the original Wonder Bread Bakery building) above the three new vertical circulation cores two of which with elevators. Lastly the casino logo will be centered upon the upper region of the northern building façade, parallel with Elm St. and facing at an angle to Grand River.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

North: office, parking – R2, B4 (General Business District), M2 (Restricted Industrial District)

East: casino complex – SD5

South: casino complex (hotel and parking), retail, residential – SD5 and PD

West: casino complex, local commercial, vacant land, low density residential – SD5, R\$ and R4

Master Plan of Policies

The City's Master Plan of Policies shows SC (Special Commercial Residential) as the future land use for the subject parcel. The Master Plan was amended to allow for the temporary facility in 1999. Therefore, the proposed rezoning appears to be in compliance with the current Master Plan of Policies. Previously, the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) has conducted a thorough review, and concurs with the City Planning Commission staff's findings.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

This project is generally in conformance with the PD District design criteria of Sec. 61-11-15 of the Zoning Ordinance. However, concerns over scale and massing arose upon viewing the proposed structure from various vantage points. Distance dependent, view of the structure is at least partially obscured by the existing buildings to the east, south and west. However, due to the alignment of Brooklyn St. and the larger surface parking lot that fronts Grand River along the parcel immediately north of the casino, the view is fully exposed revealing the mass and scale of the proposed deck in relation to its surrounds. This exposure was the chief concern of Director Cox and the Planning and Development Department.

Discussion ensued with the casino exploring means by which the mass and scale of the deck could be reduced either physically or virtually. The most effective solutions were either detrimental to the function and needed provision of 700 additional parking spaces or deemed cost prohibitive. After a reviewed of the various options explored by the casino it was determined that the thoughtful application graphics to some portion of the façade would serve to break up the mass and reduce the scale of the deck. It would also, of course present a more appealing view to the passersby.

The specific imagery, placement and amount of coverage on the façade are yet to be determined. P&DD and CPC staff agree that the treatment should also wrap the corners resulting in some small portion of the east and west facades bearing the application along the northern edges of those façades. A full presentation will be provided during the discussion at your meeting.

Attachment:
Application
Drawings

Cc: Maurice Cox, Director, PDD
Karen Gage, PDD
Julio Cedano, PDD
Esther Yang, PDD
Donald Rencher, Director, HRD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
Lawrence Garcia, Corp. Counsel