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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Jamie Murphy, Staff

RE: Request of Henry Ford Health Systems to amend Article XVII, District Map 7, of the 2019 Detroit City Code Chapter 50, 'Zoning' by showing a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification where an R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification currently exists on 26 parcels generally bounded by Pallister Street, John C. Lodge Freeway, Seward Street and Poe Street. **(REVISED – RECOMMEND DENIAL)**

DATE: January 6, 2020

On June 20, 2019 the City Planning Commission (CPC) held a 5:15 P.M. public hearing on the rezoning request of Henry Ford Health Systems (HFHS). The matter returns before the City Planning Commission (CPC) on January 9, 2020 for an update and staff recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

CPC staff has completed its review of the above captioned request. It would ideal to consider this proposal in both the current and likely future contexts, accounting for the circumstance presently before Commission as well as the reasonable cumulative impacts of related projected development. However, based upon information currently available and the analysis and findings below, CPC staff recommends denial of the map amendment request. CPC staff also recommends the following as this matter advances to City Council or if HFHS returns before the Commission with this or a similar request(s):

1. The petitioner prepare and provide a comprehensive vision and master plan for the entire hospital campus and all the properties under their control and that of their development partners in order to provide the City with the proper documentation to evaluate and consider the hospital's needs and corresponding requests;
2. That the petitioner prepare and provide a corresponding parking study establishing current and projected parking demands and exploring the means by which to address them;
3. The petitioner provide the appropriate as corresponding traffic study reflecting the current and projected future needs of the hospital exploring street closures and other options to segregate traffic and protect the surrounding neighborhood;

4. That the petitioner redesign the proposed parking structure to be lower in height, stepping down to the meet the neighborhood, to ensure ample intake capacity at the southern entrance as well proper traffic flow along Pallister, and
5. That the petitioner work with the City Planning Commission, the Planning and Development Department, other appropriate City agencies, the immediately impacted members of the community and area community groups in pursuit of the above items.

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The CPC has received a request from Henry Ford Health Systems requesting that the City of Detroit amend Article XVII, District Map No. 7 of Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, ‘Zoning,’ to show a PD (Planned Development) zoning classification where an R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification currently exists on 26 parcels generally bounded by Pallister Street, John C. Lodge Freeway, Seward Street and Poe Street.

The subject property is currently developed with a surface parking lot with approximately 300 parking spaces. The property is located on the city’s west side in City Council District 5.

Proposed Development

Henry Ford Health Systems (HFHS) proposes to build and operate a new parking structure, generally for employees who currently park in surface lots several blocks away and are shuttled to the main hospital. The proposed garage would consist of seven levels and accommodate 2034 vehicles. Previously, a garage for the hospital’s shuttle busses was proposed on the northernmost portion of the site adjacent to Seward Street; but that has been eliminated from the proposal. That portion will remain a surface parking lot as shown on the submitted plans.

A landscaped setback of 14-30 feet is proposed around the new structure, similar to the existing setback of the parking lot. The proposed structure would be clad primarily with brick and concrete panels with some metal panels on the stair towers. The brick coordinates with surrounding structures which are primarily brick, and the concrete panels echo the cladding of the apartment building adjacent.

Community Outreach

HFHS has held several community meetings to inform nearby residents about the project, gather opinions and address concerns. In response to the information gathered, HFHS made some changes to the proposal and offered other benefits to the surrounding neighbors:

- The northernmost portion of the garage that would house the shuttle busses was eliminated.
- The north façade was redesigned based on neighborhood feedback to include more brick and smaller openings.
- A row of trees was added between the garage and the alley.
- HFHS will partner with neighbors to beautify the alley.
- A sunlight study was conducted to explore the amount of sunlight blocked by the proposed structure.
- HFHS offered to pay the fees for the neighborhood to participate in the residential parking permit program (which would restrict or eliminate employee parking on the surrounding residential streets).
- Health and wellness classes will be offered at Lexington Village (the apartment building to the west) and open to all neighbors.
- An alternative was found to prevent extensive construction in the alley behind the Seward Street houses. A water line will be rerouted to the south instead.

- A representative from the City’s Office of the Assessor spoke at one of the meetings regarding property values and the numerous factors that influence them.

CPC PUBLIC HEARING

On June 20, 2019 the City Planning Commission (CPC) held a 5:15 P.M. public hearing on the subject rezoning. Four members of the public spoke, all in opposition. They were generally concerned with additional air pollution, blockage of sunlight and views, increased taxes, decreased value, security and storm water management. Questions were also raised regarding whether the parking structure could be built in another location that isn’t immediately adjacent to residential dwellings.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Staff followed up with petitioner concerning the availability of other properties that could be employed to meet the meet their parking needs. The hospital reminded staff that two major sites, formerly providing offsite surface parking east of the Lodge Freeway, were sold and redeveloped over the last couple years. Those transactions resulted in surface parking loss, but yielded the Detroit Pistons’ Training Center at Third and Amsterdam and a new housing project at Third and W. Grand Blvd. Properties that they control south of the Boulevard and west of the Lodge, aside from the Cancer Center, can’t be spoken for at present as they are subject of ongoing negotiations with development partners.

Returning to the main hospital campus there are two large surface lots along the east side of Poe Ave. at Pallister St. While the petitioner would like to see these sites redeveloped with structured parking and some mix of uses complementary to the hospital, they are not prepared to pursue such a project at this time. Furthermore, they pointed out that these sites being more internal to the neighborhood would likely draw the same community concerns and opposition directed at the current proposal. This is one of the reasons they elected to pursue the subject site at this time with its location along the periphery of the campus. Staff was also informed of additional temporary parking deficit that will be realized sometime in the near future, when the two existing parking decks located along the freeway service drive will be taken offline for repair, renovation or replacement.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

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

- North: R3 (Low Density Residential) – Child Care Center, Residential Dwellings
- East: John C. Lodge Freeway (immediately adjacent)
Across freeway – R1 (Single Family Residential) and SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed-Use) – Vacant Elementary School, Union Hall
- South: R6 (High Density Residential) – Parking Structure (owned by Henry Ford Hospital)
- West: PD (Planned Development) and R3 (Low Density Residential) – Multi-Family Dwelling (12 story, Lexington Village Apartments), Single Family Dwelling

Zoning Ordinance Approval Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff’s analysis in italics:

- Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract. *The proposed rezoning would not have an adverse impact on HFHS-owned property to the south or the apartment building to the west. However, the*

dwelling to the north along Seward Street would be adversely impacted by having such a large structure built directly across the alley. Also, the increased traffic would bring additional pollution in close proximity to residential dwellings.

- Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. *The proposed amendment would not protect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents living near the site who could be harmed by reduced natural light, additional traffic, noise and emissions.*

As a PD district, this proposal is also subject to the approval criteria in Section 50-3-96. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- That the proposed type and density of use shall not result in an unreasonable increase in traffic or the use of public services, facilities and utilities, that the natural features of the subject site have the capacity to accommodate the intended development, and that the development shall not place an unreasonable burden upon surrounding land or land owners. *The proposed development would greatly increase traffic in the area by concentrating more than 2,000 vehicles that currently park in several scattered lots into one garage. Building a seven-story parking structure in such close proximity to 2.5-story homes could be an unreasonable burden on the surrounding residents without taking certain mitigating measures.*

Additionally, the proposed vehicle entrance from the Lodge Freeway service drive will not be accessible from the Pallister Avenue exit. While there is a proposed entrance to the garage on Pallister Avenue, if there is a wait at that entrance, resulting in vehicle stacking along Pallister, drivers may circle the block to access the entrance from the freeway service drive thus increasing traffic on Poe and Seward Streets.

- Whether uses and structures that are planned for the Planned Development District comply with all applicable site design standards and use regulations which are specified in Article XI, Division 2, specifically (b) Scale, form massing and density and (c) Compatibility. *The scale of the proposed development would not relate well to the surrounding development to the north—it would be much larger and overshadow the adjacent houses. The proposed development is also not compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function given the low to medium density residential character north of Pallister.*
- Whether the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate. *The proposed intensification of dimensional standards at the site is dramatic—the existing R3 zoning district allows a maximum building height of 35 feet while the parking structure is proposed to be 72.5 feet tall. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for the R3 district is 0.70 (meaning that a single-story building could cover 70% of the site or a 2-story building could cover 35% of the site). The proposed parking structure would have a FAR of approximately 4.7 (an increase of 670%). The proposed dimensions allowed would also be more intense than those allowed on the main hospital campus which is zoned R6.*

Generally, it would be appropriate for the density and height of buildings to decrease at the edges of the hospital campus adjacent to the neighborhood, but the proposed development proposes a much taller, larger building directly adjacent to the residential neighborhood. The existing surface parking lot more appropriately transitions between the intensity of the hospital campus and the lower density residential district.

Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Rosa Parks area of Neighborhood Cluster 6 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows “Institutional” & “Low-Medium Density Residential” for the subject property. The Planning & Development Department submitted a formal Master Plan interpretation that the proposed rezoning conforms to the Future General Land Use characteristics of the area.

CONCLUSIONS

Henry Ford Hospital has been an important anchor and community institution for more than 100 years. As the flagship location of Henry Ford Health System, it both provides medical care for Detroit residents, and draws patients from the metropolitan region and beyond for innovative treatments and specialized care. As the campus continues to change and grow to meet staff and patient needs, additional parking capacity is essential.

Several developments in the last several years including the cancer center to the south and the sale of several surface parking lots for redevelopment have accelerated this parking deficit. Older existing parking structures are nearing the end of their life expectancy and will need to be taken offline in order to perform substantial rehabilitation or replacement in the new decade. On-street parking in the surrounding community is challenged by those employees and hospital patrons who choose to park on nearby streets rather than utilize off-street parking facilities provided by the hospital on and off-site. Future and at present undecided new development will present added traffic and parking concerns. Constructing new parking facilities is clearly necessary for the hospital to continue to serve its mission and to accommodate the demands of current and future employees and patients. However, a greater understanding of these demands is essential to determining the solutions and the impacts thereof.

Although a new parking structure is presently needed, surrounding residents, businesses and property owners must also be considered. Balancing and evaluating these sometimes conflicting demands is difficult. Regarding the proposed parking garage, too much of the burden seems to fall on just a few residents. Despite a great deal of effort from HFHS staff, a satisfactory compromise couldn't be reached at this time.

Attachment: Public Hearing Notice
Application
Site Plan, Floor Plan, Elevations
Memorandum from HFHS
Sunlight studies

cc: Arthur Jemison, Group Executive for Housing, Planning & Development
Katy Trudeau, Deputy Director PDD
Russell Baltimore, Director of Design, PDD
Karen Gage, Director Zoning Innovations, PDD
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