

# City of Detroit

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**TO:** City Planning Commission

**FROM:** Christopher Gulock, AICP, Staff

**RE:** **The request of the Detroit International Bridge Company, LLC and the City of Detroit City Planning Commission staff to rezone numerous parcels near the Ambassador Bridge plaza**

**DATE:** February 12, 2024

On February 15, 2024, the City Planning Commission (CPC) is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the request of the Detroit International Bridge Company, LLC (DIBC) and the City of Detroit City Planning Commission (CPC) via staff to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-44, District Map No. 42 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to rezone numerous properties generally located east of the Ambassador Bridge plaza and north of West Fort Street (St.). The location of the proposed rezoning is indicated on a map later in this report and on the attached public hearing notice.

For the past several years, in order to improve bridge plaza operations, the DIBC has acquired land adjacent to the existing bridge plaza with the interest of expanding the plaza area.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Ambassador Bridge plaza is generally located between St. Anne St. to the east and W. Grand Boulevard (Blvd.) to the west, just north of W. Fort St. Land within the plaza is mostly owned by the DIBC, but a smaller section is owned by the United States General Services Administration (GSA). The map below shows the current zoning map of the plaza. Over the years, the plaza has been incrementally expanded and now consists of a variety of zoning districts, including R2 (Two-Family Residential District), R3 (Low-Density Residential District), B4 (General Business District), B6 (General Services District), and M3 (General Industrial District). As shown on the zoning map, most of the plaza is zoned B6, which allows bridge plazas by-right. The bridge plaza was often expanded onto other non-B6 land via the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The streets and alleys within the plaza have been closed and vacated.

## Map of Existing Zoning



## COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

On October 19, 2023, the City of Detroit (represented by Mayor Duggan and Corporation Counsel Conrad Mallett), the Hubbard Richard Residents Association (HRR) (represented by President Sam Butler and Secretary Jessica Trevino), and the DIBC signed a Community Agreement (CA) allowing the bridge plaza to expand in return for certain benefits to the community. District 6 Council Member Santiago-Romero's office also participated in these negotiations.

At the February 15<sup>th</sup> public hearing, representatives of the Administration, HRR, and DIBC will present additional details of the CA. Below is a map from the agreement and summary of several CA provisions highlighted on the map:

- The DIBC will donate 10 lots it owns to HRR – shown as yellow boxes.
- The DIBC will donate one lot it owns adjacent to Roberto Clemente Center to the City– shown as an orange box.
- The DIBC will not acquire new properties within HRR – shown as the area inside the blue box.
- The DIBC will demolish the Greyhound bus garage and reopen 16<sup>th</sup> St. between W. Lafayette Blvd. and W. Fort St. This will create Parcel 1 bounded by W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, newly created 16<sup>th</sup> St. on the east, W. Fort St. on the south, and 18<sup>th</sup> St. on the west. The DIBC will donate the land it owns within Parcel 1 to HRR – shown as solid red rectangle.
- Two lots within Parcel 1 are privately owned and not part of the Parcel 1 donation – black shaded areas.

- The City will close both St. Anne St. and 15<sup>th</sup> St. between W. Lafayette Blvd. and W. Fort Street – shown as pink boxes.
- The DIBC will create Parcel 2 with added berm area, bounded by W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, newly closed 15<sup>th</sup> St. on the east, W. Fort St. on the south, and newly created 16<sup>th</sup> St. on the west – shown as purple box with green berm area.
- The DIBC will expand the bridge plaza onto the block bounded by Howard St. on the north, St. Anne St. on the east, and W. Lafayette Blvd. on the south – shown as Block A, red cross hatch.
- The DIBC will expand the bridge plaza onto the block bounded W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, 18<sup>th</sup> St. on the east, W. Fort St. on the south, and newly closed St. Anne St. on the west – shown as Block B, red cross hatch.

**Map of Exhibit B from CA**



## DIBC REZONING REQUEST

As noted earlier, for the past several years, the DIBC has been interested in expanding its bridge plaza, in order to improve the flow/processing of semi-trucks and to improve operations. Toward this end, the DIBC has acquired the land within the three blocks listed below:

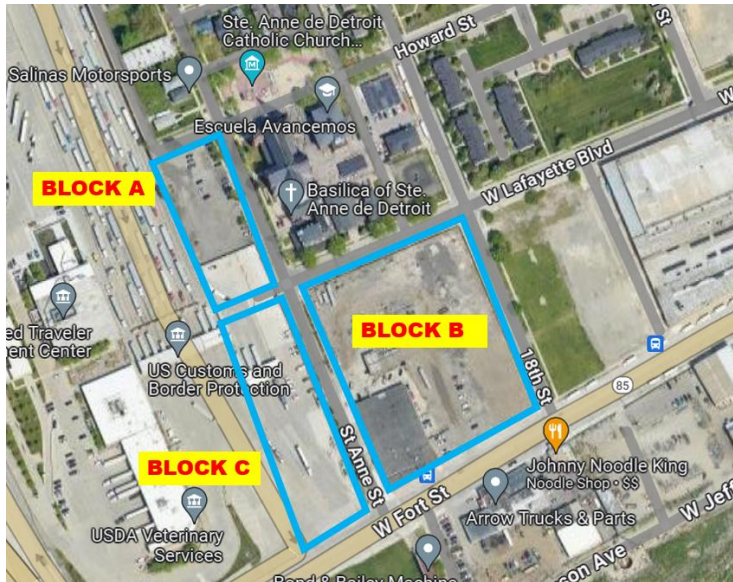
- **Block A:** bounded by Howard St. on the north, St. Anne St. on the east, and W. Lafayette Blvd. on the south. Over the years, the DIBC purchased some of the lots on this block from homeowners and then from St. Anne Church which had developed a gravel parking area.



The DIBC is requesting to rezone this block from R2 to B6, in order expand plaza operations.

- **Block B:** bounded by W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the east, W. Fort St. on the south, and St. Anne St. on the west. The DIBC is requesting to rezone this block from a PD (Planned Development District), M2 (Restricted Industrial District), and M3 to a B6 zoning classification, in order to expand plaza operations.
- **Block C:** bounded by W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, St. Anne St. on the east, and W. Fort St. on the south. The DIBC is requesting to rezone this block from R3 and M3 to B6 zoning classification, in order to reflect existing plaza operations.

### Map of DIBC Requested Rezoning Areas



### CPC STAFF EXPANDED REZONING REQUEST

In addition, CPC staff are requesting to expand the rezoning request as summarized below.

#### *Rezone Land Within Existing Plaza*

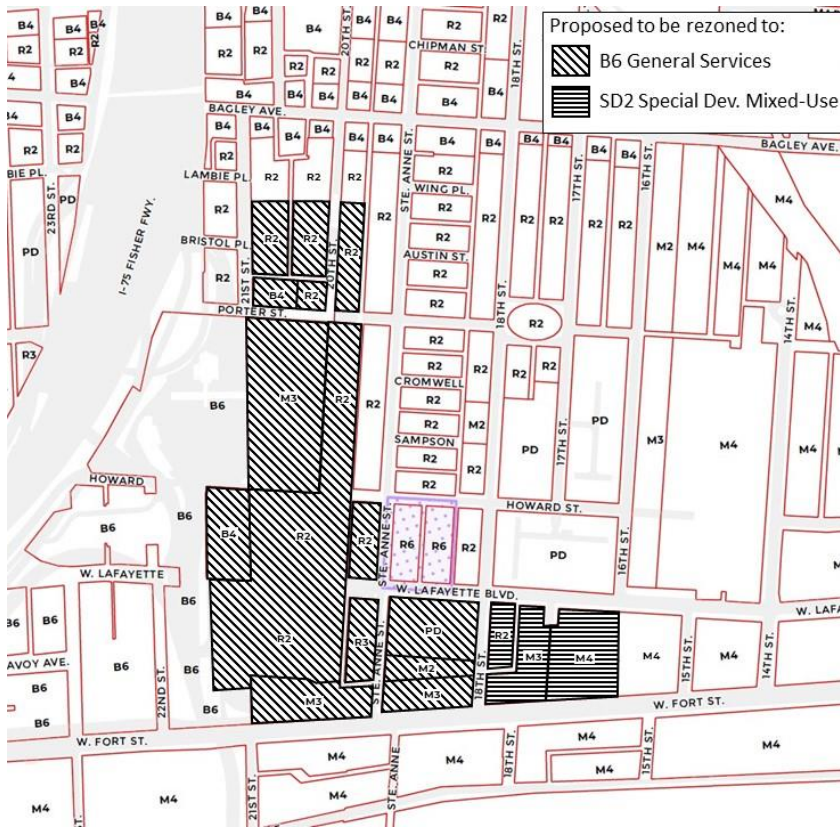
As noted earlier in this report, the existing bridge plaza is primarily zoned B6; however, there exist several blocks with other zoning categories, including R2, R3, B4, and M3. CPC staff recommends all of the parcels within the existing plaza be rezoned B6 to reflect existing bridge operations.

#### *Rezone Newly Created Parcel 1*

As noted earlier, part of the Community Agreement is to create Parcel 1, bounded by W. Lafayette Blvd. on the north, newly created 16<sup>th</sup> St. on the east, W. Fort St. on the south, and 18<sup>th</sup> St. on the west. This parcel is primarily owned by the DIBC with two parcels owned by private taxpayer, Mike Kelly. The Community Agreement states Parcel 1 (the land owned by DIBC), in general, will be transferred to a fiduciary or HRRA and any development will be residential, commercial, or mixed use – no industrial development will be permitted. As a result, CPC staff is recommending Parcel 1 be rezoned from R2, M3, and M4 (Intensive Industrial District) to SD2 Special Development District, Mixed-Use zoning classification.

A summary of the requested rezoning changes is shown on the below map.

## Requested Rezoning Changes



## LAND USE INFORMATION

### ***B6 Zoning Classification***

The Zoning Ordinance presently lists the subject land use as, “tunnel or bridge plaza and terminal, vehicular”. This land use is only allowed in the B6 and PCA (Public Center Adjacent) zoning districts, where it is allowed as by-right.

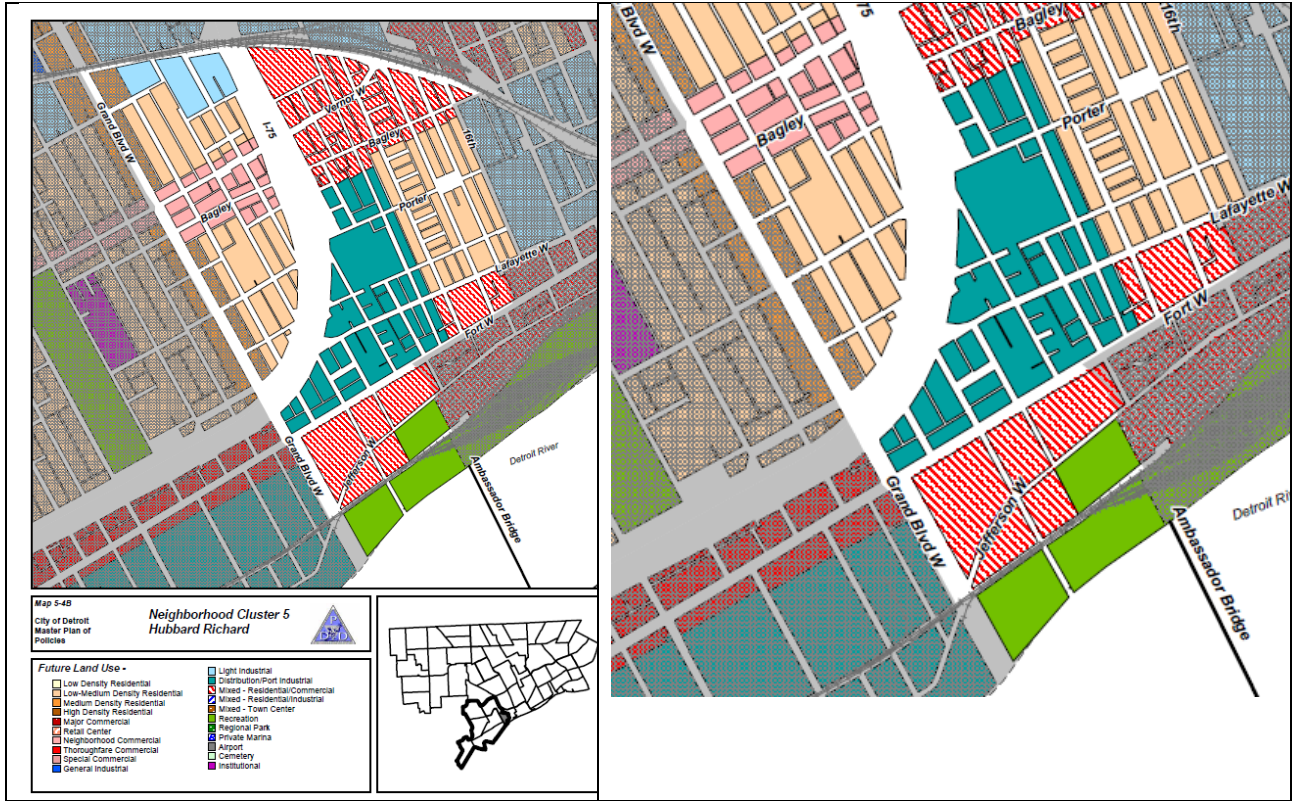
Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance presently defines “bridge plaza and terminal, vehicular” as follows, “That property immediately contiguous to a vehicular bridge where motor vehicles enter and exit the bridge. Certain uses and activities, if oriented and available exclusively to bridge traffic, shall be considered incidental and accessory to the vehicular bridge plaza and terminal: toll booths, inspection and weigh stations, customs and immigration facilities, duty-free retail stores, motor vehicle filling stations, and uses similar to the preceding.”

### ***Master Plan Consistency***

The subject site is primarily located within the Hubbard Richard Area of Neighborhood Cluster 5 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows Distribution/Port Industrial (IDP), Low-Medium Density Residential (RLM), and Mixed Residential/Commercial (MRC) for the subject area. A small portion of the proposed rezoning extends onto the Corktown area of Neighborhood Cluster 4. The Future Land Use map for this area shows Mixed Residential/Commercial (MRC) for the subject area.



# Master Plan – Future Land Use Map



The Planning and Development Department (P&DD) submitted a memo regarding the consistency of this proposal with the City’s Master Plan. P&DD indicates, “The proposed rezoning to the B6 classification is consistent with the Distribution – Port Industrial (IDP) designation in the Master Plan, which comprises the majority of the proposed area”, and “The small portion of the proposed rezoning east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street in the Corktown neighborhood is designated as Mixed – Residential/Commercial (MRC). The proposed rezoning to the SD2 classification is consistent with the MRC designation in the Master Plan”.

***Community Input***

The Mayor's Office led several meetings between the Administration, the DIBC, and HRRA, including Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero's office. These meetings resulted in the signing of the Community Agreement between the Mayor's office, the HRRA, and the DIBC.

Attachments: Public hearing notice  
Application for zoning change

cc: Antoine Bryant, P&DD  
Karen Gage, P&DD  
Greg Moots, P&DD  
Luke Polcyn, Group Executive