

ZONEDETROIT

ZAG Meeting

August Meeting

8/14/19, 3 to 4:45pm

Triumph Church – East Campus, 2760 East Grand Blvd.

Introduction

- Recap of recent outreach events – Youth Event in SW, Council President Brenda Jones' Senior Summit
- Last push on responses for survey, targeting youth & minorities. What about getting surveys filled out at CAYMC? Lots of employees and public, use table/clipboards in lobby.

Discussion/Comments on Zoning Analytic

- Is anything missing?
- Have gotten some feedback from Planning & Development and Office of Sustainability
- Will be taking comments through this Friday, August 16
- Next step is release to public for 60 comment period
- One big decision is what to do with parking requirements – eliminate minimums vs. waivers & reductions. If all parking requirements are eliminated, then they can't be used as an incentive. For example, Tactical Preservation (need incentive to rehab building)
- Is reusing a building really a zoning issue or other policies? The group had different groups working on solutions—finance, city. Zoning can be one tool, abatements and timing are other tools. Storm water regulations can be relaxed as an incentive.
- Parking requirements can be updated to make more progressive. Recreational space in another option for incentives.
- Removing parking requirements could be a game changer. We've had them for 60 years, let's try something different
- Could remove requirements in certain areas and just lower them in others
- Are parking requirements keeping some projects from happening? Don't know
- Anecdotally, many parking lots downtown are related to financing, parking spaces are required in order for condo's to be eligible for mortgages
- Need to make sure that requirements make sense with lot size. For small neighborhood parcels, sometimes a building and parking don't fit on the lot.

- Will there be parking maximums in the new ordinance? The thinking has changed on maximums, Donald Shoup (the parking guru) isn't in favor of them anymore. We need to research more. Should consider location-based maximums in areas where dense, walkable development is the goal
- It was difficult to determine the correct parking minimums and maximums for the Brush Park Form-Based Code. How are the maximums applied? By typology.
- Alleys are an overlooked component, these dense, walkable developments depend on them, but the developers can't afford to build them and the city isn't either. Alleys are vital and need to be figured out or none of the regulations work (need alley access to eliminate curb cuts, for example)
- Alleys also have infrastructure such as water & sewer. The city bills adjacent property owners for alley repairs (Motown Museum is a recent example). GSD isn't prioritizing alley maintenance. All walkable development depends on alleys
- What about a fee-in-lieu structure for alley maintenance? Could also be used for parking, parks. Other communities have used fee-in-lieu. Privatizing the alleys isn't a good idea because it allows other property owners to be held hostage
- The Office of Sustainability seems interested in the alley issue, maybe they can get it on the Mayor's radar
- For a fee-in-lieu program, fees would need to start low. Can be a barrier to development, especially for small developers. People will be suspicious about where the money is going. The city doesn't currently have the infrastructure to administer a fee-in-lieu program (for alleys, parking, etc)
- Start incrementally to get the habit going. Recreational space in a small development may not be very big, a fee to improve a nearby park may be a better use of the money so the building site can be maximized.
- At a certain point, the city make the decision to stop maintaining alleys. A long term strategy could build in a budget for alley maintenance. Residents took over alleys at their own risk—if utility maintenance is required, fences/landscaping/structures get removed.
- Need to look at average parcel and see if it works without an alley, does the width permit a driveway? The Ferndale Master Plan is a good example
- Is the city physically ready for new plan? What are the best practices? A consultant would happily manage fee-in-lieu money for a percentage.
- GSD is doing a pilot alley-lighting project, clearing brush to install lights, could coordinate efforts
- Auto-related use changes are on faster track than this project due to the moratorium that ends in April 2020. Does the ZAG have feedback? Need to decide on small changes or sweeping changes. The Law Dept proposes to remove some operational requirements from Zoning and put them in Licensing to assist in enforcement. Keeping up-to-code in order to get annual license is a good incentive.
- Are uses being redefined? Not really
- Need distinction between auto-related (gas stations, repair, junkyard) vs. auto-oriented (drive-thru, strip mall)

- Some of the uses can be good for neighborhood and are needed, seems like a design solution, doesn't have to look bad
- Enforcement is key. We need gas stations and oil changes but they look bad and there are too many. Standards could prevent them from looking like junkyards.
- Historically, many B4 corridors have been downzoned to B2 to get rid of auto uses. We can keep doing that, but is it a good solution? The fast food industry has pushed back on drive thru prohibition
- Auto-related and Auto-oriented aren't the same and shouldn't be conflated
- Is the B4 District overused? Should more walkable areas be promoted? Some areas are saturated with auto uses (related & oriented)
- One option is to only allow new auto uses in industrial districts. That would create lots of non-conforming uses. Ordinances are written to reflect a lack of faith in enforcement. Given the poor state of enforcement, will it help to create standards? The community doesn't trust that they will be enforced. If the use isn't allowed, that is easy to enforce.
- No area of the city is lacking in auto-related uses. They could be relegated to a new district or just industrial districts.
- Can the definitions be tightened to parse out things that raise the ire of the community? There seems to be less disapproval of drive-thru uses (ex: proposed Popeye's on Livernois/McGraw years ago that was ultimately denied).
- The moratorium ends in April, this project won't be complete. The moratorium could be extended or the Law Dept could do some easy fixes and leave the difficult parts for the ordinance update
- Need to differentiate between auto-related and auto-oriented, tweak the wording
- Frustrating to make decisions based on enforcement, won't produce good regulations
- The new sign ordinance will start conversation about enforcement
- Page 68 – Rezone excess industrial land. This may be where auto-related uses go, but it specifies not to include them (could be nuisance to nearby residential)
- The recommendations in the report need to be phased, many of them won't be in this phase (rezonings)
- Page 33 – Create new residential district with smaller lot sizes. Think about allowing smaller lots in existing districts. Also, allow ADU's in R1 if they fit on lot.
- Affordable housing recommendations – zoning isn't enough, need financial incentives too, zoning is only a piece of the puzzle
- Brochure needs to include things that aren't included in this project (marihuana)
- Open space group – recommendations haven't changed, need open space district, lots of conditional uses are prohibitive for people, also don't make sense in largely vacant areas.

- What about overlays? TMSO could use some improvements
- Should spacing requirements be reduced/eliminated? Spacing requirements can push out businesses that are needed

Conclusion

- Next step – Code Studio will incorporate comments before the document is released to the public
- Two large public meetings are planned for late Sept, early Oct – need locations, especially places where survey responses were low
- No ZAG meeting planned in September, will be doing bigger public meetings

DRAFT