

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For the Planning Commission Meeting of May 19, 2020**

**SUBJECT: 2800 Jackson Avenue Hotels  
(2800 Jackson Avenue)  
Rezoning – Project no. Z19-004  
Site Plan for City Council Approval – Project No. SP19-007**

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the 2800 Jackson Avenue Hotels Development rezoning from R5 to C3 (Fringe Commercial).

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the 2800 Jackson Avenue Hotels Development Site Plan and Development Agreement.

**SUMMARY:**

Two related applications have been submitted for approval for this site which is currently vacant. First, a petition to rezone this 4.5-acre site from R5 (Hotel District) to C3 (Fringe Commercial). Second, a proposed site plan to construct two new hotels, *Aloft* a four-story, 69,442-square foot, 128-room hotel; and *Home 2*, a four-story, 63,295-square foot, 107-room hotel.

**LOCATION:**

The site is located on the north side of Jackson Avenue, south of I-94 at the entrance ramp to Eastbound I-94.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the **rezoning** petition be **approved** because the proposed district is compatible with the existing and proposed uses and the Master Plan future land use recommendation, and is compatible with the surrounding districts.

Staff recommends that the **site plan** be **approved** because the contemplated development complies with all applicable state, local and federal laws, ordinances, standards and regulations; the development limits the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land; and the development does not cause a public or private nuisance and does not have a detrimental effect on the public health, safety or welfare.

### **REZONING PETITION:**

**Description** – The site is currently zoned R5 (Hotel District), which would permit a maximum of 216 rooms and maximum height of 50 feet. The petitioner has chosen to re-zone the site to C3 (Fringe Commercial) which allows hotels by right with a maximum of 55 feet (4 stories) and a total of 235 hotel rooms. The existing R5 zoning permits only hotel and similar uses with accessory incidental uses. The proposed C3 allows all types of commercial uses, office and hotels. The applicant requests that the 4.5-acre R5 parcel be rezoned to C3.

**Master Plan Recommendation** – The [City Master Plan](#) includes 8 elements, adopted individually between 2009 and 2017, and together by resolution in 2015. Together, the City Master Plan elements seek to guide the City towards sustainability, conservation, and increasing livability, affordability, transportation choices, and dense, mixed uses on vibrant, active, friendly streets. The Land Use Element recommends “commercial” for this site.

**Standards for Approval** – Changes to the text or map of the Unified Development Code (Chapter 55 of the Ann Arbor City Code) may be made pursuant to Section 5.29.9. To assist the Planning Commission and City Council with their decision, applicant submitted a petition with justifications in support of the request. The petition, available [here](#) and attached, addresses:

1. The extent to which the rezoning is necessary.
2. How the rezoning will affect the public welfare and property rights of persons located in the vicinity.
3. How the rezoning will be advantageous to the City.
4. How this particular location will meet the convenience and service requirements of potential users and occupants.
5. Any changed or changing conditions in any particular area, or in the City generally, which may have bearing on the request.
6. Other circumstances and factors which further justify the request.

**Staff Comments** – The C3 district is the most appropriate current zoning designation as it allows all types of commercial uses including hotels and restaurants. All recent hotels in the City have been approved under a C3 or Office zoning district. It is also found adjacent to this site. The R5 district has lower height limit and regulates density of hotels by calculating rooms per 900 sq ft of lot area.

In staff's opinion, it does not make sense for the projects to be developed under the R5 district when the C3 district suits the needs of the applicant, land owner, and community, and provides more flexibility for future uses. The public sidewalks installed as a result of this project, result in improved pedestrian circulation along the Jackson Avenue corridor.

### **SITE PLAN APPLICATION:**

**Description** – The site formerly housed the *Michigan Inn* hotel, and is currently vacant. The site currently has one curb cut to Jackson Avenue, but no additional paving remains on the site. The petitioner is proposing to construct two new hotels, *Aloft* a four-story, 69,442-square foot, 128-room hotel and *Home 2*, a four-story, 63,295-square foot, 107 room hotel. The site plan proposes a 237 space parking lot accessed via two curb cuts, eight Class A bicycle spaces (four for each building) and 4 Class C (two for each building). There will be a total of four EV charging stations provided on the site, two near the entrance to each hotel. Storm water treatment for the site will consist of rain gardens and underground storage with infiltration.

A development standards review is provided below. Additional descriptions and notable details of the site plan include:

- **Setbacks** – The C3 district requires a minimum front setback of 10 feet and a maximum front setback of 25 feet. For new buildings, the minimum and maximum front setback standard applies to at least one of the hotels. the proposed hotel. One hotel(*Home2*) is set back 10 feet from the front property line along Jackson Avenue, the other hotel(*Aloft*) is set closer to the rear of the site.
- **Highway Frontage** – This site plan application is the among the first to be considered since Ordinance ORD-19-26 was approved on September 12, 2019 which changed the definition of front lot line. The lot lines (west and north) of the subject site adjacent to I-94 are no longer considered front lot lines. By definition they are now a rear and side lot line.
- **Height** – The C3 district requires a maximum height of 4 stories and 55 feet. The *Home2* Hotel is 4 stories and 54 feet in height. The *Aloft* Hotel is 4 stories and 55 feet in height.
- **Landmark Trees** – There are no landmark trees located on the site. Two street trees will be removed. They will be replaced with four new street trees along the ROW.
- **Sidewalks** – Currently no sidewalk exists fronting this site. There is a sidewalk that ends immediately adjacent to the east property line. The petitioner is required to construct sidewalk along the parcel frontage, however the petitioner has also agreed to pay for almost 150 feet of additional sidewalk across the

neighboring parcel to the west. This would help to close a significant sidewalk gap in this area. This improvement will be coordinated with the MDOT reconstruction of the entrance ramp to EB I-94. The reconstruction is planned for summer 2020.

**Development Standards Review** – Staff has reviewed the site plan for compliance with all applicable development standards of the C3 district provided in Chapter 55 [Unified Development Code](#). A summary of staff findings is provided in the chart below.

	EXISTING	PROPOSED	REQUIRED/ PERMITTED
Zoning	R5	C3	C3
Lot Area	4.5 ac. (194,931 sq. ft.)	4.5 acres (194,931 sq. ft.)	6,000 sq. ft. MIN
FAR%	0%	68% (132,737 sq. ft.) TOTAL	200% MAX (393,294 sq. ft. MAX)
Setbacks	Front	0 ft.	10 ft. (Jackson Ave)
	Side (W)	0 ft.	15 ft. (I-94 ramp) Aloft Hotel
	Side (E)	0 ft.	45 ft. Home 2 Hotel
	Rear	0 ft.	35 ft. (I-94) Aloft Hotel
Height	N/A	Aloft Hotel 4 stories, 55 ft. Home 2 Hotel 4 stories, 54 ft.	4 stories, 55 ft. MAX
Vehicle Parking	0 spaces	237 spaces TOTAL	235 spaces MIN
Bicycle Parking	None	8 spaces Class A (4 per hotel) 4 spaces Class C (2 per hotel)	8 spaces Class A MIN (4 per hotel) 4 spaces Class C MIN (2 per hotel)

**Staff Comments** –The original site plan had both hotels located near I-94, away from the Jackson Avenue frontage. Planning Staff requested the architects reorganize building locations, bringing one of the hotels to the front of the site near Jackson Avenue. After

reconfiguration of the site, staff worked with the architects to improve the façades of the buildings, with a focus on the façades directly visible from Jackson Avenue.

The proposed rezoning and site plan substantially meets the criteria for approval. The C3 Zoning is appropriate for the surrounding area, land uses, and is consistent with the Master Plan designation. The site has been vacant since 2009, the new hotels and site improvements will upgrade the Jackson Avenue corridor and the proposed sidewalks help to further enhance this corridor.

Prepared by Matt Kowalski  
Reviewed by Brett Lenart  
/mg  
5/5/20

Attachments: Zoning Map  
Aerial Photo  
DRAFT Development Agreement

Links: [Site Plan Part 1](#)  
[Site Plan Part 2](#)  
[Aloft Architectural Plans](#)  
[Home 2 Architectural Plans](#)

c: Owner and Applicant: Ann Arbor Best Hospitality (Chris Abbo)  
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Systems Planning  
Project Nos. Z19-004, SP19-007