

# City of Detroit

## CITY COUNCIL

### **GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO**

COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6

February 22, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave., #208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Detroit City Council Member for District 6, I ask that you please accept this letter of support for the downzoning of parcels currently zoned “M4 Intensive Industrial” in the Core City neighborhood to “SD2 Special Development District – Mixed-Use”.

The nonprofit Core City Neighborhoods is a community-based development organization, located just passed the northwest border of Corktown and Woodbridge. The work that Core City Neighborhoods does aligns with my policy priorities, including environmental justice and equitable development.

I have fought against bad actors in our communities for years and continue to do so as the elected official for Core City. To that end, I strive to make sure our communities are protected from environmental injustice and ensure zoning centers the health of our neighborhoods. We need clear separation between residential and industrial zoning to help achieve that.

Once again, I fully support Core City Neighborhoods’ request to downzone parcels in Core City currently zoned “M4 Intensive Industrial” to “SD2 Special Development District – Mixed Use.”

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 313-224-2450 or [councilmembregabriela@detroitmi.gov](mailto:councilmembregabriela@detroitmi.gov).

Sincerely,



Gabriela Santiago-Romero  
Detroit City Council, District 6

FROM THE DESK OF COLIN LAITNER

February 23rd, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning Proposal for Core City

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Colin Laitner and I am the managing member of 4444 Lawton LLC, the owner of property located at the addresses of 2728 Buchanan and 440 Lawton in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit Michigan. My property is made up of a small lot and a large industrial building in which I have significant investment and plan to multiply that investment in the coming years.

According to your Downzoning Proposal, my property will be downzoned from M4 Intensive Industrial to SD2 Mixed Use. In general, I very much agree with your proposal, and my intended redevelopment plans nearly identically match your proposed uses. HOWEVER, there are certain limitations set forth to that downzoning that I oppose as they are unworkable or undesirable for that zoning change for nearly any developer as well as the residents thereof.

My limited objections are as follows:

- 1) The required setbacks for SD2 (40 feet from R1/R2/R3)) are unworkable since any existing buildings that happen to be adjacent to residential zones will not be able to redevelop existing buildings. Such setbacks are a good thing to protect residential residents, but any existing envelope or building should be grandfathered such that tearing down the building to move it 5-40 feet is not required. I expect the enforcement of such setbacks on existing envelopes stemming from a downzoning would be met with not only developer opposition.
- 2) The limitation of SD2 that excludes first floor residential and requiring commercial “Active ground-floor use” requirement is undesirable for developers and residents alike. Not only does it lower ability to deliver affordable units, but it also forces developers to overbuild generally undesirable product. You’re no doubt well aware of very desirable areas in Detroit (and elsewhere) where first floor commercial in mixed use properties remain vacant for years. A good example are the many of the newer mixed use buildings in and around Corktown off Michigan Ave, particularly Elizabeth and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets in Detroit. You’ll note that these lease spaces are not particularly

desirable commercial spaces and the related vacancies that serve no one in the community.

In general, Core City is changing and your proposal is not only well intentioned, but well executed. However, I strongly urge you to amend the proposal to address my two concerns herein.

I joined the residents of this important and growing community to oppose Murray Wikol's Concrete Crushing Conditional Use permit at 4445 Lawton Street and like the residents, I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that's fully compatible with the neighborhood but that will not unreasonably stifle positive development by limiting creativity and flexibility and I look forward to working with you and the City of Detroit for years to come.

Thank you,

Colin Laitner

Managing Member for 4444 Lawton LLC and Metis Capital LLC

512-732-2650; Colin@deeterinv.com;

February 23rd, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Alex Lauer, owner of 4277 18th St. am in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”. I also am the broker/owner of Clyde Realty and actively deal with many development projects and businesses in Core City.

I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with our neighborhood that will safeguard us from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become our neighbors in our beautiful part of Detroit.

Thank you,

Alex Lauer

Clyde Realty

(313) 974-1830

[alexclauer@gmail.com](mailto:alexclauer@gmail.com)

February 22, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern:

This letter is in support of the Core City neighborhood's request to downzone the portion of the neighborhood that is currently zoned as M4 – Intensive Industrial.

Artspace and the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department executed a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the retired Fire Department Training School, located at the corner of W. Warren and Lawton (2775 W. Warren Ave) in September of 2023. The project site is currently within the M4 zoning subject to the residential community's request for permanent rezoning.

Artspace is planning to rehabilitate the existing structure on the site and add a new structure to create approximately 53 affordable artist live/work spaces and commercial spaces on the ground floor. This "residential with permitted first-floor commercial" is permitted conditionally in the M4 zone subject to site plan review and Special Land Use Hearing. Artspace completed these steps and has received an approval from the Building, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department of conditional use.

Naturally, Artspace supports Core City neighborhood's downzoning request. We hope that the project proceeds to be an asset to the neighborhood and its livability. Please contact me at 612-889-3905 or [Greg.handberg@artspace.org](mailto:Greg.handberg@artspace.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Greg Handberg  
Senior VP, Properties  
Artspace Projects, Inc.

March 7, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Bruno Vanielegem, owner of 5001 W Grand River and a resident in the neighborhood, am in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with our neighborhood that will safeguard us from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become our neighbors in our beautiful part of Detroit.

As an environmentally focused business, that relies on individuals and other businesses, it’s so important to us that the city fosters a vision and plan that encourages growth more in the vein of SD2.

Thank you,

Bruno Vanielegem  
[brunovz@gmail.com](mailto:brunovz@gmail.com)

February 23rd, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226


Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Chelsea Hyduk & David Axelson, owners of 4656 17th Street, are in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with our neighborhood that will safeguard us from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become our neighbors in our beautiful part of Detroit.

Thank you,



Chelsea Hyduk

[chelseahyduk@gmail.com](mailto:chelseahyduk@gmail.com)



David Axelson

[djaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:djaxelson@gmail.com)

**SHRI THANEDAR**  
13<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND  
SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
MARITIME SECURITY *RANKING MEMBER*

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION,  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE  
1039 LONGWORTH HOB  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
PHONE: (202) 225-5802

MI DISTRICT OFFICE  
400 MONROE STREET, SUITE 420  
DETROIT, MI 48226  
PHONE: (313) 880-2400

February 23, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

As Representative of Michigan's 13<sup>th</sup> District, which includes Core City, I am in favor of downzoning the "M4 Intensive Industrial" lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to "SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use".

I want to make sure there will be no toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations of Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that's fully compatible with the Core City neighborhood that will safeguard them from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become neighbors in their beautiful part of Detroit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shri Thanedar".

Shri Thanedar, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress, Michigan's 13<sup>th</sup> District





February 21, 2024

City of Detroit  
City Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave, Suite 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

Dear City Planning Commission:

Woodbridge Neighborhood Development is the nonprofit community development organization serving the Woodbridge community, which is directly east of the Core City neighborhood. Our organization is generally opposed to new intensive industrial activities in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.

We are writing to express our support for the proposed rezoning/downzoning in the Core City neighborhood which would change the designation of lots currently zoned M4 (Intensive Industrial) to SD2 (Special Development District—Mixed-Use).

It does not make sense to intensify industrial uses near an area currently experiencing new housing and commercial development. We want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in and near Core City. Instead, we believe Core City deserves zoning compatible with the neighborhood that will safeguard the community from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become neighbors in their beautiful part of Detroit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Angie Gaabo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Angie Gaabo  
Executive Director

## Kardia Kaiomenē



February 22, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I am the executive director of a non-profit called Kardia Kaiomene and I work out of my home on the edge of the Core City neighborhood. I am in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District – Mixed-Use”.

I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with our neighborhood that will safeguard us from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become our neighbors in our beautiful part of Detroit.

Sincerely,  
Tommy Airey  
Kardia Kaiomene, Executive Director  
1786 W. Willis, #4  
Detroit, MI 48208  
949/842/9503

*Kardia Kaiomenē is a community-supported non-profit, partnering with friends, families and faith communities to equip and accompany all those whose hearts burn for intimacy, community and justice.*



February 27th, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Vanessa Serna, a representative from Core City Strong, the neighborhood block club directly adjacent to the impacted area, am in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

We want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, we want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with the neighborhood that will safeguard the community from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become neighbors in their beautiful part of Detroit.

Thank you,

Vanessa Serna

(313) 451-6593



February 23rd, 2024

To: City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I am the Executive Director of Detroit Disability Power. We are a social justice organization with nearly 300 member and our office is located in Core City. I am in favor of downzoning the "M4 Intensive Industrial" lots in the Core City neighborhood to "SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use."

We want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals next to residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, we want to see zoning that's fully compatible with the neighborhood, that will safeguard the community from potential future bad actors, and that will attract more people to become neighbors in this beautiful part of Detroit.

As a disability justice organization with our home base in Core City, we ally ourselves with residents and are committed to environmental and racial justice. Downzoning will help protect residents' health, as well as provide additional opportunity for vibrant community building.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dessa".

Dessa Cosma  
4731 Grand River Ave, Suite 307  
Detroit, MI 48208  
[Dessa@DetroitDisabilityPower.org](mailto:Dessa@DetroitDisabilityPower.org)  
[www.DetroitDisabilityPower.org](http://www.DetroitDisabilityPower.org)

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February 23, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To Whom It May Concern,

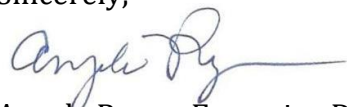
As the representative of Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC) I would like to express our full support for the recommended downzoning of the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

DHDC is a nonprofit community-based organization located in and serving Southwest Detroit, which is immediately adjacent to the Core City neighborhood. Our mission is to enact meaningful change by providing life-changing opportunities, serving over 10,000 youth and adults annually.

DHDC has worked in collaboration with other Detroit organizations and the University of Michigan for over 25 years to address the social determinants of health in Detroit, including air quality, childhood asthma and cardiovascular disease. We have decades of research documenting the health impacts of these types of facilities which are dangerous sources of toxins.

We want to ensure that the city does not allow any new developments that can worsen air quality and the health of the people who live and work there. It is imperative that zoning in the area be fully compatible with the neighborhood and will safeguard the well-being and future growth of the local community.

Sincerely,



Angela Reyes, Executive Director & Founder  
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation



Detroit Justice Center  
4731 Grand River Ave  
Detroit, Michigan 48208  
(313) 736-5957

March 13, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

**Re: Downzoning in Core City**

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Nancy A. Parker, Executive Director of the Detroit Justice Center and on behalf of the Detroit Justice Center, declare that we are in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use.”

We believe this action is necessary in order to ensure that there will be no new toxic project proposals adjacent to the residents, businesses, and community organizations of Core City. Instead, we want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with the neighborhood and one that safeguards the community from potential future bad actors. Our zoning should be one that attracts more people to become neighbors in our beautiful section of Detroit.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Parker  
Executive Director  
Detroit Justice Center  
4731 Grand River Ave  
Detroit, Michigan 48208  
(313) 736-5957

February 23rd, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Ash Davis, homeowner in Core City at 3987 Lawton St, am in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

In light of the recent controversies surrounding project proposals in Core City, it's clear that we must prioritize the wellbeing of our residents, businesses, and community organizations. There should be no room for any new toxic initiatives that could jeopardize our neighborhood's safety and health.

It is essential to establish zoning regulations that align with our community's needs and characteristics. Such measures would not only protect us from future harmful ventures but also make our area more appealing to potential residents.

Our neighborhood is a beautiful part of Detroit, and it deserves to be treated as such. Let's ensure that Core City remains a safe, welcoming, and thriving community for everyone.

Thank you,  
Ash Davis  
3987 Lawton, Detroit  
248 921 2145



4731 Grand River Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48208

Tuesday March 12, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

We are a collective of non-profit organizations located in the Core City neighborhood: Allied Media Projects, Detroit Justice Center, Detroit Community Technology Project, Detroit Disability Power, Detroit Narrative Agency. We share a home called the LOVE Building at 4731 Grand River Ave.

We are strongly in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”. We believe this change will benefit the constituents we serve and whose interests we seek to advance.

We want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, we want to see zoning that’s fully compatible with the neighborhood that will safeguard the community from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become neighbors in their beautiful part of Detroit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kwaku Osei".

Kwaku Osei, LOVE Building Executive Director





February 23rd, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, I am expressing my strong support for downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”.

Zoning ordinances are the best means of protecting residents from excessive exposure to environmental risk and preventing environmental injustice. In the past zoning ordinances often allowed highly toxic and harmful industrial uses to be placed directly adjacent or nearby residential uses. By downzoning, the City of Detroit can create a future for its residents where they do not have to be concerned about whether their neighborhood is safe from industrial polluters.

Thank you,

*/s/Nicholas Leonard*

Nicholas Leonard  
Executive Director  
Great Lakes Environmental Law Center  
313-782-3372 | [nicholas.leonard@glelc.org](mailto:nicholas.leonard@glelc.org)



February 23, 2024

City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice (DWEJ) was the first environmental justice organization established in Michigan. Its purpose then and now is to amplify the voice of community members to protect and maintain their physical, mental, spiritual and economic health. Too often in Detroit communities are in the shadow of industry and it negatively impacts health. Downzoning, especially in established residential areas, can support all aspects of health and help communities thrive.

Detroiters Working For Environmental Justice (DWEJ) is in favor of downzoning the “M4 Intensive Industrial” lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to “SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use”. We want to make sure that there are no new toxic projects proposed near residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. We want to see zoning that is responsive to community needs and zoning that will safeguard the community from potential future bad actors.

Sincerely,

Lapriisha Berry Daniels, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director  
Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice

4750 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201 | Phone (313) 833-3935

February 23rd, 2024

To:  
City of Detroit Planning Commission  
2 Woodward Ave # 208  
Detroit, MI  
48226

Re: Downzoning in Core City

To whom it may concern,

I, Andrew Chae, owner of Fisheye Farms and a resident in the neighborhood am in favor of downzoning the "M4 Intensive Industrial" lots in the Core City neighborhood of Detroit to "SD2 Special Development District—Mixed-Use".

I want to make sure there will be no new toxic project proposals beside the residents, businesses, and community organizations in Core City. Instead, I want to see zoning that's fully compatible with our neighborhood that will safeguard us from potential future bad actors and attract more people to become our neighbors in our beautiful part of Detroit.

Thank you,

Andrew Chae

Fisheye Farms

[fishyefarms@gmail.com](mailto:fishyefarms@gmail.com)