

Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2023

10:45 A.M. – PUBLIC HEARING

(Tate)

RE: Resolution to Rename 16th Street to Vernor Highway at Roosevelt Park. *(16th Street, within the Corktown neighborhood, is located between West Vernor Highway and Michigan Avenue. The street is adjacent to Roosevelt Park. The park was originally a single parcel and then was split when the use of automobiles became prominent in Detroit. The section of 16th St. to be renamed is between West Vernor Highway and Michigan Avenue and is roughly 680 feet in length. 16th Street serves 10 parcels, all with the same owner. Joseph Mifsud, the proprietor of Valletta LLC, is the property owner of all to parcels abutting this section of 16th St.)*

Attending:

(Planning and Development Department, City Planning Commission/Legislative Policy Division)

RESOLUTION TO RENAME 16TH STREET TO VERNOR HIGHWAY AT ROOSEVELT PARK

WHEREAS, With the ongoing upgrades to Michigan Central Station, Roosevelt Park will become a catalytic public space in the neighborhood. Residents have expressed the desire for Roosevelt Park to become a diverse, multipurpose park that can bring together various community groups and act as a valuable neighborhood destination. The Greater Corktown neighborhood framework plan recommended several initiatives to enhance public open spaces, create safer streets and improve pedestrian mobility, and generate equitable housing options. One of the primary recommendations of the Greater Corktown neighborhood is to "unify" Roosevelt Park by reconnecting the parcels and creating a safer and more accessible public park.

WHEREAS, The park was originally a single parcel and then was split when the use of automobiles became prominent in Detroit. The portion of West Vernor Highway that runs through Roosevelt Park will be removed to formally unify the park and create more public park space. The portion of 16th Street, within the Corktown neighborhood, is located between West Vernor Highway to the south and Michigan Avenue to the north. This stretch of 16th street is adjacent to Roosevelt Park and is proposed to be renamed West Vernor Highway to allow that stretch of street up to Michigan Ave to continue as West Vernor Highway.

WHEREAS, The Detroit City Code sets forth the procedure for renaming streets under Chapter 43 Streets Sidewalks and Public Places, Article III, Opening, Closing, Extending, Widening, Vacating, Naming, Renaming of Streets, and Assigning Secondary Names to Streets, Division 2 Renaming Streets. More particularly, Section 43-3-21(c) of the City Code provides: No action shall be taken by the City Council until a complete investigation and report thereon shall have been made by the Planning and Development Department.

WHEREAS, Section 43-3-23 of the City Code outlines the investigative steps to be conducted by the Planning and Development Department before bringing the petition to City Council. Staff concludes that they have completed all the necessary investigative steps outlined in Section 43-3-23 and has submitted a sketch of the street, the written report and its recommendation for City Council's consideration.

WHEREAS, The Planning and Development Department has provided information addressing the factors to be considered for renaming a street outlined in Section. 43-3-24 of the City Code

Given this initiative is City-led, DPW will cover the costs associated with creating the new street signs. **THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council has received from the Planning and Development Department the following required material: a sketch of the street, the written report and recommendation along with a review of the factors to be considered for renaming a street, consistent with the City Code; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, The requisite discussion and public hearing on the renaming of that portion of 16th street to West Vernor Highway as set forth in this resolution has been held pursuant to the City Code, the Detroit City Council hereby grants the renaming of the above referenced portion of 16th street between West Vernor Highway to the south and Michigan Ave to the north as a continuation of West Vernor Highway.

STAFF REPORT: Renaming 16th street to Vernor Highway

LOCATION: Between Michigan Avenue and Vernor Highway



BACKGROUND

16th Street, within the Corktown neighborhood, is located between West Vernor Highway and Michigan Avenue. The street is adjacent to Roosevelt Park. The park was originally a single parcel and then was split when the use of automobiles became prominent in Detroit. The section of 16th St. to be renamed is between West Vernor Highway and Michigan Avenue and is roughly 680 feet in length. 16th Street serves 10 parcels, all with the same owner. Joseph Mifsud, the proprietor of Valletta LLC, is the property owner of all to parcels abutting this section of 16th St.

With the ongoing upgrades to Michigan Central Station, Roosevelt Park will become a catalytic public space in the neighborhood. Residents have expressed the desire for Roosevelt Park to become a diverse, multipurpose park that can bring together various community groups and act as a valuable neighborhood destination. The Greater Corktown neighborhood framework plan recommended several initiatives to improve public open spaces, safer streets and pedestrian mobility, and equitable housing options. One of the primary recommendations is to "unify" Roosevelt Park by reconnecting the parcels and creating a safer and more accessible public park. This recommendation was met with significant public support and implementation of this effort is underway.

REQUEST

The Planning & Development Department (PDD) formally requests the Detroit City Council to approve renaming a portion of 16th street into "Vernor Highway." As noted above, the request originates from recommendations developed through the community-led Corktown neighborhood

framework process. The portion of Vernor Highway that runs through Roosevelt Park will be removed to formally unify the park and create more public park space. Construction work on the park has begun and is slated to be completed in late 2022 or early 2023 (See Exhibit 1). Under approval of this request, the existing 16th St, between Michigan Avenue and West Vernor Highway, would be renamed West Vernor Highway (See Exhibit 2). This ensures the importance of West Vernor Highway remains and preserves the intersection of Michigan Avenue and West Vernor Highway.

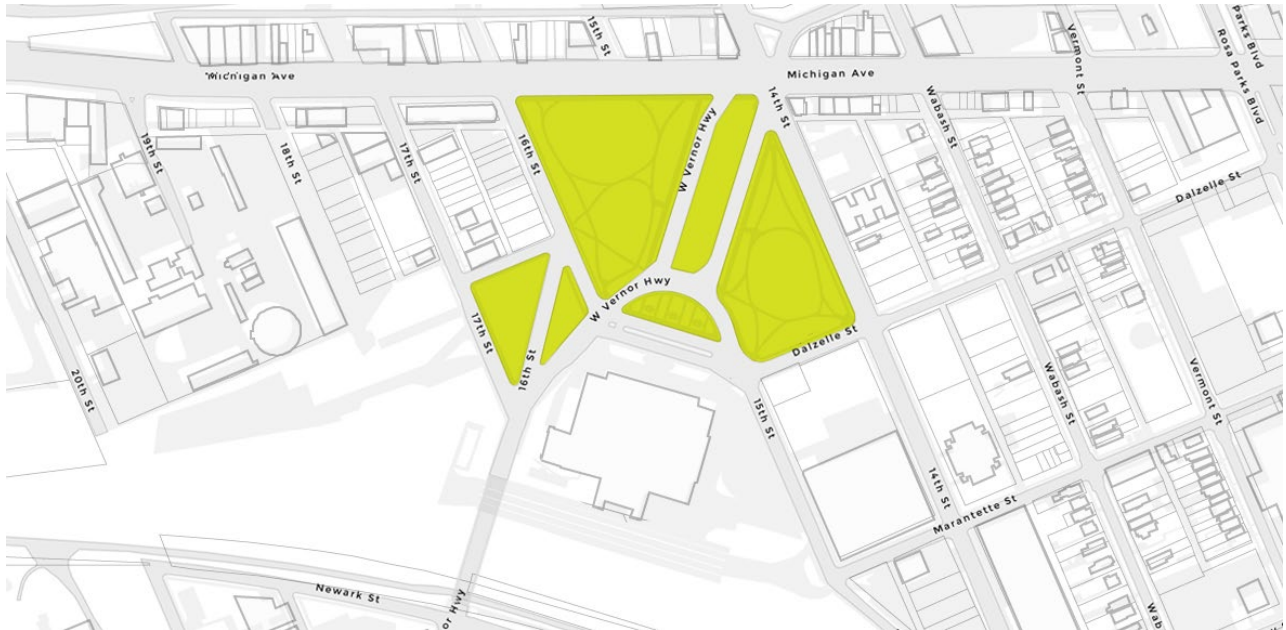


Exhibit 1: Existing site conditions



Exhibit 2: Boundaries of proposed street renaming

PURSUANT TO SEC. 43-3-21(b) OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE

A petition to rename a street or alley in the City shall be presented to the City Council by not less than two-thirds of all persons owning property abutting the street to be renamed as listed on the current real property assessment rolls of the City who shall signify, in writing, their consent to

granting such petition (appendix a).

DUTIES OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Section. 43-3-23 of the Municipal Code outlines the investigative steps to be conducted by the Planning and Development Department before bringing the petition to City Council (appendix b). Staff concludes that they have completed all the necessary steps outlined in Section 43-3-23.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR RENAMING A STREET

Section. 43-3-24 of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the factors to be considered for renaming a street (appendix c).

The City Council shall take no action until the Planning and Development Department has completed the investigation and report.

PDD Staff's comments on the ten questions are listed below:

1. Duplication and close similarity shall be avoided

The proposed name is not a duplication of a pre-existing road. However, it is proposed as a continuation of the existing West Vernor Highway.

2. Continuity of major street names shall be adhered to in order to make movement about the City easier and less confusing;

As mentioned above, the proposed name is a continuation of the name of West Vernor Highway. Therefore, it will make movement about the City easier and less confusing.

3. A name of City-wide, state-wide, or national significance is preferred for any street with a Detroit Master Plan of Policies thoroughfare designation or any street that is located within the Central Business District or within a major park

(West) Vernor Highway is a significant road in the city of Detroit. Therefore, the proposed renaming of 16th Street to West Vernor Highway is consistent with the ordinance's intent.

4. Local streets may be considered for renaming after persons or organizations well known and respected in the local area;

(West) Vernor Highway is named after James Vernor because of his contributions to the city of Detroit. During his years on the city council, Vernor tackled many issues; the most important was that of the city sewer system.

5. Where a person's name is petitioned to be used for renaming a street, the person shall have been deceased for a period of two years or more, provided, that the City Council may consider a petition for renaming a street after a living person to focus attention on contributions or services performed by the individual being honored where society has had time to reflect on such individual's deeds;

James Vernor was born on April 11, 1843, in Albany, New York. He died on October 29, 1927, at Grosse Ile Township, Michigan, at the age of 84. He was very active in Detroit politics and served the City of Detroit.

6. Where an organization or institutional name is petitioned to be used for renaming a street, the name shall have been in existence for five years or more and be recognized and held in respect in the community and in the City;

This criterion is not applicable for this proposed street renaming.

7. Consideration shall be given both to the origin of the current street name and to its historic significance, if any, to the City as a whole;

Vernor Highway has significant local and regional importance and connects to Michigan Avenue. The unification of Roosevelt Park severs the intersection of west Vernor Highway and Michigan Avenue. However, renaming 16th Street to Vernor Highway re-establishes that connection.

8. The appropriateness of a proposed street name as related to history and geographical location;

The proposed name is based on a pre-existing street with historical significance in the City of Detroit. 16th Street continues west of Vernor Highway and establishes a strong connection to Michigan Avenue. Therefore, the proposed name is geographically appropriate.

9. The cost involved in a street name change, both to public agencies and to private individuals and businesses, should be taken into consideration and weighed against the benefit of a name change; and

It is estimated that the City would be required to change only two signs to reflect the changes in the street name.

10. The Department of Public Works (DPW) shall collect payment, in advance, from the petitioner for the cost of designing, producing, erecting, and maintaining the necessary signs and markers and shall deposit the required payment into the street fund.

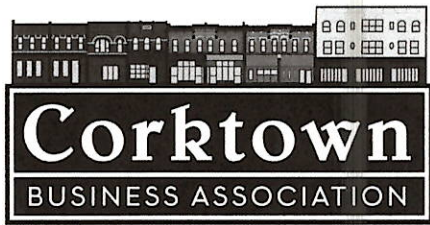
Given this initiate is City-led, DPW will cover the costs associated with creating the new street signs.

Staff Recommendation

Planning and Development Department Staff recommend the City Council direct the City Clerk to schedule a public hearing for the City Council to consider the petition to permanently rename a portion of 16th Street to Vernor Highway.

Antoine Bryant
Antoine Bryant, Director of Planning & Development Department

05/31/23
Date



Corktown Business Association, Inc.

PO Box 32310
1401 W. Fort St
Detroit, MI 48232

June 3, 2023

Councilmember Gabriela Santiago-Romero
Office 2 Woodward Avenue
Suite 1340
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Support of Permanent Street Renaming to Vernor Highway

Dear Councilmember Santiago-Romero,

The Corktown Business Association (CBA) is providing this letter to demonstrate our strong support for the request to rename a portion of 16th St. in Corktown to Vernor Highway. The portion of 16th St. is immediately adjacent to Roosevelt Park. As you know, because of the Roosevelt Park “unification” project, the Vernor Hwy streets which ran through the park were removed. This has resulted in the historic intersection of Michigan Ave. & Vernor Hwy being no more. As part of the Roosevelt Park project, the city stated a repeated commitment to rename the section of 16th St. that runs from the Train Station to Michigan Ave to Vernor Highway, so to this historic intersection could remain in place forever. We fully support that request and are asking you to do the same.

Vernor Highway and Michigan Ave are vitally important to the CBA and our members. This intersection, similar to Michigan and Trumbull, is a key destination point and marker for our community. Ensuring it remains for generations to come is important. Given the (previous) existing Vernor/MI Ave intersection, it’s also important to rename 16th St. so our residents and visitors can continue to navigate seamlessly.

We are excited for the reopening of the Train Station, Roosevelt Park, and the other exciting projects occurring within our neighborhood, and have been pleased with our continued partnership with multiple city departments.

If you have any questions regarding our support for this initiative, please contact me directly at president@corktowndetroit.biz or on my cell at 734.216.0738

Sincerely,

Bob Roberts

President, Corktown Business Association

[www.corktowndetroit
.biz](http://www.corktowndetroit.biz)

