



MCKENNA

Memorandum

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council, City of Grosse Pointe Woods
FROM: Ashley Jankowski Abeid, AICP
SUBJECT: 20567 Mack Avenue: Special Land Use & Site Plan for the Little Ghost II Restaurant
DATE: September 30, 2026

PROJECT SUMMARY

The applicant, David Vermiglio of Little Ghost II, LLC has submitted a special land use and site plan request for a restaurant in the existing $\pm 2,100$ square foot, single-story building at 20567 Mack Avenue. Patrons will have the option to dine in or carry out (no drive-thru). No alcohol service is offered at this restaurant, and no pedestrian walk-up window is proposed as part of this scope.

The property is located at the corner of Mack Avenue and Lennon Street (shown in pink below) and is zoned the C, Commercial Business District where “carry out restaurants” are a *Special Land Use*.

Special Land Uses require a public hearing and consideration before the Planning Commission, followed by final review from the City Council.



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PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION

Special Land Use Review:

On August 25th the Planning Commission held a public hearing on this application.

One public comment was heard in support of the special land use and eight comments were heard in opposition. Primary concerns expressed during the public hearing included the availability of parking, the addition of another restaurant in the area and the generation of garbage and overall cleanliness, the building design, and traffic on residential side streets.

The Commission discussed the above identified concerns and heard from the applicant regarding their operations.

The Commission then recommended **special land use approval** to Council, with the following conditions:

1. *The hours of deliveries are no earlier than 9:00 a.m.*
2. *Site Plan approval is granted.*
3. *The walk-up window is removed from the project scope.*
4. *A shared parking agreement is secured (instead of seeking a parking variance).*

Site Plan Review:

On September 22nd the Commission reviewed the revised site plan. There was no public comment on the site plan at this meeting. After discussion, the Commission granted **site plan approval**, with the following conditions:

1. *Special Land Use approval is granted by City Council (including any conditions of that approval).*
2. *The draft shared parking agreement is found acceptable to the City Attorney and executed. A copy of the agreement will then be placed on file with the City.*
3. *A photometric plan is provided for administrative review.*
4. *The awning over the new window on Lennon is relocated towards the corner entrance.*
5. *Signage is submitted under separate cover.*

Both reviews for the Special Land Use and the Site Plan are enclosed.

REQUEST OF CITY COUNCIL

At the October 5th City Council meeting, it is recommended that the Council open and close the required public hearing and grant **special land use and site plan approval**, with the following outstanding conditions:

1. *The hours of deliveries are no earlier than 9:00 a.m.*
2. *The draft shared parking agreement is found acceptable to the City Attorney and executed. A copy of the agreement will then be placed on file with the City.*
3. *A photometric plan is provided for administrative review.*
4. *Signage is submitted under separate cover.*



Special Land Use Review

1. HARMONY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

Criteria: *Is the proposal consistent with the goals, policies, and future land use map of the Master Plan? If not, has the applicant demonstrated that conditions have changed significantly since the Master Plan was developed, and request is now demonstrably consistent with the development trends in the area?*

Findings: Complies.

The chart below details the existing land use, current zoning, and future land use designations.

The Future Land Use Map of the 2024 Master Plan designates this area as “Corridor Mixed Use”. In the Master Plan, this land use classification is generally described as retail, restaurant, personal service, and office establishments which are designed for the day-to-day retail and personal service needs of nearby residents. These facilities are intended to be near residential neighborhoods with adequate buffering. The existing C, Commercial Business District corresponds to this land use classification.

The proposal complies with the future land use designation of “Corridor Mixed Use” as the use is for a smaller scale restaurant that will serve the local community.

Location	Existing Land Uses	Zoning Districts	Future Land Use Designations
Subject Site	Vacant	C, Commercial Business	Corridor Mixed Use
North	Medical Offices	RO-1, Restricted Office	Corridor Mixed Use
South	Financial Offices	C, Commercial Business	Corridor Mixed Use
East	Institutional (across Mack Avenue)	C-F, Community Facilities	Institutional
West	Single-Unit Residential	R-1E, One-Family Residential	Single Family Medium Density

2. HAZARDOUS OR DISRUPTIVE SMOKE, FUME, GLARE, NOISE, VIBRATION OR ODOR POLLUTION (SEC. 50-4.11)

Criteria: *To promote such business development insofar as it is possible and appropriate in each area, uses are prohibited [in the C Commercial District] which would create hazards, offensive and loud noises, vibration, smoke, glare, heavy truck traffic or late hours of operation.*

Findings: Complies.

The restaurant will be open for quick meal services (burgers, fries, shakes, sodas, etc.). There is no alcohol service offered, and the establishment is similar to surrounding uses, both on this commercial block and along the greater Mack Avenue corridor. The restaurant is not expected to be hazardous or disruptive.



The proposed operating hours of the restaurant are:

- Sunday - Thursday from 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
- Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

These hours of operation are not expected to be a concern and cater to the lunch / dinner crowds. Deliveries to the restaurant will arrive no earlier than 9:00 a.m.

3. CONSISTENCY WITH INTENT OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE (SEC. 50-3.1)

Criteria: The intent of the C, Commercial Business District is to encourage the concentration of local business areas to the mutual advantage of both the consumers and merchants and thereby promote the best use of land at certain strategic locations and avoid the continuance of encouraging marginal strip business development along major streets.

Findings: Complies.

In general, the restaurant will provide a convenient dining option in the community and will encourage orderly development along the City's primary commercial corridor. The business will occupy an existing, vacant storefront along Mack Avenue, which is designed to facilitate pedestrian traffic and a mix of commercial establishments and services.

The existing building is also compliant with the dimensional standards of the C, Commercial Business District. Please see our site plan review (immediately following) for additional information.



Site Plan Review

1. ZONING

The chart below details the existing land use, current zoning, and future land use designations:

Location	Existing Land Use	Zoning Districts	Future Land Use Designation
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Findings: Can comply; contingent on Special Land Use approval by City Council.

Please find our Special Land Use review in the previous section.

2. DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Findings: Complies.

The table below details the required dimensional standards. No dimensional changes are proposed, and compliance is met.

Standard Type	Requirement Details	Required	Existing / Proposed Condition	Notes
Min. Front Setback	No front yard is permitted where the use is specified in 50-4.9: Retail businesses.	0 ft.	0 ft.	Complies
Min. Side Setback	No side yard is required on the street side of corner lots.	0 ft.	0 ft.	Complies
Min. Rear Setback	Rear yards are not required along interior rear lot lines for buildings or parts of buildings not used as dwellings, if all walls abutting or facing such lot lines are of fire-proof construction and wholly without windows or other openings.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Max. Building Height	-	2 stories, 28 ft.	1 story, ~17 ft.	Complies



3. ARCHITECTURE & BUILDING DESIGN (SEC. 50-5.18)

Findings: Complies, Planning Commission approval recommended.

The Ordinance's design standards are intended to promote a coordinated and complementary use of design elements that result in a theme-oriented, harmonious appearance and image for commercial and high intensity residential areas. Per Section 50-5.18, "New construction, renovations, remodeling, or exterior building alterations in the C, Commercial Business District shall be in conformance with approved design standards."

The Ordinance also encourages specific design standards for the Commercial Business District, as follows:

Colonial," "Williamsburg Colonial," "Georgian Colonial," "Early American," "Classic" or "Traditional" styles, which shall collectively refer to use of a palette of materials, trim, shapes, forms, colors and details most commonly associated with the dominant architectural styles utilized during the early development of the east coast American towns and cities.

The existing building has a modern façade, comprised of cement block panels, geometric structures, a flat roof, and minimal architectural features. As an existing building that is proposed for adaptive reuse, achieving a traditional style, it would require substantial modifications to the building's form and architecture.

Rather than attempting to apply a historic aesthetic to a building that was not designed in that architectural period, renovations that work well with the existing architecture are proposed: painted cement board siding and metal awnings.

The proposed Benjamin Moore colors (*Dark Burgundy* as the primary building color and *Spring Azalea* as an accent color for the awnings and roof coping) are a deviation from the City's approved Benjamin Moore Historical Color Collection. However, the proposed colors do reflect the restaurant's established brand identity. For reference, an existing Little Ghost restaurant is located in Ferndale (22305 Woodward Ave, Ferndale, MI 48220) that features their brand's distinctive color palette.

After reviewing the paint samples, the Planning Commission found the proposed colors (*Dark Burgundy* and *Spring Azalea*) to be acceptable at this location. Paint samples will also be provided for review at the City Council meeting.

4. PARKING & LOADING (SEC. 50-5.3)

Findings: Complies.

Number of Parking Spaces: Per Sec. 50-5.3, a total of nine (9) off-street parking spaces are required. The site provides two (2) off-street parking spaces at the rear of the building; the project is deficient seven (7) off-street parking spaces

Building Footprint	Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces Required	Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces Provided	Number of Parking Spaces within 500 ft.
2,112 sq. ft.	11 based on square footage (2,112 sq. ft / 200) + 6 employee spaces = 17 parking spaces, at 50% = 9 off-street spaces	2 parking spaces (behind the building), including 1 ADA space <u>The site is deficient 7 off-street parking spaces</u>	19+ parking spaces along Mack Avenue and Lennon Street



To address this parking gap, the Applicant has secured an off-street, shared parking agreement with the adjacent facility, Emcura at 20599 Mack Avenue. The following are details of their shared parking agreement, which will be finalized with the City Attorney, provided Special Land Use approval is granted:

- i. Little Ghost II has the exclusive use of ten (10) designated parking spaces, as specifically identified on Exhibit A (enclosed at the end of this report). These spaces are available to the restaurant and its employees, guests and other permitted users 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- ii. The parking arrangement will become effective once the restaurant has received the needed permits, licenses and approvals necessary to operate.
- iii. The Applicant will supply and install Little Ghost specific signage at each parking spot.
- iv. Emcura is responsible for maintaining the parking area and adjacent sidewalks, including snow and ice removal, lighting, paving, striping and drainage, and for maintaining the signage/towing arrangements necessary to keep the designated spaces available for the restaurant's use.

In total, 12 dedicated, off-street parking spaces will be provided for this use, exceeding the City's parking requirement. This requirement is satisfied.

Parking Space Dimensions: The two rear parking spaces are in compliance with Sec. 50-5.3(K).

Loading Zone: The existing rear alley is sufficient for deliveries: a 12 ft. by 50 ft. loading zone is required and can be accommodated.

5. LANDSCAPING (SEC. 50-6.1)

Findings: N/A.

Several planter boxes are proposed along the front building façade on Mack Avenue, which will soften the building appearance.

6. LIGHTING

Exterior lighting must be designed so that it is shielded from adjacent properties and so that it does not impede the vision of traffic along adjacent streets.

Findings: Can Comply.

The existing building-mounted gooseneck lighting is to remain and is proposed to be painted the pink accent color (Spring Azalea). Smaller, shield and decorative accent lighting (also in the Spring Azalea color) is proposed along Mack Avenue and Lennon (a total of 5 fixtures).

No lighting is proposed at the rear of the building, facing the alley.

The Applicant will provide a final photometric plan to ensure the illumination standards are not exceeded for administrative review, pending special land use approval.



7. TRASH RECEPTACLE

Trash receptacles must be screened with quality materials that complement the site and adjacent properties.

Findings: Complies.

A new 5-foot-in-height dumpster enclosure is provided at the rear of the building, with access to the alley, and will be collected multiple times a week. The placement and dimensions of the dumpster enclosure are appropriate.

Please note, the pedestrian door that employees will use to access the dumpster does not open directly onto the alley, but rather onto Lennon. This is anticipated to slightly reduce potential noise generation in the alley.

8. SIGNS (CHAPTER 32 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES)

Findings: N/A.

No signage is approved as part of this application. All exterior signage will be submitted under separate cover for administrative review.