



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 1st, 2026
To: City of Madison Heights City Council (June 8th, 2026 Meeting)
From: Matt Lonnerstater, AICP – City Planner
Subject: Special Land Use Request PSP 26-04 – 32371 Dequindre Road – Minor Auto Repair and Auto Sales

TEMPLATE MOTION AND FINDINGS INCLUDED ON PAGE 10

Introduction

The applicant and property owner, Sergio Basmajian, requests Special Land Use approval from the Planning Commission and City Council under **Section 15.05** of the Madison Heights Zoning Ordinance to operate a Minor Auto Repair and Service use with an associated auto sales showroom at 32371 Dequindre Road, zoned M-1, Light Industrial; tax parcel # 44-25-01-226-021. The property is located on the west side of Dequindre Road, north of Avis Drive. An auto sales showroom and business is proposed in conjunction with the auto repair use.

Planning Commission Action and Findings.

Per the Zoning Ordinance adopted in 2024, Special Land Use requests begin at the Planning Commission for a public hearing, with a recommendation made to City Council for final action. A public hearing was held at the May 18th, 2026 Planning Commission meeting. No members of the public spoke regarding the application. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission acted on the following motion pertaining to the proposed Special Land Use request:

MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER FOX, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MARSH TO DEEM THIS APPLICATION AS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT THAN THE PREVIOUS APPLICATION SUBMITTED AND THUS QUALIFYING IT FOR RECONSIDERATION BY THIS BOARD FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. The use changed from primarily minor auto repair to now include auto sales.
2. The level of improvements to the site have changed substantially to include repairs to the parking lot as well as other site improvements.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Graettinger, Commissioner Marsh

Voting Nay: Mayor Haines, Commissioner Fleming, Commissioner Olson

Motion fails 3-3.

Previous Action and Evidence of “Materially Changed Conditions”

The Planning Commission considered a similar Special Land Use request for a minor auto repair facility at this location at the February 17th, 2026 meeting under case PSP #26-01. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Special Land Use, with conditions relating to landscaping, concrete details, and stormwater. Minutes from this Planning Commission meeting are contained in the meeting packet.

At the March 9th, 2026 City Council meeting, City Council denied the Special Land Use request for the auto repair facility by a vote of 4-3. Minutes from the City Council meeting are also contained in the meeting packet.

Per Section 15.05.4 (Special Land Uses – General Stipulations), *“no reapplication, reconsideration and/or rehearing for a special use permit which has been denied by the city council shall be resubmitted until the expiration of one year from the date of such denial, except on grounds of newly discovered evidence or proof of materially changed conditions sufficient to justify reconsideration by the city council. Each reapplication will be treated as a new application.”*

The new Special Land Use submittal reduces the number of auto repair bays/lifts from six (6) to four (4) and adds an auto sales showroom (with new showroom storefront windows) to the front of the building facing Dequindre. As these changes represent a departure from the previous submittal, staff administratively determined that the Special Land Use request may proceed as a new submittal under the provisions of Section 15.05.4. However, at their May 18th, 2026 meeting and public hearing, the Planning Commission’s motion to deem the application as “substantially different” failed in a tie vote. Because the Planning Commission did not find proof of materially changed conditions, they did not consider the revised application and did not make a formal recommendation to City Council.

Despite the lack of a Planning Commission recommendation, City Council may still act upon the Special Land Use case. Alternatively, City Council may remand the case back to the Planning Commission for a recommendation.

Project Details

The subject property is 1.4 acres in size and is currently improved with an 11,844 square-foot light industrial building and asphalt parking area at the rear of the building. The building has been vacant for a few years but was most recently occupied by engineering and industrial offices. Per the project narrative and concept plan, the applicant intends to repurpose the building and site into an automotive repair use with four (4) service bays. The building will also accommodate an auto sales showroom with new storefront windows facing Dequindre Road. Proposed services include oil change, brakes, and engine repair, collectively classified as “Minor Auto Repair” in the Zoning Ordinance; Minor Auto Repair requires Special Land Use approval in the M-1 zoning district. Auto sales uses are permitted by right in the M-1 district subject to use-specific standards. The applicant has not indicated hours of operation or total employees.

32371 Dequindre Rd. – Aerial Image – Existing Conditions (Red Outline)



Streetview from Dequindre Road



Site and Use History

Historic aerial imagery and city permitting records indicate that the principal building and parking lot were constructed in the early 1960s as drafting offices for Vertstand Engineering, with a rear building addition constructed in 1969.

It appears that the previous property owner had an unrecorded shared parking agreement with the gun range to the north which allowed gun range customers/employees to park in the rear portion of the parking lot; this is demonstrated by the parking bumper blocks that were installed along the north edge of the drive aisle and within the parking lot sometime between 2006 and 2008. The bumper blocks, which are still in place, restrict access to the rear portion of the parking lot from the subject parcel; access is only

available through the drive aisle on the gun range property. The applicant notes that this unrecorded parking agreement will not be carried forward if the proposed auto repair use is approved. The site plan indicates that the rear bumper blocks in the parking lot will be removed.

Current Location of Parking Bumper Blocks



Use-Specific Standards for Auto Repair and Service Facilities (Minor and Major)

Minor Auto Repair and Service Facilities, including those that offer engine repair, wheel alignment, brake servicing, tire repair and replacement, and oil change services, require Special Land Use approval in the M-1, Light Industrial district. These facilities are also subject to the use-specific zoning standards set forth in **Section 7.03.2**; the full list of standards is attached to this report. The applicant has provided a preliminary site plan and a copy of the proposed floor plan. Staff notes the following use-specific standards which will need to be confirmed by the applicant and shown on the formal site plan application, when submitted:

- **Location Repair and Servicing:** *All repair and servicing operations shall be conducted entirely within an enclosed building. All equipment used in the servicing and repair of vehicles shall be located within an enclosed building.*
- **Outside Storage Prohibited:** *Outside storage or parking of disabled, wrecked, inoperable, or partially dismantled vehicles shall not be permitted with the exception of those areas specifically designated for said purpose on an approved site plan. Such areas shall be screened in accordance with Section 8.03(6) (Accessory Outdoor Storage). Outdoor storage of materials, such as tires, barrels, or other materials used or sold on the premises, shall not be permitted with the exception of those areas specifically designated for said purpose on an approved site plan. Such areas shall be screened in accordance with Section 8.03(6) (Accessory Outdoor Storage).*
- **Hours of Operation:** No auto repair or maintenance services shall be performed before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m.

Should City Council move to approve the Special Land use, staff advises that all of the use-specific standards of Section 7.03.2, including those listed above, be incorporated as a condition of approval.

Use-Specific Standards for Auto Sales (New and Used)

Auto Sales (both new and used) are permitted by right in the M-1 district unless the property abuts a residentially-zoned or used property. Because there are no residential properties in the vicinity, Special Land Use approval is not required for the auto sales use. However, since auto sales represents a component of the overall site plan and building arrangement, it does play a role in the overall Special Land Use consideration.

Use-specific standards for auto sales uses are contained in Section 7.03.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff notes the following use-specific standards which will need to be confirmed by the applicant and confirmed on the formal site plan application, when submitted:

- **Vehicle Display and Storage:** *Outdoor vehicle display, sales and storage areas, when permitted, shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from all property lines and right-of-way lines and shall be screened in accordance with Section 11.06 (Parking Lot Landscaping). Within the M-1/M-2 zoning districts, vehicle display areas may be permitted in the front yard a minimum of 20 feet from right-of-way lines. All display vehicles shall be parked in designated display spaces and shall not be parked in required parking spaces. Vehicles displayed for the sale shall not be artificially elevated above grade.*
- **Sales Office:** *A minimum of 500 square feet within a permanent structure shall be provided on the lot to serve as offices and restrooms for vehicle sales use.*
- **Accessory Auto Repair and Service:** *Auto repair and service associated with the auto sales use shall receive separate approval for “auto repair and service facility,” in districts where permitted, and shall be subject to the use-specific standards for “auto repair and service facilities.*

Site Analysis

Existing Zoning and Land Use

The table below denotes existing adjacent land uses and zoning designations.

	Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning
Site	Vacant (previous engineering offices)	M-1, Light Industrial
North	Gun Range	M-1, Light Industrial
South	Vacant (former auto sales)	M-1, Light Industrial
East (across Dequindre)	Light Industrial	M-2, Medium Light Industrial (City of Warren)
West	Storage/Light Manufacturing	M-1, Light Industrial

The site is surrounded by light industrial zoning, including across Dequindre in Warren, with land uses typically characterized by industrial elements. Uses permitted by right in the M-1 district primarily consist of light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, distribution, and research facilities. However, commercial uses such as auto sales, restaurants, financial institutions, business schools, and tool and equipment sales are also permitted by right.

There are several existing auto-related uses along this stretch of Dequindre Road, including Detroit Hot Wheel City in Madison Heights and Tek 2 Auto Repair and Ray’s Auto Sales in Warren. The property immediately to the south recently operated as a used auto sales business but has since been vacated. Per the Madison Heights Zoning Ordinance, the M-1 zoning district is “*designed so as to primarily accommodate wholesale activities, warehouses, and industrial operations whose external, physical effects*

are restricted to the area of the district and in no manner affects in a detrimental way any of the surrounding districts.”

Future Land Use and Master Plan

The table below denotes adjacent future land use designations as contained within the 2021 Madison Heights Master Plan.

	Future Land Use
Site	Industrial
North	Industrial
South	Industrial
East (across Dequindre Road)	Industrial Commercial Corridor (Warren)
West	Industrial

The future land use designation of the subject site is *Industrial*. Per the Master Plan, the Industrial designation is intended to accommodate manufacturing, processing, warehousing, storage of raw materials and intermediate and finished products, industrial service providers, industrial parks, and industrial research activities. The Master Plan/Future Land Use Plan does not break down the Industrial designation into different levels or intensities of industrial uses.

City Council should consider the following Goals & Objectives of the 2021 Madison Heights Master Plan as part of this Special Land Use request:

Community Character

- *Enhance the city’s commercial corridors to support walkability and improve community identity.*
- *Promote the city’s positive identity in the region.*
- *Promote the use of quality building design and materials to enhance the appearance and long-term maintenance of new development.*
- *Protect established neighborhoods and business districts from the potentially negative impacts of development, including noise, traffic, waste, odor, and other nuisances through effective and thoughtful site and building design.*

Commercial & Industrial Development

- *Promote incentives and flexible zoning mechanisms for commercial and industrial property owners and tenants to upgrade existing commercial and industrial sites.*
- *Promote the mix of commercial, office, and industrial uses in a way that fosters collaboration and business growth while creating a desirable environment for the local workforce.*
- *Promote walkability by ensuring sufficient local destinations for goods and services.*

Transportation

Dequindre Road is under the jurisdiction of the Macomb County Departments of Roads (MCDR) and is classified as a Principal Arterial Road which is intended to carry long-distance, through-travel movements. Per SEMCOG, this portion of Dequindre Road handles an average volume of approximately 31,000 vehicles per day.

Special Land Use Criteria

Requests for Special Land Use approval are subject to processes and review standards contained in Section 15.05. A public hearing is required in front of the Planning Commission, after which the Planning Commission may make a recommendation to City Council. After receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission, City Council has the authority to take final action on Special Land Use requests.

City Council shall consider the Special Land Use review standards contained in Section 15.05.3 and incorporate them into any motion of approval or denial:

- A. The use is so designed, located and proposed to be operated in a way that protects the public health, safety and welfare.
- B. The use is designed in a way that considers the natural environment and helps conserve natural resources and energy.
- C. The special land use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, and equipment or conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any person, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare or odors.
- D. The use shall be designed and located so that it is compatible with the surrounding properties, neighborhood, and vicinity. At a minimum, this shall include:
 - (1) Location of use(s) on site;
 - (2) Height of all improvements and structures;
 - (3) Adjacent conforming land uses;
 - (4) Conformance with the Master Plan and future land use map for the area as adopted by the Planning Commission;
 - (5) Compatibility with the permitted principal uses allowed in the zoning district where the Special Land Use is requested, and consistency with the intent of the zoning district.
- E. Ingress/egress to the use shall be controlled to assure maximum vehicular, pedestrian and non-motorized safety, convenience and minimum traffic impact on adjacent roads, drives and uses including, but not limited to:
 - (1) Reduction in the number of ingress/egress points through elimination, minimization, and/or consolidation of drives and/or curb cuts;
 - (2) Proximity and relation to intersections, specifically with regard to distance from drive(s) to intersection(s);
 - (3) Reduction/elimination of pedestrian/vehicular traffic conflicts;
 - (4) Adequacy of sight distances;
 - (5) Location and access of off-street parking;
 - (6) Location and/or potential use of service drives to access multiple parcels, reducing the number of access points necessary to serve the parcels.
- F. The use is consistent with the intent and purpose of the zoning district in which it is proposed.

City Council may impose conditions that it deems necessary to fulfill the spirit and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance. The conditions may include those necessary to ensure that public services and facilities affected by a proposed land use or activity will be capable of accommodating increased service and facility loads caused by the land use or activity, to protect the natural environment and conserve natural

resources and energy, to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses of land, and to promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner.

Staff Analysis and Concept Plan Review

In deliberating the proposed Special Land Use, staff believes that City Council should focus on the compatibility of the proposed auto repair use with the use-specific criteria and general site requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, the compatibility of the auto-related use with the uses permitted within the M-1 zoning district and existing adjacent land uses, and the goals and objectives of the Industrial future land use designation. While vehicle repair is sometimes classified as more of a commercial use than industrial for zoning purposes, the external impacts of auto repair (e.g. noise, storage, fumes, etc.) do have similarities to other industrial uses permitted by right.

Staff is generally supportive of the proposed Special Land Use application in that it will result in site and building improvements to a property that has been vacant for several years. Additionally, the building placement ensures that auto-service operations and vehicle parking will take place in the rear yard and will be screened from Dequindre.

Staff notes the following pertaining to the proposed conceptual site plan:

General Site Layout, Circulation and Parking

Overhead doors and the primary building entrance are proposed at the rear of the building facing the parking lot. Within the building, four (4) service bays are proposed. New aluminum storefront windows are proposed along the Dequindre façade, one of which will allow transparency into the auto sales showroom.

The applicant proposes to bring the rear parking area into compliance with Zoning Ordinance standards, including the addition of required landscape islands which double as stormwater bioswales, ADA spaces, and a loading zone. The two (2) parallel parking spaces located in front of the building are proposed to be removed and replaced with a flared curb extension. As previously noted, the parking bumper blocks that run north-south within the parking lot will be removed. New bumper blocks are proposed along the north edge of the drive aisle to separate the subject property from the shooting range to the north. **Staff recommends that these bumper blocks be replaced with a permanent concrete curb.**

New asphalt pavement is shown in the parking lot. Aerial photographs show that portions of the existing parking lot – especially the rear portion – is in disrepair. The site plan, when submitted, will need to include a site demolition plan indicating which portions of the asphalt parking lot will be repaved. It is possible that the entire parking lot will need to be milled and repaved, which may require the addition of stormwater quality control structures (confirmed upon engineering submittal) above and beyond the proposed bioswale landscape islands.

The conceptual site plan does not denote which areas of the parking lot will be used to store vehicles for sale. This should be denoted with the official site plan submission.

Landscaping

A conceptual landscape plan has not been provided. However, the site plan denotes landscape islands within the rear parking lot, as required per the Zoning Ordinance. A rain garden/bioswale is proposed within the front yard area in front of the building. Bioswale details, including a cross-section and planting information, shall be provided upon site plan submittal. The site plan includes a note that “salt-tolerant species” will be installed within the bioswale islands.

While perimeter parking lot landscaping is required per the Zoning Ordinance adjacent to the north, south, and west property lines, Section 11.11 of the Zoning Ordinance allows the approving body to reduce or waive landscaping requirements where site design minimizes negative impacts of the use on adjacent properties. Given adjacent industrial land uses and the minimal width of the buffer strips, staff believes that a perimeter landscaping waiver or reduction is appropriate along the northern, western and southern property lines in this case.

A detailed landscaping plan will need to be provided upon site plan submittal.

Exterior Lighting

A photometric and lighting plan has not been provided and will need to be provided upon site plan submittal.

Dumpster Enclosure

A new dumpster enclosure is proposed at the southwest corner of the building. A concrete pad will need to be provided within and immediately in front of the enclosure; this shall be provided upon site plan submittal.

Use-Specific Standards

Should City Council move to approve the Special Land Use to City Council, the use-specific standards for auto repair and service facilities (Section 7.03.2), attached to this report, should be incorporated as a condition of approval.

Suggested Conditions

Should City Council move to approve the Special Land Use, staff suggests that the following be incorporated as conditions of approval:

1. The Major Site Plan, when submitted, shall be substantially consistent with the concept plan approved with this Special Land Use submittal and shall incorporate the auto sales use and auto sales showroom. However, the site plan shall be modified, as needed, to denote the following:
 - a. Provide a site demolition plan, including locations of asphalt removal and replacement. Given the state of disrepair, complete milling and repaving and new stormwater quality structures may be required.
 - b. Replace the concrete bumper blocks along the northern property line with a permanent concrete curb.
 - c. Provide a landscape plan in accordance with minimum planting standards.
 - d. Provide a photometric plan in accordance with lighting standards.
 - e. Add the required concrete dumpster pad.
 - f. Provide details, including cross-section and plant/seed listings, of the proposed bioswale/rain garden.
 - g. Denote the parking areas to be used for vehicles for sale.
2. Given the adjacent industrial land uses and minimal buffer widths, the minimum perimeter parking lot landscaping requirements of Section 11.06.3 may be reduced along the northern, western and southern property lines as part of Major Site Plan review.

3. The final site plan and use shall satisfy the use-specific standards for auto repair and service facilities contained in Section 7.03.2 and attached to the staff report. The use-specific operating conditions shall be listed on the final Certificate of Occupancy.

Next Step

Any motion shall include concise findings based upon the Special Land Use review standards and criteria, Section 15.03.3. Per Section 15.05, City Council alternatively may postpone action on a Special Land Use request or remand the case back to the Planning Commission to allow verification, compilation, or submission of additional or supplemental information or to address other concerns or issues.

Template motions are provided on the following page.

Attachments

- Special Land Use Application - PSP #26-04
- Concept Site Plan and Floor Plan– PSP #26-04
- Associated Maps
- Previously-Submitted Conceptual Plan (PSP# 26-01)
- Planning Commission Minutes: February 17th, 2026
- City Council Minutes: March 9th, 2026
- Section 3.17 – M-1, Light Industrial District
- Section 7.03.2 – Use-Specific Standards for Auto Repair and Service Facilities
- Section 7.03.3 – Use-Specific Standards for Auto Sales
- Section 15.05 – Special Land Use Review
- Draft Planning Commission minutes – May 18th, 2026

Template Motion, Findings and Conditions

Staff offers the following motions as a suggested template and guide for City Council’s consideration. City Council may provide additional detailed findings, as needed, to substantiate any motion for approval or denial.

APPROVAL

MOTION BY _____, SECONDED BY _____, THAT CITY COUNCIL **APPROVE** SPECIAL LAND USE REQUEST NUMBER PSP 26-04 FOR A MINOR AUTO REPAIR AND SERVICE AND AUTO SALES FACILITY AT 32371 DEQUINDRE ROAD BASED UPON THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS:

1. The applicant requests Special Land Use approval for a Minor Auto Repair and Service facility and associated auto sales showroom at 32371 Dequindre Road as permitted by Section 3.17 of the Zoning Ordinance, *M-1 Light Industrial District*
2. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for PSP 26-04 at their May 18th, 2026 meeting.
3. The proposed Minor Auto Repair and Service use is consistent with the special land use review standards and criteria set forth in Section 15.05.3. In particular:
 - a. The use is designed, located, and proposed to be operated in a way that protects the public health, safety and welfare.
 - b. The use will not involve activities that will be detrimental to adjacent industrial land uses.

- c. The use is designed and located so that it is compatible with the principal uses permitted in the M-1, Light Industrial district.
 - d. The use is designed and located so that it is compatible with the Madison Heights Master Plan and the Industrial future land use designation.
4. With modifications required as conditions of approval, the use satisfies the use-specific standards for Major Auto Repair and Service facilities as contained in 7.03.2 and Auto Sales uses as contained in Section 7.03.3 of the Madison Heights Zoning Ordinance and is in general compliance with site design standards contained within the Zoning Ordinance.

APPROVAL IS GRANTED WITH THE **FOLLOWING CONDITIONS**

1. The Major Site Plan, when submitted, shall be substantially consistent with the concept plan approved with this Special Land Use submittal and shall incorporate the auto sales use and auto sales showroom. However, the site plan shall be modified, as needed, to denote the following:
 - a. Provide a site demolition plan, including locations of asphalt removal and replacement. Given the state of disrepair, complete milling and repaving and new stormwater quality structures may be required.
 - b. Replace the concrete bumper blocks along the northern property line with a permanent concrete curb.
 - c. Provide a landscape plan in accordance with minimum planting standards.
 - d. Provide a photometric plan in accordance with lighting standards.
 - e. Add the required concrete dumpster pad.
 - f. Provide details, including cross-section and plant/seed listings, of the proposed bioswale/rain garden.
 - g. Denote the parking areas to be used for vehicles for sale.
2. Given the adjacent industrial land uses and minimal buffer widths, the minimum perimeter parking lot landscaping requirements of Section 11.06.3 may be reduced along the northern, western and southern property lines as part of Major Site Plan review.
3. The final site plan and use shall satisfy the use-specific standards for auto repair and service facilities contained in Section 7.03.2 and attached to the staff report. The use-specific operating conditions shall be listed on the final Certificate of Occupancy.

DENIAL

MOTION BY _____, SECONDED BY _____, THAT CITY COUNCIL **DENY** SPECIAL LAND USE REQUEST NUMBER PSP 26-04 FOR A MINOR AUTO REPAIR AND SERVICE AND AUTO SALES FACILITY AT 32371 DEQUINDRE ROAD BASED UPON THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS:

1. The applicant requests Special Land Use approval for a Minor Auto Repair and Service facility and associated auto sales showroom at 32371 Dequindre Road as permitted by Section 3.17 of the Zoning Ordinance, *M-1 Light Industrial District*
2. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for PSP 26-04 at their May 18th, 2026 meeting.
3. The proposed Minor Auto Repair and Service use fails to satisfy the special land use review standards and criteria set forth in Section 15.05.3. In particular:
 - (1) The use is not designed, located and proposed to be operated in a way that protects the public health, safety and welfare.
 - (2) The special land use will involves uses, activities, processes, materials, and equipment or conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any person, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare or odors.
 - (3) The use is not designed and located in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding properties, neighborhood, and vicinity.
 - (4) The use is not in conformance with the Master Plan and future land use map for the area as adopted by the Planning Commission;
 - (5) The use is not compatible with the permitted principal uses allowed in the zoning district where the Special Land Use is requested and is not consistent with the intent and purpose of the M-1 zoning district.