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Real Estate

Joe Louis Arena site hotel construction, community benefits process set to begin

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Credit: City of Detroit

The former Joe Louis Arena site on the Detroit River, now called Water Square, is set to welcome a 25-story, 600 room hotel.

The Community Benefits Ordinance process begins Jan. 9 for the new convention-style hotel on the former Joe Louis Arena site.

The hotel — proposed to have 25 stories and 600 rooms — has long been discussed, both publicly and behind the scenes, although the CBO process starting marks another step forward in making it a reality. Precise details about the hotel's scale [began trickling out earlier this year.](#)

The development cost and precise construction completion timeframe are not known, although a city website says construction is expected to start in the second quarter.

Messages were sent early Thursday to city spokespeople as well as a spokesperson for Detroit-based developer The Sterling Group, which is developing the project through an affiliate, Second & Atwater Associates LLC, which is registered to the company's general counsel, Eli Halpern.

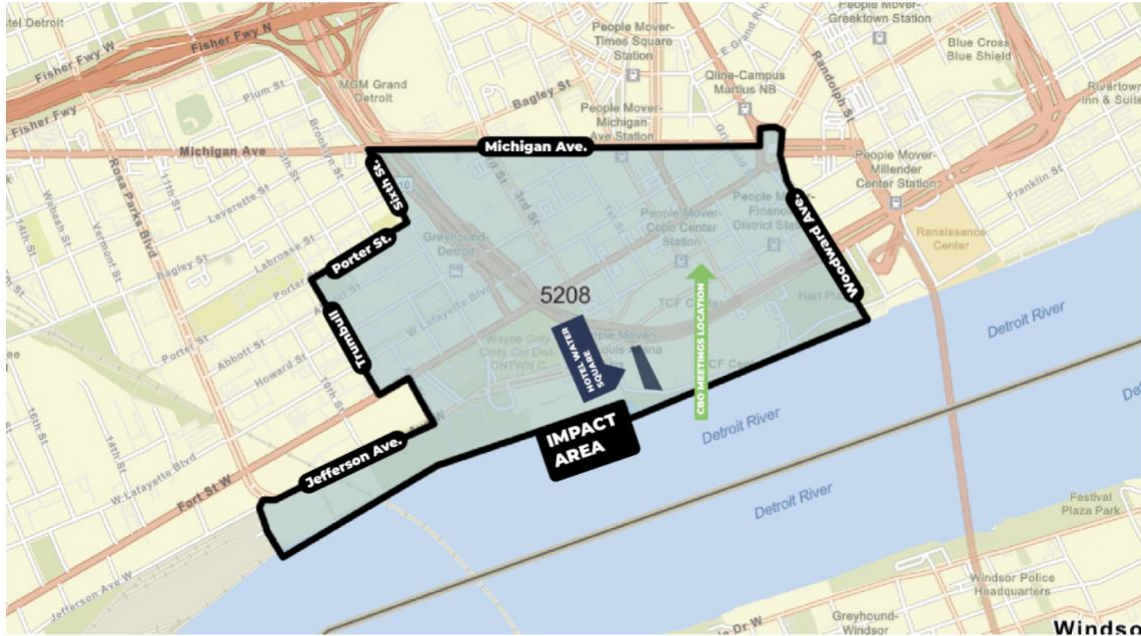
The city website says the 25 stories would consist of five podium floors with a restaurant, lobby bar, a pair of ballrooms and 50,000 square feet of meeting rooms. A pedestrian bridge would connect it to Huntington Place convention center.

The hotel would be the second building to rise on the former Joe Louis Arena site, home of the Detroit Red Wings until the Ilitch family-owned hockey team moved to Little Caesars Arena starting in 2017.

Construction on the first, a roughly 500-unit market-rate apartment building called The Residences at Water Square, [started in early 2022](#) and the building is [anticipated to open in the first quarter next year. Rents begin at \\$2,000 and, for some units, go as high as \\$10,000](#), Crain's reported this summer.

The community benefits process is required when a development costs more than \$75 million and receives city incentives totaling more than \$1 million or city-owned real estate valued at \$1 million or more. (The incentives sought for the hotel project are not known; the apartment tower received no public funding.)

As a condition of meeting those thresholds, a group of nine residents in the area surrounding the proposed developments are selected to serve on a Neighborhood Advisory Council, which over a series of public meetings, negotiates community benefits to be included as part of the development process for those large-scale projects.



Credit: city of Detroit

Residents in the impact area of the proposed Joe Louis Arena site hotel will have a hand in negotiating community benefits on the project.

Those negotiated benefits can include things like jobs, local hiring, environmental protections, land use programs and local small business and resident inclusion, among a host of others.

The first CBO meeting is scheduled for Jan. 9 at Huntington Place, with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting beginning at 6 p.m.