



REQUEST FOR PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

AGENDA DATE: October 1, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: Consider adopting resolutions finding that two real estate acquisitions by the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Grand Rapids.

PREPARED BY: Will Richter, Zoning Administrator

BACKGROUND:

The Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority (GREDA) has an agreement to purchase the former Ben's Bait site and a 39' x 143' strip of land adjacent to the north boundary. The purpose of these acquisitions is to facilitate redevelopment of the site and provide adequate space to develop parking for the future use. Thus far, GREDA has taken several actions to preserve the option of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a redevelopment tool at this site, including:

Adopting a resolution authorizing an internal loan for advance of certain cost eligible to be reimbursed from TIF.

Initiating the process declaring that the structure at 533 NW 4th St is structurally substandard.

Reserving the option of using TIF as a redevelopment tool at this site – in conformity with TIF Act (State law) - requires the Planning Commission to make a finding that real property acquisitions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

A link to the City of Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan is here:

<https://cityofgrandrapidsmn.com/development/page/grow-grand-rapids-2040-comprehensive-plan>

The Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission Chair have identified Chapter 4 (Land Use), Goal 1 – subpoint (f) as the most relevant section to review when considering a finding:

f. Stage new development, redevelopment, and expansion of the City's urban service area.

Redevelopment opportunities continue to be a focus area for development within the community, supporting specific active planning for redevelopment opportunities to ensure growth that supports the surrounding area. The Future Land Use Map identifies desired land use and growth areas for the future of the community. Redevelopment and infill development should have preference over development on greenfield sites within the City and especially areas that will require expansion of City services. Expansion of commercial areas should only occur when market opportunities within existing commercial nodes are limited. Meaningful staging will also require working with surrounding communities (adjacent townships and cities) to ensure a cohesive land use pattern for the region. Development opportunities include:

Greenfield development is development of agricultural fields or natural areas within new growth areas. The availability of large tracts of undeveloped land and lower investment costs make greenfield development attractive to developers.

Infill refers to new construction on vacant properties or underutilized areas, such as parking lots, which are located within the existing urban fabric.

Redevelopment likewise refers to new construction within the existing urban fabric, but generally also implies the demolition of obsolete structures and/or the remediation of contaminated sites. Redevelopment is not always cost-effective, but it has the potential to be transformative.

Adaptive reuse refers to repurposing obsolete or under-performing structures for viable use, which supports the City's sustainability goals. It can also be an effective strategy for historic preservation.

Infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse provide a contrast to greenfield development by helping to preserve productive farms, forests, and rural character on the urban fringe. They also reduce the public cost of providing infrastructure and services to development, strengthen access and connectivity, and improve the aesthetics of existing neighborhoods. These types of projects continue to be an area of focus for Grand Rapids.

REQUESTED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

Make a motion to adopt resolutions finding that two real estate acquisitions by the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Grand Rapids.