



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

AGENDA DATE: April 27, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: Consider authorizing staff to submit a lease agreement application to BNSF Railway Company.

PREPARED BY: Rob Mattei, Community Development Director

BACKGROUND:

Since 1983, the City of Grand Rapids has held an indefinite term lease from the railroad on the land where the Depot sits at 1 NW 3rd St. At that time, BNSF granted the City a consent to sublease the land to the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. In 1984, BNSF donated the Depot building to the City to be used for a public purpose. Subsequently, the City entered into an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce to rent the “Old Depot Building.” This building lease ran until 1994 when the City sold the building for \$1 to the Depot Commons, a non-profit formed to take over stewardship of the building. While separate entities, the Chamber Board of Directors and the Depot Commons have some common membership.

The Depot Commons seeks railroad approval to change the name on the consent to sublease from the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce to the Depot Commons. Aligning ownership of the building and assignment of the lease on the land it sits will enhance the ability of the Depot Commons to pursue grant opportunities to maintain and improve the building.

Prior to changing the consent to sublease agreement, BNSF requires the lease between the City and BNSF be updated and approved in their current format. Therefore, the first step in the process to update the consent to sublease is for the City to submit a new lease agreement application to BNSF Railway Company. The Depot Commons is paying the application fee.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION:

Make a motion authorizing staff to sign and submit lease agreement application materials to BNSF Railway Company.