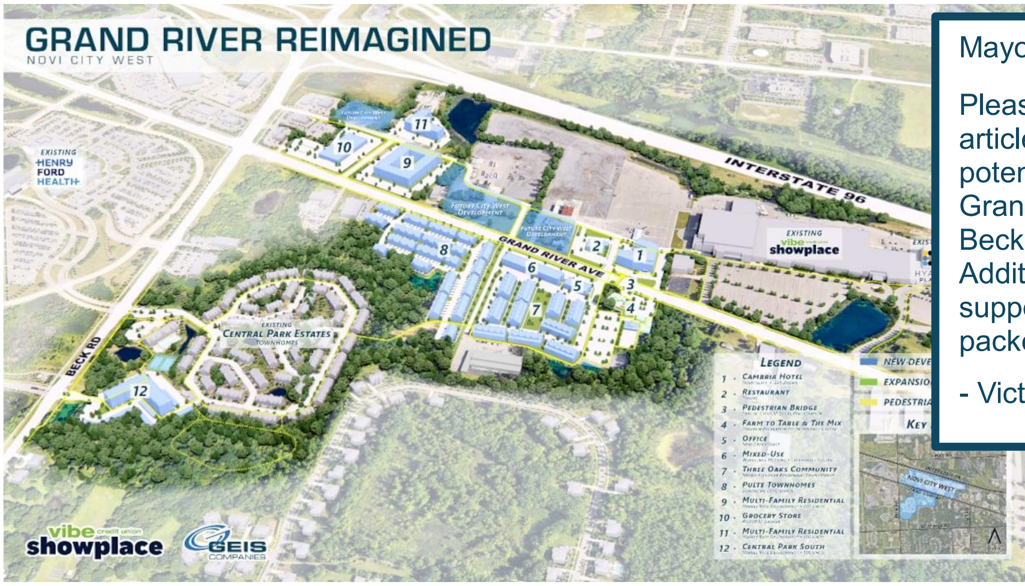
Novi convention center owner’s mega development proposal grows to $400M-plus with added housing



Mayor and Council –

Please see a recent article regarding the potential project on Grand River between Beck and Taft roads. Additionally, the supporting media packet is also included.

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An aerial rendering of the $407 million Novi City West development proposal. (Geis Cos.)

By **Kirk Pinho**

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The cost of a large-scale development proposal in Novi has grown by more than 50% as more housing is added to the mix.

Novi City West, an effort spearheaded by Blair Bowman Sr., owner of the nearby Vibe Credit Union Showplace convention center, is now expected to cost $407 million. That’s up from $270 million due to the addition of hundreds of housing units to the plan for the Grand River Avenue, Beck Road and Interstate 96 area.

In all, the proposed development would include multiple components — a hotel, apartments, townhouses, condos and dining options, among other features — spread across some 50 or so acres west of the 600,000-square-foot Vibe Credit Union Showplace, formerly Suburban Collection Showplace.

There would be some 320 multifamily units built as part of a project called North Grand.

A rendering of mixed-use buildings and neuro-inclusive condominium units that are a part of a $407 million Novi City West development proposal. (Geis Cos.)

Additionally, there would be some 200 units of neuro-inclusive condominiums for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be developed by Plymouth-based Three Oaks Communities. That project, dubbed Novi Oaks, would be the second such community in the region that Three Oaks is developing, along with the $30 million-$35 million, 55-unit Auburn Oaks project that kicked off construction earlier this month off of Auburn Road in Rochester Hills.

Substantial portions of the overall Novi City West vision are contingent upon lawmakers expanding the Transformational Brownfield Program, a large-scale public incentive that has pushed major development and redevelopment projects in Detroit and elsewhere across the financial finish line.

Some lawmakers have sought to more than double the program's $1.6 billion cap to $3.5 billion, and double the annual limit on post-construction tax captures — things like sales taxes on goods and services at a redeveloped site, as well as income tax captures for people living and working there — from $80 million to $160 million. Recently, Michigan Speaker of the House Matt Hall has said he's open to expanding the program in conjunction with property tax cuts as part of state budget negotiations.

A rendering of retail and multifamily residential buildings that are a part of a $407 million Novi City West development proposal. (Geis Cos.)

Bowman said that without the TBP funding, a proposed 225-room Cambria Hotel for the convention center would not move forward, the North Grand project would either be scrapped entirely or substantially scaled back, and other portions of the effort may be reduced in scope.

“This is the ultimate but-for situation,” Bowman said Monday. “This type of program is critical for us.”

He declined to say how much in TBP funding the projects anticipate seeking, although Crain’s has previously reported it at between $100 million and $200 million.

Other components of Novi City West include:

- A 5,000-square-foot restaurant
- A pedestrian bridge and connected pathways
- Indoor/outdoor entertainment, recreation and dining space
- A 20,000-square-foot mixed-use building with office and retail space
- A community center and retail space with 30 multifamily units on top
- A townhouse development with 112 for-sale units
- 106 units of multifamily housing in a development called Central Park South

Crain’s reported in May 2025 that some of the property the development would sit on had previously been home to heavy industrial use and road-building companies, serving as a contractor yard during the construction of I-275. About a dozen dilapidated structures need to be torn down or rehabbed, the land requires environmental cleanup, Crain’s reported a year ago.

Last week, the Michigan Strategic Fund signed off on more than $270 million in Transformational Brownfield Program funding for the proposed redevelopment of the former

Lakeside Mall in Sterling Heights into a massive complex with multiple types of housing and retail space as part of its first phase.

A rendering of a Cambria Hotel that's a part of a $407 million Novi City West development proposal. (Geis Cos.)