



## CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL NOVEMBER 25, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Zoning Map Amendment 18.747 to rezone approximately 107 acres of property located south of Grand River Avenue, east of Beck Road and west of Taft Road, from Light Industrial, Residential Acreage, and Office Service to the new City West District. **SECOND READING**

**SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT:** Community Development, Planning

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Creation of the City West Zoning District stemmed from recommendations in the Master Plan for Land Use for properties on both the north and south sides of Grand River Avenue between Beck and Taft Roads.
- The City Council adopted new Zoning Ordinance language and approved the City-initiated rezoning of land on the north side of Grand River Avenue in May 2024.
- Rezoning of the south side of Grand River Avenue has been brought back through the process at the request of Mayor Fischer.
- On November 12, 2024, City Council approved the First Reading of the Rezoning

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

City staff previously initiated the rezoning of the 250-acre area between Beck Road and Taft Road, both north and south of Grand River Avenue. The subject properties north of Grand River Avenue were successfully rezoned by City Council on May 20, 2024, but the area south of Grand River Avenue was not rezoned at that time. Based on a request from Mayor Fischer, staff were asked to bring back for reconsideration the southern area, which totals approximately 107 acres.

The Planning Commission held a new Public Hearing on October 16, 2024 and received additional public comment before making a favorable recommendation to the City Council on the rezoning of the south side of Grand River Avenue.

### CITY WEST ORDINANCE AND DESIGN GUIDE

The subject area is proposed to be zoned CW - City West, a new district that was recommended in the 2016 Master Plan Update. The new zoning ordinance language was adopted by City Council in May. Staff is proposing the rezoning to bring all parcels within a single zoning district consistent with the Master Plan recommendation to create a cohesive, walkable, mixed-use district.

The adopted City West Zoning Ordinance and Design Guide (included in the City Council's packet and available online) would not need to be amended; the Council's approval of the CW ordinance left open the possibility that the south side of Grand River could be rezoned in the future. No changes to the adopted Ordinance are proposed.

The southeast corner of Grand River Avenue and Beck Road is excluded from the request, as the property owner had previously requested that the existing B-3, General Business zoning be maintained, and City Council indicated they supported that request. Otherwise, the suggested area for rezoning is the area fronting on the south of Grand River between Beck Road and Taft Road.

### CURRENT ZONING AND LAND USES IN THE AREA

The north side of Grand River is now zoned City West. The Suburban Center Showplace is also covered by the Exposition Overlay district. The area to the south of Grand River is primarily zoned I-1 Light Industrial, except for the area that abuts Beck Road, which is zoned for RA Residential Acreage and OS-1 Office Service. The area to the south is primarily One Family Residential districts, with Central Park Estates zoned Low Rise Multiple Family, and a salon zoned Office Service. East of Taft Road is zoned Light Industrial. West of Beck Road is zoned Office Service Commercial (Ascension Providence Hospital campus).

### NATURAL FEATURES

The City's mapping portal shows that there are regulated wetland and woodland areas throughout the subject area. The actual location of any woodlands and wetlands will need to be field verified by applicants with the submittal of any site plan for the parcels. Any proposed impacts to these natural features will be reviewed and discussed during the site plan submittal for any project on the property and follow the typical standards for review and approval according to the City's ordinances, including Wetland and Woodland permitting. Throughout the City West text, there is an emphasis on protecting the existing natural features woodland and wetlands in the district.

### OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE NEW ORDINANCE

The City West area provides an opportunity to expand the housing choices available for young professionals, empty nesters, and other residents who prioritize a more urban, walkable community, easy access to the highway and destinations within Novi, and entertainment opportunities. Grand River Avenue is a major corridor with greater road capacity than many areas of the city. SMART has recently established bus service along the Grand River corridor through Novi and into Wixom. There are a couple of stops within the City West area, which makes the creation of the district very timely to enable the establishment of transit-oriented development.

City West is also an opportunity to showcase Novi as an area of interest to the thousands of visitors to the Suburban Showplace and Ascension Hospital each year. Visitors to events at the Showplace could take advantage of nearby restaurants, hotels, and shopping without having to get in a car. Similarly greater housing options may appeal to employees of the hospital who could walk or bike to work. The ordinance includes an optional Mixed-Use Development Option (MDO), which permits a wider range of uses and higher-intensity development to encourage the creation of a dynamic mix of compatible uses. While the MDO provides greater flexibility in parking and landscaping, as well as setbacks and building height to allow a more urban form of development, projects will still be subject to other applicable codes and regulations of the City, including stormwater detention standards, façade, and landscape requirements, as well as lighting and noise ordinances.

Residential uses can be developed under the MDO, either as a stand-alone use under certain circumstances or as part of a mixed-use project. The granting of a Mixed-Use Development Option application requires review and recommendation by the Planning Commission and approval of the City Council. The MDO process is similar to the approval process for the Planned Development Options, with City Council discretion over deviations and approvals.

#### BUILDING HEIGHT AND SETBACK CONSIDERATIONS

The adopted Ordinance has a maximum height of 2 stories south of Grand River under the baseline option. For MDO projects, the height limit is increased to 3 stories, or up to 4 stories if bonus height conditions are met and it is further than 300 feet from the residential area to the south. City Council would need to approve the increase in height for each project proposed. Adjacent to single-family residential zones, additional restrictions would control building heights, with a maximum of 35 feet permitted within 200 feet of single-family districts, and a maximum of 45 feet between 200-300 feet of such districts. Within 300 feet of Single-Family Districts buildings are not eligible for bonus height approval.

As with the existing I-1 Zoning, City West requires a minimum building setback of 100 feet from single family residential districts. The parking setback is 100 feet and would be required to be screened with a 5-foot wall or landscaped berm. Existing standards for screening berms/buffers also apply to new multifamily and commercial buildings when adjacent to a residential use. The presence of regulated natural features will also provide a buffer between the districts. The greater flexibility and emphasis on preserving natural features in the City West text is more likely to result in natural features protection than the current Light Industrial district.

Development in this district is to be designed to ensure development is cohesive and walkable. Buildings are meant to front on internal street networks rather than Grand River to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Shared off-street parking facilities are encouraged, as is structured parking. Development projects are required to provide public plazas and open spaces for gathering. City West is meant to have sidewalks and pathways throughout the district, providing connections to the City's non-motorized network.

#### FEEDBACK FROM PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners south of Grand River in the City West area, both of vacant land and currently developed property, have expressed an interest in and support of the ordinance amendment. Some property owners have introduced concepts for projects that could align with the intent of the City West ordinance. Current businesses such as Gatsby's, Paradise Park, and Total Sports Novi have found the text amendment appealing due to the flexibility it offers for those businesses moving forward. Meeting minutes are attached to this packet.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approval of Zoning Map Amendment 18.747 to rezone approximately 107 acres of property located south of Grand River Avenue, east of Beck Road and west of Taft Road, from I-1 Light Industrial, RA Residential Acreage, and OS-1 Office Service (excluding the B-3, General Business zoned area at the southeast corner of Beck and Grand River Avenue), to CW City West District *for the reasons provided below.* **SECOND READING**

1. The 2016 Master Plan for Land Use recommended the creation and adoption of a new zoning district for this area of the City in order to foster redevelopment of underutilized parcels, and to create a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use district,
2. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to foster a favorable business climate is fulfilled by allowing more flexible development standards for a unique area of the City,
3. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to support and strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses is fulfilled by allowing existing businesses to expand and creating new development opportunities in a mixed-use setting,
4. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to provide a wide range of housing options is supported as the new district allows residential use in a mixed-use setting,
5. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to develop the City West/Grand River and Beck area in a manner that supports and complements neighboring areas through the use of setback and height restrictions to provide buffers to single family districts, limits on uses, and an emphasis on preserving natural features, and
6. It provides an opportunity for long-standing businesses to remain at their current location.