



Item Number: 2

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

DATE: July 16, 2024

TO: Mark Washington, City Manager

COMMITTEE: Community Development Committee

LIAISON: Mary Kate Berens, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Kristin Turkelson, Planning Director
Planning, Design & Development

SUBJECT: **Consideration of an ordinance rezoning 385 Leonard Street NE from the NOS (Neighborhood Office Service) Zone District to SD-PRD (Special Districts–Planned Redevelopment District) to facilitate construction of a five-story apartment building with up to 186 dwelling units and 622 sq. ft. of commercial retail space**

On June 4, 2024, the City Commission established July 16, 2024, as the date to consider rezoning property on the north side of Leonard Street NE from NOS (Neighborhood Office Service) to SD-PRD (Special Districts–Planned Redevelopment District) to facilitate construction of a five-story apartment building with up to 186 units and 622 sq. ft. of commercial retail space.

Project Overview

The property is approximately 3.4 acres (147,394 sq. ft.) in area, encompassing the entire block bounded by Leonard Street, Lafayette Avenue, Carrier Street, and North Avenue. The east side of the property is improved with a 58-space surface parking lot, and a +/- 30,000 sq. ft. one- and two-story brick commercial building housing Sun Title's offices and a commercial kitchen used by YMCA Greater Grand Rapids. The western third of the site is vacant/unimproved.

There is a significant grade change on the site, with an increase of 24 feet moving east on Leonard, 12 feet of which occur in the portion of the site to be used for the proposed building. The site increases six feet in elevation moving north along Lafayette from Leonard to Carrier.

A new five-story courtyard-style building is proposed on the vacant portion of the site. Due to the grade changes, the building will vary between the appearance four and five stories: five stories at the corner facing Leonard and Lafayette down to four stories at the easternmost side along Leonard Street. The retail space of 622 sq. ft. will be located on the ground floor of the southwest corner of the building.

Pedestrian connections will be maintained on-site between the apartment building and Sun Title office to facilitate the resident use of the gym in the existing Sun Title building.

A surface parking/loading area and new ingress/egress with access from Leonard Street at the east side of the building is proposed, intended to be utilized for move-in/move-out activities and other back-of-house needs, as well as the permanent trash enclosures.

The parking level will be accessed from Lafayette Avenue and will provide 78 parking spaces. Covered, secured bicycle parking of 56 spaces will be located in the parking garage.

All units will be Type A or B accessible. Although the submitted floor plans show 181 units, approval of up to 186 units is requested to allow for flexibility to meet financing needs. Proposed unit types of the 181 units are as follows:

- 86 studios (400 sq. ft.)
- 91 one-bedroom units (520-650 sq. ft.)
- 4 two-bedroom units (900 sq. ft.)

The building will be constructed using brick and fiber cement panel, and will include sustainability features including solar panels, heat pumps, and electric-only utilities.

The existing building on the east side of the site will continue to house Sun Title's offices and a commercial kitchen for the YMCA Greater Grand Rapids.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission agenda item can be reviewed [here](#).

On May 9, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the project. There was no comment offered during the hearing, although a number of letters were submitted in support of the development, with one letter writer expressing concerns about density and parking. The Creston Business Association and Creston Neighborhood Association both submitted letters of support, with the Creston Neighborhood Association conditioning support based on commitments made by the applicant at a meeting with the Association. The commitments included ten affordable housing units, collaboration with The Rapid to construct sheltered bus stops near the development and engagement and additional community outreach activities about the proposed construction activities. It should be noted that the formal application did not include an affordable housing component.

After discussion, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the development by a vote of 7-0, with several conditions relating to the appearance and screening of the partially below grade parking deck. The recommended conditions require that the building elevations be modified to provide openings and/or architectural variation within the foundation wall screening the below grade parking deck, subject to review and

approval by the Planning Director, and that the proposed green screen be eliminated and/or supplemented with additional plantings, and that the landscaping adjacent to the building be mature at the time of planting.

In recommending approval of the project, the Planning Commission cited its consistency with a number of recommendations of the Master Plan, specifically that the project will increase the number and variety of housing units in the city; locate new higher density residential development to capitalize on transit and improve land use transitions; direct development and investment toward infill and reuse of previously developed sites; and allow reductions in required off-street parking in areas that are within easy walking distance of transit routes. The project furthermore incorporates the site topography into the design and will appropriately screen the parking garage by means of landscaping and berms.

City Commission Action

Pursuant to the approval process for Planned Redevelopment Districts, the City Commission shall review the recommendation of the Planning Commission and approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. If approved, the plans submitted with the PRD application will be considered an integral part of the amendment. The project will be required to meet City specifications and final construction plans will be reviewed at permitting.

Please forward the attached ordinance for consideration at the next scheduled City Commission meeting.

SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 2024 –
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND MAP 13 OF CHAPTER 61 OF TITLE V OF THE
CODE OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS ENTITLED ZONING ORDINANCE

The City of Grand Rapids is considering an amendment to Zoning Ordinance Map 13 of Chapter 61 of Title V of the City Code of Grand Rapids. The map amendment would rezone 385 Leonard Street NE from the NOS (Neighborhood Office Service) Zone District to SD-PRD (Special Districts–Planned Redevelopment District) to facilitate construction of a five-story apartment building with up to 186 dwelling units and 622 sq. ft. of commercial retail space.

The proposed Zoning Ordinance map amendment is available at the City's website at <https://tinyurl.com/385Leonard> or in person at the Planning Department, 3rd Floor, 1120 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during business hours until 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. The Planning Department may be contacted at (616) 456-4100 or planning@grcity.us.

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND MAP 13 OF CHAPTER 61 OF TITLE V
OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS, THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 - _____

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS DO ORDAIN:

Section 1. That Map 13 of Chapter 61 of Title V of the City Code of Grand Rapids be amended to rezone 385 Leonard Street NE from the NOS (Neighborhood Office Service) Zone District to SD-PRD (Special Districts–Planned Redevelopment District) to facilitate construction of a five-story apartment building with up to 186 dwelling units and 622 sq. ft. of commercial retail space.

The resulting boundary of the SD-PRD can be described as follows:

Parcel: 385 Leonard Street NE (41-14-18-383-004)
Description: ALL OF BLK 16 LYING E OF LAFAYETTE AVE & VAC ALLEY IN
SD BLK * TANNER TAYLOR'S ADDITION

Section 2. As provided in Section 5.12.12.F. of the Zoning Ordinance, that the following provisions are an integral part of this Ordinance:

1. That the application and plans submitted by the applicant and signed, dated and stamped by the Planning Director, shall constitute the approved plans, except if plan elements do not meet ordinance requirements and/or as amended in this resolution.
2. That the use shall operate according to the application and per testimony as recorded in the Planning Commission minutes.
3. That a Land Use Development Services (LUDS) permit, building permit, and all other required permits be obtained from the City of Grand Rapids prior to construction, demolition, or operation.
4. That the proposed use will comply with all other applicable City ordinances and policies and all State laws.
5. That the new westerly building shall be governed by the rules and requirements for the TN-TBA Zone District for the purposes of signs and uses in the ground floor commercial space, except that office and residential are permitted uses.
6. That the existing Sun Title office building shall be governed by the rules and requirements for the NOS Zone District for the purposes of signs and uses.
7. That the site shall maintain at least 25% greenspace and 26% tree canopy.
8. That the building elevations be modified to provide openings and/or architectural variation within the foundation wall screening the below grade parking deck and be subject to review and approval by the Planning Director.

9. That the landscape plan be modified to eliminate the proposed green screen and/or supplemented with additional plantings.
10. That the proposed landscaping adjacent to the building be modified to ensure mature vegetation at the time of planting.
11. That this approval shall take effect as required by the City Commission approval in accordance with Section 5.12.12.G. of the Zoning Ordinance.

CORRECT IN FORM

DEPARTMENT OF LAW