

Donovan Smith
Chairperson
Melanie Markowicz
Vice Chair/Secretary

Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director
Christopher Gulock, AICP
Deputy Director

City of Detroit

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-6225 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cpc@detroitmi.gov

Adrian-Keith Bennett
Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Gwendolyn A. Lewis, MBA
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel M. Udabe

May 2, 2025

HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

RE: Request of the Holcomb Development Company for an extension of the Grand Trunk Crossing Planned Development/Ordinance No. 27-14 regarding the rehabilitation of a vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street (RESOLUTION FOR AUTHORIZATION OF EXTENSION)

The Holcomb Development Company, on behalf of 6465 Sterling LLC, is requesting an extension of the Grand Trunk Crossing Planned Development (PD) designation created by Ordinance No. 27-14 for the rehabilitation of a vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street. An additional extension of the PD development proposal is being requested. Attached is a resolution for Your Honorable Body's consideration.

BACKGROUND

Original Grand Trunk Crossing

In 2014, the City Council approved under Ordinance No. 27-14 a rezoning request from Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) to rezone 13.27 acres of land on the south side of West Grand Boulevard just west of the John C. Lodge Freeway.

This proposal included rezoning 9.99 acres to B5 (Major Business District) for the development of the Henry Ford Cancer Institute and adjacent parking deck. The request also included rezoning 3.28 acres of land to PD generally located near the intersection of Sterling and Holden Streets. At the time, HFHS was proposing a mixed-income mixed-use commercial/residential development (referred to as Grand Trunk Crossing) just southwest of the hospital campus. This project was originally proposed to include 154 residential units across 8 buildings on the east and west sides of Sterling Street, including the rehab of the subject vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street.

In 2016, HFHS informed the City that Grand Trunk Crossing was reduced in scope, and City Council approved a resolution for a minor modification of the 2014 PD Grand Trunk Crossing plan. This adjustment included eliminating one of the proposed buildings and building only 77 units. However, the revised plan still included rehabbing the subject vacant apartment building.

PD Lapse of Approval

Unlike projects permitted by right in other zoning districts, PD approval comes with a "shelf life." The PD zoning designation remains in place, but the underlying planned development authorization expires. Sec. 50-3-98 of the Zoning Ordinance: **Sec. 50-3-98. - Lapse of approval.**

The authorization for a planned development shall lapse and be of no further effect:

- (1) Upon the abandonment of a particular project that is approved under this division; or
- (2) Three years from the effective date of approval of a planned development where the planned development has not been completed; or
- (3) Upon the expiration of any extension of time that is granted by the City Planning Commission.

Where one of these conditions exists, the City Council shall act to rezone the property to the zoning district classification which existed immediately prior to the time of rezoning to planned development, or to another zoning district classification as deemed appropriate.

Where PD development approval has lapsed, as in the case of Grand Trunk Crossing, the City Planning Commission (CPC) and City Council effectively have three options:

- The City can extend the lifespan of the PD authorization for a time-specific, where appropriate;
- PD modification; or
- The City can undo the PD and rezone the land to the pre-existing zoning classifications; or
- The City can consider rezoning the PD to a zoning district classification that is appropriate given the current circumstances.

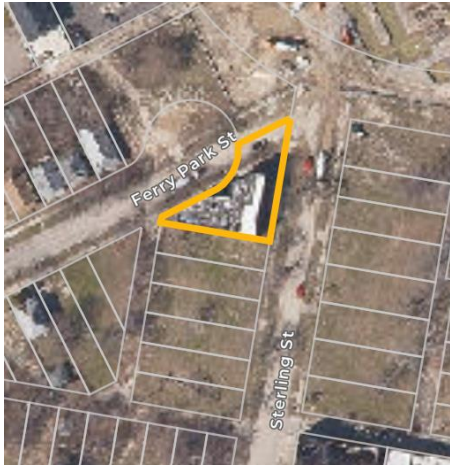
Grand Trunk Crossing Progress Since 2021

After additional delays to Grand Trunk Crossing, in January 2021, the City Council approved a request from HFHS and recommendation from the CPC to extend the Grand Trunk Crossing PD for an additional **four** years beginning November 2020.

However, since that time, there have been changes in and around the subject area. In September 2022, HFHS sold the subject vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street to the Holcomb Development Company. Furthermore, in 2024, HFHS announced the new Future of Health initiative which is a partnership with the Detroit Pistons and MSU Health Services. As part of this initiative, in March 2024, the City Council approved the Future of Health's request (via Ordinance No. 2024-24) to rezone numerous additional parcels to B5 primarily located east of Sterling to the Lodge Freeway to B5.

PROPOSAL

As noted earlier in this report, in September 2022, Henry Ford sold the subject vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street to the Holcomb Development Company. At this point, it appears HFHS is no longer pursuing the Grand Trunk Crossing project. Below is a map showing the exact boundaries of 6465 Sterling Street.



This building was originally built in 1926 and, at the time, included 26 units. At some point in the past 100 years, the unit count changed to 20 units. The Holcomb Development Company is proposing to keep the 20 units and to provide extensive upgrades, including new mechanical systems, plumbing, windows, etc. The Holcomb Development Company indicates if tenants want parking, they will be able to secure parking from the newly built adjacent Henry Ford parking deck.

CONCLUSION

At its meeting on May 1, 2025, the CPC voted to recommend a 36-month extension for the rehabilitation of the vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street which is part of the PD created in 2014 by Ordinance No. 27-14. Attached is a resolution for Your Honorable Body's consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

DONOVAN SMITH, Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Marcell R. Todd, Jr.".

Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director

Christopher Gulock, AICP, Deputy Director

A RESOLUTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER _____:

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Henry Ford Health System requested the rezoning of 3.28 acres of land in the vicinity of Holden Avenue and Sterling Street on Zoning District Map No. 7 in the City of Detroit to establish a mixed-income, mixed-use Planned Development (PD) known as Grand Trunk Crossing (Ordinance No. 27-14) which included the rehabilitation of vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Henry Ford Health System informed the City that Grand Trunk Crossing was being reduced in scope, and in response, Detroit City Council approved a resolution for a minor modification of the 2014 PD Grand Trunk Crossing plan; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, after continued delays, the Detroit City Council authorized the extension of the Grand Trunk Crossing PD for a period of four years dating back to November of 2020 so that an alternate and appropriate development plan be prepared and presented for consideration; and

WHEREAS, in September 2022, Henry Ford Health System sold the subject vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street to the Holcomb Development Company;

WHEREAS, in April 2025, the Holcomb Development Company is now ready to move forward with the rehabilitation of 6465 Sterling Street, but the previous four-year extension has expired; and

WHEREAS, the Detroit Zoning Ordinance specifies in Sec. 50-3-98 that a PD authorization is deemed to have lapsed if it is not completed within three years, the City can choose to extend the original PD authorization; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission voted at its meeting on May 1, 2025 to recommend a three-year extension of the PD authorization for the rehabilitation of the vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, the Detroit City Council authorizes the extension of the Grand Trunk Crossing PD (Ordinance No. 27-14) for a period of 36 months for the rehabilitation of the vacant apartment building at 6465 Sterling Street.



Holcomb Development
5440 Cass Ave.
Detroit, MI 48226
313.571.3385

April 25, 2025

Detroit City Planning Commission
c/o Director Marcell Todd

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 208
Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Request for Extension of PD Development Rights for 6465 Sterling Street (Parcel No. 08005972)

Dear Director Todd and Members of the City Planning Commission,

Holcomb Development Company, on behalf of 6465 Sterling LLC, respectfully requests an extension of the Planned Development (PD) designation and associated development rights for the property located at 6465 Sterling Street.

Holcomb acquired the property in September 2022 from Henry Ford Health, which had previously obtained PD approval for a larger redevelopment initiative known as Grand Trunk Crossing (Ord. No. 27-14, adopted in 2014). The 6465 Sterling building—a 3-story, 20-unit multifamily structure—is one of the few components of the original PD that remains physically intact and viable for rehabilitation.

Holcomb intends to preserve the existing building and complete a rehabilitation focused on repairing existing fire damage, new interior finishes, and replacing outdated building systems. We do not propose any change in use, unit count, layout, or occupancy.

The project is already advancing through the City's permitting process:

- A fast-track repair permit for building stabilization due to fire damage (BLD202-02349) was approved on 12/4/2023 and remains active.
- Site Plan Review was submitted on January 17, 2025; all comments have been resolved except for zoning.
- A Building Permit application was submitted on March 4, 2025; all comments are expected to be resolved this week.

We believe this project aligns with the intent of the original PD and provides much-needed housing while preserving the neighborhood's character. It has strong community support including the support of the neighborhood's community group, Northwest Goldberg Cares. Holcomb held two well attended community engagement meetings to discuss the project with neighborhood residents. The project was also granted a NEZ tax abatement by the City Council in 2023. The attached zoning verification letter confirms that the building will retain its "current, legal, and conforming" longstanding use as a multi-family dwelling.

Given the expiration of the PD authorization in November 2024—following the Commission's previous 4-year extension granted on November 5, 2020—we respectfully request a time-specific extension for the 6465 Sterling parcel only. Maintaining the PD designation at this time is critical to avoid delays and keep the project on schedule for construction.

Thank you for your consideration. We are happy to provide any further information or attend the May 1 or May 15 CPC meeting to support this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Casazza', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Casazza

Managing Partner

Holcomb Development Company

313-618-9030 | Andrew@Holcomb.us



**BUILDINGS, SAFETY ENGINEERING
AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Fourth Floor
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•2733 TTY:711
Fax 313•224•1467
www.detroitmi.gov/BSEED

January 8, 2025

Gary Brownell
2108 Burns
Detroit MI 48214

RE: 6465 Sterling
PIN: 08005972

To the Attention of Gary Brownell:

Pursuant to your request for zoning verification of the above-referenced property, we have reviewed our records and find that it is in a PD (Planned Development) zoning district. Modifications or expansions of uses within a Planned Development district are subject to review by the City Planning Commission and approval by City Council.

The current legal, conforming use of this multi-building complex is 'Multiple-Family Dwelling (26 units)' per building permit number 7390 issued May 10, 1926. The continued use of this property for the above-stated use is permitted per Section 50-11-13 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance, subject to compliance with all relevant codes and ordinances.

Building permits are required for any construction at the site. If you have any questions, please contact our Zoning Division at (313) 224-1317 or send an email to zoning@detroitmi.gov and someone from our office will get back in touch with you.

Sincerely,

Jayda Philson

Jayda Philson
Zoning Manager

JP/EL
VER2024-00472