

Crain's Grand Rapids Business

Grand Rapids business owner, former commissioner plans first housing project

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The four-story mixed-use development is at the northeast corner of Kalamazoo Avenue and Adams Street.

Credit: Issac V. Norris & Associates

Eastern Floral CEO and former Grand Rapids city commissioner Bing Goei is breaking into the housing development space for the first time under a partnership that plans to bring an infill mixed-use project to Grand Rapids' southeast side.

Goei is partnering with Holland resident and real estate investor Saleem Usami to build 27 apartments with commercial space in Grand Rapids' Third Ward, an area that Goei

recently represented on the commission and that city leaders have identified as historically underinvested.

Plans for the nearly \$8 million project call for a four-story, 5,700-square-foot building with ground-floor retail.

The development team, doing business as Impact-Full Investments LLC, is under contract to buy the nearly half-acre vacant lot at 1356 Kalamazoo Ave. SE.

The Third Ward spanning the city's southeast side historically has had the highest population of Black residents and the least amount of investment among the three wards. According to a city economic opportunity dashboard, private investments supported by city incentives in the Third Ward from 2012-2017 were a fraction of those in other areas of the city.

Goei, who served as an appointed commissioner from March 2024 through the end of 2024, said he hopes the project generates interest from people interested in pursuing smaller-scale development across the Third Ward and throughout the city, he said.

Bing Goei



"I'm passionate about the Third Ward and I think we need to have more and new investments here, and that will have to include opportunities for people in the Third Ward to do that on their own as well," Goei said. "This particular project is just a small way for us to say projects don't have to always be done by big conglomerates."

We're really excited and I think this is something I hope we can duplicate many, many times over in the Third Ward."

Goei and Usami, doing business as Impact-Full Investments LLC, on Wednesday morning received a \$193,700 emerging developer grant from the city's Local Brownfield Revolving Fund. The grant will fund some pre-construction and site due

diligence work. The developers also plan to apply for a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone, and state-level incentives.

Usami said during a Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment Authority meeting Wednesday that the team plans to offer investment and ownership opportunities in the project to neighborhood residents.

“That was important to me, that we maximize what we can do for the community with this project,” Usami said during the meeting.



The 0.4-acre lot is currently vacant. Credit: Property records

Usami has developed other projects before, but this will be his first in Grand Rapids, he told the brownfield board.

Usami, who previously worked for more than two decades in tech positions at MillerKnoll and Gentex Corp., said he wanted to get involved in the project and help benefit the community.

The plan is to break ground in July or August this year and for construction to be done within about a year in summer 2026.

Cella Building Co. and Issac V. Norris & Associates are working with the developers on the project. Plans call for an all-electric building with a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments and below-market rent for tenants.

Goei said the project will eventually be named after an African American woman leader from Grand Rapids.

"It's important for us to recognize the contributions of our many African American leaders in our community," Goei said.

Goei is also working to find a tenant for the commercial space, with a focus on a user that will fill a community need, he said. Feedback so far from community members indicated a desire for a vision care office in the neighborhood. Goei said he has connected with Ferris State University to help find an optometrist who might want to bring an office to the building.

"We're doing that kind of research. We want to build up a more diverse economy in the Third Ward," Goei said. "We know one of the things we have to do is grow and increase the amount of African American-owned businesses and increase the strength of existing African American owned businesses."