

TO: James Bannon, Commander
Detroit Police Department

FROM: Ronald J. Hewitt, Director

DATE: March 16, 1976

RE: Possibility of Establishing a Mini-Station at
Grand River and Oakman

The Mayor has suggested that I describe to you efforts the Community and Economic Development Department is making to stabilize the Grand River/Oakman shopping area. He further suggested that I request you to consider establishing a police mini-station in the shopping area as a means of bolstering our efforts.

The Mayor has directed me to take steps which will aid retail businesses and encourage them to remain at present locations in several major strip retail areas. Grand River/Oakman is one of the prime focal points for C&EDD's efforts. We have been discussing needs of area businesses for nearly a year with Sears, Federals and other area property owners who have responded with enthusiasm to our proposals for better street lighting, improving access to parking lots, removal of blighted buildings along Grand River near the shopping area, cosmetic treatment of building fronts and entrances, and an enclosed walkway over Grand River between Sears and Federals.

Sears has sent regional and national executives to Detroit to explore with us ways we can jointly develop the shopping area and underutilized portions of the aging Sears building. Sears is apparently considering Detroit as a pilot city for developing answers for their nation-wide problems with operation of inner city stores.

One concern frequently expressed by the local Sears managers and by area merchants is the need for a visible police presence to reassure customers and employees, and to counter crime in the stores and on the adjacent walks. The decline in evening shopping is, they feel, directly related to this concern by customers. When they have had trial programs in the area which provided police to walk on the street and through the stores, both customers and employees expressed relief and commented positively on the improved safety of the area.

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Therefore, I am asking that you consider establishing a mini-station in the shopping area. Some vacant store fronts now exist. It is possible that Sears, James Wineman, or another owner will provide space at a very low rate.

I would be happy to provide more information about our efforts in this area and would appreciate your early response to this proposal that we join efforts in stabilizing and improving the Grand River/Oakman retail area. Please call me if you have any questions.

RF:jc

bc: Mr. William Beckham, Jr.