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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division Staff 

DATE: August 28, 2025

RE: **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DIVERSE ATHLETIC OFFERINGS AT THE PROPOSED
PISTONS' WATERFRONT MULTISPORT COMPLEX**

City Council Member Scott Benson has requested the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to produce a resolution requesting the inclusion of a diverse offering of sports at the proposed riverfront multisport complex. The requested resolution is attached.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if we may be of further assistance.

BY CITY COUNCIL MEMBER SCOTT BENSON

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DIVERSE ATHLETIC OFFERINGS AT THE PROPOSED PISTONS' WATERFRONT MULTISPORT COMPLEX

WHEREAS Detroit is celebrated for its rich sports tradition, proudly hosting four professional teams across the major North American leagues; and

WHEREAS The City is further renowned for its unique sports achievements, being one of only twelve U.S. cities to host teams in all four major sports and the only U.S. city where its MLB, NFL, NBA, and NHL teams all play within the downtown district;¹ and

WHEREAS A coalition led by Pistons owner Tom Gores and Vice Chair Arn Tellem has put forward a bold bid to return a WNBA franchise to Detroit in a proposal that hinges upon transforming the former Uniroyal industrial site along the Detroit River into a mixed-use athletic campus, featuring a dedicated WNBA practice facility and a team headquarters, alongside publicly accessible youth sports courts and fields for basketball, volleyball, soccer, football, and lacrosse;² and

WHEREAS The bid reflects a convergence of women's sports momentum, community priority and urban revitalization. The initiative embeds sports infrastructure into the heart of the community and may serve to address longstanding inequities in youth sports access; and

WHEREAS The vision for the facility promotes athletic excellence, community engagement, and youth development,³ and the inclusion of a broader range of diverse sports and recreational offerings would provide transformative opportunities for young Detroit athletes, ensuring equitable access to experiences and professional pathways, potentially contributing socioeconomic advancement; and

WHEREAS Youth participation in organized sports has been shown to promote critical outcomes such as psychosocial development, emotional resilience, leadership, and academic success, as youth athletes exhibit stronger social skills, greater self-esteem, better mental-health outcomes, and are more likely to graduate from college compared to non-participants;⁴ and

WHEREAS This serves as a critical opportunity to provide young Detroiters with a diverse array of athletic experiences, including tennis, sailing, rowing, track and field, and other such programs that not only promote physical fitness, but also cultivate teamwork, discipline, and community engagement, while offering pathways to Olympic competition, collegiate scholarships, and professional advancement, thereby significantly contributing to the personal growth, academic success, and long-term well-being of Detroit's youth;⁵ **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED That the Detroit City Council strongly advocates for the inclusion of **world-class indoor tennis courts** in the proposed waterfront multisport complex, capable of hosting United States Tennis Association (USTA) tournament-level events, to promote competitive tennis, youth participation, and community engagement in this globally recognized sport; **BE IT FURTHER**

¹ United States cities with teams from four major league sports, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_cities_with_teams_from_four_major_league_sports.

² Crain's Detroit Business, *Sports complex under discussion for Uniroyal site as part of Gores WNBA bid*, Mar. 24, 2025, <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/real-estate/gores-led-group-seeking-wnba-team-talks-over-uniroyal-site>; Crain's Detroit Business, *Tom Gores wants the WNBA back in the Motor City*, Jan. 31, 2025, <https://www.detroitbadboys.com/2025/1/31/24355939/tom-gores-wnba-detroit-shock-pistons>.

³ Id.

⁴ *Organized Sports Participation Among Children Aged 6–17 Years: United States, 2020*, NCHS Data Brief No. 441 (Aug. 2022); see also *Organized Sports for Children, Preadolescents, and Adolescents*, 143 *Pediatrics* e20190997 (2019).

⁵ Harry Jones, *How Detroit Community Sailing Center fosters diversity on the water*, Planet Detroit, May 28, 2025, <https://planetdetroit.org/2025/05/harry-jones-detroit-river-sailing/>.

RESOLVED That the Detroit City Council further advocates for the integration of an **indoor, competition-grade track and field facility** suitable for Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) events, as well as **sailing and crewing infrastructure with associated programming** to further activate the Detroit River, expand access to Olympic and scholarship-level water-based sports, and ensure equitable opportunities for athletes of all ages and abilities throughout the city; **BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED That the Detroit City Clerk is to transmit copies of this resolution to the Mayor, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, the Detroit Pistons Headquarters, and all relevant stakeholders, to affirm the City's unwavering commitment to advancing access to world-class athletic facilities, promoting youth development, activating the riverfront, and supporting Detroit's continued legacy as a premier center for sports and recreation.