



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids is home to people of all backgrounds, including those who were not born here, but now call it home. Grand Rapids' success depends on making sure that all Grand Rapidians feel welcome. New Grand Rapidians are a vital part of our community, along with our long-time residents, bringing ideas, starting businesses, serving in civic roles, working in critical industries, and contributing to the vibrant diversity that we value; and

WHEREAS, diversity is an asset and our community must strive to create policies and a culture that ensure everyone can belong and thrive. This includes addressing disparities, countering hate, understanding history, and helping neighbors come together; and

WHEREAS, anti-Blackness, racism, xenophobia, and all forms of othering threaten our collective well-being, health, and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, regardless of where we are born or how we identify, we are Grand Rapidians and our lives are interdependent. By fostering a welcoming environment for all - regardless of immigration status, race, ethnicity, place of origin, English language proficiency, religion, gender, sexual orientation, differing abilities, and other factors - we enhance Grand Rapids' health, economic prosperity, and well-being for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids in partnership with Samaritas, West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Kent County, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, several organizations across sectors and the immigrant community embarked on a two year process to create a Welcome Plan for all municipalities within and including Kent County; and

WHEREAS, the Welcome Plan's recommendations support justice and systemic change goals within additional City reports and plans, including but not limited to the recent Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Plan, strategic plans of the Grand Rapids Police Department and Office of Oversight and Public Accountability, SAFE Task Force report, and the City of Grand Rapids' Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS, advancing recommendations within the Welcome Plan will foster a more welcoming city for all year round;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rosalynn Bliss, Mayor of the City of Grand Rapids do hereby proclaim September 12 through September 20, 2020 as Welcoming Week in Grand Rapids, Michigan as part of the national Welcoming Week initiative and call on our residents, business leaders, civic groups, government agencies and stakeholders to reach across lines of difference and support and advance recommendations of the new Welcome Plan designed to make our city and region more equitable, inclusive and welcoming for new and long-term residents alike.

Rosalynn Bliss