

# **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

AUGUST 15, 2006



CITY OF  
GRAND  
RAPIDS

# **City of Grand Rapids, Michigan Sustainability Plan**

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## **FOREWORD**

### **CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS' SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

Creating a sustainable City requires envisioning an ideal community in which the economic, environmental, and social systems throughout the City are ideal and in balance to create and sustain a positive quality of life for future generations. Being a sustainable City compels action that will be conducted with regard to the achievement of the “triple bottom line” goals of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social equity.

City of Grand Rapids Sustainability Plan provides the policy direction in which residents, visitors, and employees within the City will receive municipal services and includes the vision of a sustainable City and community. The Sustainability Plan has evolved from a strategic directive for the provision of quality municipal services to a dynamic document that incorporates outcomes leading to the building a sustainable City.

During FY2006, the City had entered into a multi-organizational agreement with the Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Valley State University, and Aquinas College to combine efforts to advance the goals of Sustainability. The agreement resulted in the creation of the Community Sustainability Partnership (CSP) that guides the organizations in improving modes of service delivery with regard to the triple bottom line. The CSP developed a framework for planning, establishing baseline data, and evaluating service delivery. The City's Sustainability Plan integrates elements of the CSP framework.

The Sustainability Plan also aligns with the mandates of the City as set forth in the Michigan State Constitution and legislation, City Charter, City Ordinances, City Commission Policies, and Administrative Policies. Similarly the Sustainability Plan and the related outcomes will be carried out in alignment with the City's Mission, Vision, and Values.

Each City Department will provide their services with regard to the “triple bottom line” principles of sustainability consistent with the framework of the Community Sustainability Partnership. The progress that the City and each department achieve toward these outcomes will be detailed in an annual Sustainability Plan Progress Report and in the Departmental Performance Management Plan Progress Reports.

Finally, In support of achieving the outcomes of the Sustainability Plan, the City will establish a Sustainability Council comprised of members of City Commission, City staff, and key community stakeholders that will regularly monitor and report on the City's progress towards sustainability.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Aggregate purchasing** – the purchase of goods and services through a joint purchasing coalition program involving multiple entities.

**Alternative fuels** – methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols; mixtures containing 85 percent or more by volume of methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols with gasoline or other fuels; natural gas; liquefied petroleum gas; hydrogen; coal-derived liquid fuels; fuels (other than alcohol) derived from biological materials; electricity (including electricity from solar energy); and any [that] is substantially not petroleum and would yield substantial energy security benefits and substantial environmental benefits. (U.S. Energy Policy Act of 1992)

**Biodiversity** - the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, 'inter alia', [terrestrial](#), [marine](#), and other [aquatic](#) ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (1992 [United Nations Earth Summit](#))

**Brownfield** - real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

**Clean technology** - manufacturing processes or product technologies that reduce pollution or waste, energy use, or material use in comparison to the technologies that they replace.

**Economic prosperity** - the economic system fosters and sustains strong business and gainful employment.

**Environmental integrity** - the natural environment is respected, improved, and preserved for future generations

**Green purchasing** – the acquisition of recycled content products, environmentally preferable products and services, biobased products, energy- and water-efficient products, alternate fuel vehicles, products using renewable energy, and alternatives to hazardous or toxic chemicals. (Office of the Federal Environmental Executive).

**Green space** - a tract of land designed and used by the public for active and passive recreation.

**Green technology** - the application of the [environmental sciences](#) to conserve the [natural environment](#) and eliminating the negative impacts of human involvement.

**Greenhouse gases** – (GHG) are [gaseous](#) components of the [atmosphere](#) that contribute to the [greenhouse effect](#). GHG are transparent only to some wavelengths of light. When sunlight hits the Earth, some is absorbed and re-emitted at longer wavelengths for which the GHG is opaque, hindering emission back out into space. GHG include: [nitrous oxide](#), [sulfur hexafluoride](#), [hydrofluorocarbons](#), [perfluorocarbons](#) and [chlorofluorocarbons](#)

**Indicator** – a unit of measure used to quantify the degree of progress towards the achievement of an outcome.

**LEED** - (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System® is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. (U.S. Green Building Council).

**MWBE** – Minority and Women Business Enterprises; are business enterprises that are owned and controlled by racial/ethnic minorities and/or women.

**Open space** - primarily natural sites that have a minimum of development and little if any, active recreational development. Although these areas may be located within an urban area, the site itself is primarily natural, as opposed to urban open space that has landscaping, plazas, and other built components.

**Outcomes** – statement of anticipated change in condition or behavior

**Renewable energy** – is power derived from existing flows of energy, from on-going natural processes, such as [sunshine](#), [wind](#), [wave power](#), [flowing water \(hydropower\)](#), [biological processes](#) such as [anaerobic digestion](#), and [geothermal](#) heat flow.

**Smart growth** – development that is based on the principles of mix land use, compact building design, broad range of housing opportunities, walkable neighborhoods, preserved open and green spaces, variety on transportation modes, and community stakeholder engagement in development decisions. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

**Social equity** - Society embraces diversity and uses the power of diversity for positive change.

**Sustainable building** - the design and construction of buildings using methods and materials that are resource efficient and that will not compromise the health of the environment or the associated health and well-being of the building's occupants, construction workers, the general public, or future generations.

**Sustainability** - is the ability to achieve continuing economic prosperity while protecting the natural systems of the planet and providing a high quality of life for its people. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

**Sustainability framework** – is a dynamic inventory of interconnected areas of interest, activities, and related outcomes that lead to a sustainable City and community.

**Toxic waste** - waste material, often in chemical form, that can cause death or injury to living creatures. It usually is the product of industry or commerce, but comes also from residential use, agriculture, the military, medical facilities, radioactive sources, and light industry, such as dry cleaning establishments. The term is often used interchangeably with “hazardous waste,” or discarded material that can pose a long-term risk to health or environment.

**Themes** – are general categories of City services, programs, and activities that include anticipated outcomes.

**Urban sprawl** - is low density, automobile dependent development beyond the edge of service and employment areas. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

## MISSION STATEMENT

We, the elected and appointed officials and employees of the City of Grand Rapids, believe in the dignity and worth of all people and in the right of every citizen to have equitable access to the benefits of urban life. We believe in the rights of all citizens to express their views and the responsibility of City government to respond to those views.

As government representatives, we will help shape the future to assure that the City will continue to be a place where the benefits of urban life can be enjoyed.

We will:

- Provide leadership in focusing community resources to address community needs and opportunities.
- Develop and nurture partnerships that encourage and support collaboration.
- Encourage economic prosperity for City residents and businesses to ensure the City's ability to provide important urban services.
- Foster the economic health of our City within an economically healthy metropolitan region and assure that responsibility is shared equitably across the metropolitan area.
- Celebrate and strengthen the diversity of our community, ensure the dignity of all citizens, and equitably deliver services.
- Provide for the security of persons and property.
- Provide leadership to ensure that children, families, and seniors thrive in our community.
- Develop, maintain, and improve City-owned physical infrastructure.
- Maintain and enhance residential neighborhoods and increase homeownership.
- Enhance citizens' quality of life using the City's cultural, recreational, and occupational infrastructure.
- Provide high quality municipal services efficiently, fairly, and courteously.
- Foster a learning organization, which promotes employee and team excellence in delivery of City services.
- Provide environmental stewardship to enhance quality of life for residents.
- Collaborate with residents to provide a neighborhood-based City service delivery system

## VISION STATEMENT

**Grand Rapids is a vibrant, exciting and diverse community in which to live, work and visit.** Guided by our core values of integrity, honesty, respect, competence, service and family, our dedication to excellent service, leadership and creativity makes this happen.

### **Customer Service**

- Our future is in customer satisfaction.

### **Teamwork**

- We work together toward common goals to create synergy from valuing individual responsibility, contributions and risk-taking.

### **Families**

- We value families and individuals by practicing policies that promote balance, flexibility, growth and community participation.

### **Technology**

- We provide organized access to current methods and means to achieve quality customer service. We provide a learning environment, service delivery options, and have secure funding consistent with our priorities and a plan for success.

### **Work Environment**

- Our work environment is conducive to productivity through a well designed, pleasant, supportive and personally rewarding place to work.

## VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

The City of Grand Rapids has six core values, which guide behavior and the development of policies and practices. They are:

### **Integrity**

We demonstrate consistency in all of our actions and are committed to actions that are above reproach.

- Our actions reflect ethical soundness, steadfastness in purpose, responsibility and truthfulness.
- We are diligent in the performance of our jobs.
- We strive to demonstrate honor in our actions and behaviors.

### **Honesty**

We are committed to sharing a full range of available information and are truthful, open and sincere with each other.

- We are open and receptive to the sharing of ideas.
- We have the courage to acknowledge when we do not know something and trust each other to share our full understanding of the truth.
- We are willing to say or do things that may not be popular.

### **Respect**

We practice fairness, consideration and understanding with each other, recognizing that everyone has intrinsic worth and equal value.

- We listen to each other with open minds.
- We are courteous with each other.
- We treat each other with dignity and are polite with each other.

### **Competence**

We are able to reach objectives in an effective and efficient manner.

- We have a thirst for knowledge and are willing to share our knowledge with each other.
- We strive for excellence and take individual responsibility for acquiring new and better job skills.
- We constantly evaluate our own performance and look for opportunities to perform more effectively.

### **Service**

We provide assistance and services to citizens and employees to the best of our ability.

- We are courteous and respectful at all times.
- We anticipate problems and seek to find solutions.
- We are timely in our responses and follow-through on commitments that we have made to our customers.

### **Family**

We recognize the value of families and strive to support our employees' needs to balance their work and family lives.

- We provide for the safety and welfare of the family unit.
- We show interest and concern for the families of those who work with us.
- We provide opportunities for employees to spend quality time with their family and friends.

## SUSTAINABILITY VISION STATEMENT

**Sustainable City:** *The economic, environmental, and social systems throughout the city are ideal and in balance to create and sustain a positive quality of life for future generations.*

### Sustainability Themes and Outcomes

#### **Clean Environment**

- The natural environment is respected, improved, and preserved for future generations.

#### **Enriched Lives**

- Opportunities for and access to educational and cultural experiences are abundant.

#### **Prosperous Economy**

- The economic system fosters and sustains strong business and gainful employment.

#### **Quality Community Design and Infrastructure**

- Community development is conducted in accordance with the City's Master Plan and infrastructure design is conducted in accordance with the City's Master Plan and governing rules and guidelines.

#### **Responsible Government**

- The City is a "best in class organization" by which the management of the City and the provision of services are conducted.

#### **Safe Neighborhoods**

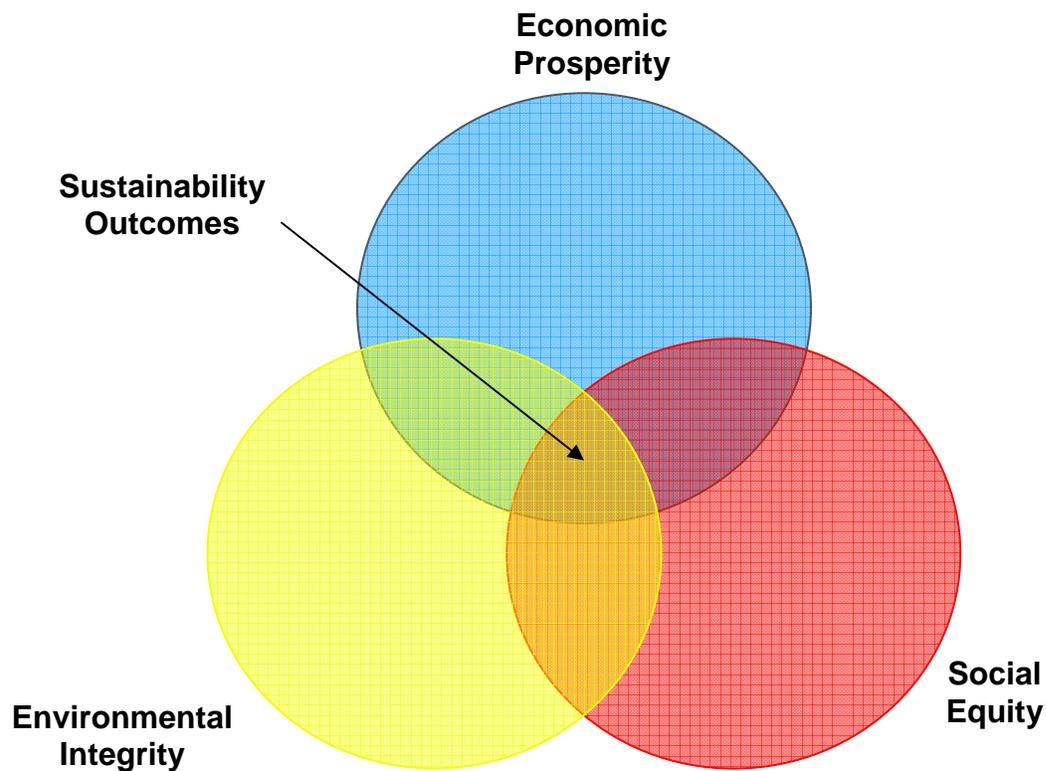
- Neighborhoods are free from crime and other threats to public safety.

#### **Social Equity**

- Society embraces diversity and uses the power of diversity for positive change.

## SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Sustainability Framework is a dynamic inventory of interconnected areas of interest, activities, and related outcomes that lead to a sustainable City and community. It is critical to note that the activities that are conducted within this framework, although categorized under a primary area, relate to all three principles of sustainability and their impact will be measured against the triple bottom line.



## **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

### **Economic Development**

- Increase brownfield redevelopment
- Increase and maintain business sustainability
- Create and maintain gainful employment
- Increase and maintain smart growth

### **Fiscal Management**

- Maximize revenue generation
- Optimize and maintain expenditure and operational efficiencies

### **Innovation**

- Increase applied clean technologies
- Create public and private partnerships

### **Purchasing**

- Adopt aggregate purchasing practices
- Adopt green purchasing practices
- Establish sustainable purchasing policies and procedures
- Increase purchasing of local products
- Increase MWBE utilization

## **ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY**

### **Agriculture**

Increase the production of local food crops  
Reduce land erosion

### **Air**

Increase and maintain air quality  
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions  
Reduce or abate nuisance noise

### **Built Environment**

Adopt LEED construction methods for commercial and industrial facilities  
Increase facility efficiency  
Increase facility renovation  
Increase sustainable residential development/redevelopment

### **Energy**

Increase energy conservation  
Increase renewable energy use

### **Land Use/Preservation and Restoration**

Increase biodiversity  
Increase and maintain open and green space  
Protect and maintain natural habitat  
Reduce urban sprawl

### **Transportation**

Increase the use of alternative fuels  
Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation  
Increase fleet vehicles efficiency

### **Waste**

Increase recycling  
Reduce or eliminate toxic waste  
Reduce or elimination waste

### **Water**

Conserve water  
Increase and maintain quality storm and waste water management  
Increase and maintain water quality

## **SOCIAL EQUITY**

### **Community Capital**

Foster leadership and advocacy  
Increase and maintain civic engagement and community based leadership  
Increase and maintain voter registration and participation

### **Cultural Competence**

Increase inclusion  
Increase inter-cultural awareness and interaction

### **Education**

Increase and maintain intellectual capital  
Increase and maintain educational achievement  
Increase and maintain access to technology  
Increase and maintain training

### **Health and Wellness**

Increase and maintain health resources  
Increase and maintain access to health resource  
Increase and maintain human health and wellness

### **Quality of Life**

Establish and maintain great neighborhoods  
Increase and maintain access to the arts and cultural experiences  
Increase and maintain access to public services  
Increase the availability of quality and affordable housing  
Increase availability of recreational programs and facilities  
Increase social Integration  
Reduce poverty

### **Philanthropy**

Increase and maintain charitable resources and contributions

### **Responsible Governance**

Comply with regulatory mandates  
Establish and implement a model of fiscal sustainability  
Increase and maintain inclusive participation in governance  
Establish and maintain regional partnerships and cooperative relationships

### **Public Safety and Security**

Establish and maintain an emergency management system  
Increase and maintain a quality fire response system  
Increase and maintain crime prevention  
Increase and maintain fire prevention  
Reduce crime rates

## SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION MATRIX

Outcomes	Economic Prosperity	Environmental Integrity	Social Equity
Clean Environment			
Enriched Lives			
Prosperous Economy			
Quality Community Design and Infrastructure			
Responsible Government			
Safe Neighborhoods			
Social Equity			

## REFERENCES

Alternative Fuels:

[https://energy.navy.mil/publications/law\\_us/92epact/hr\\_0301.htm](https://energy.navy.mil/publications/law_us/92epact/hr_0301.htm)

Brownfield:

<http://epa.gov/brownfields/glossary.htm>

Clean Technology:

<http://www.p2pays.org/ref/09/08853.htm>

Green Purchasing:

<http://www.ofee.gov/>

Smart growth:

[http://www.epa.gov/livability/about\\_sg.htm#what\\_is\\_sg](http://www.epa.gov/livability/about_sg.htm#what_is_sg)

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<http://www.egret.net/SustainableBuilding.htm>

Sustainability:

<http://www.epa.gov/sustainability/>

Sustainability Index – Dow Jones:

<http://www.sustainability-index.com/>

Urban Sprawl:

<http://www.epa.gov/maia/html/sprawl.html>