

Draft Equity Statement for City of Grand Rapids Draft Preliminary Strategic Plan

Draft as of 2.25.19

“...Racial inequities has been baked into government, and that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. We also know that other groups of people are still marginalized, including based on gender, sexual orientation, ability and age, to name but a few. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization.” (2019, Government Alliance on Race and Equity)

The City of Grand Rapids is dedicated to advance equitable outcomes and opportunity by leading with racial equity to address root causes of disparities. The City defines equity as the condition achieved when people have the tools, resources and connections necessary to be fully engaged and prepared to benefit from the opportunities they seek. Racial equity is achieved when one’s race or ethnicity does not determine, in a statistical sense, how one experiences opportunity, power and life outcomes.

This targeted approach on racial equity will advance our universal goal of elevating quality of life in Grand Rapids. Equity is one of the six City values that must be embedded into all of our decisions, policies, and practices. In an effort to dismantle the systemic and institutional injustice that has been prevalent throughout our history, the City has made the conscious choice to highlight equity in each priority area of our strategic plan: Governmental Excellence, Economic Prosperity and Affordability, Engaged and Connected Community, Health and Environment, Mobility, and Safe Community.

The first objective in this Strategic Plan outlines the City’s commitment to creating a structure within the City to lift up racial equity throughout the organization so that each department has the knowledge, skills and support to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice. Additionally, to the extent possible, all Strategic Plan metrics and corresponding data will be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and when needed as a proxy, by geography (Census tracts, Wards, etc). The statement is an urgent call to action to transform government to achieve positive and sustainable community level impact.