
Grand Rapids City Commission Committee of the Whole
August 24, 2021
Agenda

- Why are we doing this work
- What did we accomplish in the Zero Cities Project
- What are the key takeaways
- What’s next
Why focus on buildings?

- People spend 90% of their time inside buildings
- The construction and operation of buildings have significant impacts on affordability/financial sustainability, health (individual, public and neighborhood health) and climate change (buildings account for nearly 30% of global carbon emissions)
- Black, Indigenous and People Of Color (BIPOC) are disproportionately negatively impacted by both indoor and outdoor environmental pollutants and climate change and have been under-represented in designing and operating buildings as well as the systems and policies that regulate the design, construction and operation of buildings
- Nationwide affordable housing crisis
It’s all connected

HUMAN HEALTH
- Tenant Health
- Healthy Neighborhoods
- Indoor Air Quality

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
- Higher Market Value
- Lower Tenant Vacancies
- Reduced Utility Bills
- Higher Workforce Retainment

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
- Preserved Green Space
- Stormwater Management
- Greater Biodiversity
- Decreased Resource Extraction

Designed by the Grand Rapids 2030 District
Zero Cities Project Accomplishments

- Collaborative and innovative partnerships rooted in equity and environmental justice
- GR Equity Assessment Tool
- Neighborhood of Focus (NOF) resident survey on myriad of housing obstacles
- Communitywide baseline building assessment
- Building policy modeling scenario
- Commercial building stakeholder education on zero carbon buildings (4,223 webinar views and 1,981 people educated)
- Development and implementation of the environmental sustainability requirement of cannabis licensing ordinance
- National recognition as a model for leading with equity in building policy development

Zero Cities Project website
GR Equity Assessment Tool

Kent County home energy burden (percent of annual income spent on home energy bills) among low income households

What’s Next?

Grand Rapids Policies and Programs for Equitable, Healthy and Zero Carbon Buildings Initiative – E.H.ZERO
Desired Outcome

Residential and commercial building policies and programs co-created and supported by community (residents and commercial building stakeholders) focused on equitably achieving increased affordability, beneficial health outcomes and resilience while reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.
Policy Options for Buildings to Explore

Single Family Residential
- Energy audit and lead sampling for residential rental license certification program
- Disclosure of 12 months of utility data or an energy label at point of sale or lease
- Certification for environmentally friendly design and construction training for contractors and designers
- Comprehensive all-electric ready new construction requirements
- Whole Homes concierge service for repairs, safety, health, energy/carbon, financing

Commercial
- Building performance standards (based on carbon reduction)
- Building owners complete and disclose energy efficiency assessment of buildings prior to sale
- Mandatory energy & water benchmarking and disclosure for large commercial buildings (>10,000 Ft²)
- Adopt stricter building energy code if allowed by the state (zero code)
- Incentivize renewable electricity for large commercial buildings
What’s Next?

- Launch BIPOC Equity Consultation Team
- Hire Healthy and Sustainable Buildings Policy Specialist at the City
- Continue fundraising
- Confirm housing partner
- Offer educational webinar series
- Complete a communitywide carbon emissions inventory
- Authentically engage stakeholders in co-creation model for policies and programs
- Implement “Whole Homes” single family housing pilot
- Work in partnership to include learning and outcomes in Housing Fund development and Community Master Plan initiatives
- Present a package of building policies that will improve affordability and health outcomes while reducing carbon emissions for City Commission consideration (approximately 2 years from now)
Stakeholders to Engage

**PROJECT INITIATION**
- Investors
- City’s Economic Development, Community Development, and Planning Departments
- Project Developers

**DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION**
- Designers, Engineers, Contractors
- City’s Design Team, Dev., Center, and Building Inspections
- Construction Companies
- Building Owner/Operator
- City Residential Rental Cert. Program
- Real Estate Companies
- Building Management Companies

**PEOPLE**
- Tenants & Residents
- Neighbors
- Employees
- Community-based organizations and Neighborhood Associations
Wholistic Approach

COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN/ZONING ORDINANCE

LOCAL BUILDING POLICIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

FINANCING OPTIONS

VOLUNTARY PROGRAMS

FEDERAL/STATE LEGISLATION & REGULATIONS

Local Utility Programs
Grand Rapids 2030 District

PACE
Michigan Saves
Traditional Lending

Designed by the Grand Rapids 2030 District
Thank you

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