



BRIEFING ON  
COMMUNITY MASTER  
PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION  
AND ZONING  
ORDINANCE UPDATE

City Commission

3-11-2025

# AGENDA

- Community Master Plan Implementation
  - Online Plan
  - Dashboard
  - City-Wide Alignment
- Zoning Ordinance Update
  - Schedule
  - Phase I: Pre-Planning
    - Technical Advisory Committee
    - Request for Proposals and Consultant Selection
    - Zoning Ordinance User Survey
    - Zoning 101 Road Show
    - Community Engagement
  - Phase II: Drafting and Engagement



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – ONLINE PLAN

**BRIDGE TO  
OUR FUTURE**

- Available at [grandrapids.mi.gov/cmp](https://grandrapids.mi.gov/cmp)

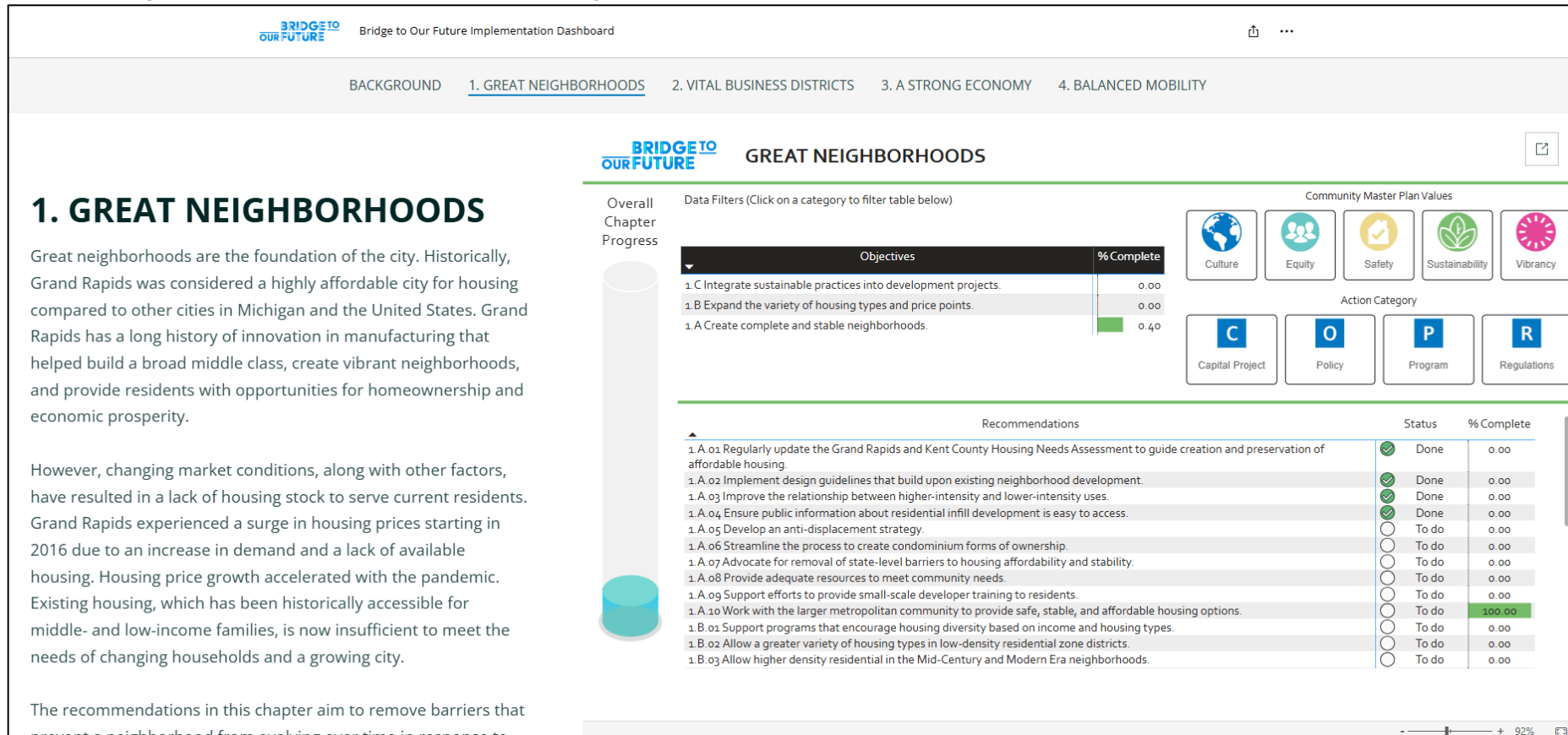
## Bridge to Our Future

Grand Rapids Community Master Plan

Adopted December 2024



- In development
- Will also be available at [grandrapidsmi.gov/cmp](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/cmp)
- Will track implementation for public



Zoning Ordinance

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Vital Streets Plan

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GR Forward

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Equitable Economic Development & Mobility Strategic Plan

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Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

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Bicycle Action Plan

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Area Specific Plans

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Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan

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Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan

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Other City Department Work

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Grand River Equity Framework

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The Rapid Transit Master Plan

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The Right Place Strategic Plan

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Grand Valley Metropolitan Council Regional Transportation  
Demand Management Plan

-  **Great Neighborhoods** Grand Rapids' neighborhood will have access to housing, retail, open space, and more that meet the needs of residents in all phases of life.
-  **Vital Business Districts** Vital business districts will provide a variety of products, services, amenities, and safe, walkable places that attract people of all ages.
-  **A Strong Economy** Grand Rapids' economy will offer a range of employers and job choices so that everyone has the opportunity to access and earn a living wage.
-  **Balanced Mobility** Grand Rapids will have mobility options that include a variety of ways to move about the city and beyond.
-  **Desirable Development Character** New development will improve or support the built fabric of each neighborhood.





Zoning Ordinance
Vital Streets Plan
GR Forward
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 **Great Neighborhoods** Grand Rapids’ neighborhood will have access to housing, retail, open space, and more that meet the needs of residents in all phases of life.



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**Great Neighborhoods** Grand Rapids' neighborhood will have access to housing, retail, open space, and more that meet the needs of residents in all phases of life.



**10** Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Updates

**18** Recommendations aligned with other Plans or other department work

## Example

1.A.2: Implement design guidelines that build upon existing neighborhood development



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT



Great Neighborhoods

Zoning Ordinance	10
Vital Streets Plan	
GR Forward	
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**Vital Business Districts** Vital business districts will provide a variety of products, services, amenities, and safe, walkable places that attract people of all ages.





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**Vital Business Districts** Vital business districts will provide a variety of products, services, amenities, and safe, walkable places that attract people of all ages.



- 7 Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Updates
- 4 Recommendations aligned with other Plans or other department work

## Example

2.A.5: Update the Zoning Ordinance to address the impacts of continued growth in business districts



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts

Zoning Ordinance	10	7
Vital Streets Plan		
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**A Strong Economy** Grand Rapid's economy will offer a range of employers and job choices so that everyone has the opportunity to access and earn a living wage.



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts

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**A Strong Economy** Grand Rapid's economy will offer a range of employers and job choices so that everyone has the opportunity to access and earn a living wage.



- 6 Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Updates
- 4 Recommendations aligned with other Plans or other department work

## Example

3.B.3: Reposition underutilized commercial retail properties to support non-retail businesses



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

*Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts  
A Strong Economy*

Zoning Ordinance	10	7	6
Vital Streets Plan			
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**Balanced Mobility** Grand Rapids will have mobility options that include a variety of ways to move about the city and beyond.



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts  
A Strong Economy

	10	7	6
Zoning Ordinance	●	●	●
Vital Streets Plan	●	●	●
GR Forward		●	●
Equitable Economic Development & Mobility Strategic Plan		●	●
Climate Action and Adaptation Plan	●	●	●
Bicycle Action Plan			
Area Specific Plans	●	●	●
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan	●	●	●
Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan	●		
Other City Department Work	●	●	●
Grand River Equity Framework	●	●	●
The Rapid Transit Master Plan			
The Right Place Strategic Plan		●	●
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan			

**Balanced Mobility** Grand Rapids will have mobility options that include a variety of ways to move about the city and beyond.



- 9 Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Updates
- 8 Recommendations aligned with other Plans or other department work

## Example

4.C.6: Ensure new developments maintain walkable and bikeable roadway networks with appropriate access to transit



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

*Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts  
A Strong Economy  
Balanced Mobility*

Zoning Ordinance	10	7	6	9
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**Desirable Development Character** New development will improve or support the built fabric of each neighborhood.





# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

Great Neighborhoods  
Vital Business Districts  
A Strong Economy  
Balanced Mobility

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**Desirable Development Character** New development will improve or support the built fabric of each neighborhood.



Recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Updates  
& Future Land Use Plan



# COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN – CITY-WIDE ALIGNMENT

	Great Neighborhoods	Vital Business Districts	A Strong Economy	Balanced Mobility	Desirable Development Character
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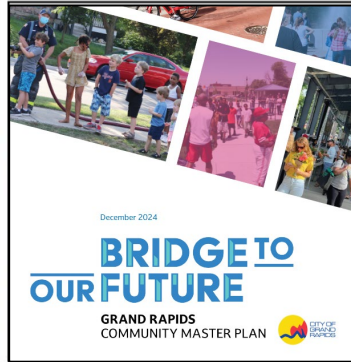
# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

- Implementation of the land use strategies of the Community Master Plan, resulting in a code that is visual and user friendly



## Enabling Legislation

The Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts give permission to adopt a Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance



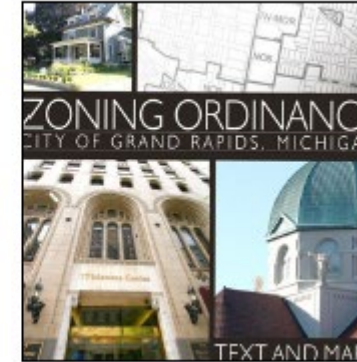
## CMP

Establishes the policy that guides future growth and development



## Area Specific Plans

Establishes vision for particular areas of the City



## Zoning Ordinance

The set of laws that implement CMP and ASPs

# Impact of May 2024 Housing Amendments

## Goals:

- Increase housing supply
- Diversify housing types
- Increase housing affordability

## Additional Outcomes:

- Reduced review/approval times
- Eliminated some fees
- Stronger relationships with small-scale local developers

## Targeted Housing Types

- Duplexes
- Small-Scale Multi-Family (3-6 units)
- Accessory Dwelling Units

## New Projects Impacted by Housing Amendments

- Duplexes: 10 (20 units)
- Small-Scale Multi-Family (3-6 units): 3 (11 units)

## Accessory Dwelling Units Permitted

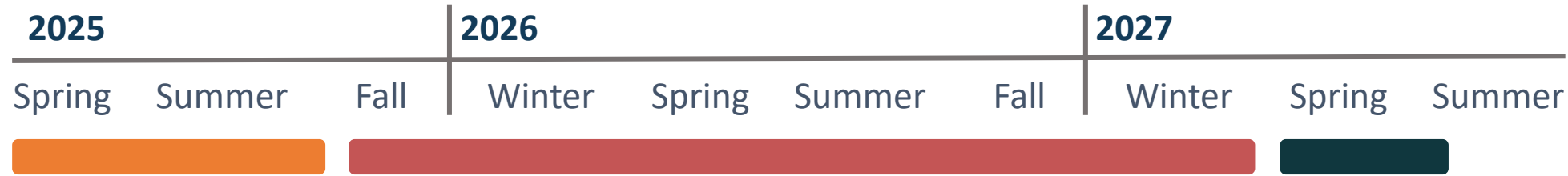
- 2008 – 2023: 9 units
- 2024 – Present: 8 units



*“The new planning changes at the city has allowed me to open up many new opportunities to expand housing on properties that would have never been able to have the option to add density.”*

*– Ricky Labra, Local Developer*

# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE



## Phase I

- City Commission Briefing March 11
- Technical Advisory Committee formed
- Request for Proposals and consultant selection
- Survey of design professionals created and administered
- Zoning 101 Road Show

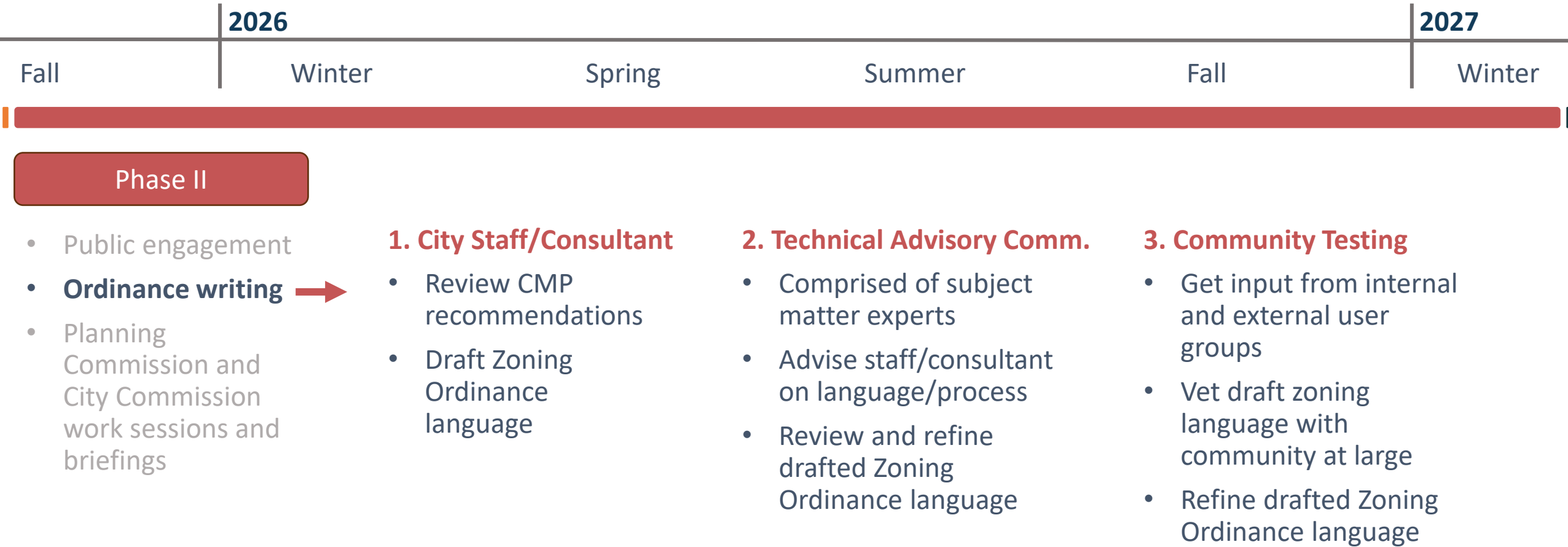
## Phase II

- Public engagement
- Ordinance writing
- Planning Commission and City Commission work sessions and briefings

## Adoption

- Planning Commission recommendation to City Commission
- City Commission Adoption

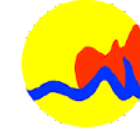
# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – PHASE II: ORDINANCE WRITING PROCESS





# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND CONSULTANT SELECTION

- Purpose: Solicit proposals from prospective consultants to assist the Planning Department in writing the text for the Zoning Ordinance.



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Purchasing Department  
300 Monroe NW, Room 720 Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Buyer Contact: Kelly Criner Phone: (616) 456-3172

Community Master Plan

RFP #918-92-02

Due: March 17, 2022 11:00 AM EST

Company Name:		Contact Name:	
Company Phone #:		Contact Phone:	
Company Fax #:		Contact E-mail:	
Company Address:			
Website Address		Federal Taxpayer ID #:	

The City of Grand Rapids is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for obtaining proposals from professional consulting firms/teams to provide professional and technical expertise for the preparation of a Community Master Plan.

The terms bidder, company, vendor, respondent, proposer, and contractor are all used throughout this RFP to reference the name of the company submitting a response to this RFP. The information submitted by a vendor in response to this RFP shall be referred to as the "Proposal" or "Vendor's Response."

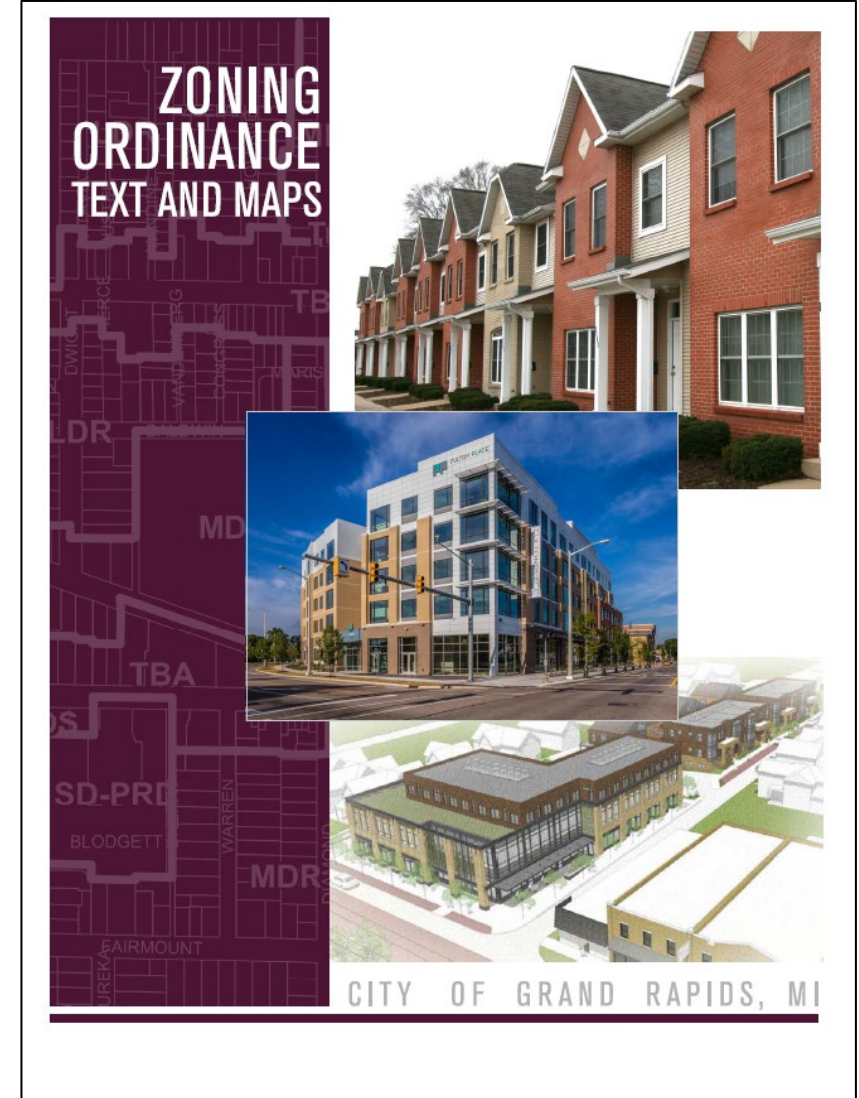
All information in a bidder's proposal and the subsequent contract, is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 no.442, as amended, MCL 15.231 or latest revision thereof. Bidders shall note that pricing methodologies, cost and fee proposals, and any other response information related to pricing shall not be considered confidential information. Company financials are considered confidential and shall be submitted in a separate envelope.

The City intends for this Request for Proposal to result in a contract for the Community Master Plan. This signed and completed RFP document, along with any submitted responses and terms and conditions, will form the contract document for the awarded vendor.



# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – USER SURVEY

- Purpose: Gather opinions from Zoning Ordinance users (contractors, architects, developers, other design professionals) on Zoning Ordinance
  - How often do you use the Ordinance?
  - How do you access the Ordinance?
  - What's working and not working?
  - How easy is the Ordinance to use?
  - What regulations or processes are a benefit/hindrane to development?
  - How does the Ordinance compare to other communities?



# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – ZONING 101 ROAD SHOW

Purpose: Provide overview of purpose and intent of Community Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and the relationship between the two; collect informal input on Zoning Ordinance topics.

Who:

- Neighborhood Association Collaborative
- One meeting in each ward
- Neighborhood/Business/Corridor Improvement meetings
- Development Center lunch and learns
- Others by request/as identified





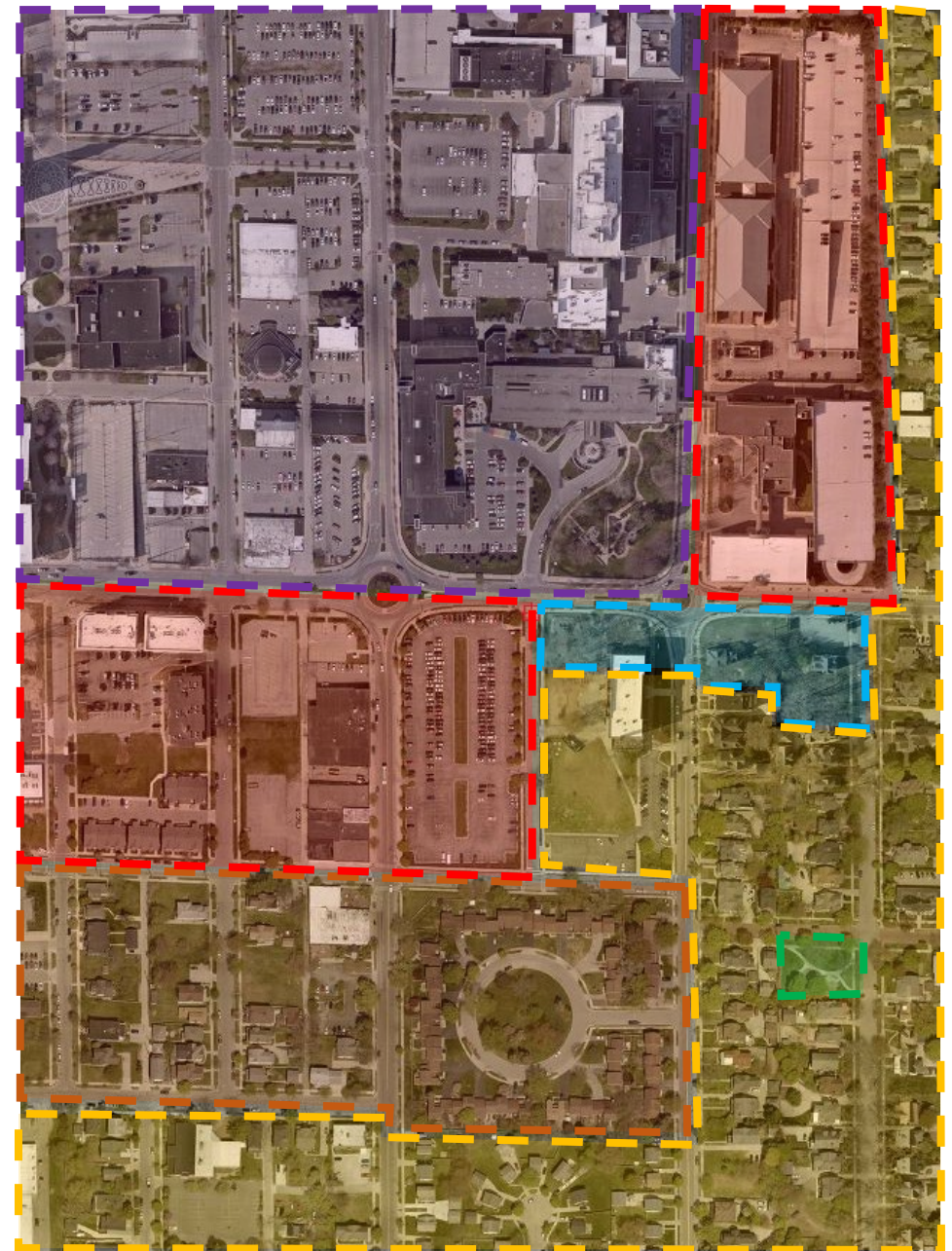
# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW

## What is Zoning?

- Zoning is the local law that governs the physical development of land and use of property
  - Every property has a legal zoning designation
  - Zoning is outlined in a document called the Zoning Ordinance
- Varies from State to State (Enabling Legislation)

## Benefits of Zoning

- Provides local control relevant to land use
- Zoning protects the health, safety, and general welfare by:
  - Protecting property values
  - Creating unique public spaces
  - Protecting natural resources
  - Preventing nuisances
  - Ensuring land use compatibility





# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW

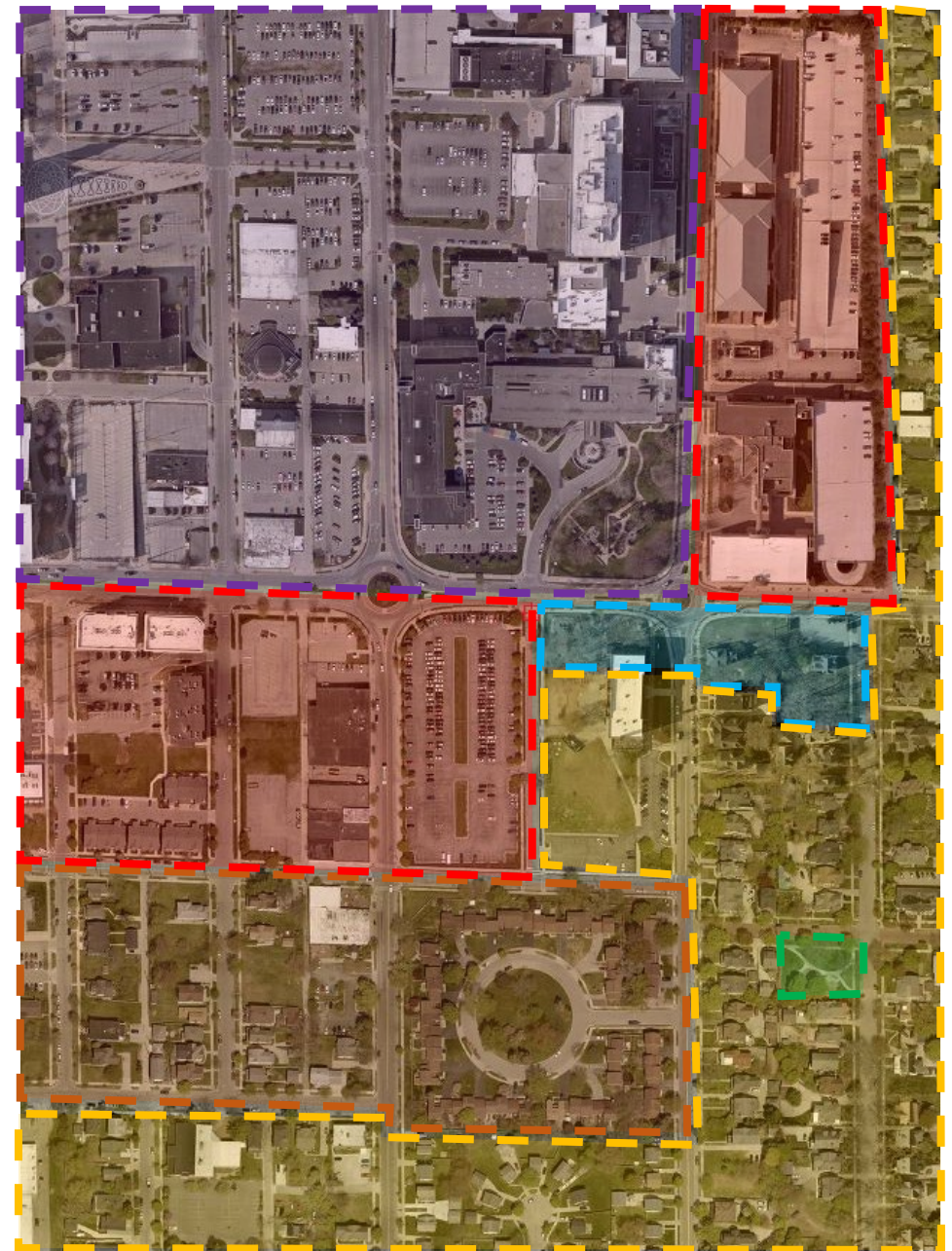
## Constraints of Zoning

- Can add complexity to the development process
- Slow to adapt to unique situations
- Preservation over adaptation
- Singular approach to land use and development
- Unintended consequences
- Land based, not operator based

## What Zoning Cannot Do

*Limited by State and Federal Law and Court Cases*

- Rent control
- Inclusionary zoning
  - Affordability mandates
  - Require public benefits/contributions (available incentives)
- Regulate or prioritize ownership
- Prohibit certain uses outright city-wide (exclusionary zoning)



# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW – ZONING IN GRAND RAPIDS

Zoning in Grand Rapids has two components: the Neighborhood Classification and the District

## Neighborhood Classification

- Design standards for structures and development
  - Porches
  - Garage placement
  - Windows/transparency
  - Building size
  - Materials
  - Lot size
  - Residential density

## District

- Allowable uses
  - Permitted by Right
    - Go do it!
  - Special Land Use
    - Requires approval from the Planning Commission
  - Not Permitted

**TN - LDR**

Zoning Classification





# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW – ZONING IN GRAND RAPIDS

Zoning in Grand Rapids has two components: the Neighborhood Classification and the District

## Neighborhood Classification

- **Traditional Neighborhood**
  - Oldest parts of the City with a large range of housing types and dense residential development
- **Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Neighborhood**
  - Built in the early to late 20<sup>th</sup> century with larger lots and primarily single-family homes
- **Modern Neighborhood**
  - The newest residential developments in the City with large lots and typical suburban development

## District

- **Residential Zone Districts**
  - “Low Density Residential” and “Mixed Density Residential”
- **Commercial Mixed-Use Zone Districts**
  - Ranges from “City Center” (downtown area) to low density “Commercial” (28<sup>th</sup> Street)
- **Special Districts**
  - “Industrial Transportation,” “Institutional Campus,” “Open Space,” “Airport,” and “Planned Redevelopment District” (Celebration North)
- **Overlay Districts\***
  - Special areas that have unique Zoning requirements beyond the “base” Zone District



# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW – WHAT DOES ZONING LOOK LIKE AT A PROPERTY & BUILDING LEVEL?

Property Use:  
What is it?

Site Elements: Greenspace,  
tree canopy, & landscaping

Parking: Count  
and location

Lot Dimensions:  
Size and width

Setbacks:  
Distance from  
property lines

Required  
Building Line:  
Distance from  
the street

## Building Elements

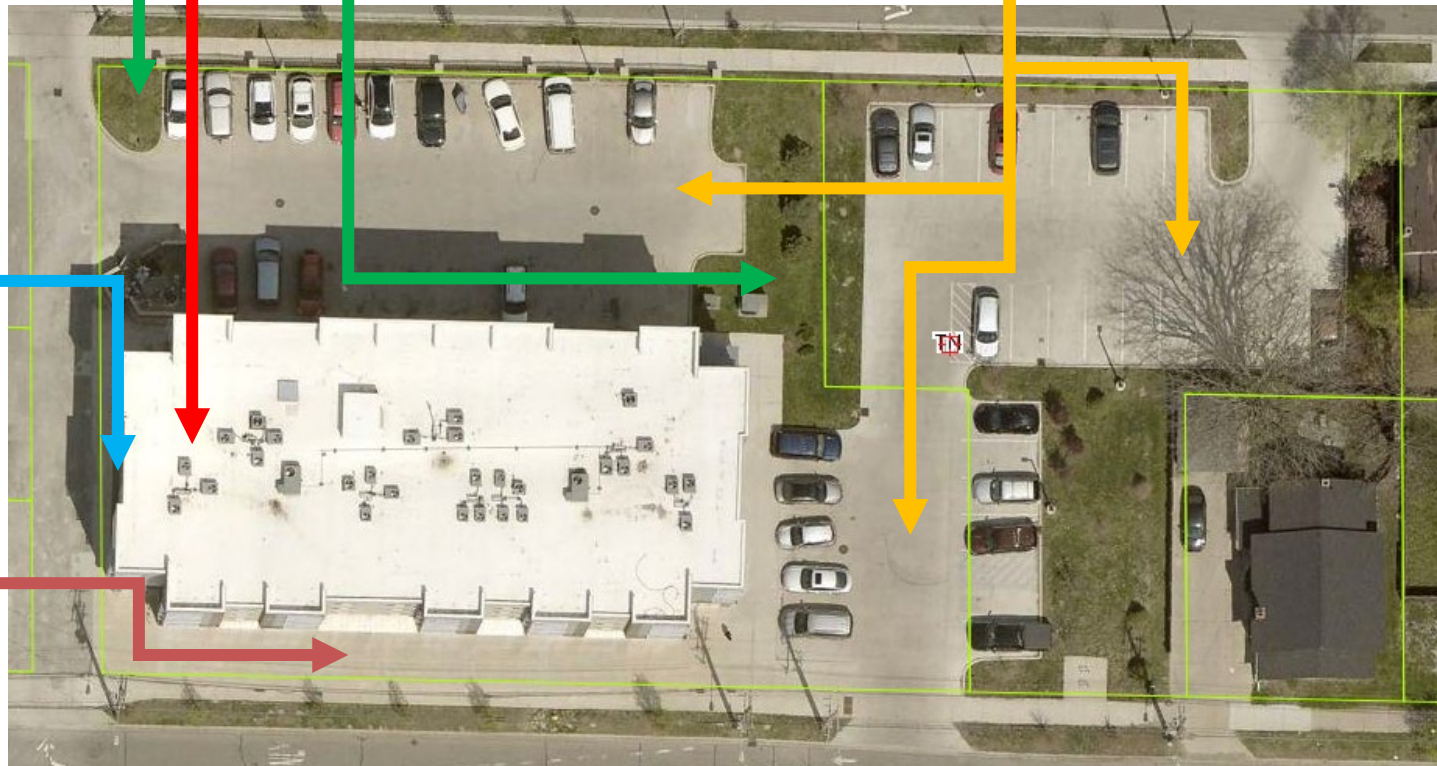
**Height:** Stories and  
feet

**Facade:**  
Preservation and  
variation

**Materials:** High-  
Quality and durable

**Transparency:**  
Windows and glass

**Architecture:**  
Entrances, step-back,  
expression line



# ZONING 101 ROADSHOW – IMPLEMENTING THE CMP VISION

**BRIDGE TO  
OUR FUTURE**



## Where We Are Today

- Limited amounts of developable land
- Doing nothing comes with a high cost

## The Transition

- Growing pains with looking to the future
- Important to understand potential impacts of changes

## The Vision of the CMP

- The Vision of the CMP cannot be achieved by “staying the course”
- Need to manage growth and change

## Example of a CMP Recommendation to Implementation

### **CMP Recommendation:** →

2.A.4 Support taller commercial buildings in commercial districts.

### **Ordinance Update:** →

Increase minimum and maximum building heights

### **Potential Impact:** →

More substantial street presence and visual impact on adjacent properties

### **Mitigating Measures:**

Additional architectural requirements to better transition height to adjacent lower height properties





# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE – PHASE II: DRAFTING TEXT

- Write Ordinance
- Community Engagement
  - Vet new ordinance language with the community
  - Further develop the engagement strategy with the consultant
- Planning Commission makes recommendation to City Commission (Spring 2027)





Thank you

