

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
STRATEGIC PLAN
UPDATED NOVEMBER 2025



Fellow Grand Rapidians,

It continues to be an honor to serve as your City Manager and to work alongside the City Commission and our dedicated staff to advance the community's shared vision for Grand Rapids. Together, we have strengthened a high-performing organization that listens, learns, and acts in partnership with the people we serve.



This updated Strategic Plan builds on the foundation established in 2019 and refined in 2022. It reflects the progress we've made, the lessons learned through extraordinary times, and the evolving needs of a growing and dynamic city. While the plan continues to be grounded in our six core values – accountability, collaboration, customer service, equity, innovation, and sustainability – it also challenges us to apply these values in new ways.

Our mission remains clear: to elevate quality of life through excellent City services. This plan provides the roadmap for aligning our daily work, investments, and partnerships to achieve measurable results for the community. It strengthens transparency and accountability, ensuring that every objective and strategy moves us closer to our long-term vision of a city that works for everyone.

Inclusion and belonging continues to be central to our success. We will only reach our goals when every resident has the opportunity to thrive, free from systemic barriers and inequities. As we implement this plan, we will measure progress, adjust where needed, and remain open to new ideas and partnerships that move us forward.

I am deeply grateful for the City Commissioners' leadership, our employees' dedication, and the community members whose feedback and collaboration shape this plan. Together, we are building a Grand Rapids that is equitable, innovative, sustainable, and ready for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive.

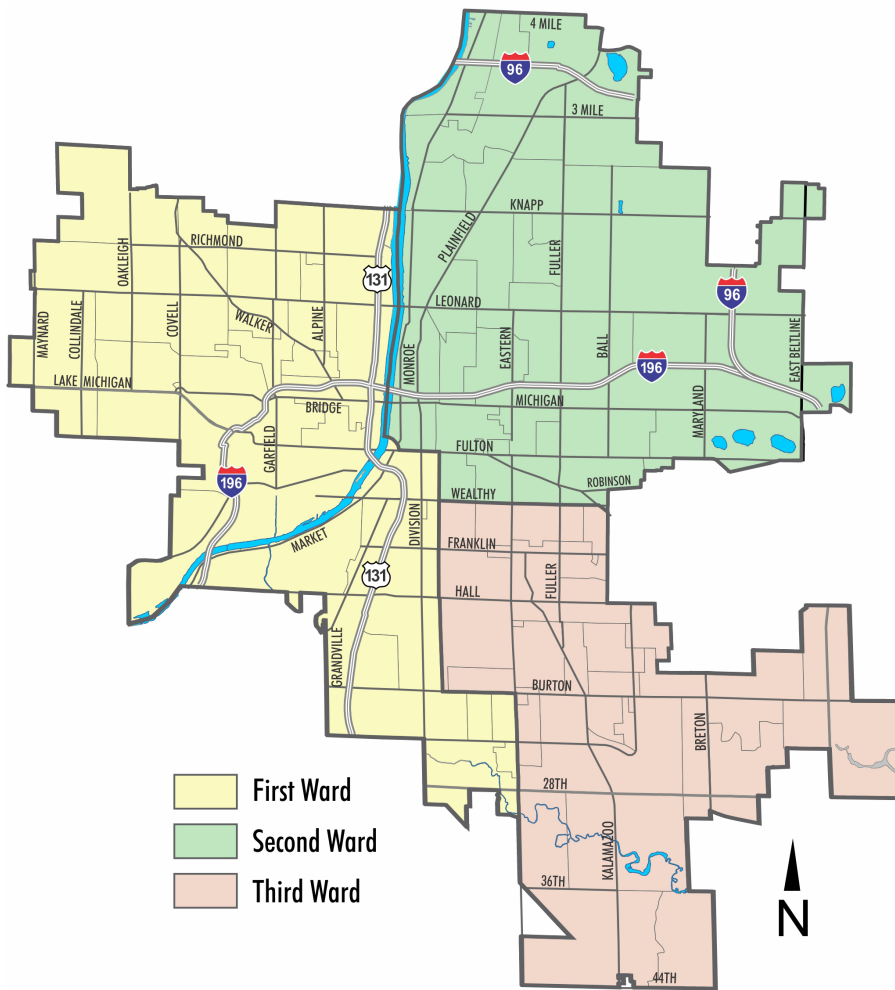
City Manager
Mark A. Washington

Together, our collective planning and implementation efforts will advance our community journey in becoming one of the best cities in the country.

Current State

The City Commission

Grand Rapids has three Wards. Our Mayor serves at-large and each Ward has two City Commissioners. Each Commissioner has one vote for policy decisions. Grand Rapids is a Commission/Manager form of government. The City Manager is responsible for directing City operations and carrying out Commission policy.



Mark Washington
City Manager



David LaGrand
Mayor, 1st term
Expires 12/31/28



AliciaMarie Belchak
1st Ward, 1st term
Expires 12/31/28



Drew Robbins
1st Ward, 1st term
Through 3/7/26



Lisa Knight
2nd Ward, 1st term
Expires 12/31/26



Milinda Ysasi
2nd Ward, 2nd term
Expires 12/31/28

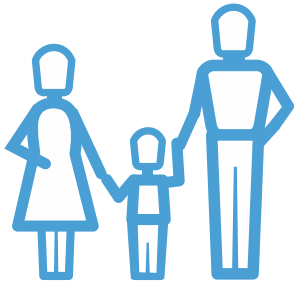


Marshall Kilgore
3rd Ward, 1st term
Expires 12/31/28



Kelsey Perdue
3rd Ward, 1st term
Expires 12/31/26

- Grand Rapids is the 129th largest city in the U.S.
- We're the 2nd largest city in Michigan

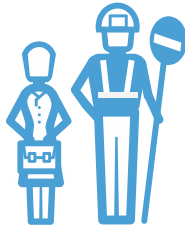


200,131

- 57.46% White alone
- 18.35% Black/African American
- 16.49% Hispanic
- 4.63% Two or more races
- 2.25% Asian alone
- 0.33% American Indian or Alaskan Native alone
- 0.46% Some other race alone

Source: Census Bureau

Current State



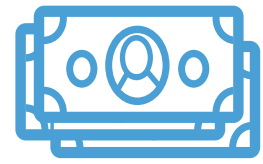
111,193

Employees in Grand Rapids economy (69.27%)

4.0%

Unemployment rate

Source: 2024 ACS



\$70,515

Median household income

15.1%

Population below the poverty level

Source: 2024 ACS



\$286,500

Median Home Price

\$1,362/mo median rent and **53.5%** home ownership

Source: 2024 ACS



30%

Reduction in Municipal Greenhouse Gas Footprint

100% Renewable energy

81%

Residents who live within a 10-minute walk to a park



1,667 Acres of accessible parks

Source: 2022 Parks & Rec Master Plan



62% Residents with an overall feeling of safety

Source: 2024 Grand Rapids National Community Survey

5,151

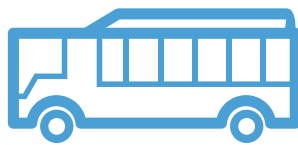
Crimes against person

6,644

Crimes against property

Source: 2025 Police Dashboard

34%



Used public transportation

56% Carpooled

71% Walked or biked

Source: 2024 Grand Rapids National Community Survey

Recognition

#25 Fastest-Growing U.S. Metros for jobs and new talent

[LinkedIn Cities in the Rise 2025](#)

#40 Best Places to Retire

[U.S. News and World Report, 2022-2023](#)

#20 Best U.S. Cities for Women in the Workplace

[Checkr, 2025](#)

#20 Best Run Cities in America

[WalletHub, 2025](#)

#1 Beer City USA (13 consecutive years)

[USA Today 10 Best, 2025](#)

#5 Metros Where Young Homeownership is Most Accessible

[Consumer Affairs, 2025](#)

#28 Best Cities for Jobs

[Wallethub, 2025](#)

Consecutive Distinguished Budget Presentation Award (37 consecutive years)

[Government Finance Officers Association 2025](#)

#40 Best Cities to Buy a House in America

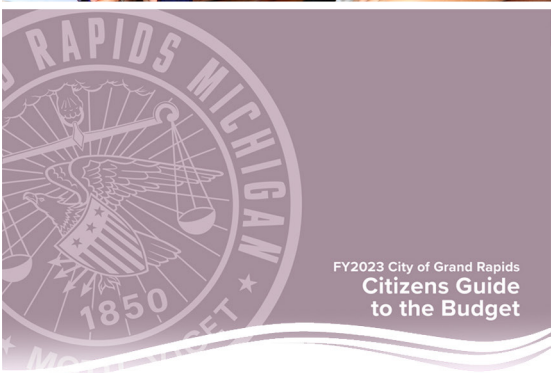
[Niche, 2025](#)

#41 Best Cities for Young Professionals in America

[Niche, 2025](#)

#37 Best Cities to Start a Career

[Wallethub, 2025](#)





Values

Our values are how we make decisions. They are embedded throughout the entire plan and drive all City work.

Accountability

Always acting with integrity and transparency and being responsible for what we do and say.

Collaboration

Working together in partnership with others; teamwork.

Customer Service

Professionally serving those who live in, work in or visit the city. Providing respectful, excellent, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the person's interactions with the City.

Equity

Leveraging City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.

Innovation

Challenging how things have been done before. Fulfilling community needs by offering new ways to serve our customers and enhance operations. Being nimble, self-aware and open to feedback.

Sustainability

Making decisions with the goal of achieving long-term net positive benefits that are informed by an understanding of how those decisions will impact climate resiliency and the environment, people and communities, and finances, both today and in the future.

Vision

Grand Rapids will be nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

Mission

To elevate the quality of life through excellent City services.

Priorities



Governmental Excellence

A fiscally resilient government powered by high performing and knowledgeable staff equipped with the appropriate tools and resources to offer excellent, equitable and innovative public service.



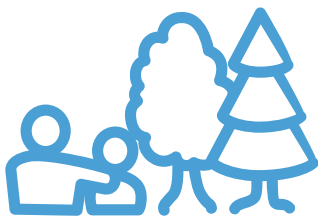
Economic Prosperity and Affordability

Residents, employees and businesses have pathways to financial growth and security.



Engaged and Connected Community

Residents and stakeholders have awareness of and voice in decisions that affect them, and receive culturally-responsive and proactive communication.



Health and Environment

The health of all people and the environment are advocated for, protected and enhanced.



Mobility

Innovative, efficient, low-carbon and equitable mobility solutions are safe, affordable and convenient to the community.



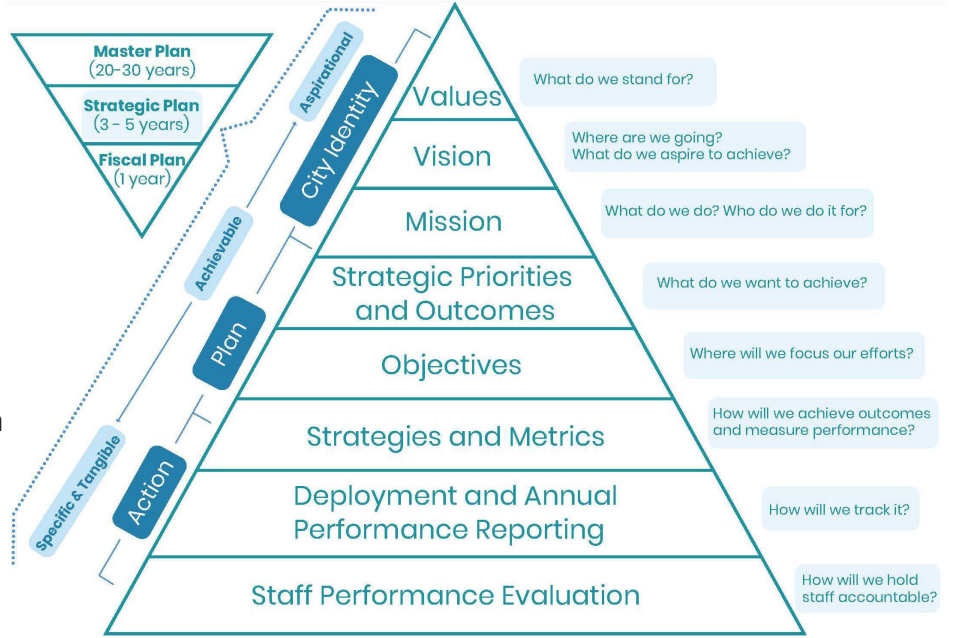
Safe Community

All people feel safe and are safe at all times throughout our community.

Planning Process

In late 2018, we began our strategic planning journey by creating this strategic plan framework to guide the creation of our plan. This framework is still accurate today and demonstrates:

- How the strategic plan aligns with the long-term community master plan and the short-term fiscal plan
- How our Values, Vision and Mission shape our City's identity and create the roadmap for the strategic plan
- How the plan's priorities, outcomes, objectives, strategies and metrics work together to define what we hope to achieve, how we plan to achieve it and how we will measure our progress
- How the City will hold itself accountable to the plan through annual performance reports and staff performance evaluations



Since the adoption of our original plan in April 2019 by City Manager Washington and the City Commission, we have matured in our strategic planning, implementation and reporting.

We knew from the beginning that the plan would be a living breathing document that would require adjustments and revisions over time. COVID spurred innovation and agility that resulted in both temporary and permanent changes to our operations. In addition, the process of measuring and reporting since 2019 has revealed the need for adjustments and realignment not contemplated in the original plan.

This update is due to the dedication of our City staff. We continue our learning journey with a refreshed Strategic Plan and look forward to you holding us accountable to the commitments identified in this plan.



Plan Elements

Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities are the high-level buckets through which we organize our work.

Outcomes

Plan outcomes are what we hope to accomplish within each of the strategic priorities.

Objectives

Objectives identify where we will focus our efforts. There are multiple objectives within each strategic priority.

Strategies

Strategies identify how we will achieve our objectives and desired outcomes.

Metrics

We will measure how well we are achieving our objectives and desired outcomes through our metrics.

Using the plan

We will use this plan to guide our operations and financial investments. As we continue to work more collaboratively internally and externally, we will uncover more opportunities for innovation, sustainability and enhanced customer service.

This plan is intended to be a living breathing document. We will continue to learn throughout implementation. We recognize and acknowledge that updates will need to be made and we commit to being transparent about our learnings and forthcoming updates.

GOVERNMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Objective 1: Fiscal Sustainability

Foster and maintain fiscal sustainability.

Strategies

1. Review and update financial policies to ensure they reflect best practices
2. Ensure the long-term viability of defined-benefit retirement and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) systems under the City's authority
3. Utilize proactive asset management practices, continuous improvement and innovation to ensure that City operations are fiscally and operationally sustainable
4. Assess long-term funding opportunities for Vital Streets
5. Engage in resource planning including exploring new revenue sources to evaluate sustainable service levels as major projects are built in a growing city
6. Leverage outside funding (i.e., grants, philanthropic support, state/federal funding) to support the City's strategic, operational and legislative priorities
7. Prioritize and promote the use of safe, secure and efficient electronic payment methods

Metrics

1. General Operating Fund (GOF) fund balance
2. Bond rating
3. Total debt as a percentage of annual revenue disaggregated by general obligation and water/sewer utilities
4. Percent of Actuarially Computed Employer Contributions (ACEC)
5. Percent of payments processed online, as a percentage of all payments processed (for water, parking tickets, refuse, and property tax)
6. Percent of payments to vendors electronically, as a percentage of total transactions and as a percentage of total dollars paid

Objective 2: Workforce

Attract, hire, develop and retain high-performing employees.

Strategies

1. Develop a workplace culture based on City values that embraces diversity and fosters employee collaboration and engagement
2. Become an employer of choice by offering and sustaining competitive compensation and benefits, ongoing employee development and employee-friendly policies that meet the diverse needs of our evolving workforce
3. Implement competency-centered performance management, employee retention and succession planning strategies that contribute to individual growth and organizational success
4. Educate, encourage, and support all City employees to embrace a safe, healthy, well-balanced and sustainable lifestyle in and outside of work
5. Integrate workforce diversity, employee development, turnover rates and other key metrics into Citywide and departmental operations and budgeting
6. Implement intentional strategies to ensure equitable recruitment, qualification and hiring that contributes to a diverse workforce and removes potential barriers to entry for historically marginalized populations

Metrics

1. Demographics of applicants advanced at each stage of the hiring process: original applicants, applicants passing minimum qualifications and/or eligibility testing, applicants selected for interview, new hires
2. Percent employee turnover in total and disaggregated demographically and by reason and tenure
3. Position vacancy rate, disaggregated by sworn and civilian employees
4. Time from requisition request to offer acceptance (time to fill/hire), disaggregated by sworn and civilian employees
5. Time from requisition request to offer acceptance (time to fill/hire), disaggregated by sworn and civilian employees
6. Percent of in-use classifications falling within 5% or above the identified market for compensation
7. Percent of employees participating in elective training and development programs
8. Percent of employees participating in City Wellness programs

Objective 3: Facilities and Technology

Optimize facilities/workspaces and technology systems to meet the demands of government operations, the community and our growing/changing population.

Strategies

1. Evaluate and prioritize implementation of facilities assessment recommendations
2. Evaluate and modify, where appropriate, the current design, use and configuration of employee workspaces and public-facing operations based on the evolving needs of employees and residents utilizing the facilities assessment recommendations
3. Ensure workspaces are safe and healthy and utilize environmentally friendly and climate-resilient design, construction and maintenance practices
4. Make all facilities welcoming and accessible for all customers with an emphasis on people with differing abilities, people that speak a language other than English and people that are transgender and/or non-binary
5. Ensure the City's information technology (IT) infrastructure is secure, supported, aligned with IT best practice and available to staff in support of their work
6. Ensure that public-facing IT systems are user-intuitive for the public and adaptable for those with limitations
7. Identify and prioritize key business processes and customer service functions for analysis to identify inefficiencies and improvement opportunities, including appropriate use of innovative technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)
8. Ensure that supportive technologies (i.e., Enterprise Resource Planning/ERP, billing, MLBE reporting, payment systems) are secure and effective in supporting the City's strategic goals and operational needs

Metrics

1. Number of business processes/functions analyzed to identify improvement opportunities
2. Percent of staff requiring remedial cybersecurity training
3. Nationwide Cyber Security Review (NCSR) for the City (range 0-7)

Objective 4: Strategic Plan Implementation

Consistently demonstrate progress on strategic plan implementation through transparent reporting of prioritized actions and performance metrics.

Strategies

1. Embed strategic planning practices throughout City operations and leverage these plans for budgetary and other key decision-making processes

2. Monitor and report on strategic plan implementation activities
3. Track, analyze and report on performance metrics
4. Support processes to ensure data-informed decision-making

Metrics

1. Number and percent of strategic plan metrics measured and available
2. Percent of metrics with an established target
3. Percent of strategic plan implementation activities on track

Objective 5: Community Master Plan Implementation

Implement the Community Master Plan (CMP) with transparency and accountability.

Strategies

1. Embed Community Master Plan goals, objectives and recommendations within department budgets and plans
2. Monitor and publicly report on CMP implementation activities
3. Update the Zoning Ordinance to align with the CMP

Metrics

1. Number of departments working on CMP implementation
2. Percent of short-term CMP recommendations in progress and completed

Objective 6: Equity

Embed equity throughout government operations.

Strategies

1. Maintain and expand equity work across the City organization and through targeted investments in neighborhoods
2. Disaggregate all data - to the extent possible - by race, ethnicity, household income, gender identity and geography
3. Include evaluation and reporting of potential or observed equity and/or social justice impacts in City budget proposals, policies, programs, services and initiatives

4. Identify systemic issues that cause disparate outcomes and implement strategies to address issues that are within the City's span of influence
5. Identify and execute on investments that improve equitable access to resources that influence social determinants of health and well-being (e.g. healthy food, transportation, health care, safe & affordable housing, arts & culture)

Metrics

1. Percent of capital investment budgeted by Ward and Neighborhoods of Focus
2. Dollars in approved budget supporting projects that advance equity
3. Percent of elected City officials, City employees and people serving on a City board or commission who participate in equity training
4. Municipal Equality Index score
5. Percent of departments utilizing Equity Toolkit to evaluate and report on equity and social justice impact, and total number of programs evaluated

Objective 7: Innovation

Grow a culture of innovation and continuous learning that is people-centered, data-informed, experimental, and collaborative, so staff are encouraged to better serve our community.

Strategies

1. Support infrastructure to organize, spread, and support the use of shared innovation practices across the organization
2. Build awareness, understanding and use of key innovation skills among staff, leadership and community partners through a variety of interactive learning opportunities
3. Support leaders and staff with individual and team development, providing infrastructure and practices to successfully manage the full cycle of complex change
4. Establish a platform-agnostic data repository to serve as a centralized, accessible platform that empowers AI, public transparency and data-driven decision-making across all departments and services
5. Establish a data governance policy and a geographic information data strategy

Metrics

1. Number of teams creating consistent time and space for innovation work
2. Number of staff learning about innovation through practice teams and skill building opportunities

Objective 8: Legislative Priorities and Partnerships

Implement City priorities in collaboration with community partners to secure financial investments and achieve legislative and policy changes for the betterment of the community.

Strategies

1. Support the City Commission's every-other-year adoption of the Legislative Priority Agenda
2. Jointly advocate for investments, legislation and/or policies and practices that advance community and/or regional priorities and are aligned with the Legislative Priority Agenda
3. Support requests from partner entities that align with the City's strategic plan and seek support from partner entities for those legislative initiatives and investments that the City has prioritized
4. Advocate for maintaining local control and defend against unconstitutional actions, policies, and proposals

Metrics

1. Percent of prioritized legislative initiatives and investments that were funded, acted on or saw some movement during a legislative term
2. Dollars of non-formula State and Federal funding secured

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & AFFORDABILITY

Objective 1: Economic Opportunity

Support the creation, retention and growth of businesses to enhance residents' employment and wealth-building opportunities.

Strategies

1. Prioritize incentives for private development and business retention, expansion, and attraction projects that bring vibrancy to the city
2. Prioritize investments in neighborhood business districts and those that will create opportunities in neighborhoods of focus
3. Leverage the Equal Business Opportunity (EBO)/Micro-Local Business Enterprises (MLBE) program to increase and scale MLBEs registered and benefiting from City spending
4. Support entrepreneurship throughout the business lifecycle – from startup to succession
5. Support equitable opportunities for historically marginalized communities and individuals across a broad range of economic backgrounds
6. Collaborate across departments with Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIA) and Business Improvement Districts (BID) to invest in, and maintain the health and safety of, neighborhood business districts
7. Support the increase of post-secondary degree attainment and skilled-trades certification, particularly for people of color and first-generation students, through partnerships with the local school district, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations
8. Leverage significant City infrastructure investments and major public/private civic infrastructure investments for the opportunities they provide to create or grow local businesses and job opportunities

Metrics

1. Dollars of private investment supported by City incentives with dollar amount and percent of diverse-owned and micro-local business contracts committed by projects with an Inclusion Plan
2. Total number of business start ups supported through SmartZone
3. Number of total and new micro-local business enterprise (MLBE) vendors registered to do business with the City
4. Dollars and percent of total City contract expenses and goods and services paid to micro-local business enterprises (MLBE) and diverse-owned businesses

5. Number and percent of registered micro-local business enterprise (MLBE) contractors prequalified with the City Engineering Department
6. Dollars invested annually by Corridor Improvement Authorities and Business Improvement Districts in façade grants, public art support, infrastructure, and streetscape enhancements

Objective 2: Business Environment

Support a thriving and resilient business environment.

Strategies

1. Optimize the local licensing and regulatory processes, including eliminating outdated or obsolete licenses and regulations and revising those that are ineffective or are contributing to disparate outcomes
2. Increase accessibility of public information on city services, incentives and permits related to property development and business regulations to enhance the experience of the City's diverse customer base
3. Provide regular training and education opportunities that help users navigate the development approval process
4. Broaden allowable activities in Community Activity Centers and Innovation Centers to support expanded business opportunities per the Community Master Plan

Metrics

1. Percent of new buildings and commercial renovations approved administratively
2. Number of days to administratively approve projects from permit application to approval for projects where board/commission approval is not required
3. Average number of days for projects requiring to be approved by the Planning Commission
4. Number of and total amount of emerging developer grants awarded through City incentive programs

Objective 3: Housing

Ensure all residents have access to safe, stable and permanent housing.

Strategies

1. Support and incentivize development of a variety of housing types and price points through City regulations, incentives and investments.
2. Facilitate preservation of existing housing units and support, leverage and promote home repair, maintenance and safety services, with a focus on affordable housing units

3. Invest in projects and initiatives that reduce barriers to housing and home ownership and strengthen neighborhoods
4. Develop an anti-displacement strategy per the Community Master Plan
5. Develop and implement a strategic land acquisition and disposition policy to support housing development goals alongside the Grand Rapids Land Bank Authority
6. Actively partner in community efforts to end homelessness and support programs that provide permanent housing solutions through the use of evidence-based practices

Metrics

1. Number of new dwelling units permitted
2. Number of new dwelling units affordable to households earning above 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) but not exceeding 120% of AMI supported through City incentives or direct City investments
3. Number of new dwelling units affordable to households earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) supported through City incentives or direct City investments
4. Number of dwelling units committed (from the time the sale of the lot is closed) on former City-owned or Grand Rapids Land Bank owned lots
5. Number of persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness that became stably housed through programs supported by City investments
6. Percent of occupied rental dwellings certified

Objective 4: Placemaking

Support development and placemaking efforts that contribute to making Grand Rapids a destination City.

Strategies

1. Collaborate with public and private partners on event pedestrian and traffic management planning for major civic venues (e.g., amphitheater, soccer stadium), including safe crossings, parking availability, shuttle options, and clear communication strategies
2. Collaborate with business and community partners to use activations and events to promote Grand Rapids for economic development, new residents, and tourist attraction opportunities and to brand Grand Rapids as a destination city
3. Permit, produce, and/or financially support a variety of special events and activations that reflect and celebrate the full cultural diversity of Grand Rapids including the arts, music, innovation, outdoor recreation, and local cuisine and beverages options

4. Create partnership opportunities to enhance, maintain, and promote activation of public spaces
5. Encourage private and public spaces that are inclusive, available and accessible to individuals of varying backgrounds and abilities
6. Use the Zoning Ordinance to cultivate community-based placemaking through infill and redevelopment that complements the form, scale, design, and cultural histories of the surrounding area per the Community Master Plan
7. Collaborate with Kent County, neighboring municipalities, community and regional partners along the Grand River corridor to align investments, infrastructure/amenities, operations and management practices, and activations that support a shared riverfront vision
8. Capitalize on the Grand River as an asset for economic development and quality of life by encouraging a change in land use along the riverfront from industry to open space and mixed use
9. Explore opportunities for greater public and private investment to sustain and expand public art

Metrics

1. Number of activations and events permitted by the City annually
2. Number of events intentionally designed to center, celebrate, or serve diverse cultural communities
3. Reported number of attendees at City permitted events and activations
4. Number of new or first-time event organizers
5. Number of new public art installations

ENGAGED & CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Objective 1: Communication

Enhance communication with the public.

Strategies

1. Apply customer-friendly and culturally appropriate communication protocols and practices that consider (but are not limited to) readability, clarity, representation, style and multi-lingual accessibility, proactive outreach and education
2. Ensure that staff are well-trained to facilitate media inquiries and public engagement, and that they develop their communication with a lens of equity and inclusion
3. Ensure consistent, accurate and timely handling of all external customer inquiries, including responses to media and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, through established processes
4. Intentionally and clearly communicate about City policies, programs, processes and budget with an emphasis on highlighting successful outcomes
5. Intentionally and clearly communicate about infrastructure changes and temporary disruptions

Metrics

1. Percent of 3-1-1 customer inquiries responded to within target response time in total and disaggregated by department
2. Average wait time for 3-1-1 phone customers
3. Number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests processed: total requests and Police Department requests
4. Percent of residents rating the quality of public information services as excellent or good (NCS)
5. Reported use of language access services by department, disaggregated by language served

Objective 2: Community Engagement

Elevate resident perspective and ensure that the community has equitable and accessible opportunities to engage with the City of Grand Rapids in meaningful ways.

Strategies

1. Implement and refine a Citywide community engagement framework that includes equity-centered protocols, standards, metrics, guidance and training, and fosters participation and collaboration with diverse perspectives
2. Ensure that City staff conducting community outreach and engagement are sufficiently trained on the engagement framework and equipped to successfully carry out engagement activities
3. Coordinate with residents and stakeholders on designing long-term planning processes and leverage those perspectives for community-wide issues and City government operations
4. Use standardized tools and processes to consistently measure, evaluate and report the outcomes of engagement processes to ensure transparency and determine opportunities for growth
5. Advance policies, processes, and programs intended to increase civic literacy and voter participation, reduce barriers to participation, and encourage equitable representation on City boards and commissions

Metrics

1. Number of public participation and decision-forming opportunities led by the City, disaggregated by Ward and threshold of engagement
2. Number of training opportunities for City staff related to application of the community engagement framework
3. Percent of residents who feel the Grand Rapids community does an excellent or good job providing opportunities to participate in community matters (NCS)
4. Demographics of persons serving on City Boards and Commissions

Objective 3: Community Feedback

Consider feedback from the Commission, community, and staff to inform decisions, improve services, and clearly demonstrate to the public how their input influences City actions.

Strategies

1. Ensure that feedback solicited and received is consistently recorded and reported back to

participants and stakeholders in a timely manner, and that decisions resulting from that feedback are noted

2. Provide transparent updates on projects and activities affecting the community, and communicate measurable outcomes of related engagement activities directly to those who participated

Metrics

1. Percent of residents who believe that the City does an excellent or good job at welcoming resident involvement (NCS)

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Objective 1: Climate Action and Adaptation

Reduce carbon emissions, support climate adaptation and increase climate resiliency.

Strategies

1. Increase the knowledge, awareness and understanding of climate change among staff, partners, community stakeholders and residents
2. Enhance collaboration with partners on strategies and actions to address climate change
3. Reduce carbon/greenhouse gas emissions from City operations (buildings, utilities and fleet) by 85% by 2030 (compared to 2008) and achieve carbon neutrality by 2040
4. Create and support programs and policies to reduce carbon/ greenhouse gas emissions from the building, transportation and other key sectors throughout the community
5. Implement the Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) in partnership with the community and guided by the City Commission's priority actions
6. Create and support a proactive Urban Forestry operating plan that dedicates the appropriate level of resources to care for the health of the city's trees

Metrics

1. Percent of carbon/greenhouse gas emissions reduced from 2008 benchmark for City buildings, utilities and fleet
2. Percent electricity consumed by City buildings, utilities and fleet supplied by renewable sources
3. Percent of carbon/greenhouse gas emissions reduced from 2019 for community-wide greenhouse gas emissions
4. Percent of City fleet that is low or no emission, disaggregated by passenger vehicles versus heavy duty vehicles
5. Number of trees planted and number of trees removed

Objective 2: Green Space and Recreation

Ensure equitable access to and use of green spaces and recreational offerings.

Strategies

1. Expand parks and active open spaces to reduce disparities in green space deficient neighborhoods
2. Increase grade level of park maintenance as prescribed in Parks and Recreation Master Plan
3. Collaborate with partners to maintain, enhance, and activate public spaces for diverse users and improve amenities (lighting, seating, restrooms) based on community input
4. Enhance the connected network of parks, natural areas, and trails accessible to all of the Grand Rapids community
5. Increase accessible, diverse and inclusive programming to encourage participation by all races, ethnicities, gender identities, ages and abilities
6. Increase the number of children connected to nature through City programming

Metrics

1. Percent of households within a 10-minute walk of a park or active green space
2. Number of participants in recreation programs per year
3. Percent of parks rated A/B for operational maintenance
4. Percent of residents rating the overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities as excellent or good (NCS)
5. Linear feet of continuous accessible park trails
6. Hours of programming for youth in nature

Objective 3: Water Resources

Supply excellent water, sewer and stormwater services, and protect and preserve our water resources.

Strategies

1. Replace all lead service lines in advance of state/federal deadlines
2. Collaborate with partners, within the City and in upstream and downstream communities, to increase, protect and preserve the overall water quality of the Grand River, Lake Michigan and other surface water bodies

3. Continue water conservation strategies within City operations and for customers
4. Continue proactive asset management and maintain rate discipline in collaboration with utility partners
5. Continue to expand and maintain green infrastructure to strategically reduce stormwater system burdens and protect the watershed.
6. Advance the practice of “daylighting” existing underground storm conveyance pipes to create natural waterway systems that improve water quality and promote natural habitat
7. Continue to stay on the cutting edge of PFAS mitigation, treatment and disposal opportunities, while proactively monitoring/testing for currently unregulated contaminants
8. Collaborate with partners to expand water distribution network to serve those with contaminated groundwater wells
9. Proactively work to minimize risk of residential water/sewer service shut offs and create innovative solutions to avoid the shut off of services

Metrics

1. Number of water connections with lead service line replacements completed per year and number remaining
2. Water quality index score
3. Gallons of water pumped from treatment plant per person per day normalized for weather impacts
4. Gallons of stormwater infiltrated through green infrastructure installations
5. Acres of stormwater runoff treated through green infrastructure practices
6. Linear feet of stream daylighting
7. Number of residents referred to and using the County for assistance with water/sewer bills (85% of users must be below 200% poverty level)
8. Number of regulatory drinking water, regulatory wastewater, and stormwater quality standards not met

Objective 4: Materials Management

Minimize waste generation and promote waste diversion practices.

Strategies

1. Evaluate and implement refuse collection strategies that will maximize waste diversion and increase efficiency in collection and hauling operations
2. Reduce material contamination across the refuse spectrum and increase the amount of

correct material placed into the correct collection device

3. Enhance compost and organics diversion options for the community
4. Implement waste diversion programs that prioritize beneficial reuse and maximize local impact and benefits
5. Promote and implement biosolid diversion from landfills toward reusable materials and sustainable practices

Metrics

1. Number of customer accounts participating in recycling diversion programs
2. Percent of residential waste diverted by weight through recycling
3. Cubic yards of compost and organics processed onsite at City composting facility

Objective 5: Health Equity

Collaborate with and support partners working to reduce health disparities and the resulting undesirable outcomes.

Strategies

1. Collaborate with partners to implement policy solutions and programs that reduce sources of lead- based paint exposure
2. Implement innovative approaches to support people experiencing mental health challenges and/or addiction, including impacted individuals who are experiencing homelessness
3. Take a Health For All approach to creating or revising policy, procedures and plans that address equity, health and environmental justice
4. Evaluate and implement policies, procedures and plans that support equitable access to local, healthy and affordable food and urban agriculture
5. Measure and work to improve air quality, particularly in environmental justice communities
6. Continue to incentivize and support the cleanup and beneficial reuse of brownfields and other contaminated properties

Metrics

1. Percent of children tested that have elevated blood lead levels above the current CDC reference value ($\geq 3.5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$)
2. Number of homes where lead hazards were controlled and cleared
3. Number of mental health and number of substance use disorder referrals resulting from co-response initiatives

4. Number of emergency department, jail, and ambulance/EMS diversions resulting from co-response initiatives
5. Number of children (< 18) participating in City offered or supported opportunities to connect to nature
6. Number of projects and acres of land included in the City's brownfield program that received City support to make the property safe for reuse
7. Number of air quality monitors
8. Number of regulatory air quality standards not met (for Water Resource Recovery Facility operations)

Objective 6: Grand River

Make the Grand River one of the city's greatest quality of life assets.

Strategies

1. Remove the river dams in the urban core
2. Preserve and restore natural areas to improve the health of the river ecosystem
3. Restore and stabilize key riverfront segments with green infrastructure to improve habitat, water quality and climate/flood resilience
4. Expand water access, river activation amenities and recreational opportunities in collaboration with river partners and upstream/downstream communities
5. Support efforts to evaluate and improve, where warranted, flood protection infrastructure along key reaches of the Grand River

Metrics

1. Percent of dam removal completed
2. Percent of river restoration project completed by phase: designed, funded, completed

MOBILITY

Objective 1: Safety

Ensure a safe transportation network for people using all modes of travel through use of data to inform infrastructure design and maintenance, and enforcement, education, and engagement initiatives.

Strategies

1. Launch sustained safety campaigns (aligned with [Vision Zero](#)) tailored to Grand Rapids' high-risk corridors, behaviors, and populations
2. Identify and mitigate high-injury network (HIN) corridors using crash, speed, and equity data
3. Continue prioritization of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program focusing on areas facing elevated crash risk
4. Integrate Safe Systems principles into all capital projects and traffic operations

Metrics

1. Number of new traffic calming projects implemented
2. Number of signaled crosswalks and number of pedestrian signals improved
3. Number of safety campaigns focused on high-risk behaviors and populations
4. Total and percent change year-over-year monthly traffic fatalities and serious injuries, Citywide and by mode
5. 3-year pre/post changes in speed or crash severity at qualifying project sites

Objective 2: Mobility Choices

Increase access to connected, accessible, multimodal travel options.

Strategies

1. Implement the Community Master Plan with a mobility plan that supports the City's growth and economic development objectives through a multi-modal, coordinated transportation vision
2. Coordinate long-range transportation and land use policies to support system design that

prioritizes safety for all users and active transportation

3. Increase walkability by ensuring existing facilities are maintained and adding connectivity guided by Vital Streets' Walkway Improvement Prioritization Criteria
4. Collaborate in development of a regional mobility and transportation demand management program with public and private partners
5. Enhance neighborhood access to the Grand River Greenway corridor along east/west connections and neighborhood trail connection initiatives

Metrics

1. Percent of residents who live within 500 feet of a transit stop or bicycle facility
2. Number of ADA ramps or raised intersections placed annually to address missing and non-ADA compliant curb cuts
3. Miles of new sidewalk installed to close gaps in network connectivity
4. Percent of residents that indicate they have used public transportation instead of driving; carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone; or walked or biked instead of driving during the last 12 months
5. Percent of trips using carpool, transit, walk, and bicycle (mode-split)

Objective 3: Transportation Asset Management

Develop a well-maintained and coordinated transportation network through planning, partnership, effective asset management, and efficient project delivery that strengthens Grand Rapids' economy.

Strategies

1. Coordinate transportation investments with regional partners
2. Maintain Grand Rapids' transportation infrastructure (e.g., signals, sidewalks, trails/shared use paths, roads/streets and bridges) in a state of good and fair repair
3. Enhance the use of data to plan and develop equitable mobility and transportation capital investments
4. Pursue sustainable funding for right-of-way asset management and investment
5. Pilot low cost and reversible mobility solutions that can be quickly implemented and are informed by safety and community needs
6. Improve communication and wayfinding before, during, and after City right-of-way construction projects

Metrics

1. Miles and number of street projects completed each year
2. Annual investment in streets by Ward
3. Miles of sidewalk inspected/repaired
4. Percent of residents that rank the overall quality of the transportation system as excellent or good
5. Percent of streets in good and fair condition evaluated annually by Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PACER) system
6. Number and percent of bridges in good and fair condition as evaluated bi-annually through bridge inspections
7. Number and percent of signals in good and fair condition

Objective 4: Parking and Curb Management

Adapt parking and curbside policies to support local economic development, improve access, and balance the needs of all users and modes.

Strategies

1. Recognize the role of publicly owned off-street parking in supporting economic development and implement an asset management plan to guide their maintenance and redevelopment
2. Develop and implement the citywide Curb Management Plan to guide allocation of curb space for mobility, parking, loading, deliveries and access in a manner that elevates safety for all users and that supports the Community Master Plan and mobility vision
3. Support parking systems and enforcement to meet evolving needs, foster economic development, and maintain reliable access and infrastructure
4. Integrate data collection technologies to monitor curb and parking demand by time and location

Metrics

1. Average parking fee per off-street and on-street space
2. Total number of public parking spaces
3. Percent average of occupied off-street public parking in downtown and neighborhood business districts

4. Percent average of occupied on-street parking in downtown, neighborhood business districts, and residential streets
5. Percent of residents that rank the ease of public parking across the community as at least good

SAFE COMMUNITY

Objective 1: Constitutional and Community Policing

Provide constitutional and community policing services that enhance trust, transparency, accountability and the safety of every resident, employer, employee and visitor.

Strategies

1. Continue implementation of the Police Department Strategic Plan
2. Improve and maintain community-police relations
3. Continue co-response services and other innovative and effective policing models in partnership with community to increase the capacity of Police personnel to engage with the community and improve safe community outcomes
4. Identify and implement innovative recruiting, hiring and retention strategies to achieve desired outcomes and ensure the Police Department represents the diversity of Grand Rapids
5. Identify, pilot and implement data and community-informed policing strategies that will decrease violent crime

Metrics

1. Percent of beats covered 24/7/365
2. Number and percent change in select crimes
3. Number of use of force incidents
4. Number of recruiting hours, including recruiting hours taking place specifically within the neighborhoods
5. Time for Dispatch to answer calls
6. Average response time from dispatch to arrival on scene for all call types
7. Average response time from dispatch to arrival on scene for reported shooting in progress
8. Number of hours of annual training per police officer
9. Number of community-informed trainings offered at PD and the number of attendees
10. Number of domestic violence victims reached and the number of victims who accepted services

Objective 2: Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Provide professional fire and emergency medical services that enhance trust, transparency, accountability and the safety of every resident, employer, employee and visitor.

Strategies

1. Implement, publicly report on and achieve desired outcomes under the Fire Department Strategic Plan
2. Reduce the impact of repeat 911 users on the emergency response system through proactive outreach and alternative intervention strategies
3. Strengthen the use of the Residential Safety Program (RSP) in neighborhoods to reduce residential structure fires
4. Utilize pipeline programming such as cadets, summer youth academy, and GRow1000 to assist with recruiting
5. Maintain effective asset management plan and strategy for fire equipment, facilities and apparatus
6. Ensure fiscally responsible and on-schedule completion of major GRFD capital projects, including the Division Avenue Fire Station and the GRFD Training Center, while developing a comprehensive asset management plan for all Fire Department facilities to guide long-term maintenance and investment
7. Enhance GRFD's water rescue readiness and response capabilities to ensure public safety amid increased recreational activity resulting from Grand River restoration and expanded waterway use

Metrics

1. Number of residential structures equipped with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors via the RSP
2. GRFD critical performance compliance for distribution, concentration, and reliability measures
3. Number of HOT contacts made through street outreach
4. Number of individuals diverted from emergency response through outreach or alternative interventions
5. Percent reduction of repeat 911 calls (defined as three or more calls from the same individual within 12 months)

Objective 3: Collaboration and Collective Impact

Enhance collaboration across City departments and with community partners and residents, focusing on the social determinants of health and restorative practices, to achieve harm reduction and ensure safety for all.

Strategies

1. Continue collective impact approach to safe community across City departments and in collaboration with community partners and residents that integrates initiatives that directly or indirectly improve the environmental, financial, physical and mental health of residents, employees, employers and visitors with the goal of reducing violent crime by testing new approaches to collaborative partnerships
2. Continue a collective impact approach to homelessness that reduces its impact on individuals and neighborhoods while supporting long-term solutions
3. Streamline processes where internal and external data and information may be cross-referenced with Fire and Police department information systems to improve safe community outcomes and mitigate emergencies
4. Continue to partner with individuals, organizations and the Safe Task Force on innovative, community-based solutions to youth gun violence, lack of pro-social opportunities, and mental health issues
5. Continue to implement Cure Violence Grand Rapids as an evidence-based strategy to address violence by using community-based public safety solutions
6. Create and implement a violence intervention strategy
7. Expand opportunities for diversion from the criminal justice system

Metrics

1. Number of initiatives piloted to reduce violent crime in geographic place-based areas
2. Number of people informed or educated on public safety topics via neighborhood organizations
3. Number of housing units or public spaces that received safety improvements via neighborhood organizations
4. Number of engagements that led to violence interruptions and disruptions
5. Number of interactions and treatment of high-risk individuals that served to defuse immediate conflicts that had a high-risk of leading to gun violence
6. Number of diversions from the criminal justice system
7. Number of businesses inspected via Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and percent compliance

8. Percent of residents rating their overall feeling of safety in Grand Rapids as excellent or good (NCS)
9. Number of participants in out-of-school time (OST) programs in the Expanded Learning Opportunities Network

Objective 4: Emergency Response and Recovery

Mitigate, prepare for and provide timely, equitable and effective response to and support the community's recovery from emergencies and disasters, with an emphasis on violence reduction efforts where applicable.

Strategies

1. Resource and deploy an effective emergency management program
2. Ensure staff are equipped and trained to provide effective emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery support
3. Construct and maintain the necessary facilities, equipment and technology needed to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies
4. Enhance communication, coordination and collaboration before, during and after emergency response
5. Provide emergency response services that protect the community and are best in class
6. Increase neighborhood safety through the City's partnership with neighborhood organizations
7. Prepare to support community through local disasters by implementing a Disaster Relief Fund that will leverage funding from local government and community-based organizations in the event federal/state funding is not available

Metrics

1. Number of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations: full activations and partial activations
2. Percent of population enrolled in Grand Rapids emergency alert notification system
3. Number of OEM engagements with neighborhood organizations, private businesses and key stakeholders
4. Number of individuals who complete Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Level 1 and/or Level 2 trainings
5. Percent of city departments with up-to-date Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs)

6. Percent of emergency plans reviewed and/or updated within the calendar year
7. Average number of days to resume essential city functions (water, power, transportation systems etc.) after a disaster, when applicable
8. Disaster Relief Fund balance

Objective 5: Oversight and Accountability

Ensure civilian oversight of public safety with an emphasis on accountability, transparency, restorative justice and community involvement.

Strategies

1. Work with community partners and departments to increase public safety accountability and transparency
2. Elevate community voice in the creation, evaluation, and implementation of public safety trainings and policies
3. Implement and publicly report on progress and desired outcomes established in the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability's Strategic Plan including, but not limited to, annually documenting and sharing statistical findings of Internal Affairs, the Civilian Appeal Board, and other relevant findings

Metrics

1. Number of Civilian Appeal Board cases and outcomes of appeals
2. Number of complaints filed against public safety employees, broken down by department, type and outcome

Equity Statement

Equity, as defined by the City, is the condition achieved when people have the tools, resources, and connections necessary to fully participate in and benefit from the opportunities they seek. Racial equity is realized when race or ethnicity no longer predict one's access to opportunity or life outcomes.

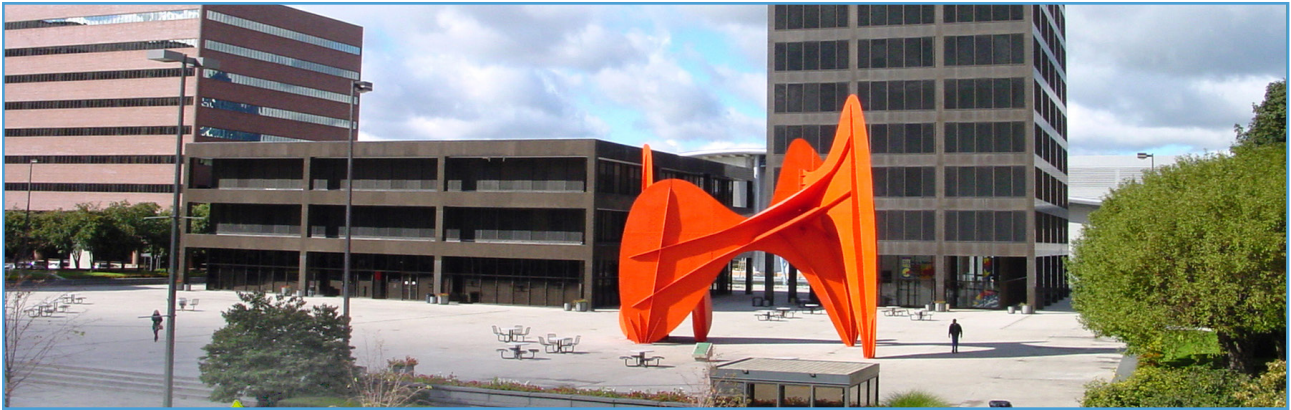
Our focus on equity is not about division – it is about ensuring that every resident, regardless of background, can thrive. We know that when we intentionally address disparities that have historically limited opportunity, we improve the quality of life for everyone in our city.

As one of the City's six core values, equity must continue to guide our decisions, policies, and daily operations. This strategic plan builds upon years of listening to our community and strengthening our internal capacity to embed equitable practices across all departments. Each team is equipped and supported to identify and remove barriers so that our services and systems work better for everyone.

Where possible, the City will continue to use data – disaggregated by race, ethnicity, or geography – to better understand where disparities persist and to measure our progress over time. Transparency and accountability remain central to this effort.

Our goal is simple yet profound: to make Grand Rapids the best place to live, work, and raise a family – for everyone. While we celebrate recognitions such as being named among the “Best Places to Live” and one of the top cities for wage growth, we must also remain mindful of where inequities still exist, including in health, housing, employment, entrepreneurship, and education.

We are confident that through collaboration – with community, including, but not limited to residents, partners, regional, and national allies – we can continue to build a Grand Rapids where opportunity is accessible to all. By leading with equity, we are investing in a more inclusive and prosperous future for our entire community.



Implementation

When this plan was originally adopted in 2019, we recognized that to be successful we must be diligent about implementation and we have. The creation of a plan alone will not drive successful outcomes or achieve more equitable, effective and sustainable operations.

Below are the implementation commitments we made in 2019. We have successfully completed 7 of those tasks and work on the remaining 2 is in progress.

- Establishing a performance management team responsible for managing the successful implementation of the plan
- Assigning accountability to staff for measuring, tracking, accomplishing and reporting on the progress of strategies and metrics
- Creating a robust information and data tracking system that supports detailed analysis of performance (we are currently evaluating opportunities to enhance the process by which we collect, analyze and report on Strategic Plan metrics and commit to improve this moving forward)
- Training staff on the plan, implementation process and performance management expectations
- Establishing a cadence of report-outs on progress, which will include internal staff reporting as well as an annual report to the Commission and public
- Publishing performance information and data publicly on the website and through other communication methods
- Updating the plan as needed
- Reorganizing the budget and budget process to align with the plan
- Integrating strategic plan performance measures into employee evaluations

Implementation (cont.)

City leadership and staff have used this plan extensively. Specifically, this plan has been used to:

- Create annual preliminary and final fiscal plans (budgets) for FY2020 – FY2027
- Establish an organizational-wide methodology for tracking performance of both strategic initiatives and essential services
- Identify metrics to be included on the Key Metric Dashboard and support the development of the Police Department’s Dashboard
- Guide annual City Commission prioritization workshops, which have been held in the fall of 2019 – 2025
- Present mid-year performance updates and annual performance reports for FY2020 – FY2026
- Support City departments in creating department operational plans, including department specific key performance indicators
- Refresh our recruiting, hiring, on-boarding and staff training
- Support the development of other important City and community plans (e.g. Community Master Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan)

Each year, the City Manager proposes the City’s budget in April. As a part of the budget proposal, the City Manager will highlight the key strategies from this plan that we are investing in for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. We continue to learn and to be on this journey. We hope this plan helps you better understand our priorities and direction.

Find information about this plan and monitor our performance at:

grandrapidsmi.gov/departments/executive-office/strategic-plan/

Thank you to our plan contributors!

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CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
STRATEGIC PLAN

