



Neighborhood Living Guide





Neighborhood Living Guide

Residents and neighborhoods define Grand Rapids' exceptional quality of life and distinct character. Charming homes interspersed among lively business districts keep Grand Rapids an attractive place to live, work and raise a family.

Several real estate studies show that the city continues to attract new residents to this growing community, including many first-time homebuyers. As the City continues to mature, there are several things property owners and renters can do to ensure that Grand Rapids protects the vitality of its quaint neighborhoods. Various home improvement projects (a fresh coat of paint on exterior structures, new plantings, maintained landscaping and debris-free yards) help keep homes looking good, protect property values and enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods.

This Grand Rapids Neighborhood Living Guide, compiled from common questions asked by residents to Grand Rapids 311 customer service representatives, provides a quick glimpse of the rules and regulations required of homeowners and renters. It also identifies typical property issues and identifies whether the homeowner or other agency (including the City of Grand Rapids) is responsible for resolving the issue.

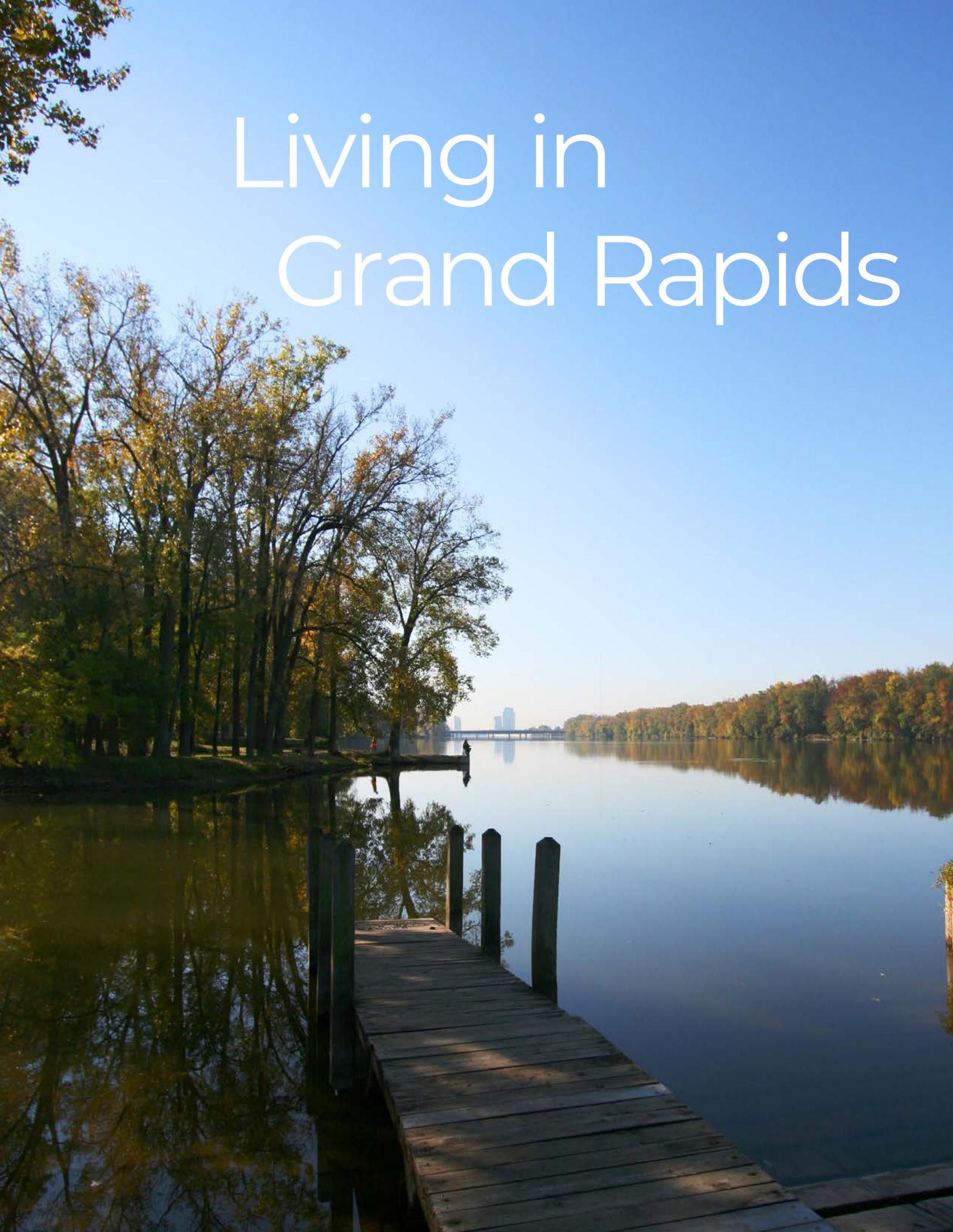
For additional information on any of the following topics, please contact the City at 311 (or dial 616-456-3000) or visit the webpage at grandrapidsmi.gov.



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Living in Grand Rapids





Pets are certainly just as much a part of our neighborhoods as we are. They can impact our neighborhood's quality of living in many ways. If you're a pet owner, here are some reminders and tips to keep in mind for our furry or scaly friends.

Dogs

- When walking your dog(s) in public, use a leash.
- All dogs must be licensed with Kent County. To read more about this license, or to apply visit kentcounty.gov/DogLicense.
- Make sure your dogs have identification tags with your contact information listed.

- Is there a dog excessively barking in your neighborhood? You can call 616-456-3400 to report to non-emergency Police dispatch.

Animal Waste

- When walking a pet, dispose of all its waste from public places and private property.
- Clean up animal waste from your yard daily.
- Animal waste should be placed in a trash container **ONLY**, NOT in a recycling bin, street or catch basin.

Exotic and Vicious

Exotic (Exotic pets are defined as any pet that is not a dog, cat, domestic rodent, fish or farm animal) and vicious animals are not allowed as pets.

Animal Removal

Have you seen a dead animal in the street? You can report it online at grandrapidsmi.gov.

Reporting Stray or Domestic Animals

Would you like to report a stray or domestic animal in your neighborhood? You can report them to Kent County Animal Control at (616) 632-7300.

Rodent Control

Property owners are responsible for preventing conditions that provide a home or food source for rats. Here's are some tips:

- Remove all rubbish on property. This includes any piled close to buildings to expose burrows and openings.

- Store all pet food in containers with lids.
- Store and dispose of garbage properly.
- Do you feed your pets outdoors? Leave the food out for just long enough to be eaten, then remove it.



Backyard Chickens

Do you want to have chickens in your backyard? You can apply for a Backyard Chicken Permit if your property meets certain size requirements at grandrapidsmi.gov.

Beekeeping

You can keep bees within city limits as long as they are contained in a hive or box and your property is large enough to follow requirements of where hives can be located.

Beehives should be located:

- More than 25 feet from any residence, hospital, medical facility, school, church, office building, store, hotel, apartment house, rooming house or any place of habitation.

- Not less than five feet from the edge of the beekeeper's own lot or property line.
- Must be located in the rear yard of the beekeeper's own lot.
- Beehives are also required to have a flyaway barrier – a hedge, shrubbery or solid fencing around each box or hive that is at least six (6) feet tall. We require this so that bees have a high flight path above the head of an average human being when exiting and entering their hives.



The maximum number of Hives or boxes is based on the beekeepers lot size:

- Two (2) hives for a lot that is not greater than 11,000 square feet in area.
- Four (4) hives for a lot greater than 11,000 square feet but not greater than 22,000 square feet in area.

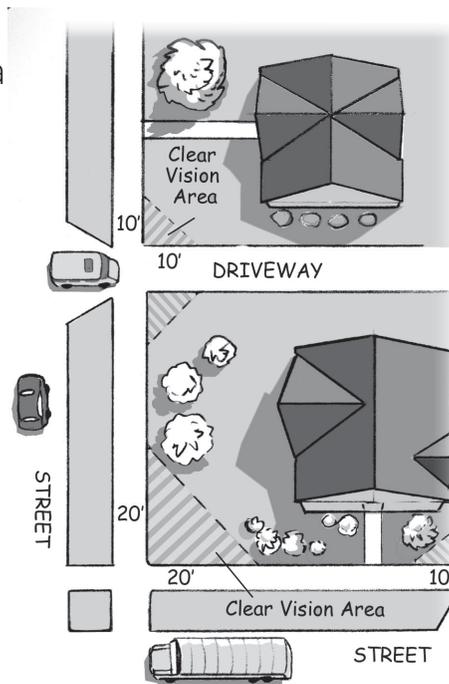
Each hive or box shall have a maximum size of 20 cubic feet.

Growing in Front Yards & Parkways

You can grow native or edible plants in your front yard as long as guidelines are followed to prevent blocking clear vision areas around sidewalks and driveways. It is important to maintain **clear vision** areas in specific locations for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

Clear Vision Areas

A clear vision area is typically the triangular area at the intersection of two streets, or a street and a driveway.



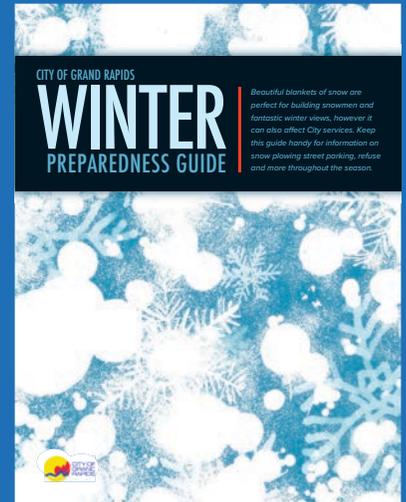
Street Corners

For streets, it is measured as twenty (20) feet along each lot line starting at the intersection of the lot lines, and connected by a straight line to form a triangular area.

Driveways

For driveways, it is measured as ten (10) feet along the lot line and the driveway starting at the intersection of the lot line and the closest edge of the driveway, and connected by a straight line to form a triangular area.

Any planted vegetation in these areas should be less than 30 inches to maintain clear sight lines.



Winter Preparedness

Beautiful blankets of snow are perfect for building snowmen, snowshoeing and fantastic winter views. However, it can also affect the services we provide to our residents during the winter months. If you're interested in snow plowing, parking, refuse and more, check out this guide of helpful information to thrive during the winter season, at the City of Grand Rapids website:

grandrapidsmi.gov



- Michigan state law requires all changes or transfers of ownership to be registered with the City Assessor's office by filing a Property Transfer Affidavit within 45 days of the transfer (even if one is not recording a deed).
- In order to qualify for a Principal Residence Exemption (a.k.a. Homestead Exemption), a home must be owned and occupied by the owner by June 1. Please file the original Principal Residence Exemption Affidavit with the City Assessor (300 Monroe Ave NW).

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Are you a new homeowner? Are you a first time homeowner? Have you recently relocated to Grand Rapids? If you answered yes to any of these questions, congratulations and/or welcome! Learn about the resources available for your new journey at grandrapidsmi.gov.

Home Business

- Some home-occupation businesses may be operated out of a residence provided there are no employees, signs, storage, commercial vehicles or equipment or on-site parking.
- You do not need to obtain a permit to hold a garage sale.
- Recurring or continual garage sales (i.e. every weekend) are not permitted. You are encouraged to hold no more than two sales per

year of no more than three days duration each.

- Garage sale signs (or any other signs) are regulated by city ordinances and cannot be posted in the public right-of-way and must be removed after the event.
- Dealers are not permitted to operate in residential areas. Vehicle sales on private residential property are restricted by City Ordinances.

Residential Rental Property

- All residential properties or dwellings, not occupied by the owner, are considered rental properties. These properties must be registered annually and must have a valid Certificate of Compliance for occupancy. Vacant properties must also be registered annually. Properties can be registered online at grandrapidsmi.gov.
- Renting property for less than 30 days (i.e. short-term rental) is not permitted in the City.

Home Maintenance

- Homes should be routinely painted or coated to prevent surface deterioration with no

visible signs of peeling paint. Paint chips may contain lead and shall be properly removed. Aluminum and vinyl siding and trim should be kept in good repair.

- Indoor furniture or furnishings, such as sofas, may not be placed in the yard or on an open porch. Indoor furniture materials are not designed to be weather resistant, decay over time and can attract vermin.
- Vacant houses must be kept properly secured with maintained yards.
- All buildings should be maintained in a structurally sound condition, with no sagging rooflines, worn or missing shingles, or tilted/bowed floors and walls.
- All building extensions and attachments, such as fences, porches, gutters and shutters, should be maintained. They should present an even, straight, and structurally sound appearance.
- Garage doors should be free of peeling paint and dents, and should close tightly and securely.
- Driveways should be free of broken areas and hazardous conditions.
- Single-family homes are designed for traditional

family units for the safety and comfort of those residing in the dwelling.

- Parking in the front yard is prohibited.
- Between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., it is unlawful to operate or play any radio, television, electronic audio equipment, drum, musical instrument, or device creating amplified sound such that the sound can be heard across a residential property line. Keep noise and music to a respectful level (below 25 decibels).
- Swimming pools must be in proper working order and, for public health reasons, must not contain stagnant water.
- Swimming pools that are capable of containing 24 inches of water or more, must be enclosed with a fence.
- Property owners are responsible for the upkeep of the alleyway abutting their property (width of the lot and to center of the alley).
- Some neighborhoods have posted seasonal odd/even parking requirements to assist in snow removal, meaning vehicles can only park on one side of the street on a particular day.

- Students living off campus are integral to the neighborhood's quality of life and help support critical social infrastructure by helping neighbors in need, keeping noise to a minimum in respect for children and early risers, and maintaining their premises.
- No more than **six** unrelated persons may live together in a housing unit.
- If you experience problems with your unit, please first report them to your landlord. If the problem is not addressed, file a complaint online at grandrapidsmi.gov.



Yard Maintenance

- **One (1)** unlicensed but operational vehicle may be stored on the property. Stored vehicles cannot be damaged or have missing parts. No vehicle storage is permitted on vacant parcels.
- Grass and shrub areas should be mowed, trimmed and kept weed-free. No lawn areas should be allowed to grow to a height greater than **12 inches**. Mowing and trimming of ditch lines, alleys, and right-of-way

areas adjacent to the roadway, is also expected.

- All types of landscaping should be kept neat and clean. Diseased or dead landscaping should be removed.
- Yard areas should be free of litter, junk, debris and scrap storage.
- Landscaping must be installed at a new home within one year of occupancy.
- Firewood shall be stacked neatly at least eight inches off the ground, no higher than **6 feet** and **3 feet** from the side lot line.
- Composting is allowed only in the backyard of occupied residential dwellings in accordance with the following:
 - The compost may not contain animal waste, meat, bones, grease, oils, fats, or cooked foods of any kind.
 - The compost must be completely contained in a fully enclosed compost

receptacle having a capacity no greater than **64 cubic feet**.

- The compost receptacle shall be constructed of rigid and durable materials, which shall not include any of the following: burlap, tarp, vehicle tires, wire mesh, chicken wire, flexible fencing material of any kind, or any substantially similar materials; and must be kept tightly covered except when opened for deposit or removal of compost materials.
- Refrigerators and freezers may not be stored without removing or securing the doors.
- Bushes and shrubs must be trimmed so vision is not obstructed and pedestrian traffic is not interfered with along sidewalks and driveways.
- Site Restoration – Please help improve restoration efforts by watering grass seed in the parkway at the end of a construction project.

Parking

- All vehicles should be parked in defined driveways and not in any yard areas. Vehicles should not be parked on the lawn or across the public sidewalk.

- Michigan's Motor Vehicle Law requires that vehicles cannot be parked within **20 feet** of a crosswalk or, if there is no crosswalk, within 15 feet of the intersection.
- Outdoor storage of one Recreational Vehicle (boat, boat trailer, utility trailer, travel trailer, motor home, or similar vehicle) under **25 ft.** in length is permitted in residential areas in the rear yard, or if not possible, on the side yard, but not closer than **4 ft.** from the lot line and screened from the adjacent property by a **6 ft.** fence or hedge.
- RVs cannot be occupied or repaired in a residential area.
- One RV may be parked on a driveway **May 1–Oct. 31**, provided the vehicle is in good condition, does not exceed **25 ft.** in length and is parked at least **6 ft.** from any structure, adjacent property or **15 ft.** from the front lot line.
- Commercial vehicles can park temporarily in a residential neighborhood while engaged in the delivery, pickup or service run to a property.
- Commercial vehicles and equipment may not be parked or stored in

residential areas of the city. Trucks exceeding 3/4 ton and used for commercial purposes are considered commercial vehicles, as are semi truck trailers, step vans, cube vans, and any other vehicle capable of a payload of more than one ton.

- No unlicensed and/or junk vehicles should be parked on the property other than in the garage. Major vehicle repairs, such as engine and transmission overhauls and bodywork that require extensive

time to complete, should not be attempted and are not permitted.

- The parking of personal vehicles (new or used) for purposes of sale is not permitted on commercial, industrial or public properties.





Residential Parking Permit (RPP)

Each year we assess how much parking is available in neighborhoods near business districts. Has parking become difficult in your neighborhood? Our Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program might be right for you. This program puts resident parking first.

RPP Zones prioritize parking spots for residents within the area. To park within an RPP Zone, you must be a resident or a guest of a resident and must have a Residential Parking Permit. Vehicles parked within an RPP zone without a permit

will be subject to parking enforcement. Residents within RPP Zones can apply for a permit for a small permit fee. If you are not currently within an RPP Zone, your neighborhood might qualify for establishing a new RPP Zone in the future. For more Residential Parking Permit information go to: grandrapidsmi.gov.

Handicap Parking on Residential Street

Do you need a handicap parking space on your residential street?

You can apply for it at: grandrapidsmi.gov.

Odd/Even and One-Side Parking

Some neighborhood streets have restricted parking November 1 to April 1. Find out which streets have odd/even or one-side parking restrictions at the City's website.

Petition for Winter Parking Restrictions

Do you want to add odd/even or one side winter parking restrictions to your street? Did you know you can petition and vote on seasonal parking limitations for your block? To do so, just visit the City's website.

Mobile GR

The City of Grand Rapids offers micromobility, shuttle bus, and carshare options to enhance transportation accessibility, reduce environmental impact and promote equitable mobility. These initiatives align with the city's commitment to innovative, sustainable urban transportation.

Electric scooters and bikes*

Residents and visitors can utilize electric scooters and bikes for short, eco-friendly trips through the city's expanding micromobility network.

Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH)*

The free to ride DASH bus in downtown Grand Rapids provides convenient, zero-fare transportation to multiple Grand Rapids destinations. Operating 7-days-a-week, the DASH allows residents and visitors to explore downtown Grand Rapids with ease.

DART CarShare

The DART CarShare Program provides access to shared vehicles, offering an affordable and sustainable solution for those who need occasional car use. After a short orientation process, residents and visitors are able to rent a car for \$5 per hour from select neighborhood locations. For more information on this program please visit dartgr.org.

*For more information on the DASH and the City's micromobility options, please visit grandrapidsmi.gov.



THE RAPID

Public Transportation

• The Rapid, the Grand Rapids region's public transportation system, operates buses, paratransit and carpool services. It operates dozens of bus routes that run seven days a week, including evening hours. Routes originate at the Rapid Central Station, located at 250 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Schedules and routes: ridetherapid.org.



• AMTRAK Michigan Services trains provide several convenient options for getting around the Wolverine State, and beyond, linking the Grand Rapids area with many points in Michigan as well as over 450 cities and towns in the United States. Catch the train at Grand Rapids' Vernon J. Ehlers Station, 440 Century Avenue SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Schedules and routes: amtrak.com/michigan/where-we-go.

Business and Neighborhood Associations

Grand Rapids has six Corridor Improvement Authorities in place to assist economic development and redevelopment in the Michigan Street, North Quarter, South Division-Grandville, Southtown, Uptown and West side commercial districts. These authorities are working to create thriving, vibrant business corridors across the City through strategic public investments in streetscape enhancements, business development and marketing.

A **Business Improvement District** is also in place within the Uptown business district that helps promote and encourage community and economic vitality and growth through marketing, development and enhanced services to the district. Visit the City's Economic Development site at growgr.grandrapidsmi.gov for more information about the authorities operating in your district and how you can engage with them.

Grand Rapids has 28 great neighborhood associations and 19 business associations that team with citizens and entrepreneurs to build stronger neighborhoods and business districts.

Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood associations may be formally or informally structured. Some are 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations with paid staff, while others may not be incorporated and rely solely on resident volunteers.

Some neighborhood associations receive grants from the City for public safety and resident leadership programs in central city neighborhoods. These activities are supported with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other resources.

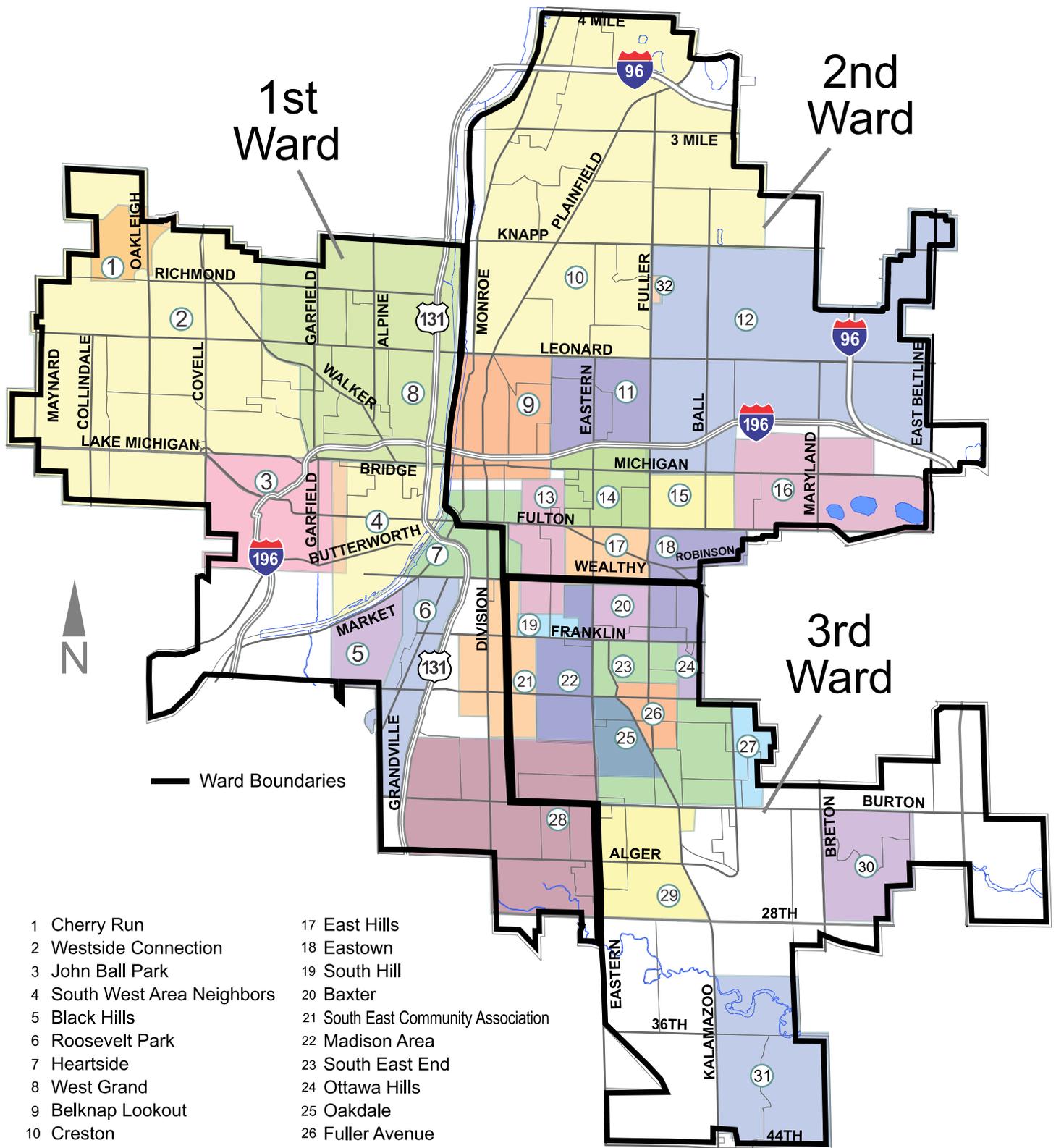
Both types of neighborhood associations work hard to communicate what's happening in their neighborhood and our city, create fun events, bring programs helpful to residents and provide resources.

Please consider getting involved in your neighborhood association. Contact them to learn how!



My Neighborhood

Find events, parks, libraries and schools near you. Find out who your commissioners and mayor are. Lookup the next date your trash and recycling will be picked up by visiting the City's website at grandrapidsmi.gov.



- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Cherry Run | 17 East Hills |
| 2 Westside Connection | 18 Easttown |
| 3 John Ball Park | 19 South Hill |
| 4 South West Area Neighbors | 20 Baxter |
| 5 Black Hills | 21 South East Community Association |
| 6 Roosevelt Park | 22 Madison Area |
| 7 Heartside | 23 South East End |
| 8 West Grand | 24 Ottawa Hills |
| 9 Belknap Lookout | 25 Oakdale |
| 10 Creston | 26 Fuller Avenue |
| 11 Highland Park | 27 Eastgate |
| 12 North East Citizens Action | 28 Garfield Park |
| 13 Heritage Hill | 29 Alger Heights |
| 14 Midtown | 30 Ridgemoor |
| 15 Fulton Heights | 31 Millbrook |
| 16 Michigan Oaks | 32 Auburn Hills |

List of Grand Rapids Neighborhood Associations

Alger Heights Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 7809, Grand Rapids, MI 49507
algerheights.org
ahneighborhoodassociation@gmail.com

Auburn Hills Neighborhood

1706 Auburn Dr. NE, Grand Rapids MI 49505
616.617.9522
jejls@msn.com

Baxter Neighborhood Association

Location: 746 Neland Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616-821-3740 or 616-426-6273
www.bnagr.org

Boston Square Neighborhood Association

bostonsquarena@gmail.com
<http://bostonsquarena.org>

Creston Neighborhood Association

205 Carrier NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505
(616) 454-7900
contact@crestongr.com
crestongr.com

Eastgate Neighborhood Association

contact@eastgatena.com
eastgatena.com

East Hills Council of Neighbors

131 Eastern Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI (Pink Building at Cherry Park)
(616) 454-9079
info@easthillscouncil.org
www.easthillscouncil.org

Easttown!

(616) 451-3025
info@easttown.org
www.easttown.org

Fulton Heights Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 1590, Grand Rapids, MI 49501
fhna@fultonheights.org

Garfield Park Neighborhoods Association

334 Burton St SE, Grand Rapids MI, 49507
616-241-2444
info@gpnagr.org
www.gpnagr.org

Heartside Downtown Neighborhood Association

106 Division Ave S, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Info.hdna@gmail.com
www.intheheartofGR.org

Heritage Hill Association

252 State St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950
www.heritagehill.org

Highland Park Neighborhood Association

535 Shirley St NE Unit A, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 259-4421
hpnagr@gmail.com

South West Area Neighbors DBA John Ball Area Neighbors

1120 Bridge St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504 in the Lincoln Park Pavilion
616-456-9190
info@swangr.org
www.jbangr.com

King Park Neighbors

900 Fuller Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
info@kingparkneighbors.org
www.kingparkneighbors.org

Michigan Oaks Neighborhood Association

contactmonaboard@gmail.com
<https://sites.google.com/site/michiganoaksna/>

Midtown Neighborhood Association

616-219-0203

info@midtowngr.org

www.midtowngr.org

Millbrook Community Bridgeworks

s.beukema@prodigy.net

NorthEast Citizen Action Neighborhood Association

necaagr@gmail.com

www.necaa-gr.com

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout

700 Clancy Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

616.454.8413

info@BelknapLookout.org

Oakdale Neighbors

1260 Kalamazoo SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507

(616) 248-2848

info@oakdaleneighbors.org

www.OakdaleNeighbors.org

Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Association

PO Box 68212, Grand Rapids, MI 49516

president@ottawahillsgr.org

www.facebook.com/ottawahillsneighborhood

Ridgemoor Neighborhood

mllanning@comcast.net

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association

1260 Grandville Avenue SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 243-2489

info@rooseveltparkna.org

www.rooseveltparkna.org

Seeds of Promise

1168 Madison Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 59507

616-710-5730

Seedsofpromisegr.org

South Hill Neighborhood Association

homellca2z@gmail.com

West Grand Neighborhood Association

754 Leonard St NW, Suite B, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

616-451-0150

mail@westgrand.org

westgrand.org

Westside Connection Neighborhood Association

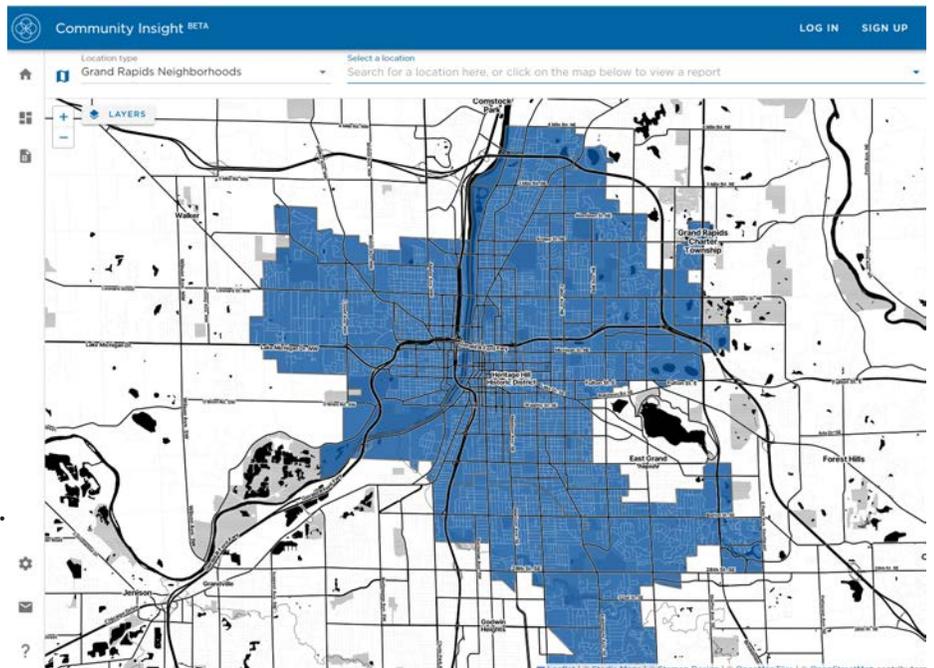
1257 Divot Dr NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

616-453-3313

keykey4557@sbcglobal.net

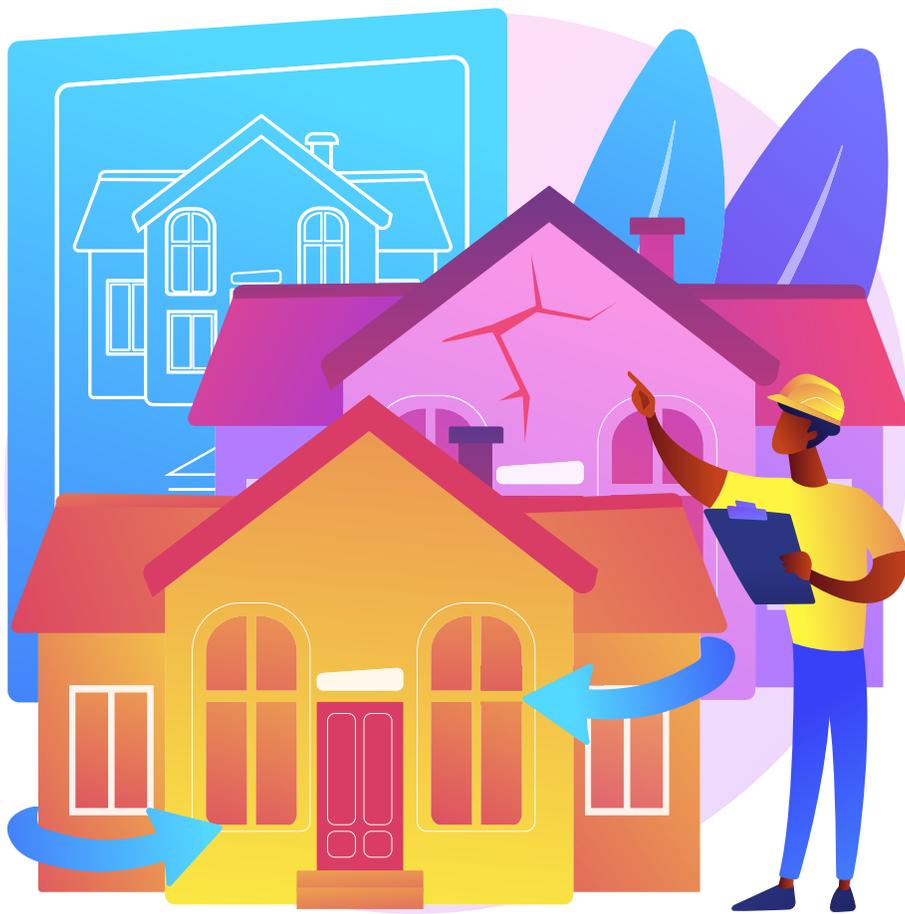
Neighborhood Lookup Map

The Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University's Community Research Institute (CRI) keeps a map showing Grand Rapids' neighborhood associations. CRI also has useful neighborhood data and statistics.



Visit grandrapidsmi.gov and search Neighborhood Map. Once you get to the page, click the link to the external site.

[Leave grandrapidsmi.gov
CRI Neighborhood Map](#)



Permits are required for occupied structures, like homes, as well as unoccupied structures like garages and sheds.

In many cases, you can perform the work yourself once you have the necessary permits. However, rules are stricter for landlords. If you're a landlord, in most cases you'll need to hire a licensed and registered contractor to get permits for your rental properties. For a list of all currently registered/licensed contractors in the City of Grand Rapids, visit grandrapidsmi.gov.

BUILDING & RENOVATIONS

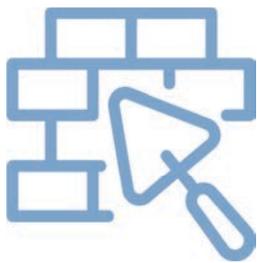
Are you looking to build a home or renovate your existing home? Thinking about adding a deck, pool, or shed to your backyard? Home renovations big and small often need a permit if you're adding or modifying walls, wiring, piping, ductwork or HVAC equipment.

Why you need permits

Without a permit and inspection, you run the risk of endangering yourself and others. You could also run into trouble later if a code violation is found or reported. Since permit and inspection records are available to the public, this can happen easily—especially during home sales. It's important to have a public record of additions and updates to your house. That way, you don't have to worry about expensive surprises during the home inspections process. Depending on the violation, you may have to absorb the cost of undoing

or redoing work or pay a fine. Permits are generally easy to get, low-cost, and take a few minutes for many home projects.

When you're renovating your home, you'll most likely need at least one of the following four permits. Take a look to see if your project might need one.



Building Permits

The building permit is our most commonly required permit type. A building permit is required for any project that you're planning to change the structure of your house and for most new structures on your property. This could include adding drywall or taking out a wall. If you're only ripping up carpet, adding a tile backsplash, or painting a room, you don't need one. As a homeowner, you're able to do basic building projects in your home with a permit. Many projects that include an electrical, mechanical, or plumbing permit will also require a building permit. For a list of current building inspections fees, visit grandrapidsmi.gov.



Electrical Permits

You'll need an electrical permit if you are altering, changing or adding to the electrical equipment for your home. If it involves the electrical wires of your home, you'll need a permit. If you're only swapping out a fixture, you don't need one -- but be careful! As a homeowner, you're able to do any electrical work in your home with a permit. If you're a landlord, you'll need a licensed and registered electric contractor.



Mechanical Permits

Mechanical work involves anything in your home associated with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and fire sprinkler systems. You'll need a mechanical

permit for any changes or updates to water heaters, furnaces, boilers, exhaust fans, kitchen hoods, RTUs (roof top air handling units), or ERV (energy recovery ventilation units). You don't need one for installing or removing gas appliances (like stoves and dryers). As a homeowner, you're able to do any mechanical work in your home with a permit. If you're a landlord, you'll need a licensed and registered mechanical contractor.



Plumbing Permits

If you're only replacing a faucet, sink, toilet or similar fixture, a plumbing permit is not required. We require permits for any plumbing work beyond that. That includes adding lines and pipes in the walls and floors, adding or working on a water heater or upgrading your water services. As a homeowner, you're able to do any plumbing work in your home with a permit. If you're a landlord, you'll need a licensed and registered plumbing contractor. Please keep in mind that you can't

combine storm water and sanitary sewer systems. Also, any underground plumbing work outside the building footprint requires an inspection permit issued by the Water System. And only a City-licensed contractor can perform plumbing work in the City right-of-way.

Online Applications

Our plan submission process is done online using ePlan Room on our City's website. This electronic plan review application is integrated in Citizen Access. If you're submitting your permit application online, you'll be prompted to upload plans at the end of your application. If you're not ready to submit plans, you can always log into Citizen Access and do this later.

Paper Applications

If you're submitting a paper permit application form to the Dev Center, we still need electronic plans. Here are your options:

Include your electronic plans on a USB flash drive
Upload your plans to ePlan Room after we process your permit application

Apply for a permit

Once you've created your plan and looked through

any relevant guides, you'll apply for a permit. Keep in mind that multiple permit types may be required for a single project. For example, a typical bathroom remodel requires building, electrical and plumbing permits. With your plan in hand, we can guide you to which permits you'll need.

Projects must begin within six months of receiving the permit. They're valid as long as the work is proceeding. If the work is halted or abandoned for a period of six months or more, the permit is invalid. Extensions may be granted under certain circumstances. If you suspect you'll need an extension, submit a written request before your permit's expiration.

Inspections

Building and trade inspections can all be scheduled online through Citizen Access, our online permit portal. You can also call 311, the City's Customer Service Center. If calling from outside of the city limits, please dial 616-456-4100 (Option 1).



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

311 Customer
Service

GR311 is:

- A convenient single point of contact for non-emergency government information about City of Grand Rapids services or programs, or to make a request for service.
- A number to call to obtain information and access to all non-emergency City government services (or dial 616-456-3000 if unable to reach the City by dialing 311)
- 911 is the number to call in case of emergency (burning house, robbery, crime in progress).
- Open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Closed on weekends and holidays
- A customer service center that provides in-person service; stop in at the City Hall Lobby, located at 300 Monroe Avenue NW.
- Customers receive a half-hour of free parking in the Government Center Parking structure (parking can be accessed from Monroe Avenue NW or Ottawa Avenue NW)

The Communications Department:

- Works to ensure that it distributes culturally responsive and proactive communication to community members so that they have awareness of, and voice in, decisions that affect them.
- Leads by engaging with our residents, businesses, visitors and the media. We do this by:
- Issuing electronic and printed publications, press releases and handling requests from the media using a variety of social media platforms to promote City events, resources, initiatives and information.
- Supporting City staff with outreach and engagement efforts including providing consistent and transparent information to community members and stakeholder organizations. If you are interested in learning about some of our active engagement efforts, please visit Engage GR at gr.publicinput.com.
- Partnering with members of our community to keep them informed about what is happening Citywide and in their neighborhoods.

Broadcasting and Streaming: City Commission meetings and informative videos on Facebook, YouTube and government access channel (Comcast Channel 26).

Publications:

We Are GR

A joint communications initiative between the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Public Schools. We Are GR is the City's quarterly printed newspaper delivered to all Grand Rapids addresses.

GR Connected

An email newsletter that highlights the connections that make Grand Rapids special published the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month.

Commission Connected

An email newsletter that highlights the decisions made by the Grand Rapids City Commission published days following the bi-monthly Commission meetings.





GRAND RAPIDS FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE SAFETY & PREVENTION

Your home's safety is one of our top neighborhood concerns. When a fire breaks out in a home, the aftermath it leaves can be devastating. To prevent a fire from ever happening, here are some things you can do:

- Reduce clutter in your home.
- Keep storage items away from furnaces and water heaters, never store flammable liquids or propane in your home.
- Always maintain clear pathways in your home to reduce the potential of trip and fall injuries.
- Be cautious when cooking outdoors, keep grills and fryers at least three feet from your home and other structures. Never dispose hot coals into non-metal containers.
- There is NO open burning in the City of Grand Rapids which includes the burning of leaves.
- You may have an outdoor recreational wood-burning fire with an approved permit. Self-contained gas or propane

fire containers do not require a permit.

- The Residential Safety Program offers free smoke alarm installation for homeowners in their primary residence.
- Lithium-ion batteries are a competent source of ignition. Visit [usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/prevent-fires/batteries/](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/prevent-fires/batteries/) for more information.

You should have smoke alarms in the following places:

- Inside every bedroom
- Outside of every bedroom
- Every house level

You should also have carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.

Fire Hydrants

We encourage you to assist our firefighters by maintaining a clear path to fire hydrants. Clearing accumulated snow away from the hydrant highly is appreciated. Also, remember never to park within 15 feet of a hydrant.

Visit our Fire Department page to discover more about the department and the services it offers at [grandrapidsmi.gov](https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov)

Residential Safety Assessment Program

A voluntary program to prevent fires. The goal is to reduce the number and severity of fires. The Residential Safety Program offers free smoke alarm installation for homeowners in their primary residence.

Register a Fire Alarm System

Have you just installed a new fire alarm system in your business or residential building? Help us protect you by registering your alarm system with us.

Recreational Fire Permit

Do you want to have a recreational fire? You can apply for a Recreational Fire Permit if your property meets certain requirements.

NEIGHBORHOOD & HOME SAFETY



Safety within our City's neighborhoods and homes is very important. It impacts our overall quality of living. Here are some tips that'll help our city stay safe:

Get to Know Your Neighbors

Get to know your neighbors. Introduce yourself when new residents move in. Not only do you get to create community, you'll also get to know who's around you.

Reporting Suspicious Behavior Which May Include:

- Person walking away from your neighbors porch with a package.
- Individuals shining flashlights or phone lights into vehicles and trying door handles
- Sitting in parked cars
- Individuals going around asking about your private information
- You can report this behavior to the police department's non-emergency number at 616-456-3400. If you believe the suspicious behavior can turn into an emergency, call 911.

Other Safety Tips

- All doors and windows to homes, outbuildings and vehicles should be locked. Windows should be locked to prevent easy break-ins and criminal behavior.
- Keep lawn mowers, bicycles and tools in a locked garage or shed. Do not leave personal items in view.

- Use security lighting and cameras to help monitor entrance points (front door, back door, door wall) to your home. Use energy-efficient lighting that is either motion or light sensitive. Turn porch, rear and garage lights on at night to provide visibility.
- Have a free CPTED safety assessment done at your home, business or organization.
- Be mindful of all activity in your neighborhood. Spend time enjoying the outdoors to deter crime.
- Trim tall or overgrown bushes and shrubs.
- Call 311 for non-emergency, 911 for emergency.
- Share the Road! Motorists and those riding bicycles should observe the rules of the road. Motorists are asked to be alert for people biking on designated bike lanes and give them five feet of space when passing.
- City ordinance prohibits parking in a marked bike lane in any manner that blocks or partially blocks a bike lane.
- Grand Rapids' urban bike network (73 miles of dedicated bike lanes and growing), on-street bike facilities and repair stations have established a more robust biking culture throughout the community.



INCOME TAX

Grand Rapids is one of 24 Michigan Cities whose citizens have approved a local city income tax.

There are three types of City taxpayers:

- Resident taxpayers: taxed on all of their income, regardless of where the income is earned
- Non-resident taxpayers: taxed on the income earned within Grand Rapids city limits
- Part-year resident taxpayers: taxed on all income while living in Grand Rapids, regardless of where income is earned at the resident rate, and taxed on the income earned within the City limits while not living in Grand Rapids as a non-resident.

The Income Tax department is responsible for overseeing the Income Tax ordinance

compliance. It works with individuals and employers to provide tax payer service by:

- Collecting and accounting for income tax receipts
- Processing income tax returns
- Refunding overpayments
- Assessing tax deficiencies
- Running collection, compliance, and enforcement programs

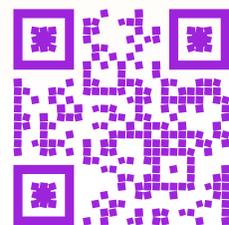
Need more information on filing or paying the balance of your City individual income tax? Do it online or explore your other options at grandrapidsmi.gov.



The Grand Rapids Public Library is our community's source of accessible information, resources and programs. It offers a wide selection of books, movies, music and eBook downloads for check-out. It has about 200 computers and various research centers. Make sure to check out the classes and other learning opportunities it offers at grpl.org.

Branch Locations:

- **Main Library**
111 Library St NE
- **Madison Square**
1201 Madison Ave SE
- **Ottawa Hills**
1150 Giddings Ave SE
- **Seymour Branch**
2350 Eastern Ave SE
- **West Leonard**
1017 Leonard St NW
- **West Side**
713 Bridge St NW
- **Yankee Clipper**
2025 Leonard St NE



QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

Car Seat Installation and Inspection

Safe Kids of Greater Grand Rapids (safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-greater-grand-rapids) inspects and provides car seat education locally by appointment.

Fair Housing

Individuals cannot be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age or familial or marital status. To report suspected housing discrimination, contact the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan at fhcwm.org.

Museums

Few cities the size of Grand Rapids can match the depth and breadth of our museum facilities. Downtown alone contains five museums within a few blocks of each other:

- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum (fordlibrarymuseum.gov)
- Grand Rapids African American Museum and Archives (graama.org)
- Grand Rapids Art Museum (artmuseumgr.org)
- Grand Rapids Children's Museum (grcm.org)
- Grand Rapids Public Museum (grpm.org)

Attractions and Restaurants

Grand Rapids is a city on the leading edge of art, culture, dining and nightlife. Visit experiencegr.com and downtowngr.org and grandrapidsmi.gov/events for listings of great restaurants, calendars of events, happenings and more!

Sidewalks

Snow or Ice Covered Sidewalk

Having trouble walking through the snow? Residents have 24 hours from the time it stops snowing to clear sidewalks. You can report uncleared sidewalks at grandrapidsmi.gov or by calling 311 or (616) 456-3000.

Sidewalk Snow Support Program

The City offers a Sidewalk Snow Support program throughout a wide area of our city during the winter season. The program includes more than 200 miles

of the 922 miles of sidewalks in Grand Rapids. After heavy snow events, a contractor will provide sidewalk snow removal support in the designated areas. When the contractor finishes, property owners and residents are still responsible for removing any remaining snow and ice. Visit grandrapidsmi.gov for more information.

Damaged/ Hazardous Sidewalks

You can also report any damaged or hazardous sidewalks to 311 or (616) 456-3000.



Trash, Recycling and Yard Waste

Recycling

- Recycling service is paid through property taxes with two cart size options for your household. The more recyclable material you can divert into your recycling cart from your trash cart, the less often your trash cart becomes full and the less often you have to pay to have your City of Grand Rapids trash cart tipped. If you use a private trash hauler, there would be no decrease in the cost of that trash service.
- Check out our Recycling Guide: kentcountymi.gov/402/Single-Stream-Recycling to see what items can go in your recycling cart!



Trash

- Grand Rapids offers a pay per tip service. We offer three different cart sizes (32, 64 and 96 gallons) for small to medium size families. You only pay when you use the cart. Keep in mind a smaller cart will work if you recycle often. This is a pre-paid and self-managed service. This means you should keep a positive balance in the account for service, and we do not send out invoices.

For more information on

starting, stopping and paying for service please visit the City of Grand Rapids website: grandrapidsmi.gov

The Bulk Item & Appliance Collection

- The City provides separate collection for disposing of oversized items and appliances. Residents can request pickup by completing an online form and paying a \$37.50 fee per item—no bulk sticker is needed for online purchases. Items must be placed at the curb by 7 a.m. the next business day, and collection typically occurs within a week. Accepted items include various appliances, furniture and household fixtures. Refrigerators and freezers must have their

doors removed, and TVs are not accepted through this service and must be recycled elsewhere.

- Check out our bulk item webpage at grandrapidsmi.gov

Yard Waste



- The season starts in early April and ends the second Saturday in December. Your curbside collection is the same day as your waste collection. We offer several options for curbside collection – Yard Waste Cart, Yard Waste Paper Bags and/or Yard Waste Bulk Tags for bundles of larger twigs or branches. You can buy City yard waste cart tags, paper bags and purple bulk tags at City Hall. You can also buy them at select Meijer, Family Fare and D&W supermarkets. For more information on our options for yard waste disposal and list of materials we accept, visit our Yard Waste Services page at grandrapidsmi.gov

Drop-Off Site

- The City of Grand Rapids offers a drop-off site for residential yard waste. You can drop-off leaves, brush, cut grass, garden plants, and tree branches. The site is open year-round for your convenience.
- Address: 2001 Butterworth St SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534

• Hours of operation:

Open early April through the second week of December – Monday through Saturday: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Third week of December through March – Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed: Sundays and holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day

- This service is offered to Grand Rapids residents only, a photo ID is required for proof of residence. If you have a commercial lawn service you can dispose of material here by paying the vendor tipping fee. Please reach out directly by phone at 616-268-5164 to work with Denali.

- Yard waste must be loose or in a paper bag. Plastic bags are not allowed.
- Branches should be cut down to 5 foot in length or shorter and have a diameter of 6 inches or less.
- Colored/dyed mulch not accepted
- All city residents are eligible to receive one cubic yard of compost free of charge each year. This material is available on Saturday only, after Memorial Day through July. You can also purchase additional compost, mulch or topsoil. Keep in mind that delivery services are not available, so plan accordingly.

Not sure if your yard waste is eligible for drop off? Call 311 or 616-456-3000 to make sure.





Request a Tree Planting

If you request to have a tree planted in the right-of-way near your home, you will be responsible for the planting, care and maintenance (watering, mulching, staking, pruning, etc.). A tree care guide, list of approved tree species and form to receive a permit, is available online. You can find out more on our website at grandrapidsmi.gov.

Caring for Your Street Tree



Watering a new tree is the most important thing you can do. The best way to water is to make sure the soil is saturated with at least 15 gallons of water. We recommend watering your tree one-to-three times a

week for the first three years. Here are some helpful tips on watering:

- You should water weekly May through October.
- Soil should be moist, not soaked. Over watering can damage your tree.
- If it rains one inch or more in a week, you don't need to water that week.
- Water slowly so the water can penetrate the soil.

Weeds are fast growing and fast moving. They tend to compete for water, space and nutrients. Street trees live in very small spaces that only provide limited amount of nutrients. Having as little competition as possible helps your tree stay healthy. Here are some helpful tips on weeding:

- Weed your tree site in early fall before the plant dries out and seeds disperse.
- Wear gloves and remove the weed's entire root system.
- Dispose of weeds in City yard waste bags.
- Watch out for poison ivy and hazardous trash in the soil.

Mulch is organic material, like shredded bark or woodchips, that is added to the base of the tree. It acts as a blanket to hold moisture, moderate soil temperatures, and reduce competition from grass and weeds. Here are some helpful tips on using mulch:

- Two to four inches of mulch is best.
- Do not add soil to the tree base, as it can smother roots and cause trunk rotting.
- Make sure the trunk of the tree doesn't get covered by mulch. 1 to 2 inches of mulch-free area around the base of the of the tree is best.



Ornamental planting

Planting bulbs around a tree is a great way to add color to your neighborhood. However, flowers shouldn't be planted within the first two years of the tree planting. Here are some helpful tips on ornamental planting:

- Choose bulbs that are "drought tolerant" and don't require much watering. We recommend Daffodils, Lilies of the Valley, or Tulips.
- Use small plants and bulbs to reduce competition and tree root damage.
- Don't add any more than two inches of new soil when planting flowers.
- Don't plant flowers that compete for water and nutrients, such as bamboo, ivy, vines, or shrubs.



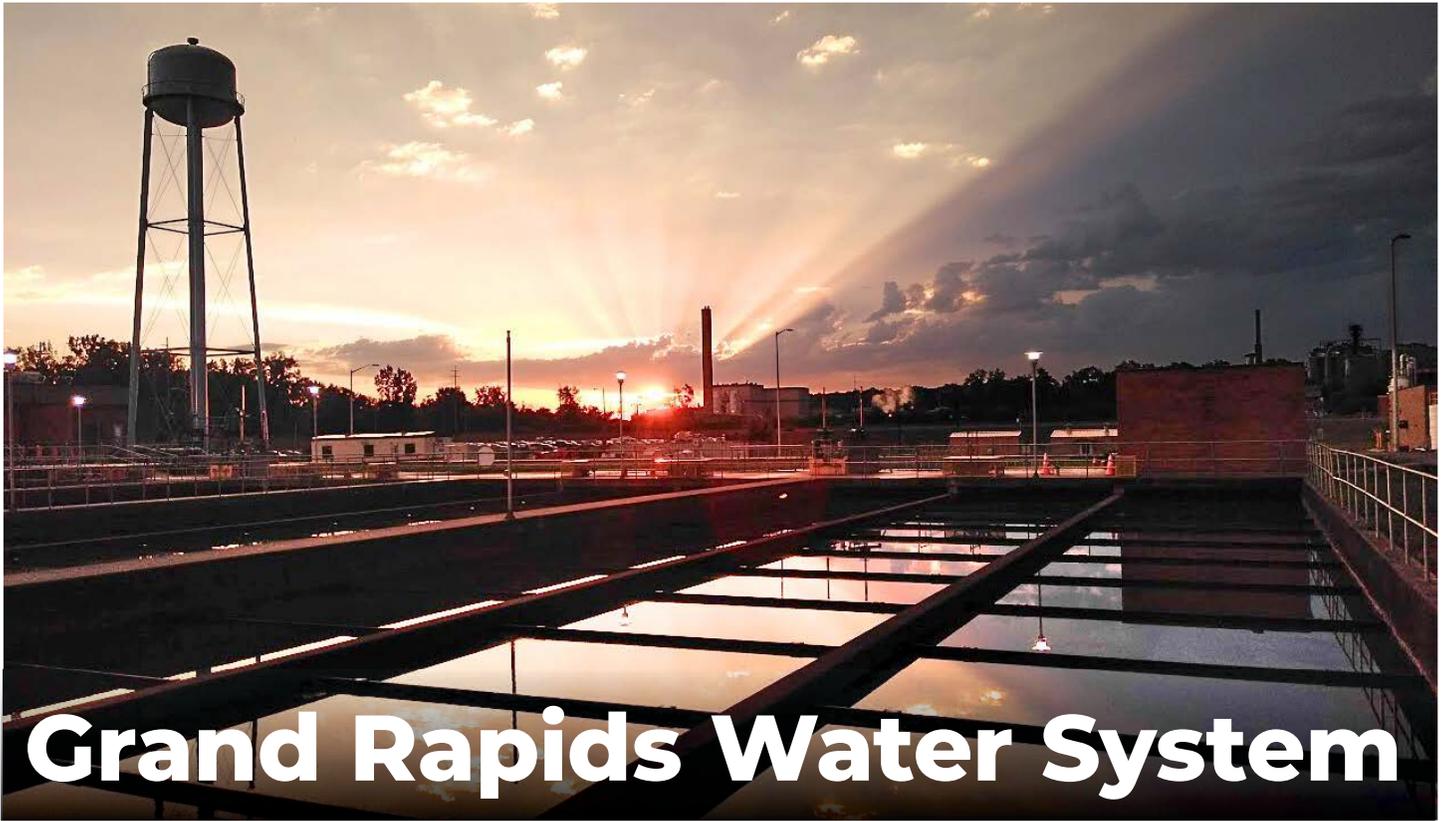
Treasurer's Office

Do you have bills or taxes to pay? The Treasurer's Office manages bill, tax, and City loan payments. We've got you covered with options to pay online, in the mail, over the phone or in person. The process is easy so you can make a payment and move on with your day.

We're here to help you with your payment options for all your bills:

- Water/Sewer
- Waste services
- Parking tickets
- Income taxes
- Property taxes
- Code Compliance invoices

Visit: grandrapidsmi.gov for more information and all the options available at the Treasurer's Office.



Grand Rapids Water System

Our Water System ensures that our residents have high quality water. It is a regional provider of water to municipalities in Kent and Ottawa counties. We serve a population of approximately 320,000. We cover a service area of nearly 140 square miles. We protect life and property by providing high-quality water services in an environmentally safe and efficient manner.

Water System Responsibility

The property owner's responsibility begins at the property line after the curb stop, continues through the yard to the building/home, and throughout the home. The Water System is responsible for the service line from the water main in the street to the curb stop, the couplings on either side of the meter within the home or in an outside pit, and the meter itself.

Service Line Insurance Plans

From time to time, private companies will contact or mail residents offers to purchase service line insurance. The City does not endorse nor is affiliated with any of these offerings. More information is available at grandrapidsmi.gov, keyword: service line insurance.

Water Meter

No person other than an authorized employee of the Water System shall move

or interfere with the water meter in any way. Meters must be accessible to Water System employees as requested and must be free of obstacles. The property owner is responsible to prevent damage, theft, or other disturbances to the meter or meter reading equipment; inoperable equipment will be charged back to the owner. To prevent frozen meters, please remember to supply adequate heat to the area that your meter is located.



Take walking tour of our Lake Michigan Filtration Plant. Call 311 or 616.456.3000 for reservations.

New Account Information

With every new account change at an address, a Water/Sewer Utility Agreement must be filled out and submitted back to the Utility Business Office with a copy of the new account holder's photo ID. Contact 311 or (616) 456-3000 to obtain the form or with additional questions or email water@grcity.us. (Please note an owner must submit a Utility Agreement for their tenant.)

- Water and sewer utilities are billed on a quarterly basis (every 3 months) for residential and most commercial accounts,

with the additional option for residents to pay their quarterly bill in three monthly installments.

- Payment options include but are not limited to:
- Online or cell phone app – with GRPayIt payments. grandrapidsmi.gov
- Mail – 300 Monroe Ave. NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503
- Drop Box – 300 Ottawa Ave NW (Tan box on curb across the street from Calder Plaza)
- Phone – 1.877.495.0333
- In Person – 311 Storefront City Hall

Starting or stopping water service at your residence can be completed on the City's website at grandrapidsmi.gov.

UTILITIES



Electric

Consumers Energy
consumersenergy.com
 (800) 477-5050

DTE

Gas

DTE Energy
dteenergy.com
 (800) 477-4747



Water

Grand Rapids Water System
water@grcity.us
 311 or 616-456-3000

City Tax Bills

You can pay City invoices and bills -- all with a single GRPayIt account (grandrapidsmi.gov/Payments). With grpayit you decide when and how much to pay. There is a fee assessed with paying property taxes when using a credit card to pay. Bonus: Water, refuse, parking ticket, loan and invoice payments do not have a convenience fee.



**Sometimes life can take
an unexpected turn.**

**How can you and
your family be
prepared for the
emergencies?**

**Personal
Preparedness**

Visit our Office of Emergency Management page at grandrapidsmi.gov/emergency-management, for resources to make a plan when disasters strike, build a basic emergency supply kit and connect to the community.

**Emergency Alert
System**

Do you live and/or work in the City of Grand Rapids? Be in the know and register for emergency alerts today! Register at grandrapidsmi.gov.

**Community
Emergency Response
Team (CERT)**

Join our community-based emergency preparedness and response volunteer program! The CERT Program trains volunteers to assist their families, neighbors, and community members during emergencies when professional responders may not be immediately available to help. Join at grandrapidsmi.gov/CERT.

**Outdoor Warning
Siren Testing**

Keep in mind that outdoor warning sirens are tested on the first Friday of every month at noon, April through October.

