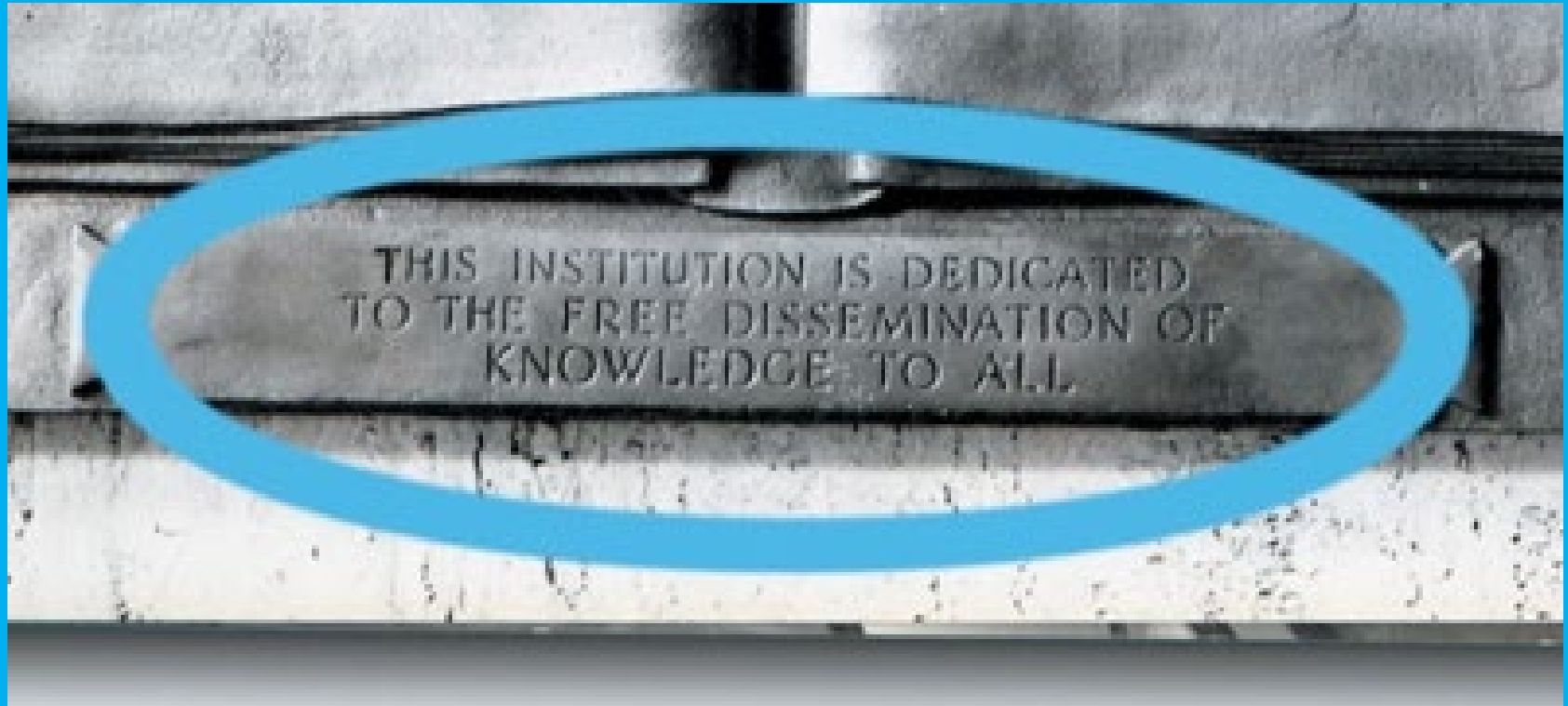


# 2026 GRPM Millage Renewal Update

# Knowledge for All



# Charter Mandate

The City of Grand Rapids' charter explicitly requires that a public museum exist within the city, which is the GRPM. The City holds title to all the land, Museum facilities and collections.

Founded in 1854, the GRPM is the oldest and second-largest museum in Michigan, with over 250K artifacts and specimens resulting in the broadest and most diverse collection in the state.



# Public Ownership & Operation

While the City owns the Museum, it's run by a separate nonprofit organization, the Grand Rapids Public Museum Foundation.

For more than a century, the Museum operated as a City of Grand Rapids municipal department before separating into a nonprofit governance model in 2006; direct city funding ended in 2008.



# Public Ownership & Operation

A 99-year lease with a 50-year renewal option formally executed in 2007 between the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Public Museum Foundation.



- **No annual appropriations from the City budget**
  - Museum is fully responsible for operations, management, collections care, and maintenance/repairs to the VAMC and its grounds
- **GRPM is a net contributor to the City budget**
  - Annual remittance for the use of archive space
  - Museum assets appear on the City's balance sheet
- **Capital support from the City**
  - \$2.5 million for riverfront expansion
  - \$4.3 million for south tower elevator

# Focus on Community

The GRPM acts as both educator and steward of community history, preserving and sharing stories with a focus on science, history, and culture.

Key components of the Museum are:

- VAMC & Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium
- Community Archives & Research Center
- Indian Mounds (serving as stewards on behalf of the tribal nations)
- Veen Observatory (GRAAA partnership)
- The Voigt House & Calkins Law Office



# GRPM's Role in the City

- **Education Partner:** The Museum provides K-12 and higher education immersive educational experiences through its unique programs and uncommon collection access.
- **Care of the Collections:** Preserving and maintaining over 250K artifacts and specimens.
- **Community Stories:** The Museum preserves and shares local history and stories, by making its collections accessible both in person and online.
- **Community Impact:** Serves as the GR Forward Master Plan-designated interpretation and education center for the Grand River restoration.



# 2016 County Millage Promises

First approved by voters in 2016 (62% yes), the millage has allowed the institution to provide several benefits to Grand Rapids and Kent County residents, including:

- Free admission to the Museum for children (age 17 and under) including field trips
- No surcharge for traveling exhibits
- Reduced admissions for adults and seniors
- Preservation and protection of collections, including facility maintenance and exhibit enhancements
- Transparent reporting including annual community engagement and finances



# GRPM Annual Community Impact

- 307,765 visitors
  - 157,480 17 and under
- Over 40,000 students on field trips
- Over 20,000 students for school programs
  - Curriculum aligned - artifact based
  - *Immerse* (week long, 52 classes)
- More than 10,000 students served through offsite, take-home discovery kits at schools
- Over 75 public program days serving over 75,000 people



# Working Alongside Our Community

- Partnered with 96 community organizations in 2025
  - Partners include Disability Advocates, Hope Network, KDL, K-12 schools, City of Grand Rapids, GR A250, Grand River Greenway, and the Eshtoojik Advisory Council, GRWW, Occupational Therapy students
- Engage in local and national research to design meaningful, educational experiences that connect to and reflect the unique community of West Michigan
- Provide professional development for area teachers and collaborate with local professors specializing in diverse learning communities to ensure inclusive engagement



# Partner Highlight: XQ Museum School – GRPS

- GRPS partnered with GRPM, GVSU College of education, Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University, and the City to create the Grand Rapids Public Museum School, opened in 2015.
- The school and its partners competed and won a nationwide contest with over 700+ schools to be designated as one of 10 XQ Super Schools, with each receiving \$10 million.
- The \$10 million prize was invested directly in GRPS, facilitating the launch of the GRPS Museum High School.
  - The old museum building was deeded back to GRPS for use as the High School.
  - The City received Ted Rasberry Field and the Ottawa Hills Park.



# Current Millage Renewal Status



- Current 10-year millage ends in 2026
- Renewal petitioned under same terms: 10 years, 50/50 split, including Headlee rollback (0.4173)
- County oversight: Kent County has established a Millage Review Committee with meetings scheduled through April
  - Mandated financial analysis by Plante Moran presented to the county (Jan 2026)

# 2026 and Beyond

- **Broadened Exhibits & Programs:** Continue offering world-class traveling exhibits, enhance the permanent collection, and provide interactive learning experiences.
- **Enhanced Educational Outreach:** Strengthen school partnerships, youth programming, and community workshops, reaching more students.
- **Expanded Community Engagement:** Increase public programs, lectures, and cultural programs that connect the Museum with the broader Grand Rapids community.



# Stability and Public Benefit

- **City Partnership Stability**
  - The lease agreement ensures continued shared stewardship between the City and the Museum. Of the Museum's \$13.5 M annual budget, \$7.5 M comes from millage.
- **Protected Donor Investment**
  - Donor-designated endowment funds remain secure and well managed, reinforcing donor confidence toward long-term sustainability.
- **Educational Continuity & Growth**
  - Millage dollars are critical and allow for uninterrupted delivery of core educational programs and continued learning opportunities for students across the community.