



# Chapter 4 – Future Land Use

## Land Use - Looking Back

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan included an assessment of existing land use, zoning, and annexation areas. The land use element was one of the four major topic areas of the 2003 Plan. The background included:

- An assessment of existing land uses within the City limits by zoning category.
- A description of existing development standards in both the City and in the planned annexation areas regulated by Itasca County
- An examination of developed and undeveloped land by zoning category in both the City and the annexation areas.

County zoning jurisdiction over annexation areas was transferred to the City five years in advance of each scheduled annexation. In 2007 the City rewrote its zoning ordinance and changed many of the districts described in the 2003 Plan, including adding new rural districts to cover the annexation areas. By January 1, 2010, the annexation process was complete and the City boundaries extend to the old township boundary lines except in the east where the Prairie and Mississippi rivers (and the City of LaPrairie) bound Grand Rapids.

### Existing Land use

During the creation of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan the analysis of the City's existing land uses was constrained by several factors. The City was mid-way through the annexation process of Grand Rapids Township and was considering land that was not yet under City jurisdiction and zoning districts that were not necessarily designed for use in rural areas. The 2003 Plan analyzed existing land use by zoning category, including both land within the City and the planned annexation areas within Grand Rapids Township. Zoning categories, however, do not reflect the current land use, but rather the preferred land use on a forward-looking basis. For instance, land that was zoned residential may include non-conforming non-residential uses, undeveloped land in uses that do not have buildings (agriculture, forestry), and non-residential public uses that may be allowed within residential areas (such as schools and churches). This method does not recognize land that is zoned in advance of development, the actual use of land within transitional or mixed-use districts such as the Medical District, or vacant land.

The 2003 land use inventory includes an accurate picture of the percentage of developed and undeveloped land within the City's 2003 boundaries: this area was approximately 57 percent developed and 43 percent undeveloped. Land within the annexation area was categorized based on the Itasca County Zoning Ordinance then in effect. Much of this area was undeveloped (including tax forfeit lands and lands in public ownership) or in forestry or recreational use.

As part of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan update, an improved existing land use map was created that allowed a better picture of the current land uses in the City. Rather than use the zoning map to identify existing land use, the analysis took a different

#### **“Developed” and “undeveloped” land**

Land is considered “developed” when the primary land use is a built structure. Undeveloped land does not imply that the land is unused or vacant. Rather, “undeveloped” means that the primary land use does not include a built structure. Forestry, mining, agriculture, parks and recreation, can all be classified as undeveloped land.



approach: existing land use was categorized based on County tax classifications, existing GIS mapped characteristics, aerial photo interpretation and fieldwork. An initial map was created that grouped tax classifications and GIS data layers into 17 land use categories. Aerial photo cross-referencing indicated that parcel tax data identifying vacant or undeveloped parcels is more than 90% accurate. Additional cross-referencing and ground-truthing enhanced the data on existing land use which resulted in the attached Figure 4-1 Existing Land Use Map.

**Table 4-1. Existing Land Use, 2010**

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	30	0%
Commercial	383	2%
Forestry	3,454	22%
Industrial	366	2%
Institutional	1,228	8%
Manufactured Home Park	85	1%
Mining and Extractive	304	2%
Open Water	1,116	7%
Public Parks	680	4%
Public Lands	1,303	8%
Residential	3,325	21%
Residential - Multifamily	209	1%
Residential - Seasonal	73	0%
Right-of-Way	839	5%
Transportation and Utilities	1,014	7%
Unknown	61	0%
Vacant/ Undeveloped	1,098	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,566</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: City of Grand Rapids GIS*

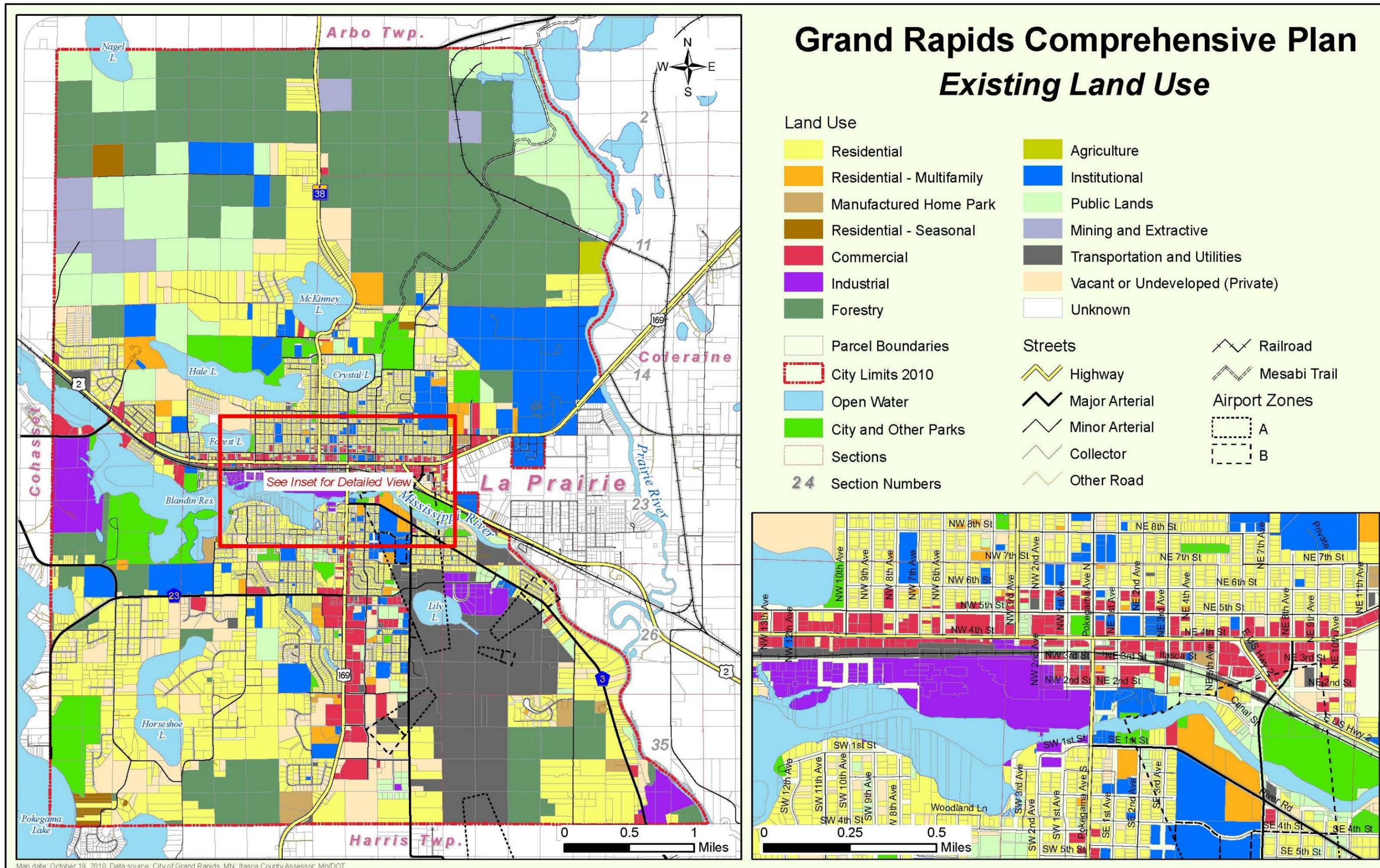
With the annexation complete, the distribution of lands uses within the City limits has changed considerably since 2003. The large areas with rural land uses, such as forestry and non-City-owned public lands, now comprise large percentages of the total land base (30%). As shown in Table 4-1, the ‘forestry’ land use has almost as many acres as residential land uses. Much of the land in the Public Lands category is County-managed tax forfeit land that is also managed for commercial forestry or aggregate extraction.

The Vacant/Undeveloped category, which comprises 7% of the City’s total land base, is based on a somewhat different characterization of land use than other categories. Vacant or undeveloped parcels are those that are taxed as a developed land use that normally would have buildings (residential, commercial, industrial). These parcels, however, have

no development on them and are thus characterized as vacant. The vacant/undeveloped category should be distinguished from land use categories that typically do not have structures (forestry, agriculture, public lands). Most of the vacant parcels are undeveloped residential properties (totaling 863 acres). Another 194 acres are currently taxed as commercial, but have no commercial development on them, including some large parcels along the Highway 169 commercial corridor at the south end of the City, but also smaller parcels in other commercial areas of the City.

The Vacant/Undeveloped category indicates that significant opportunities for commercial and residential development exist within the developed portion of the City. Some of these vacant sites are constrained by environmental conditions (wet soils, steep slopes) or ownership considerations (residential homes with double lots, commercial businesses holding adjacent parcels for potential expansion). But approximately 34% of commercially taxed lands, and 20% of residential taxed lands, are currently vacant.

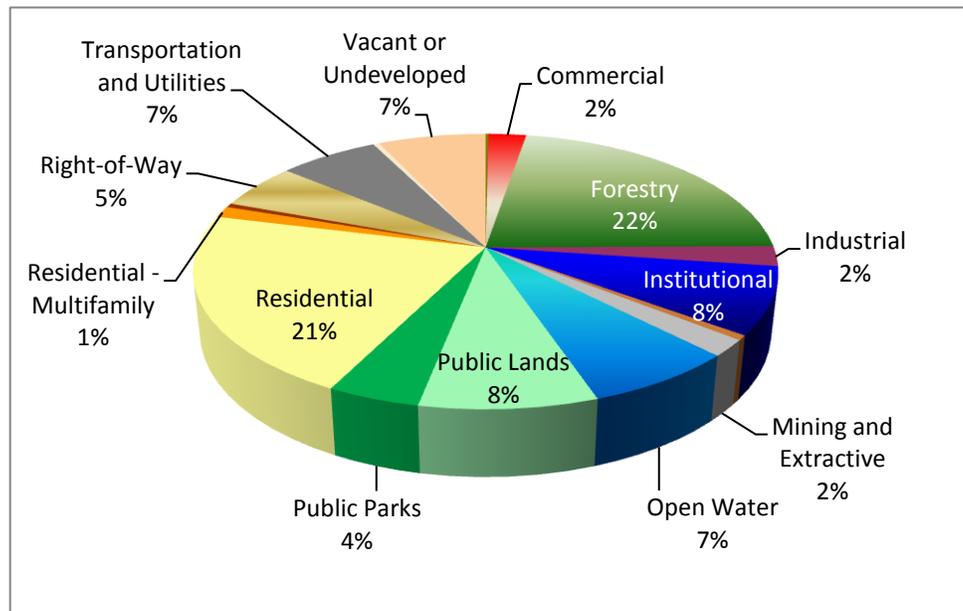
Figure 4-1 Existing Land Use Map





The ‘public lands’ land use category, comprising 8% of the City’s total land base, is primarily County-managed tax-forfeit land that the County manages for forestry, aggregate, and some recreation uses. Millions of acres across northern Minnesota went tax-forfeit back in the first half of the 20th century, and were originally (after going tax-forfeit) controlled by the State of Minnesota. State statute granted most of these lands to the county, and some restrictions apply on how and whether counties can sell these lands.

**Figure 4-2. Existing Land Use, Percent of Total Land Base, 2010**



**Land Use and Zoning**

As noted above, zoning districts are not necessarily consistent with land use districts. Zoning districts are frequently distinct from both current land use districts and the future land use districts. Each of these maps (current land use, zoning, future land use) serve distinct purposes as noted below:

- *Existing Land Use* – identify the land uses currently on each parcel (or at least predominant to an area) irrespective of what is allowed or preferred going forward. The Existing Land Use map simply shows what is.
- *Zoning* – identify the preferred and permitted land uses for development and redevelopment for each geographic area in the City. The Zoning map shows what is allowed to happen today on a parcel by parcel basis.
- *Future Land Use* – identify the generally preferred end result of the development and redevelopment process at a specific point in time 20 years from the present. The Future Land Use map shows the long-range desired future condition on a generalized basis, less geographically specific than zoning and on a much longer time frame.

Since the adoption of the 2003 Plan, the City has updated its zoning ordinance to reflect the 2003 Plan priorities. The new ordinance included some changes in the zoning districts, in addition to recognizing new types of land uses, making the ordinance consistent with state requirements and statutes, new standards to ensure development and redevelopment was consistent with the priorities of the 2003 Plan vision, community values, and guiding principles.



The current Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance consists of 18 zoning districts, 14 additional districts specific to shoreland areas, and five overlay districts. One district, the Mixed Use district and its Shoreland equivalent, is not yet used. Figure 4-3 below is the zoning map showing the location of all other districts (as of January, 2010).

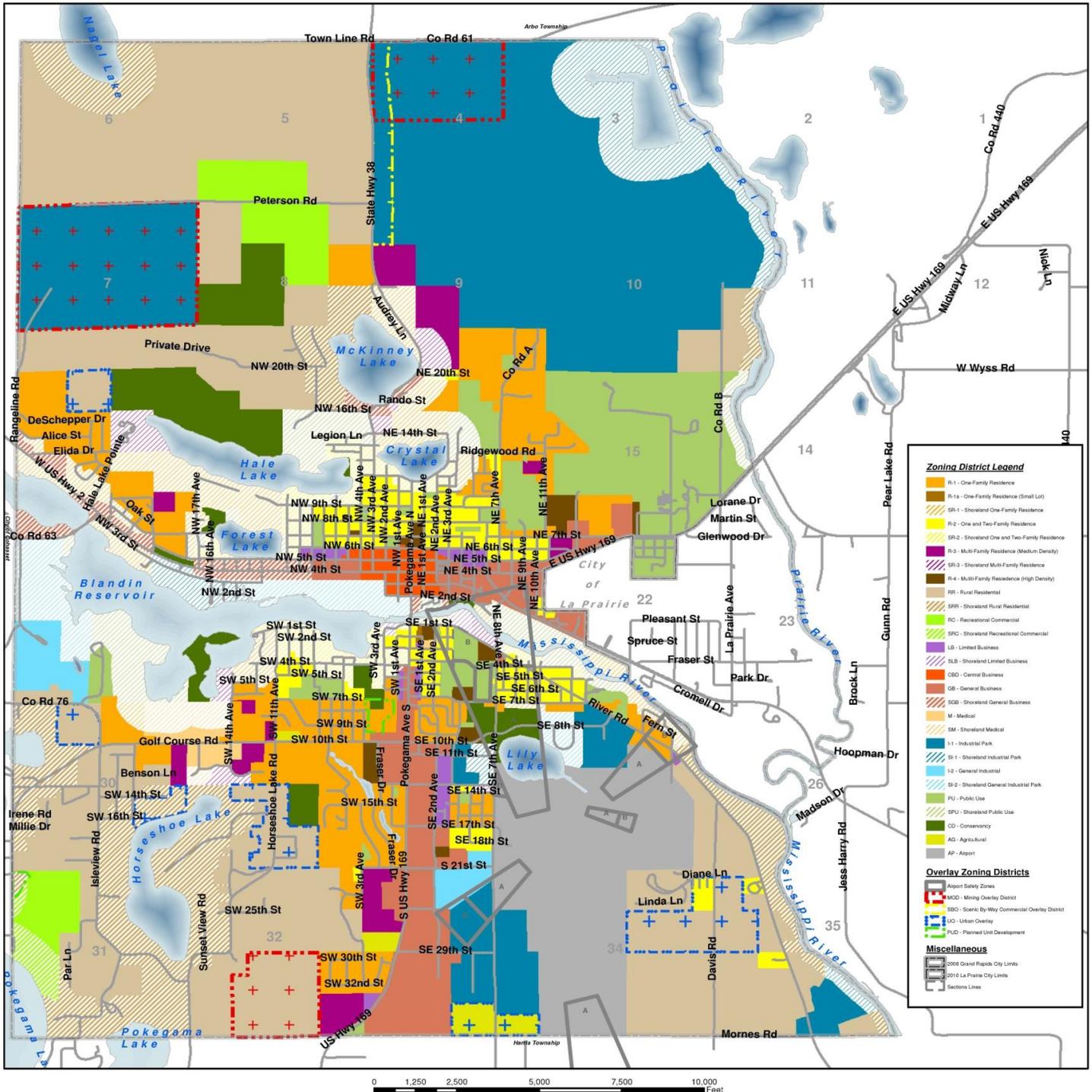
**Table 4-2. Zoning Districts, 2010**

Map Code	District	Shoreland Version	
		Code	Description
RR	Rural residence district	SRR	Shoreland rural residence
R-1	One-family residence district	SR-1	Shoreland one-family residence
R-1a	One-family residence district (small lot)	SR-1a	Shoreland one-family residence (small lot)
R-2	One- and two-family residence district	SR-2	Shoreland one- and two-family residence
R-3	Multiple-family residence district (med. density)	SR-3	Shoreland multiple-family residence (med. density)
R-4	Multiple-family residence district (high density)	SR-4	Shoreland multiple-family residence (high density)
LB	Limited business district	SLB	Shoreland limited business
GB	General business district	SGB	Shoreland general business
CBD	Central business district		
MU	Mixed use district	SMU	Shoreland mixed use
M	Medical district	SM	Shoreland medical
RC	Recreational Commercial district	SRC	Shoreland recreational commercial
I-1	Industrial park district	SI-1	Shoreland industrial park
I-2	General industrial park district	SI-2	Shoreland general industrial park
CD	Conservancy district		
PU	Public use district	SPU	Shoreland public use
AG	Agricultural district		
AP	Airport district		

**Source: City of Grand Rapids**



Figure 4-3. Grand Rapids Zoning Map



**COPY**  
 Official Map is located in the office of the Zoning Administrator.  
 Located at Grand Rapids City Hall, 420 N Pokegama Ave  
 For questions please call (218).326.7601

**City of Grand Rapids  
 Official Zoning Map**



The zoning designations on this map should be interpreted in light of the accompanying text and policies contained in the complete City of Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance. Adopted 10/27/2008. Zoning designations are subject to change as part of the City's ongoing planning process.



**Table 4-3. Land Available for Development (Dec. 2010)**

District Type		Parcels	Mean Parcel Size (sq. ft.)	Total Area (sq. ft.)	Definition of Parcels Included in Analysis	Undeveloped % of Total (sq. ft.)
Central Business	<b>Undeveloped</b>	11	11,461	126,078	Undeveloped property (no buildings) that are: not owned by City, County or State for parking or roadway and that are large enough to develop.	6.1%
	<b>Total</b>	195	10,628	2,072,560		
Limited Business	<b>Undeveloped</b>	18	25,070	451,266	Vacant/non-developed parcels (building value = 0) less tax exempt	20.0%
	<b>Total</b>	131	17,198	2,252,942	All parcels less tax exempt	
General Business	<b>Undeveloped</b>	48	112,937	5,420,964	Vacant/non-developed parcels (building value = 0) excluding parcels equal or less than 10,500 square feet and those that owned by government or Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) for ROW.	25.8%
	<b>Total</b>	464	45,316	21,026,853	All parcels, less those that are government or BNSF owned for ROW and less those that are undeveloped and smaller than 10,500 square feet.	26% of GB/SGB property is undeveloped. However, adjustments for property known to be available for purchase leaves 28 parcels = 4,830,718 square feet, 23%.
R-3 & SR-3	<b>Undeveloped</b>	15	397,550	5,963,251	R-3 = Multi-family (medium density), SR-3 = Shoreland multi-family (medium density)	40.3%
	<b>All Parcels</b>	77	192,255	14,803,669		40% of R-3 property is undeveloped. However, the Lakewood Height plat is the only property being marketed for sale (Map R3-3). Total area = 1,110,245 square feet = 7%.

In December of 2009, City staff conducted an analysis of land available for development within key zoning districts (undeveloped land is distinct from vacant buildings). As can be noted in Table 4-3, undeveloped land is readily available in most of these zoning districts. Undeveloped areas within these zoning districts are the priority areas for development – these areas have city utilities, are connected to the transportation network, and are generally located near compatible land uses. However, while a parcel may be undeveloped, that does not mean it is on the market. Over time most of the undeveloped parcels will be available, but at a given point in time only a portion can be purchased for development.



## **Future Land Use Categories and the Future Land Use Map**

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map presents a geographic representation of the City's preferred future land use scenario. The map summarizes the community's discussion of how development, preservation, and public realm investment should play out over the next twenty years. Being able to see a picture of the end result is helpful in directing the myriad of large and small decisions and investments over the next twenty years. While the map does not identify the implementation process or interim results it does show the end point, sometimes called the 'desired future condition,' of the next twenty years of development activity and land use decisions.

The land use map is intended to be used in conjunction with the written content of the Plan. The map shows the geographic layout of Grand Rapids' preferred land uses in twenty years, but does not capture the full detail of Comprehensive Plan policies, identify the full range of recommended strategies, or present any staging of development priorities. The vision, values and principles, along with the Plan's land use policies, and the recommended strategies provide additional direction on staging of growth, on priorities within land use categories, and on implementation preferences.

### ***What is "Land Use"?***

The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan uses the concept of "land use" to describe how the City looks and functions now and in the desired future. "Land use" is related to, and sometimes confused with, other policy and regulatory elements such as zoning districts, land cover, building types, and economic and natural infrastructure. Distinct from these other elements, land use describes literally how the land is being used. A building can be put to residential, commercial, institutional, even industrial uses, and still look largely the same. A piece of land can have no building on it, but can have very different uses; working forest, protected habitat, agricultural crops, residential lawn, storage for iron mining tailings or for heavy equipment. A parcel covered by trees can be used for park, working forest, or residential side lot.

Land use is not necessarily consistent with zoning, land cover, or natural system functions.

### ***What is a "Land Use Category"?***

A land use category is a group of land uses that are similar or that have been determined by the community to be complementary. Determining which land uses are complementary is a critical component of the comprehensive plan process. The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan includes 15 land use categories that the Steering Committee and general public believe reflect the preferred norms for Grand Rapids. For instance, residential land uses are all similar, but the Committee determined that the land use categories needed to recognize differences among residential land uses. For that reason, traditional neighborhoods on a street grid are distinct from lower density suburban style neighborhoods on cul-de-sacs or non-grid street systems. Both of these residential neighborhoods are distinct from areas with substantial amounts of multi-family residential buildings.

The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee determined a set of land use categories that reflect the Plan's vision, values and goals. The Committee made these decisions using information and input provided through public meetings, surveys, and other outreach, in addition to technical feedback from staff, consultant team, and the Technical Advisory Committee. These decisions can be rooted in

general policies about how broad groupings of land use (residential, commercial, industrial, open space) should be separated into land use categories that define Grand Rapids' desired future.

### Residential Land Use Policy

Residential land uses have always been the single most prominent land use in Grand Rapids. The City has always grouped residential land uses into several categories that distinguish the intensity of use and the differing connections that residential land uses have to the City's transportation system, natural infrastructure, and economic base. The distinct residential land use categories used in the Comprehensive Plan are critical to recognizing these differences and the differing character of Grand Rapids' neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan uses four residential land use categories to sustain neighborhood character, housing value, and household quality of life: Traditional Neighborhood, Suburban Residential, Multi-Family Residential, and Rural Residential. The distinction between Traditional Neighborhood and Suburban Residential is a new element of the Plan, and reflects the differing form, mix of uses, and relationship to the built and natural infrastructure.

#### ***Traditional Neighborhood***

Traditional Neighborhood areas are primarily single family neighborhoods with a smattering of other small multifamily, institutional, and open space uses. Traditional Neighborhoods are laid out in a grid street pattern with a high degree of connectivity, emphasize pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation, and are located near commercial nodes or corridors.





### Commercial Land Use Policy

Commercial land uses include an extremely wide variety of small and large businesses, businesses with high intensity uses and businesses with low intensity uses. The Comprehensive Plan vision, values and principles are best served by recognizing these important distinctions and creating separate land use categories for different types of commercial land uses. These differences need to be incorporated into zoning and land use decision making processes. Consequently, the Grand Rapids Future Land Use map includes three distinct categories of commercial land uses: Downtown Mixed Use, Neighborhood Mixed Use, and Highway Commercial. Of these three, two (Downtown and Highway Commercial) are already acknowledged in the City’s policies and land use regulation.

Neighborhood Mixed Use is a new commercial land use category that helps create synergy with the City’s transportation, neighborhood character, and economic diversity goals.

**Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)**

Neighborhood Mixed Use areas are primarily small businesses with relatively low land use intensity that are compatible with and sometimes integrate directly with residential land uses, are designed to be pedestrian-friendly, and fit into small building footprints. NMU areas are located in or adjacent to higher density residential land uses (Traditional Neighborhood or Multi Family Residential), but typically away from other commercial areas. Floor to Area Ratios (FARs) are between 0.8 and 1.5, and building heights are consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood. NMU businesses are distinct in intensity from downtown or highway commercial businesses that have a higher potential nuisance impact on nearby residential land uses.

### Industrial Land Use Policy

In the past, Grand Rapids has grouped all industrial uses into a single land use or zoning category. As business uses and the local economy have evolved, however, a single category no longer supports the City’s economic development needs nor the desired mix of uses in and around industrial areas. The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan uses three categories of industrial land uses to meet the City’s long term vision, values, and principles: Industrial - Traditional Workplace; Industrial Park; and Business Park/Limited Industrial. Of these three, the new land use category is Business Park/Limited Industrial. The Traditional Workplace category includes traditional industrial uses but specifically recognizes the unique characteristics of the Blandin UPM site, located at the nexus of heavy rail access, highway access, water, the downtown, a separation from most residential uses, and land available for industrial redevelopment.

**Business Park/Limited Industrial**

Business Park/Limited Industrial areas are primarily small and lower intensity industrial uses, commercial land uses that are similar to wholesale businesses, and businesses that have a mix of uses including office and back office operations, storage, assembly, and limited retail. BP areas include businesses that are inappropriate for industrial parks, but create few synergies by being located with retail establishments, including small wholesale businesses, back-office operations, mail-order operations, materials suppliers, and professional offices.

### Open Space Land Use Policy

Open Space refers to land that has little or no built environment or infrastructure. Open space land uses have always had a significant presence in Grand Rapids, reflecting the City's natural resource based economic identity and the City's overall character, as emphasized in the City's logo and identity system. After the annexation of the township, Grand Rapids now has more land in forestry and natural resource industry use than in residential housing. Open Space has become a much more important element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Open Space land uses include several types of non-built uses, such as forestry, parks and trails, public and private recreation areas, agriculture, and community gardens, in addition to private lands with some buildings on very large lots. The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan has two land use categories that comprise the open space system: Parks and Recreation; and Resource Management. Resource Management is a new land use category that designates natural resource use as the primary value for the area, while recognizing that other secondary land uses also need to be accommodated in rural areas.

#### **Resource Management**

Resource Management areas include public and private land uses that are focused primarily on natural resource industry uses, conservation areas, and recreation uses. This designation includes some parcels with buildings, but only when the predominant land use is oriented to natural landscapes or natural resource use. Forestry, mining, agriculture, and conservation areas that allow for some economic use are included in this category.

Resource Management areas include both those areas that are held in 'urban reserve' (intended for eventual expansion of urban land uses), and areas intended to remain in rural and natural resource



### Other Land Uses

The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan has several other land use categories: Institutional; Transportation and Utilities; and Medical Campus. These future land use categories match fairly well with the categories in the Existing Land Use map and the zoning descriptions for these uses. In addition to these land use categories, small land uses such as trails, new streets, utilities, and small parks are assumed to be land uses that will exist within all the land use categories, and thus are not noted separately as secondary land uses on the future land use table.



**Table 4-4. Grand Rapids Future Land Use Categories**

Category / Description	Primary Land Use	Potential Secondary Land Uses	Other aspects, zoning considerations
<p><b>Traditional Neighborhood / Traditional Residential</b> – street grid, moderate lot sizes, walking distance from larger commercial nodes; stable residential areas.</p> 	<p>Single-family residential; other housing with similar densities</p>	<p>Other residential types such as duplex, limited multi-family buildings at the scale of the neighborhood, neighborhood scale institutions including churches, pocket parks, community gardens.</p>	<p>New development that is farther removed from existing commercial nodes should incorporate NMU or DMU opportunities as part of or adjacent to the TN development.</p>
<p><b>Suburban Residential</b> – sewerred areas, newer homes, typically not on a grid street pattern, typically lower density than traditional neighborhood.</p> 	<p>Single-family residential</p>	<p>Duplex and triplex, accessory dwelling units, neighborhood scale institutions including churches, parks, community gardens, limited home-based businesses.</p>	<p>New development should use trails to ensure pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, encourage trail creation in existing areas.</p>
<p><b>Multi-Family Residential</b> – encompass the scattered sites that already exist, provide for some expansion of MFR areas.</p> 	<p>Apartments, condos, townhouses (outside of downtown or mixed use areas).</p>	<p>Parks, recreational or community amenities, assisted living, manufactured home communities.</p>	<p>Consider adjacent uses to create synergy, such as commercial and related institutional uses. Consider integration with transit and non-motorized travel infrastructure.</p>



Category / Description	Primary Land Use	Potential Secondary Land Uses	Other aspects, zoning considerations
<p><b>Rural/Large Lot Residential</b> – on-site septic, limited street connections.</p> 	<p>Single-family residential with on-site wastewater system.</p>	<p>Forestry, agriculture, recreation, rural home-based businesses, limited commercial uses compatible with primary use.</p>	<p>Will require additional definition and standards for secondary uses.</p>
<p><b>Neighborhood Mixed Use</b> – small mixed use areas adjacent to or within residential areas.</p> 	<p>Mixed use buildings, offices, small scale commercial uses compatible with residential</p>	<p>Residential buildings.</p>	<p>Allowed uses and building design need to be clearly defined to ensure compatibility with residential uses.</p>
<p><b>Downtown Mixed Use /Town Center</b> – small to mid-size commercial and retail centers that are adjacent to and integrated with residential areas.</p> 	<p>Mix of uses encouraged. Retail, office, institutional, civic, entertainment, lodging, high-density residential, vertical mixed use.</p>	<p>Parks, recreational or community amenities</p>	<p>Consideration of form-based zoning.</p>
<p><b>Highway Commercial / Commercial Corridor</b> – small scale to big box retail and commercial that is oriented to the City's highways.</p> 	<p>Larger-scale commercial (retail and other) uses, lodging</p>	<p>Commercial recreation</p>	<p>Could require design standards or some segregation of uses (big box, pedestrian-oriented, auto-focused)</p>



Category / Description	Primary Land Use	Potential Secondary Land Uses	Other aspects, zoning considerations
<p><b>Medical Campus</b> – areas with institutional (large scale) medical uses and aggregations of smaller medical businesses.</p> 	<p>Hospital, medical offices and related services</p>	<p>Related commercial, lodging, parks and recreation, assisted living facilities.</p>	<p>Clear regulatory connection needs to be created for integrating secondary uses.</p>
<p><b>Industrial – Traditional Workplace</b> - Paper and other industries in city center – part of greater Downtown and integrated with rail and highway infrastructure.</p> 	<p>Industrial, office, services. Facilities needing access to rail infrastructure.</p>	<p>N/A (In proximity to downtown retail and services).</p>	
<p><b>Industrial Park</b> – Traditional industrial park uses, primarily heavy/intensive uses such as manufacturing and warehousing.</p> 	<p>Production/manufacturing, warehouse, large-scale wholesale with trucking, transfer facilities</p>	<p>Office/administrative associated with primary uses. Retail outlets associated with and secondary to primary uses.</p>	<p>Clear regulatory standards defining appropriate mix of uses and relationship between primary and secondary uses.</p>
<p><b>Business Park / Limited Industrial</b> – Industrial and non-retail uses that are less intense than heavy manufacturing.</p> 	<p>Offices, limited production, small wholesale uses</p>	<p>Low visibility/limited retail, services such as child care, education, training facilities.</p>	<p>Will require zoning district modification or new district. Clear definition of preferred mix of land uses needed.</p>



Category / Description	Primary Land Use	Potential Secondary Land Uses	Other aspects, zoning considerations
<p><b>Institutional / Civic</b> – Larger campus-style institutions, mostly but not exclusively public and non-profit sector.</p> 	<p>Religious, educational, government institutions</p>	<p>Residential multi-family that is related to the institutional use.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Management</b> - Includes County-owned tax-forfeit lands managed for forestry, gravel, trail; private lands managed for minerals or forest products.</p> 	<p>Forestry, agriculture, sand and gravel, other mining, trails and recreational uses</p>	<p>Very low density residential that can be isolated from resource extraction and management.</p>	<p>May require use of multiple zoning districts to ensure separation of incompatible land uses. May require creation of overlays</p>
<p><b>Parks and Recreation</b> – public and private lands dedicated to long-term recreational uses.</p> 	<p>Public and semi-public parks, recreational areas, trails, water access points, golf courses.</p>	<p>Shooting ranges, outdoor racetracks.</p>	<p>Includes both public and private ownership, and thus does not translate directly to a zoning district.</p>
<p><b>Transportation and Utilities</b> – includes most public land dedicated to transportation infrastructure and long term utility needs.</p> 	<p>Airport, roads, railroad, other rights-of-way including electric transmission and inter-regional pipelines</p>	<p>None</p>	

### What is a Land Use Map?

The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan includes two types of “land use” maps; the Existing Land Use map, and the Future Land Use map. These two maps both show land use, but there are some important distinctions to be made between them.

**Existing Land Use Map.** The Existing Land Use map shows the City existing land use landscape. Existing land uses are described on a parcel specific basis. The City has a record of the type of land use on each individual tax parcel, which can then be grouped into categories to accurately show existing land uses. The Grand Rapids Existing Land Use map shows this landscape using 15 land use categories, including a category for “vacant” land.

**Future Land Use Map.** The Future Land Use map is a snapshot of the preferred mix of land uses at a point 20 years in the future. The future land use map is therefore more conceptual than the Existing Land Use map. The future land use map shows the City’s future landscape assuming the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan are met. Boundaries between land use districts are not intended to be precise; the view of the City is from 20,000 feet rather than from on the ground. The actual boundaries will be shaped by the market conditions, demographic changes, and economic events that occur over the next 20 years.





**Grand Rapids’ Future Land Uses**

Figure 4-4 shows the distribution of the City’s area by Urban and Rural uses. Almost a third of the City is in the Resource Management category, and another 14% in rural residential. Grand Rapids future development pattern will thus leave almost half the City in rural land uses.

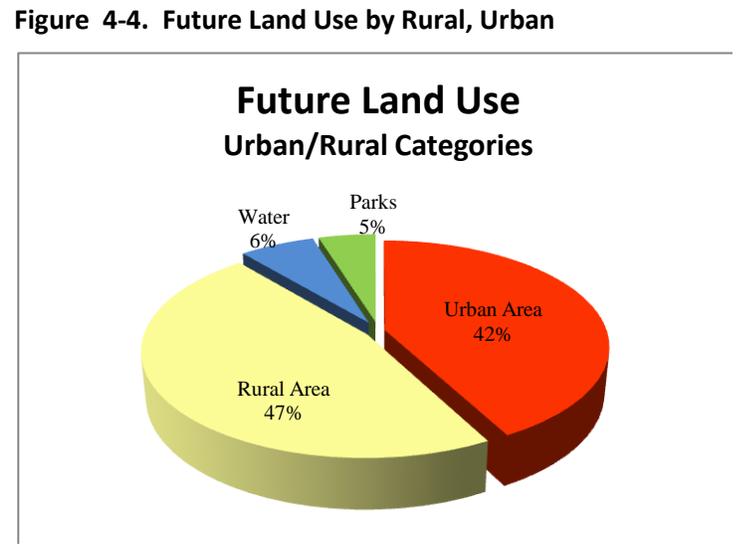


Table 4-5 and Figure 4-5 (next page) show the City by Future Land Use Category. Residential housing other than rural housing comprises 22% of the City. Most City residents will live in the more compact areas of the City (Multi-Family and Traditional Neighborhood). The Suburban Residential area is 9% of the City’s area but is likely to be developed at a somewhat lower density.

Industrial and Business park areas make up almost 4% of the City’s land, enough to provide for continued industrial expansion for years to come. Mixed Use categories include the Neighborhood Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, and Medical Campus area. These areas can include varying types of commercial and service businesses in addition to some housing and institutional uses, and make up two percent of the City. The other commercial land use category, Highway Commercial, is four percent of the City’s area.

Transportation and Utilities is composed primarily of the airport and associated safety zones, making up six percent of the City’s area. Institutional areas also make up six percent and include the Itasca Community College, governmental buildings, and large churches and schools.

**Table 4-5 Future Land Use by Total Area**

Future Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Downtown Mixed Use	114	0.7%
Highway Commercial	601	3.9%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	39	0.3%
Business Park	188	1.2%
Industrial Park	402	2.6%
Industrial Traditional	136	0.9%
Institutional	738	4.8%
Medical Campus	91	0.6%
Parks and Recreation	735	4.8%
Multi-Family	548	3.6%
Traditional Neighborhood	1,343	8.8%
Suburban Residential	1,313	8.6%
Rural Residential	2,169	14.2%
Resource Management	4,946	32.4%
Transportation/ Utilities	939	6.1%
Water	969	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,270</b>	

Parks and Recreation and open water total 11% of the City.

Figure 4-5. Future Land Use by Category

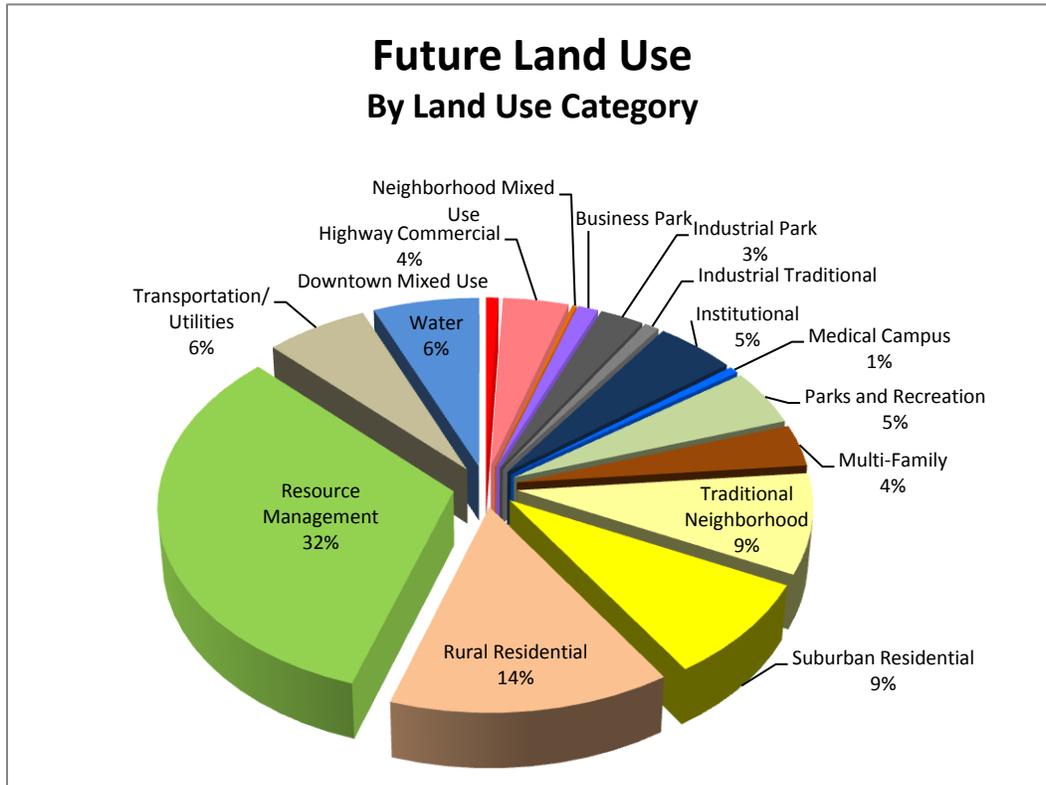
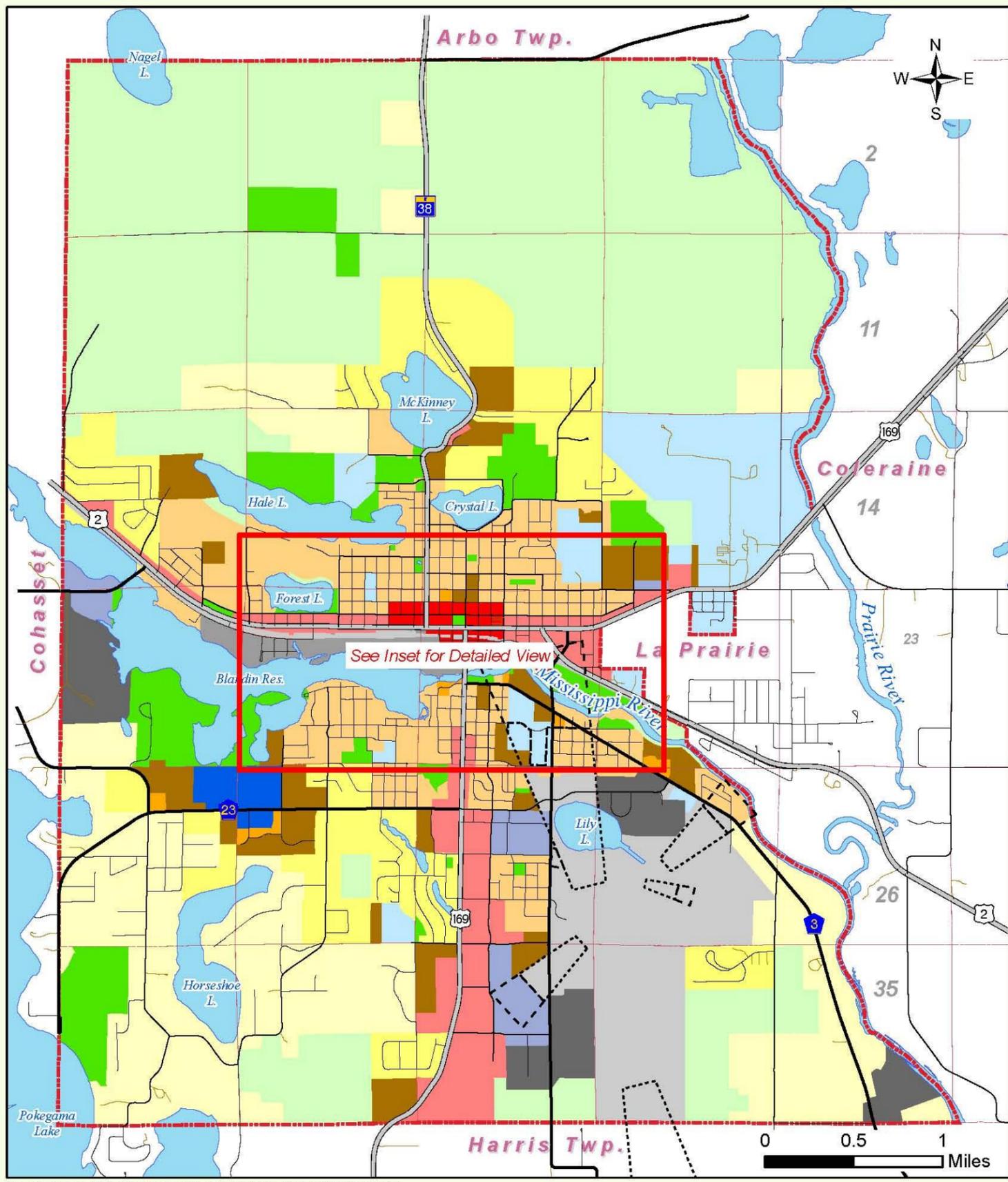


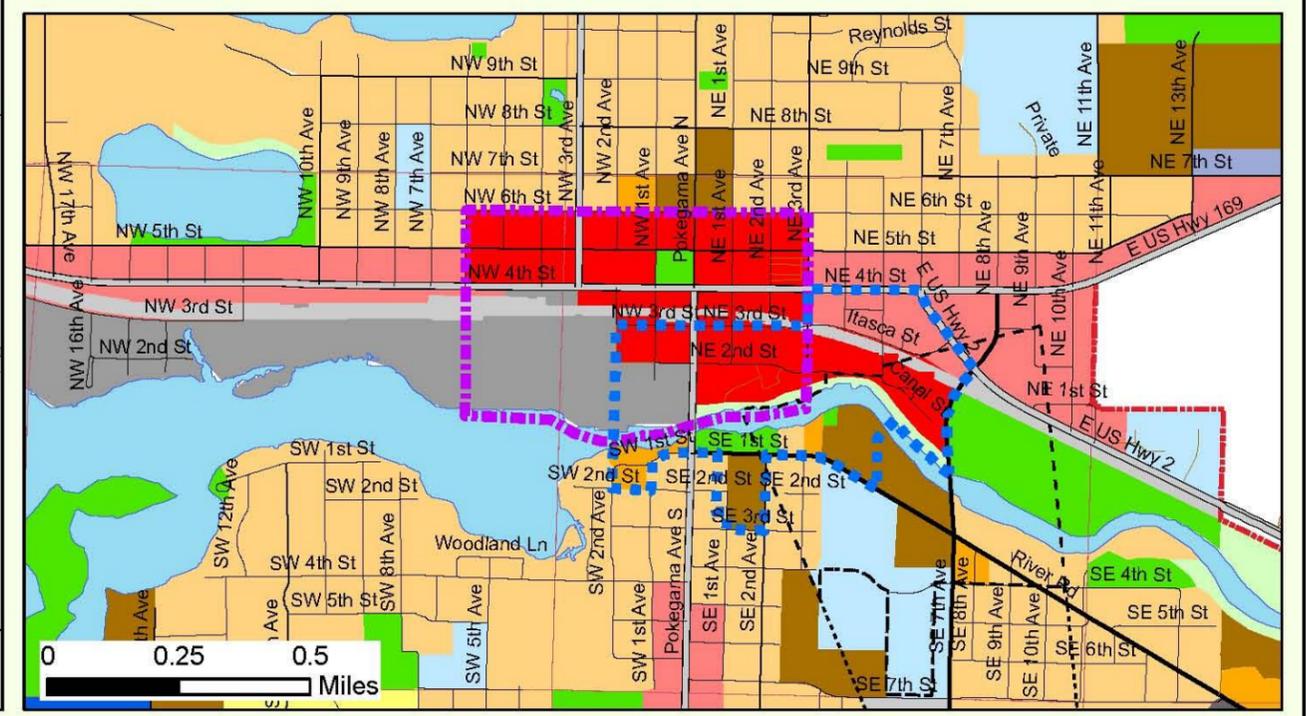
Figure 4-6 on the following page shows the full Future Land Use Map.

Figure 4-6 Future Land Use Map

# Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use



- |   |                            |                           |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Highway Commercial                          | Parks & Recreation         | City Limits 2010          |
| Downtown Mixed Use                          | Resource Management        | Open Water                |
| Neighborhood Mixed Use                      | Rural Residential          | <b>Airport Zones</b>      |
| Industrial - Traditional                    | Suburban Residential       | A                         |
| Industrial Park                             | Traditional Neighborhood   | B                         |
| Business Park                               | Multi-Family Residential   | Sections                  |
| Institutional/Civic                         | Transportation & Utilities | <b>24</b> Section Numbers |
| Medical Campus                              |                            |                           |
| Grand Rapids Riverfront Framework Plan Area |                            |                           |
| Grand Rapids Downtown Planning Area         |                            |                           |



Map date: April 11, 2011. Data sources: City of Grand Rapids, MN; Mn/DOT; CR Planning



### Key Development and Redevelopment Sites

Some key development and redevelopment parcels that were addressed during the planning process on the Future Land Use Map including the following sites.

**St. Joseph School and Church site** – The full city block immediately north of the downtown was the location of the St. Joseph Church and school for many years. The blocks to the east are zoned for multi-family housing. This site has the characteristics for a Neighborhood Mixed Use redevelopment within the 20-year term of this Plan.

**Riverview School Site** – The former Riverview School site is located a few blocks south of Mississippi River at SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This area is targeted for redeveloped as multi-family housing that can be integrated into the Traditional Neighborhood area and include amenities such as a redeveloped playground or park on the site of the old school playground.

**Former Primary Treatment Plant Site** – The primary wastewater treatment plant is being replaced with a new facility. The old plant site will include a small area for wastewater pumping, but is available for redevelopment in the near future. The site, located along the Mississippi River, connected to riverfront park and trails, is an ideal location for higher end high density housing. Part of the site along River Road can also accommodate a neighborhood mixed use commercial area, and the redevelopment process should leave a resource management buffer along the River that connects to the park.

**Industrial Parks** – The Future Land Use Map shows several recent additions to the City's industrial park areas and the planned (already zoned) expanded industrial areas west of the Blandin/UPM facility. The industrial areas were assessed to make sure that sufficient land was ready for both routine industrial expansion and the potential for a large facility looking for a shovel ready site.

**Housing and Neighborhood Diversity** – The planning process was cognizant of the City's and region's changing demographics, the potential for expansion of natural resources industries in the area, and potential changes in in-migration patterns. One of the goals in creating the future land use map was to ensure the plan provided for a range of housing types and to accommodate a diversity of interconnected neighborhoods. These goals required particular attention to creating multiple opportunities for redevelopment (particularly for multi-family areas) near to walkable commercial areas and job centers.

**Protecting Natural Infrastructure** – A clear response in both the community survey and the focus group process was the importance of building in increased connections to open space and greater integration of natural systems into the City's urban areas. Part of that sentiment was expressly directed to the urban rivers and lakes that were not treated as amenities as Grand Rapids developed in the past. The Future Land Use map includes resource management shore areas in those parcel targeted for development or redevelopment along lakes or the Mississippi River over the next 20 years. Improved treatment of the River is also consistent with the City Riverfront Plan that was adopted after the 2003 Plan.



## Future Land Use – Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Priorities

Grand Rapids has achieved many land use goals of its 2003 Plan. Some priorities, however, remain unfulfilled and new priorities have arisen since 2003. The 2010 Plan process included significant public outreach around land use issues and the creation of a future land use map. Issues identified in public meetings, the community survey, the focus group process, and the engagement of stakeholders in the Steering committee include the following:

- *Recognize the City's evolving demographics.* As noted in the Demographics section, the City is facing the same unprecedented aging trend that is seen throughout Minnesota and across the United States. Land use patterns can be greatly affected by such changing demographics as demand for various housing types and urban amenities shifts. The City has already seen an increase in demand for accessible housing, for smaller housing units, and residential areas that are better connected to health care, commercial areas, and recreational amenities.
- *Prepare for economic expansion.* As described in both the Demographics and Economic Infrastructure sections, the City needs to be prepared for another round of expansion in natural resource industries. Such an expansion could bring new demand for housing, industrial, and commercial land uses.
- *Maintain balance of urban and rural character within the City.* The City's recent annexation of large rural areas of Grand Rapids Township changes the land use management decisions faced by staff, Planning Commission, and City Council. Public comment clearly favors maintaining the rural character of areas in the City's north, southwest, and southeast.
- *Staging development.* The uncertainty about the rate of economic expansion and market demand requires the City to strike a balance between ensuring sufficient land is zoned for development and the risk of inefficient and disconnected sprawl.
- *Improve urban integration with natural infrastructure.* Public comment demonstrated a clear preference for improving the connection of the City's urban area to the natural infrastructure within and adjacent to the urban area. Sentiment is strong for better utilization of and protection of rivers, lakes, urban forest, and other elements of the City's natural infrastructure.
- *Protect natural infrastructure supporting economic base.* As noted in the Natural Infrastructure section, Grand Rapids has important mineral, recreational, and forestry resources within City limits. These resources need to remain part of the portfolio of natural resource feedstocks for industry and tourism.
- *Improve urban integration with the transportation system.* Land use goals and transportation infrastructure are integrally linked. Concepts such as "complete streets" and pedestrian-orientation can be extended from the 2003 Plan and enhanced by new studies.
- *Better capture of land use synergies.* Traditional separation of land uses into residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional categories fails to recognize how a selective mix of uses across these categories improves livability and economic sustainability. The City has an opportunity to create new distinctions and new mixes between traditional categories.
- *Incorporate character and design in land use categories and regulation.* The design of neighborhoods and commercial areas affects livability and economic viability. The City has an opportunity to identify and encourage design for development and redevelopment that recognizes characteristics affecting livability, visual character, function, and connectivity.

To help define the City's land use goals, the Steering Committee crafted the Future Land Use Map and a sequence of goals and objectives that reflect the Plan's community vision, values, and guiding principles.



As described below, the Comprehensive Plan is not simply the Future Land Use map, nor just a set of goals, objectives and strategies. The different elements of the Plan work together and must be considered comprehensively rather than in isolation.

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan Land Use section included five goals:

- Goal 1: Provide a sound basis for orderly development by establishing proper relationships among agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, and other land uses.
- Goal 2: Provide physical accessibility throughout Grand Rapids.
- Goal 3: Preserve Community Landmarks
- Goal 4: Protect the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway Corridor
- Goal 5: Ensure that riverfront development meets the needs of current and future Grand Rapids Residents

Each Goal had a number of objectives. Goal 1 had eight objectives, Goals 2 through 5 had only one or two objectives. All of these goals, and many objectives, were still consistent with the City’s Community Vision, Values, and Guiding Principles and the 2010 Plan incorporates the goals and objectives into a new goal hierarchy.

***Goal 1: Provide for orderly development by establishing proper relationships among agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, and other land uses.***

The fundamental basis for land use planning, and a primary element of sustainable development, is recognizing the synergies and conflicts between different land uses, and the need for a diverse set of land use areas.

The City has also identified five objectives that help define Land Use Goal 1.

- a. *Ensure that development and redevelopment is orderly, following the patterns established in the Future Land Use Map.* The Future Land Use map portrays the development and redevelopment patterns that are consistent with the Community Vision, Values and Principles. Implementing the pattern in a staged and efficient process will sustain the City’s community, economic, and natural infrastructure.
- b. *Ensure that development avoids the close proximity of conflicting uses and maximizes synergy among uses.* Recognize conflicts and synergies in setting and administering land use regulation. Look beyond the similarity of uses (i.e. small commercial and large commercial) to maximize synergies (i.e.

**Community Vision**

“Grand Rapids is a unique blend of small town hospitality and character with big city conveniences and opportunities. . . “

**Community Values**

**Fiscal Responsibility**

Being accountable to our community means managing our financial resources wisely. This core value is expressed in many ways, including encouraging sustainable growth and development, efficient provision of services and programs, and fully accounting for costs associated with public decisions.

**Guiding Principles**

**Principle 1. Direct growth and development to locations that serve community vision and values.**

Recognize that development and redevelopment activities should be guided to appropriate locations in order to realize the community’s vision. Choices about where and how growth occurs will define community character for decades, affect the cost and quality of public services, and shape future development markets.

- small commercial and multifamily residential).
- c. *Promote the best use of land, from the community's long-term perspective, for new development and redevelopment.* The City will consider the long-term consequences of development decisions as well as the value of development proposals under today's market conditions.
  - d. *Give preference to long-term community and market benefits in Resource Management land use areas.* Resource management areas are designed as such due to the frequently multi-generational consequences of development in these areas that might diminish resource value. Development should be secondary to protection of economic or natural resources and interim uses should not diminish resource management or extraction and natural system function.
  - e. *Stage new development or expansion of the City's urban service area.* The Future Land Use Map shows an end point 20 years out. Redevelopment and infill development should have preference over development on green field sites within the City and especially areas that will require expansion of City services. Expansion of commercial areas should only occur when market opportunities within existing commercial nodes are limited. Meaningful staging will also require working with surrounding communities (adjacent townships and cities) to ensure a cohesive land use pattern for the region.

**Goal 2: Promote commercial development that serves local and regional markets.** A diversity of commercial land uses offers multiple benefits to residents and visitors and enhances economic sustainability.

The City has identified two objectives to define Land Use Goal 2.

- a. *Recognize distinct classes of commercial development that serve different markets and are compatible with different land uses.* Different commercial uses serve distinct markets and perform best when clustered with uses that serve similar markets or require similar infrastructure.
- b. *Provide opportunities for neighborhood commercial nodes that are compatible with residential land uses.*





**Goal 3: Provide for industrial retention and expansion.** Land use goals need to provide ready opportunity for basic industries to locate in Grand Rapids and to expand.

The City has identified two objectives to define Land Use Goal 3.

- a. *Recognize distinct classes of industrial development and direct industrial development to the appropriate land use areas.* Different industrial uses require different types of public and transportation infrastructure. Rail access, for instance, is difficult infrastructure to build new, and sites with rail access should be reserved for industrial uses that gain value from it.
- b. *Reserve sufficient industrial area for new large and small industrial projects.* The Future Land Use Map provides for new industrial investment of a variety of types, and should be reflected in land use regulation.

**Goal 4: Protect and enhance the diversity and livability of residential areas.** A diversity of residential land uses allows for lifecycle housing choices and options within a variety of housing markets. Grand Rapids’ housing options stretch across the entire residential land use transect, from rural to dense multi-family.

The City has identified four objectives to define Land Use Goal 4.

- a. *Integrate different types of residential housing while retaining character of distinct neighborhoods.* Allowing for some variety of housing within neighborhoods will promote inclusive and economically integrated neighborhoods. Variety of housing options can be achieved while enhancing neighborhood character.
- b. *Promote the development and retention of traditional neighborhoods in and adjacent to the urbanized area.* Traditional neighborhoods are the largest residential land use category on the Future Land Use Map, and likely to be where most residents will live.
- c. *Promote neighborhood identity, pride, and sense of place.* Grand Rapids has distinct neighborhood character throughout the City. Regulation and land use decision-making should explicitly attend to character and sense of place.
- d. *Allow uses and activities appropriate to the character of the residential district.* All land use and zoning districts ideally have multiple uses. In creating and managing land use regulation, recognize and allow secondary land uses that enhance livability or character, while retaining the primary use as residential.

**Community Values**

**Housing Diversity**

We value a variety of housing types in our community to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their stage in life. Quality, affordable housing is a basic need. Housing diversity is enabled when neighborhoods are connected to cultural, recreational, economic, natural, education, and transportation systems.

**Guiding Principles**

**Principle 4. Sustain Grand Rapids’ neighborhoods.**

The City’s neighborhoods and the social networks that connect neighborhood residents require conscious attention and support. Integrate housing with other land uses, design appropriate transportation infrastructure, protect community character in public and private development decisions, enhance natural systems and create connected green spaces.

**Goal 5: Promote development of mixed-use areas.** All land use categories include a mix of uses, as do many zoning districts, but the City has relatively few fully mixed use areas. Mixed use development has



been demonstrated to be extremely efficient in use of public infrastructure and provides market options that are currently limited in Grand Rapids in an era likely to see growing demand for mixed use development. Mixed use land use categories include downtown mixed use, neighborhood mixed use, and medical campus.

The City has identified three objectives to define Land Use Goal 5.

- a. *Encourage new, planned mixed-use developments, in which the attributes of traditional neighborhoods and small commercial are merged.* Mixing uses is much less controversial in new developments. New mixed use development should explicitly include both residential and commercial land uses, incorporating design and performance standards as necessary to limit nuisances.
- b. *Promote the full mix of uses in existing mixed use areas, as identified in the land use categories.* The land use categories define primary and secondary land uses within each land use category. Multiple zoning districts may need to be applied in some of these areas to achieve the targeted mix of uses.
- c. *Support the development and expansion of Grand Rapids' medical campus.* The viability of the medical campus area is enhanced when the Neighborhood Mixed use and Multi-family land uses are integrated into and around the medical campus, as portrayed on the Future Land Use Map.

**Goal 6: Balance open space and environmental preservation with the Grand Rapids' development needs.** Development and environmental preservation goals can successfully be integrated with careful design and recognition of natural system functions, as described in the Natural Infrastructure section. Open space within the urban fabric creates synergies with almost every other type of land use. Natural systems, if designed into developed areas, help sustain and add value to the development over time.

The City has identified three objectives to define Land Use Goal 6.

- a. *Protect and preserve existing open space and natural systems and encourage expanded access of urban and rural open spaces.* Grand Rapids has many critical natural systems throughout the City; few places in the City are without natural system or open space considerations. Development and redevelopment efforts can incorporate open space and natural systems, and even restore degraded systems when so targeted during the development process.
- b. *Provide sufficient opportunities for public use activities within Grand Rapids.* The Future Land Use Map identifies a wide variety of open space and recreational areas. Parks and public open spaces are important elements in residential and commercial areas.

**Guiding Principles**

**Principle 2. Harmonize change with the existing community fabric and natural systems.**

Change is inevitable but opportunities and risks can be managed to protect and sustain community and natural infrastructure. Change can be structured to enhance rather than detract: creating synergies between new and existing businesses, transforming buildings to be more sustainable, designing new housing or commercial buildings to match existing scale.

**Community Vision**

“Grand Rapids provides all residents safe, friendly, affordable housing and inclusive neighborhoods that retain and enhance nature in the City. . . “



- c. *Facilitate the conservation goals of the Blandin conservation easement.* The City has hundreds of acres of lands under permanent protection for conservation and forest management purposes. Regulation and administrative review of land use and development activities in and around the conservation areas should contribute to the conservation goals of the easements.

**Goal7: Provide physical accessibility throughout Grand Rapids.** Access to and among different types of land use is critical to a functioning community. Access needs to include pedestrian, bicycle and non-motorized, and motorized vehicles.

The City has identified five objectives to define Land Use Goal 7.

- a. *Encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link the community together in a cohesive manner, in addition to providing motorized vehicle access.* As described in the Natural Infrastructure section, pedestrian and bicycle pathways are a key element to sustainable development goals. Incorporate planned pathways in new developments and subdivisions, and create processes to extend pathways to existing developed areas.
- b. *Connect rural residential and suburban land uses to the urban form.* Rural residential and suburban residential development frequently leaves these neighborhoods isolated from the rest of the community. Creating pedestrian, bicycle, and motorized connections to the rest of the City is important to sustaining these neighborhoods over time.
- c. *Encourage the provision of access to residents and visitors with disabilities.* Ensure that street, neighborhood, and commercial area planning and design accommodates access for people with disabilities.
- d. *Integrate the Complete Streets study results into the Comprehensive Plan.* As described in the Transportation section, the Complete Streets study being completed by MnDOT will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan when applying Complete Streets principles to Grand Rapids. The results and recommendations can be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan to support building a multi-modal transportation network.
- e. *Connect businesses with surrounding land uses to increase access.* Connectivity and multi-modal transportation should be strong across all land use categories.

**Community Values**

**Healthy Living**

Opportunities for healthy living is a core value. Creating healthy living opportunities requires careful management of our built environment (housing, roads, other infrastructure) our natural systems (recreation, natural resources), and other local amenities (economic systems, education, local food systems, health care).



**Goal 8: Preserve historic and natural community landmarks.** Grand Rapids’ natural, historic, and cultural heritage is embodied in buildings, places, and views through the City. Recognizing those places as unique contributors to Grand Rapids’ sense of place will enhance livability and help retain the community character celebrated in Grand Rapids’ vision statement.

The City has identified three objectives to define Land Use Goal 8.

- a. *Promote the preservation of those sites, buildings, structures, objects and natural resources that are associated with the historical and cultural development of Grand Rapids.* Historic and cultural elements are a critical component of Grand Rapids’ identity.
- b. *Protect the visual integrity of the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway.* Protecting the Scenic Byway will retain the rural and scenic character of the northern entrance to Grand Rapids.
- c. *Integrate the visual and natural functions of the Mississippi River into riverfront development.* Riverfront development needs to actively incorporate, protect, and where possible, restore the River and shore areas.





### Implementation Priorities

The 2003 Plan included a number of implementation priorities for the land use goals and objectives. A number of these recommended strategies and actions were completed over the ensuing years, including a complete rewrite of the City’s zoning ordinance. A few actions were not completed and are included in this updated Plan. Moreover, the new Plan includes new natural resource priorities and opportunities, including some new responsibilities assigned to the City by State and Federal agencies. Additional implementation priorities are added to address these changes.

The following actions implement the goals and objectives described above and the land use policies that accompany the Future Land Use Map. These implementation priorities must also be understood within the context of the Community Vision, Values, and Principles and the goals, objectives, and implementation priorities in other sections of this Plan.

### Development and Land Use Regulation

- Continue to evaluate new development for compatibility with and sensitivity to existing land uses, particularly in evaluating applications for rezoning, variances, and conditional use permits.
- Continue to use the subdivision approval process to connect new development to surrounding lands and neighborhoods and to mitigate potential nuisances created by either existing or proposed land uses.
- Create staging criteria for evaluating whether rezonings are warranted, if extensions of urban services are an efficient use of tax dollars and land, and if proposed changes in land use support infill and redevelopment priorities.
- Continue to work with Harris Township, Arbo Township, Cohasset, Coleraine, and LaPrairie to stage development from a regional perspective and minimize land use conflicts at political boundaries.
- Zoning Districts
  - Create a new zoning district or modify an existing district to allow development that matches the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use category, as described in the Future Land Use categories.
  - Create a new zoning district or modify an existing district to distinguish Business Park land uses, as described in the Future Land Use categories, from other commercial and industrial land uses.
  - Remove mineral extraction and other resource management activities from the list of permitted used under the Industrial zoning district. Distinguishing between resource extraction/management

**Conservation Subdivision**

“‘Conservation subdivision’ is a method of subdivision characterized by common open space and clustered compact lots, with the purpose of creating greater community value through open space amenities for homeowners and protection of natural resources . . . “

*Source: MnDNR, Conservation Subdivision Provisions for Local Land Use Regulations*

“The practice of conservation subdivision allows communities to capture the opportunities of development while minimizing the risks to natural resources, economic resources, and community character. Generally, conservation subdivision allows landowners to develop parcels by clustering residences on smaller lots than would otherwise be allowed while protecting open space, agriculture, or sensitive natural resources. . . .”

*Source: Minnesota Model Conservation Subdivision Ordinance 2009, MnPCA*



and industrial development recognizes that some forms of industrial development are inappropriate for areas with valuable natural resources.

- Create a new zoning district to implement the goals of the Resource Management land use category. Set different standards for distinct types of resource management including protection of mineral resources, forestry, and conservation areas. Consider developing a conservation design subdivision process to minimize the impact of development on protected resources.
- Create development and management standards for resource management areas in urban areas along lakes and the Mississippi River.
- **Commercial Development**
  - Modify commercial and related business zoning districts to recognize and distinguish the different types of commercial development identified in the future land use categories and policies.
  - Implement the Downtown Plan in economic development activities, modifications to development regulation, and administrative review of development and redevelopment proposals.
  - Ensure that commercial zoning and development regulations are sufficiently flexible to encourage redevelopment and expansion of existing commercial land uses within commercial corridors and the downtown area.
  - Consider standards and locations for temporary economic uses such as farmers' markets.
- **Industrial**
  - Make zoning map amendments as necessary for industrial land uses, to create shovel ready sites and a clear path to industrial expansion.
  - In transition areas around industrial and business park areas, protect existing industrial infrastructure from encroachment by incompatible development.
  - Mitigate negative impacts to residential and commercial areas that are located near industrial uses.
- **Design Standards**
  - Establish appropriate transition uses and consider design standards in commercial and mixed use districts that are adjacent to residential districts. Neighborhood Mixed Use design standards could include pedestrian-friendly design elements, high levels of fenestration, smaller building footprints, lighting and sign standards and performance standards for uses to ensure compatibility with residential uses.
  - Consider pedestrian design standards throughout the City, including commercial retail areas such as the Highway Commercial category.

**Pedestrian Oriented Design Elements**

Design standards that will enhance the appearance, pedestrian character and safety, and economic viability of specific districts and corridors include:

◆ Building Placement	◆ Entrance Orientation
◆ Facade Articulation	◆ Façade Modulation
◆ Door ,Window Openings	◆ Service Area Screens
◆ Equipment Screening	◆ Materials
◆ Parking Design	◆ Parking Landscaping

*Source: Minnesota Model Design Standards for Pedestrian-Oriented Districts and Corridors, MnPCA 2009*



- Establish design standards that preserve the aesthetic character and function of established neighborhoods, consistent with the policies and characteristics noted in the future land use categories and Future Land Use Map.

#### **Incorporate Connectivity and Access Development Considerations**

- Enhance neighborhood safety and promote healthy living by creating greenbelts, arterial sidewalks, bicycle paths/routes among residential neighborhoods and between residential and commercial and institutional destinations. Recognize different needs of urbanized and rural areas, but plan for connections in both.
- Ensure that development and redevelopment standards create connections between residential land use districts and zoning districts, including continuation of subdivision standards requiring a designated ROW for connecting to adjacent parcels.
- Enforce the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Minnesota State Building Code regarding development and redevelopment.
- Strictly enforce rights-of-way access laws for public streets and sidewalks, including crosswalks, curb ramps, street furnishings, parking, and other components of public rights-of-way.

#### **Support Neighborhoods in Capital and Land Use Decision-Making**

- Develop standards or indicators that allow evaluation of whether neighborhood amenities are distributed equitably throughout the community to assist in capital planning and land use decision-making. Maintain existing neighborhood open space and public space amenities and consider options in capital planning and land use development and redevelopment in neighborhoods with less access to amenities.
- Provide open space that is easily accessible to residents at the neighborhood level.
- Seek to provide a range of housing options throughout Grand Rapids through some mixing of housing uses within residential land use areas and through improved connectivity between different housing areas.

#### **Support a Mix of Land Uses**

- Modify residential zoning districts to allow for the mix of land uses described in the future land use categories.
- Review and, if appropriate, modify the mixed use zoning standards for compatibility with the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use category.
- Establish development standards for mixed-use districts that include an interconnected street pattern with sidewalks, smaller blocks, and open space or natural infrastructure.
- Consider appropriate encouragement or assistance for developers to engage in mixed-use development in mixed-use districts.
- Continue to group medical uses, including medical offices and residential care, with related commercial and residential uses.
- Consider the potential impacts of development upon open space and natural resource preservation when hearing rezoning requests that would intensify use.

### **Sustain Open Space and Natural Infrastructure**

- Update the Park Master Plan, including a forest management plan for maintaining urban woods, in order to preserve, expand, and coordinate green space and to protect the broader public interest.
- Protect and preserve existing trees and encourage the planting of additional trees in suitable locations to meet the needs of current and future residents and visitors.
- Mitigate potential conflicts between activities associated with public use districts and adjacent uses.
- Update Shoreland standards to meet goals of Resource Management areas within the urban areas, including the use of low-impact development standards as noted in the Natural Infrastructure section of the Plan.

### **Support Community Landmarks in Land Use Planning and Administration**

- Establish a community landmark preservation commission or similar group. Charge this commission with developing a community landmark preservation plan that defines landmarks, sets criteria, inventories assets, and identifies appropriate protection tools.
- Continue to enforce the Scenic Byway Commercial Overlay District. Protect existing trees adjacent to byway and (re)plant trees as needed.
- Implement the Riverfront Framework Plan recommendations in development and redevelopment activities within and adjacent to the Plan area and in infrastructure planning and public right-of-way management.
- Encourage the continued viability of the Itasca County Fairgrounds. Balance the ongoing use of the County Fairgrounds for a variety of community activities while recognizing the need to integrate the Fairgrounds into the overall community fabric.

