



SRF No. 11997

AGENDA

Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #4

September 11, 2019 | 6:00 to 8:00 pm

City Hall Council Chambers (420 North Pokegama Avenue)

1. Introductions
2. Draft Goal and Policies Review
3. Existing and Future Land Use
4. Hot Topics Discussion
5. Next Steps
 - a. Remaining Schedule
 - b. Public Meeting and Pop-up Event

Grow Grand Rapids – 2040 Comprehensive Plan Goal Updates – DRAFT

The following pages outline the proposed draft updates to the goals and objectives for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. These goals include a combination of unchanged, updated and new elements based on feedback received throughout the public engagement process. The following key is used to identify the type of change for each element:

- Unchanged Goal – identified in black text
- **Updated Goal** – identified in bold blue text
- **New Goal** – identified in bold orange text

Additionally, notation has been made to identify the connection to community and steering committee input to update or add the item.

2040 Community Values

- **Small Town Living** – Friendly, vital neighborhoods that provide a sense of community, support reinvestment in the area, and provides space for everyone to feel at home.
- **Housing Variety** – Value a range of housing types that promote something for everyone. While not all goals and desires can be met, the housing stock should attract a range of affordability, aesthetics, amenities and access to services.
 - Modified from Housing Diversity to update language while still maintaining the same intent.
- **Cultural and Recreational Opportunities** – Highlight and promote the existing resources by maintaining access and the quality.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – Remain accountable for municipal spending to support the needs and desires of Grand Rapids and its residents.
- **Safe Neighborhoods and Streets** – Maintain a safe environment throughout Grand Rapids for all residents, within all locations, and during all activities.
- **Healthy Living and Accessible Movement** – Create opportunities for residents to incorporate healthy living into their lifestyle. Promote access for all types of movement within Grand Rapids.
 - Grouped together to help each of the concepts support each other.
- **Sustainable Built Infrastructure** – Development and maintain quality infrastructure that responds to community needs while withstanding change.
- **Sustainable Natural Infrastructure** – Maintain the existing natural resources within Grand Rapids – striving to maintain quality resources and access/interaction with the resources.
- **Education** – Support continued learning and development for all in Grand Rapids. Coordinate with local schools to collaborate on the access to continued education.
- **Economic Opportunities** – Value and maintain the healthy economic base within the community and support and pursue opportunities for growth.
- **Regional Center – Maintain the city’s place as a regional center, serving the needs of both local and regional residents while limiting the impacts of the regional economy on the local community.**
 - Added per input from the Steering Committee to acknowledge the City’s role as the regional center and the strengths and weaknesses that come with it.
- **Quality of Life – Actively plan for access to a high quality of life for all residents. This includes access to a range of services, including health care and child care, housing options, and sense of community.**
 - Added per input from the Steering Committee, as residents value their own quality of life and the components that contribute to it.

Guiding Principles

1. Direct growth and development to locations that serve and support the community’s vision and values.

2. **Align change with the existing community, neighborhood and natural resources fabric.**
 - a. Modified the sentence to include neighborhoods as part of the fabric. The concepts of neighborhoods and their role in the character and quality of life for Grand Rapids was discussed with the Steering Committee.
3. Promote local economic vitality.
4. Sustain Grand Rapids' neighborhoods.
5. Enhance healthy lifestyles, families, and community.
6. **Sustain and enhance the status as a regional center and role in the greater region.**
 - a. Updated to add additional emphasis about the city's regional role.
7. **Promote community participation and civic engagement to inform the decision-making process.**
 - a. Updated to further expand the desire for engagement.
8. The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for City actions.
9. **Support access to arts and culture and identify opportunities to incorporate into municipal action.**
 - a. Arts and culture was added in response to input from Steering Committee.
10. **Collaborate and support community service providers and organizations to ensure that residents' needs are met for health care, childcare, and recreation.**
 - a. Added to emphasize access to the high-quality community services that connect to the high quality of life referenced in the values.

Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are established for six plan elements to assist the City in achieving its desired vision for 2040. These goals and policies should be referred to on a regular basis to ensure that decisions are pursued and made to support the desired direction. All goals and objectives should work together, supporting the growth direction of the community. A definition of Goals and Objectives as they relate to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan are:

Goal – Statement of a desired vision (i.e., what is the future of the various elements within).

Objective – Statement of a defined action or policy that provides guidance in achieving the established goal.

Future Land Use Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Actively manage growth that provides relationships between all land uses and assesses the potential location within the existing core or future growth areas.

-Further emphasized the analysis of the location of the development and its relationships to growth.

- Ensure that development and redevelopment is orderly, following the guidance established within the Future Land Use Map.
- **Reduce and eliminate land use conflicts within long-range planning and identify opportunities to create synergy among uses.**
 - Slight update to emphasize the reduction in land use conflicts.
- Promote the best use of the land, from the community's long-term perspective, new development and redevelopment.
- **Assess opportunities and locations for growth both within new growth areas on the edges of the community and within the existing developed areas.**
 - Emphasize the review of development between infill and greenfield development.
- Give preference to long-term community and market benefits in Resource Management land use areas.
- **Stage new development, redevelopment and expansion of the City's urban service area. Redevelopment opportunities continue to be a focus area for development within the community, supporting specific active planning for redevelopment opportunities to ensure growth that supports the surrounding area.**
 - Promote development of all types that allows for responsible extension of urban services.

Goal 2: Promote commercial development that serves local and regional markets.

- Recognize distinct classes of commercial development that serve different markets and are compatible with different land uses.
- **Explore opportunities for commercial development at various scales. For example, neighborhood commercial nodes provide for localized commercial development that meets the needs of a neighborhood population.**
 - Updated to soften the language of neighborhood development. This is intended to identify it as an option to be explore when the desire presents itself. The Steering committee will review the larger intent of this goal in more detail.
- **Explore opportunities for the introduction of mixed use into Grand Rapids land use planning, including all types of mixed-land uses. The inclusion of mixed uses improves access to a range of needs and varied lifestyles.**
 - Added to support the mixture of uses in many forms, outside of the traditional vertical mixed use. The intent is to provide flexibility, should the market present an opportunity – under the city's desired direction.

Goal 3: Provide for industrial retention and expansion.

- Recognize distinct classes of industrial development and direct industrial development to the appropriate land use areas.
- Reserve sufficient industrial area for future large and small industrial projects.
- **Identify available and/or needed services, amenities, and infrastructure availability to effectively prepare and market available land and promote growth.**
 - Added to promote fiscal responsibility with the extension of services.

Goal 4: Protect and enhance the character, amenities, variation, and livability of residential areas.

-Minor verbiage update per discussion with Steering Committee.

- **Integrate a range of housing types while retaining the character of distinct neighborhoods. Introducing new housing types to the area can provide opportunities to increase housing options and livability of the community; however, the potential impact or change to the existing neighborhood character from increased diversity of housing typology must be considered.**
 - Updated per Steering Committee discussion about the varying neighborhoods and character they provide.
- **Promote the development, rehabilitation, and retention of neighborhoods and their existing character within urbanized areas.**
 - Updated to support Steering Committee discussion about the preservation of neighborhoods.
- Promote and market neighborhood identity, pride and sense of place throughout the community.
- Allow uses and activities appropriate to the character of the residential district.

Goal 5: Promote development of mixed-use areas.

- **Support opportunities for mixed-use development throughout the community. Various types of mixed use development should be explored include both vertical and horizontal mixed uses.**
 - Modified to soften the direction of mixed-use development in response to Steering Committee input and the lack of historic mixed-use development. Intent is still to provide the option, while reducing the
- Promote the full mix of uses in existing mixed use areas, as identified in the land use categories.
- Support the development and expansion of Grand Rapids' medical campus.

Goal 6: Balance open space and environmental preservation while reviewing and approving local and regional land use decisions.

-Updated to change language regrading land use decisions, intended to include policy development and land use planning.

- Protect and preserve existing open space and natural systems and encourage expanded access of urban and rural open spaces.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for public use and activities within Grand Rapids.
- Facilitate the conservation goals of the Blandin conservation easement.

Goal 7: Provide accessibility throughout Grand Rapids.

-Updated to remove “physical” accessibility, with the intent of increasing accessibility in many forms (i.e., physical, social, economic).

- **Encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways that connect the community, in addition to providing motorized vehicle access. The City shall support projects that provide community wide connectivity to create a greater community network.**
 - Expanded to include support of connectivity across the community.
- **Connect all areas of the city to the urban form. Support the expansion of the trail network to promote connections between rural and suburban areas and the urban core. This network can provide connectivity to local services and amenities, while helping to build the sense of community.**
 - Further support the connection of all areas within the community to amenities.
- Encourage the provision of access to residents and visitors with disabilities.
- Integrate the Complete Streets studies and recommends results into the Comprehensive Plan.
- Connect businesses with surrounding land uses and increase access.

Goal 8: Preserve historic, natural and cultural community landmarks.

-Added cultural to the list of landmarks in response to Steering Committee discussion.

- **Promote the preservation of sites, buildings, structures, and objects of historic, natural, cultural and community landmarks.**
 - Updated to include cultural and community landmarks.
- **Actively manage the preservation of and investments of historic resources as a critical component of the community identity.**
 - Added to reference historic resources that support the community’s identity.
- Protect the visual integrity of the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway.
- Integrate the visual and natural functions of the Mississippi River into river front development.

Housing Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Facilitate the development of a vibrant, varied and interconnected housing stock.

-Updated to remove reference to a diverse housing stock per Steering Committee comments.

- Guide residential development to reflect a pattern of interconnected housing types.
- **Identify opportunities to incentivize housing development that encourages developers to pursue an affordable and varied housing stock. An example of incentives includes tax-increment financing (TIF) that can be used for single family and multi-family options. Additionally, find opportunities to promote housing in needed locations throughout the community beyond the profitable locations.**
 - Added to support the growth of a range of housing types and affordability levels.
- **Monitor housing typologies throughout the community and vacancy rates. As the community’s demographics shift, the City should monitor needed housing types to meet local demand. For example, the aging population is resulting in a shift in multifamily development and the need for lifecycle housing.**

- Added to monitor the types of available housing and response to changing demographics. Lifecycle housing was identified as the biggest housing need by the Steering Committee.
- **Support opportunities for owner occupied single family home development not being met in the market.**
 - The City has seen little to no private single-family development in recent history, though the City is committed to responding to the need. Recent efforts have included City led action to promote development through platting and funding resources.
- Allow for secondary uses in each residential land use area.
- **Explore opportunities to create amenity rich nodes that provide local services for the neighborhood. While standard mixed uses are not achievable everywhere, opportunities to introduce mixed-uses into appropriate neighborhoods should be considered.**
 - Updated to promote the development/maintenance of neighborhood amenities.
- **Promote safe and sanitary housing conditions for all housing tenures.**
 - The City has experienced growth in rental housing throughout the community, and this objective is intended to identify the focus on maintaining safe conditions for all.

Goal 2: Provide a mix of affordability in the City's housing stock.

- Guide residential development to reflect a pattern of interconnected housing types.
- **Provide for a range of housing typologies that respond to community needs. Lifecycle provides opportunities for people at all phases of life.**
 - Updated to increase focus on lifecycle housing and responding to community housing needs.
- **Use a range of tools to sustain affordable housing options, and actively review new and updated programs that can be brought to the community.**
 - Added notation of active planning for housing programing. This could include both financial and policy efforts.
- **Explore and establish regional housing partnerships to assist the City with meeting its housing goals.**
 - Further support the housing efforts by identifying partnerships.
- Maintain the quality of housing stock.

Goal 3: Recognize the City's distinct neighborhoods and neighborhood character.

- Consider context, including lot and building design, when integrating new development into existing neighborhoods.
- Engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders in sub-area plans and large developments.
- Maintain and improve neighborhood sense of safety.
- **Identify and pursue opportunities to promote investments of the existing housing stock.**
 - The Steering Committee discussed the changes that have been experienced in their own neighborhoods. This objective was added to support the investment in the existing housing stock, keeping exiting neighborhoods viable.

Natural Resources Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Protect natural infrastructure economic assets for future generations.

- **Protect mineral resources in land use decisions. Historically, the establishment of two recent districts have provided ample protection of the mineral resources and future development impacts.**
 - Updated to reference existing districts
- Support continued management of forest lands for timber and pulp.
- Recognize synergy between recreational assets and other natural infrastructure goals.
- Support environmental permitting policies and actions.

- Encourage education system and research to explore useful products that use natural resources in a closed-loop system.
- **Maintain natural infrastructure as a tourism attraction and amenity within the community.**
 - Added in response to the connection and support of natural resources noted through survey responses.

Goal 2: Integrate natural infrastructure within the urban core of the city to support community character and access to healthy living.

-Expanded to emphasize the importance of and connection to natural resources and the community.

- Create or protect buffers along the riverfront and lakes areas.
- Support and enhance the urban forest.
- Define the natural system infrastructure within future development and redevelopment areas.
- Educate businesses, residents, and visitors on the importance of protecting the natural infrastructure.
- **Ensure compliance with landscaping and buffering requirements.**
 - The City has existing landscaping and buffering requirements that are reviewed during the site plan review process. However, this objective was added to assist with installation of these requirements as part of the development (follow through with the requirements).

Goal 3: Integrate the natural infrastructure within the rural areas.

- Provide buffers along the waterways and wetlands.
- Support re-forestation and other native ecosystem restoration in the context of climate change.
- Define the natural system infrastructure within future development and re-development areas.
- Educate businesses, residents and visitors on the importance of protecting the natural infrastructure.

Goal 4: Provide support and management of the city's parks and trails to provide recreational and open spaces uses.

- **Continue to promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity within neighborhoods and between destinations.**
 - Updated to recognize the work that has been completed within the trail work, while still noting that efforts can be made.
- Improve access to motorized trails.
- **Support, manage, and promote parks within City boundaries. Maintain and develop relationships with community civic organizations to support these efforts.**
 - Expanded to recognize existing relationships.
- Work with adjacent local governing units and the State.

Transportation Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Maintain a safe and efficient city-wide transportation system.

- **Continue to complete the results of the Complete Streets study to better create and retain streets that promote a mix of uses such as car travel, transit, and bicycling.**
 - Updated to continue the effort, as some projects have been completed.
- Promote land use policies that limit access as necessary to maintain safe and efficient operation of the existing road system.
- The street layout of new developments shall continue to be coordinated with the streets and parking of surrounding areas, including Suburban Residential and Highway Commercial areas.
- Protect road system investments and ensure efficient use of the road system by giving high priority to operational maintenance, safety improvements, and capacity improvements that are cost-effective and improve the level of service.

Goal 2: Promote the development of multimodal transportation network that creates walk friendly infrastructure.

- Expanded to be more general with multiple modes

- **Maintain a pedestrian friendly environment. Construct and maintain facilities, services, and programs that encourage walking.**
 - Updated to reflect the improvements that have been made to date, while continuing to pursue.
- Educate the general public on the importance of the sidewalk and bikeway system and its safe use.

Goal 3: Promote bicycling for commuters and recreational riders

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and between local destinations, including public facilities, schools, parks, open space, employment districts, and shopping centers.
- Promote bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation. **Continue to pursue partnerships and programs that promote bicycling and access to equipment.**
 - Updated to reference existing programs such as the City Hall bike loan program.
- Maintain existing trails and bike routes.

Goal 4: Maintain, expand and enhance the transit system.

- **Work with local and regional transit and para-transit organizations to expand and improve service.**
 - Updated to include all local and regional organizations.
- **Promote rideshare transportation options within Grand Rapids.**
 - Added in response to Steering Committee input about the need for rideshare for both residents and visitors.
- Consider strategic investments or pilot programs to test alternatives to existing transit systems.
- Consider transportation criteria for standards in land use regulations.

Goal 5: Provide an airport that safely and efficiently meets local and regional demands.

- Guide future airport development so that it will satisfy aviation demand.
- Support airport economic development activities.
- Create infill development around the airport that is compatible with airport use.

Goal 6: Promote safe and efficient rail service to Grand Rapids

- Protect the existing railroad system and encourage improvements that could benefit potential industrial development.
- **Continue to work with BNSF and rail users to integrate rail operations with the rest of the City's transportation infrastructure. Recent efforts have included at-grade crossing improvements allowing for the implementation of a quiet zone (no train horn) and increase in rail speed.**
 - Updated to reflect recent efforts.

Public Infrastructure Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Provide cost effective and quality City services.

- Sustainably operate and maintain drinking water infrastructure and facilities.
- Sustain operated and maintain wastewater collection and treatment facilities.
- Sustainably operate and maintain the storm sewer utility and the gray and natural infrastructure components of the stormwater system.
- Sustainably operate and maintain Grand Rapids energy system.
- **Actively plan and participate in technology infrastructure, including access to broadband.**
 - Updated statement to include be more active in planning and add notation of broadband.

Goal 2: Plan for expansion of public utilities to facilitate healthy and sustainable community growth.

- Design infrastructure and facilities that sustain or restore natural systems.
- Ensure adequate service for future business and residential demand without degrading or diminishing service to existing users.
- Use technology enhancements where practical and appropriate to support growth.

- Establish criteria for prioritizing projects in the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
- Maintain and enhance open and on-going dialogue in the community.
- Maintain and enhance open and on-going cooperative efforts with the other governments, public sector utilities, utility commissions, and community organizations.
- Enhance and expand access to communications and information networks

Community Services Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Efficient use of public asset in providing services.

- Protect the public interest through fiscally responsible practices.
- Sustain critical City operations that contribute to quality of life.

Goal 2: Ensure access to a quality education.

- Updated general language
- Ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate educational infrastructure.
- Continue and enhance working relationships between city staff and the school district.
- Support and promote activities to further early childhood education.
- Improve opportunities and quality of continuing education
- Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within the community.

Goal 3: Provide services to protect public health, safety and general welfare.

- Continue to administer building and fire code programs and regulations.
- Continue to provide services that enhance the general welfare.
- Clearly tie regulations, programs and other services to health, safety and general welfare goals.
- Periodically review regulations and programs for effectiveness.

Goal 4: Keep Grand Rapids safe by collaborating and supporting local and regional first responders and emergency management staff.

- **Promote community education and personal safety.**
- **Commitment to inter-agency cooperation.**
- **Remain responsive to the changing needs of the community and quality of life issues.**
- **Evaluate facilities, equipment and technology usage for emergency responders.**