

Introduction

Public infrastructure and services include the components that make Grand Rapids a safe, enjoyable, and vibrant place to be. The infrastructure system includes public utilities that are utilized by residences and business and emergency services. Public services include programs and facilities that are provided to residents and visitors to enrich their day-to-day lives, including the library, schools, and parks and recreation.

This chapter provides an inventory and description of the publicly-owned infrastructure and services in Grand Rapids. The intent and overall description of these components has experienced minor changes from the 2011 Comprehensive Plan; therefore, many components of this chapter are consistent with the 2011 plan.

Departments and Commissions

The organizational structure of the city's departments and commissions that manage city infrastructure and services has experienced little change in the last ten years. There are four entities that are engaged with overseeing the city's utilities and services:

- **Public Utilities Commission** – The PUC consists of five members that are appointed by the City Council but have independent authority from the Council. The PUC oversees electric, distribution; water production, treatment, transmission and distribution; and wastewater collection and treatment for the City of Grand Rapids. The PUC also provides electric, wholesale water and wastewater treatment services to the City of La Prairie, wastewater treatment services to the City of Cohasset, water and wastewater services to Itasca Community College, and electric power distribution to select rural areas.
- **Public Works Department** – Public Works has responsibility for the maintenance and administration of most city transportation, parks, and storm sewer infrastructure, along with streetlights.
- **City Engineer** – The City Engineering is responsible for capital improvements and long-term planning for facilities and utilities.
- **Community Development Department** – Community Development provides a number of services in long-range planning, safety enforcement, and economic development. Many of the policy and regulatory tools that are used to implement the Comprehensive Plan are managed by the Community Development Department, including zoning, subdivision, and economic development. The department is currently working with the Fire Chief to establish fire code enforcement within the Fire Department's roles.

Public Utilities Commission

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) manages and controls the electric distribution, water treatment and distribution and wastewater collection and treatment within Grand Rapids. The PUC works with the General Manager and utilities staff to ensure the provision of quality infrastructure services to residents and landowners.

A Strategic Business Plan 2008 -2012 was adopted by the PUC in August of 2008 to define the overarching Strategic Framework that provides broad and enduring guidance to the more focused Annual Business Plan that consists of operational goals, financial goals, and resource requirements. Similar to the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan can be referenced as the PUC is considering updates and investments to the infrastructure system.

Drinking water, wastewater, and electric utilities are publicly owned and managed by the PUC. The telephone, information services (fiber optic), cable television, and natural gas service are privately owned and managed utilities within franchises granted by the City for use of public rights-of-way.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department has responsibility for managing City-owned buildings, facilities, and infrastructure. The Department’s management responsibilities include:

- Road rights-of-way (City/County/ MnDOT)
- Building and facilities maintenance
- Cemetery maintenance
- Storm sewer maintenance
- Fleet maintenance
- Central Business District Maintenance
- Snow and ice control
- Park maintenance
- Traffic Control
- Athletic field maintenance

The Public Works Department also supports inter- and intra-governmental units such as:

- Independent School District 318
- Other City departments (e.g., library)
- Itasca County
- State of Minnesota

City Engineer

The City Engineer is responsible for planning for and implementing capital projects. Responsibilities include:

- Road and street improvements, including adding capacity, improving safety, and reconstruction.
- Utility improvements, such as building new or rebuilding existing stormwater management facilities, wastewater, and water mains.
- Planning for new or improvements to trails and sidewalks.
- Rail crossing safety projects and working with railroad companies (which are independent of the City).
- Managing the City’s Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Capital improvement projects such as new buildings or major reconstruction or remodeling.
- Designing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in public facilities and lands.
- Managing the City’s MPCA Stormwater Permit (MS4 Permit)

Community Development Department

The Community Development Department works with residents, businesses, developers and other private and public entities to promote a safe, desirable and economically viable environment for the citizens and businesses of Grand Rapids. The services provided by the Community Development Department can be broadly categorized into three general areas:

- **Economic Development:** The Director of Community Development serves as the point of contact and staff support for the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority. The Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority (GREDA) is a public body governed by Minnesota Statute and Enabling

Resolutions enacted by the City Council of the City of Grand Rapids. The mission of GREDA is to promote the growth of the Grand Rapids economy through efforts focused on business recruitment and attraction, and business retention and expansion.

- Long Range Community Planning and Zoning: Planning in the City of Grand Rapids is centered on a Comprehensive Plan and specific zoning and subdivisions ordinances that execute the Comprehensive Plan. The focus of these ordinances is to provide for orderly development and redevelopment in the City. The Director of Community Development serves as the zoning administrator and staff support for the Grand Rapids Planning Commission.
- Building and Property Maintenance Code: Building Safety Division staff review building plans and permit applications, issues building permits, and conducts a wide range of field inspections. The Community Development staff continue to work with the Fire Department regarding inspection and enforcement responsibilities.

Public Services

Library

The Grand Rapids Area Library is a welcoming place that builds an informed, engaged and enlightened community by helping children develop a love of reading, supporting lifelong learning, connecting individuals, and enriching leisure time.

The Library is located downtown on the north bank of the Mississippi River at 140 NE 2nd St – between the Blandin Foundation and KAXE. Constructed in 2000 – key features of the 26,500 square foot facility include ample parking, community meeting rooms, designated study spaces, and extraordinary views of the Mississippi River.

Library materials, services, and programs are an important community resource for all ages. As of 2018, the Grand Rapids Library held 64,914 books and magazines, 4,645 DVDs, 3,468 audio items, and 181 print magazine and newspaper subscriptions in the collection. An additional 30,998 downloadable eBooks, audio books and magazines are available through the library’s web site. Circulation for the library in 2018 was 180,169 items, along with 16,650 items borrow from other libraries. The library also answered 11,586 reference queries in 2018.

The library offers entertaining and informative programs for adults, teens and children – including regular story times for small children. In 2018, 11,243 children and adults attended 378 library programs.

In 2018, a total of 128,006 people visited the Grand Rapids Area Library during 2,594 hours of operation. A total of 11,086 residents throughout the region held library cards throughout the year and were provided a value of \$3,256,136 from the library through resources, programming, and computer use. The community meeting rooms within the library were used to support 530 community meetings or programs throughout 2018.

The Library offers a wide range of materials and resources for children, teens, and adults including:

Resource	2018 Use/Availability
Books in hardcover, paperback or large print	64,914 materials available
Computers with internet access and wireless internet access	14,772 sessions of computer use
DVDs	4,645 materials available
Books and music on CD	3,468 materials available
Interlibrary Loan Service	16,650 materials borrowed from other libraries
Online resources	30,998 downloadable materials available

- Books in hardcover, paperback, or large print – 64,914 materials in 2018
- Computers with internet access and wireless internet available

School District 318

Schools within the City of Grand Rapids are part of the Independent School District 318 (ISD 318). The administrative offices are located in Grand Rapids. ISD 318 encompasses most of Itasca County, covering an area of nearly 2,000 square miles, the largest provider of public education in the county encompassing providing educational opportunities at 14 learning sites. The district serves the communities of Balsam, Bigfork, Cohasset, Effie, Grand Rapids, Squaw Lake, Togo, Warba and Wawina. Within Grand Rapids there are 3 elementary schools (Forest Lake, Murphy, and Southwest), one middle school, built in 2003 (Robert J. Elkington), and one high school (Grand Rapids High School).

A referendum was passed in 2018 for \$68.9 million to construct two new elementary schools and renovations to Cohasset Elementary. The two new elementary schools are located within the City of Grand Rapids and will include the new West School and East School. Design for the two facilities begin in late 2018, with construction starting in 2019. The projects are expected to be completed prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Post-Secondary Education

Itasca Community College (ICC) is located on the eastern edge of the city limits of Grand Rapids. ICC is a two-year public college offering a wide variety of programs and courses. ICC has a strong reputation for its associate arts degree which allows students to complete their first two years of a four-year degree. ICC is also nationally recognized for their engineering program which leads into an opportunity to complete a four-year degree through the Iron Range Engineering program. Also, ICC has quality programs in nursing, natural resources, psychology, class act teacher preparation, early childhood and customized training, among others. The school enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year was approximately 1,400 students. ICC is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system which is comprised of 32 state universities and community and technical colleges serving the higher education needs of Minnesota.

Parks and Recreation

Grand Rapids boasts over 200 acres of public parks and nearly 50 miles of City trails for public use. Residents and visitors alike prize the variety of year-round recreational activities these parks and trails provide. [Figure 9.1](#) illustrates the location of existing parks in the city. In 2014, the Parks and Recreation Department developed a Parks and Trails Master Plan to provide strategic direction for the future of the park's system. The plan highlights the system's future direction, the existing system and implementation actions for the future. As identified within the plan, a total of 14 parks and facilities were identified under Grand Rapids' ownership, along with one County and two private parks. Additionally, nine neighborhood parks and three school district playgrounds contribute to the recreation infrastructure.

In addition to parks and trails, Grand Rapids has significant areas of protected forest land within its borders. In 2018, over 3,300 acres of forested land, shown on [Chapter 4 – Land Use](#), were identified within the city. Portions of this land are included in conservation easements which prohibit future development and preserve the land for sustainable forest management and open space use. The conservation easements were part of a larger 10,000 acre forest land preservation partnership between the State of Minnesota and the Blandin/UPM forest products company. The majority of the protected forest land is located in the northern half of the city.

Pokegama Golf Course

The Pokegama Golf Course is owned and operated by the City of Grand Rapids and is located in the southwest quadrant of the City. The 18 hole course provides views of Pokegama Lake and amenities for all groups to enjoy. These amenities include, 18 holes, driving range, golf lessons, lounge, roofed outdoor patio, Pokegama Grill, boat docking, electric golf carts, and two short game ranges.

Emergency Services

Police

The role of law enforcement protection is to ensure public safety through the protection of people and their property. Fair and effective law enforcement has the outcome of enhancing the quality of life within a community. Furthermore, the perception of a low crime rate and an adequately funded and efficient law enforcement service can help make a community an attractive place for businesses and families to locate. The mission of the City of Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) is to keep the community safe through service, education and enforcement. The police station is located in City Hall.

The annexation of Grand Rapids Township increased both population and service territory; the geographic area of the City increased by 194%. The GRPD has 20 full-time licensed peace officers. This includes: one Chief of Police, one Assistant Chief, one Investigative Sergeant, four Patrol Sergeants, two Investigators, nine Patrol Officers, Canine and two School Resource Officers. In addition to the sworn officers, GRPD includes one Community Service Officer, three Administrative Assistants, 7 Hospital Security Officers and is augmented by 13 volunteer Police Reserve Officers. In addition, the GRPD has mutual-aid agreements with every law enforcement agency within Itasca County.

Fire

Adequate fire protection is an essential service within any community, often saving lives and property. Manpower, equipment, and a good emergency response system are important for both current Grand Rapids resident and for prospective residents and businesses. The City of Grand Rapids Fire Department (GRFD) provides fire protection to the greater Grand Rapids area, including the City of La Prairie, and the townships of Trout Lake, Arbo, Blackberry, Harris, Splithand, Wabana and the unorganized townships. The GRFD no longer serves Wildwood Township, now covered by the Hill City Fire Department, nor the area east of the Prairie River, now covered by the Coleraine Fire Department. A Full-Time Fire Chief, Assistant Chief and Capitan serve as the leadership for the GRFP. The department is responsible for fire safety and prevention, fire inspections, disaster preparedness and burning permits.

EMS

Like fire protection, emergency medical response is an essential service within any community. The ambulance provider is Meds-1, the first rural, non-urban, advanced-life support (ALS) provider in northern Minnesota. Meds-1 is located in the northwest quadrant of the city.

The primary service area (PSA) for Meds-1 is roughly the 1,028 square miles. The PSA is designated by the Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Board and includes portions of both Aitkin and Itasca County. Meds-1 also has mutual aid agreements with some neighboring communities. Primary funding for Meds-1 comes from Medicare Part B, which helps pay for medical services such as physicians, ambulance services, outpatient therapy and other professional services. Meds-1 draws an additional subsidy from Aitkin county.

Meds-1 also provides event stand-by and medical support within the service area. Emergency medical standby services are available for a fee. There is no fee charged for standby at the annual Itasca County Fair, SWAT callouts or at the scene of structural fires.

Public Infrastructure

Right-of-Way

Road right-of-way maintenance includes street sweeping, storm sewer maintenance, pothole patching, tree trimming, and boulevard maintenance such as sidewalks, general mowing and trail maintenance. The Public Works Department maintains approximately 100 miles of roads throughout Grand Rapids. The city's snow and ice control policy is available on the city's website. Transportation planning, including implementation of the "Complete Streets" policies are led by the City Engineer and discussed at greater length in the Transportation section. Maps showing the City's road network are also provided in the Transportation section.

Facilities and Maintenance

The Facilities Maintenance Division within Public Works was created to ensure that the city buildings are maintained and repaired. The division ensures cost-effectiveness and that both the exterior and the interior of city buildings are kept in good condition. Some of the buildings maintained are:

- IRA Civic Center
- Fire Hall
- Central School
- City Hall
- Pokegama Golf Course clubhouse
- Grand Rapids Sports Complex structures (concession/washrooms)
- Library
- Four warming houses
- Airport terminal

The Division also manages some other non-City public buildings, such as school district buildings.

Cemeteries

As of January 1, 2010, the City assumed the responsibility of ownership and maintenance of the Itasca Calvary and Old Soldiers Lane cemeteries. Old Soldiers Lane Cemetery was the first cemetery in the township and the last burial was on April 9, 1971. There will be no more burials at this facility.

Itasca Calvary Cemetery was established at the turn of the 20th Century. The cemetery covers 40 acres and has approximately 9,213 burials with another 3,228 sites purchased. Currently, 1,011 platted sites are available for purchase and approximately 15 acres of the 40 acres is undeveloped. The facility sees an average of eighty burials per year.

Electric System

Grand Rapids has a municipally owned and operated electric utility that is managed by the Grand Rapids Public Utility Commission. The electric utility provides electric distribution service to all Grand Rapids residents and businesses, with the exception of businesses that have a direct high-voltage connection to Minnesota Power, the regional investor-owned electric utility. [Figure 9.1](#) shows the local electric distribution and transmission system and substations. Regional transmission lines owned by Minnesota Power cross the community but are not shown in [Figure 9.1](#). The city should collaborate with Minnesota Power and other local/regional electric utilities regarding long-range planning and development considerations.

As can be noted in [Figure 9.1](#), the electric system serves a wider area than the water/wastewater system. With the annexation of Grand Rapids Township, the city now has a number of homes and businesses that

are not served by the municipal electric utility. These properties will be merged into the municipal utility's service area over time, as the utility acquires the distribution lines on city rights-of-way and folds these customers into the municipal customer base.

The City continues to work with the PUC to assess and make adjustments to the electric systems to ensure efficiency through new developments and city facilities.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service is offered through much of the urban service area by a private regulated utility, Minnesota Energy Resources – Northern Minnesota Utilities (MER-NMU). MER-NMU was purchased by Integrys Energy Group in 2006. The change in ownership has not changed the service received by city residents or businesses. The City of Cohasset also owns and operates a natural gas system that serves properties located on County Highways 76 and 23 on the western side of Grand Rapids.

Telecommunications and Information Systems

Grand Rapids has a state of the art communications network. The city is part of the Paul Bunyan Telephone Cooperative service territory, providing local regulated telephone service. A variety of companies, including MediaCom and Qwest, offer alternative local phone and competitive information services, such as internet access, long distance service, and video services. 2005 saw expansion begin to Grand Rapids and by 2007, Paul Bunyan's first all fiber optic network expansion project was completed. All locations within the City of Grand Rapids now have services available and can join the cooperative with service provided over one of the first all fiber optic networks in the state.

Wastewater Infrastructure

The wastewater service area and existing infrastructure is shown in [Figure 9.3](#), which has remained relatively consistent from the 2011 plan. Wastewater collection and treatment services are provided to approximately 3,186 city customers and 26 rural customers. The PUC also provides treatment to one industrial customer, Blandin Paper, Itasca Community College and the neighboring communities of La Prairie and Cohasset.

The wastewater collection system within Grand Rapids is made up of 9 sewage lift stations and 57 miles of sewer main, included both forced and gravity systems. Treatment facilities consist of the Industrial Screening/Pumping Station, the Industrial Treatment Plant, and the Secondary Treatment Plant. These facilities treat an average of 7.5 million gallons of waste effluent per day, 6.0 million gallons per day from UPM/Blandin Paper Company, and 1.5 million gallons per day from domestic users.

The City's centralized wastewater infrastructure is part of the City's public infrastructure system but has critical relationships to the City's natural infrastructure and economic infrastructure. As discussed in [Chapter 7 – Natural Resources](#), the City's rural areas (outside the service boundary) rely on soils to treat wastewater. Service extensions outside the existing service boundaries are much more costly when topography will not allow for use of gravity systems or requires river crossings. The interaction of these variables affects the City's ability to cost-effectively develop new industrial or residential areas to capture economic opportunities and respond to housing demand.

Stormwater Infrastructure

The stormwater system includes natural and constructed stormwater elements. The constructed system is shown in [Figure 9.4](#) and includes sewer main, ditches, culverts, detention ponds, treatment units, infiltration ponds, and rain gardens all under the City's jurisdiction and maintenance. Natural systems include soils that

allow for infiltration, vegetation that disperses and absorbs rainwater (including the urban forest), and natural drainage, both surface and subsurface.

The City operates its storm sewer system under an Authorization to Discharge Storm Water Associated with MS4 under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Disposal System Permit Program with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This permit must be reviewed and renewed on a regular basis with the MPCA to ensure compliance. One of the requirements of the current permit required the city to implement a Storm Water Protection Ordinance. In order to fund the requirements of the MPCA permit, maintain the storm sewer system, and eliminate special assessments for the reconstruction of Drinking Water Infrastructure storm sewer systems, the City created a Storm Water Utility. The utility charges a monthly fee based on impervious areas and typical run-off coefficients. The utility also provides storm water credits for onsite Best Management Practices such as detention/retention ponds, rain gardens, and green/timber spaces.

Figure 9.4 shows the extent of the stormwater conveyance system and location of best management practices in the city. The stormwater conveyance system extends outside the boundaries of the water and sewer service boundary.

Drinking Water Infrastructure

The City's centralized drinking water system is comprised of water supply wells, treatment facilities, pumping stations, water storage tanks, and water delivery mains. The PUC provides water for 3,261 city customers, 5 rural customers, the City of LaPrairie, and the Itasca Community College. Water for Grand Rapids comes from five primary wells with a combined pumping capacity of 1,600 to 2,500 gallons per minute. The PUC owns one water treatment facility that is capable of treating 2.25 million gallons of water per day. Treated water is stored in a 0.5 million gallon underground water reservoir and pumped to the distribution system with high service pumps. The distribution system contains three 0.5 million gallon elevated storage reservoirs and 64 miles of cast and ductile iron distribution mains consisting mostly of 6", 8" and 12" pipe.

The water supply system has experienced limited growth since the 2011 plan, primarily to include additional residential service connections. The service area has also remained consistent and is shown in **Figure 9.5**. This figure also shows other elements of the drinking water infrastructure system, including locations of wells (both public and private), minor watersheds and source water vulnerability areas.

The Wellhead Protection program defined by the Minnesota Department of Health, is an important consideration for public water supplies across Minnesota. A number of variables were used in a hydrologic model to predict how, for instance, a hazardous material spill could result in contamination of the water supply. High risk areas are those areas where surface contamination could affect the water supply fairly quickly. The high, medium, and low risk areas for those areas that can potentially affect water supply are portrayed as "vulnerability" areas. The high vulnerability areas in Grand Rapids are centered around Crystal, McKinney, and Hale lakes.

The annexation of much of Grand Rapids Township has created a large area within City boundary that is not served by the water system. Residences and businesses in these areas generally use individual private wells for water supply. The City does not have plans to extend service to these areas unless health or safety issues demand extension for existing residences, although some expansion is planned in the southwest portion of the City to improve reliability.

Goals and Objectives



As noted within Chapter 3, goals and objectives were developed for each plan element in support of the 2040 Vision and Guiding Principles. The goals and objectives defined within these chapter should be considered as public infrastructure and services decisions are considered.

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.

Goal 1: Provide cost-effective and high-quality City services. The City’s gray infrastructure of built utilities and facilities, enhanced by the City’s natural and economic infrastructure, is critical to sustaining economic stability and community health. Providing high quality services in the most efficient and sustainable manner is a primary goal of the Comprehensive Plan. Decisions of where and how to expand infrastructure capacity and upgrade services must be aligned with development objectives.

- a. **Sustainably operate and maintain drinking water infrastructure and facilities.** Protection of water supply, delivery of quality potable water, and appropriate demand-side management of water usage will help sustain the community over time.
- b. **Sustainably operate and maintain wastewater collection and treatment facilities.** Economical wastewater management should meet regulatory standards, protect surface waters, and enable sustainable economic and community development.
- c. **Sustainably operate and maintain the storm sewer utility and the gray and natural infrastructure components of the stormwater system.** Stormwater management is becoming increasingly complex in regard to regulation standards and cost management. Developing a landscape approach to stormwater management, which incorporates more permeable surfaces and natural stormwater management techniques, can help reduce these costs and improve the performance of gray infrastructure.
- d. **Sustainably operate and maintain Grand Rapids’ energy system; incorporate and expand renewables as feasible.** Sustainable energy systems need to be affordable, reliable, and efficient. In addition to traditional sources of energy, Grand Rapids has local resources that can be used for both supply and demand side initiatives that will enhance sustainable provision of energy to businesses and residents.
- e. **Actively plan and participate in technology infrastructure deployment, including access to broadband and cellular communication networks.** Grand Rapids is a leader in providing broadband information services and should continue to seek opportunities for enhancing service to residents and businesses.

Goal 2: Plan for expansion of public utilities to facilitate healthy and sustainable community growth. Some expansion is likely to be needed over the next 20 years in order to support new development. Expansion decisions should meet the triple bottom line of sustaining the local economy, environment, and community fabric.

- a. **Design infrastructure and facilities that sustain or restore natural systems.** Natural and gray infrastructure should be designed to be complementary.
- b. **Ensure adequate service for future business and residential demand without degrading or diminishing service to existing users.** Evaluate the short and long-term needs for the development increment against the existing and future capacity of public infrastructure.
- c. **Expand and upgrade technology infrastructure where practical and appropriate to support growth.** For example, place new electrical systems underground, consider on-site alternatives to expensive centralized service extensions such as community septic systems, invest in demand-management.

- d. **Establish criteria for prioritizing public infrastructure projects in the City’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).** The community should understand why priorities are set and the rationale behind decision.
- e. Maintain and enhance open and ongoing dialogue in the community. To ensure quality service, information needs to flow to and from utilities and service customers.
- f. **Maintain and enhance open and ongoing cooperative efforts with other governments, public sector utilities, utility commissions, and community organizations.** Grand Rapids’ utility serves surrounding communities and the City is similarly served by the private sector. Coordinating amongst these providers is imperative to deliver efficient service.
- g. **Enhance and expand access to communications and information networks.** Information networks are a critical component of economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Goal 3: Make efficient use of public assets in providing services. Using public assets efficiently is a primary component of the Comprehensive Plan. The City should continue to evaluate public investments for their cost efficiency and set clear criteria to guide investment decisions.

- a. **Protect the public interest through fiscally responsible practices.** Develop a decision-making and policy framework for public expenditures that reflects a business plan format.
- b. **Sustain critical City operations that contribute to quality of life.** Sustaining basic public assets requires investment and maintenance.

Goal 4: Ensure access to a quality education. The goals of ensuring economic opportunity and offering a high quality of life are directly linked to educational opportunity. The City supports providing educational opportunities for all residents.

- a. **Ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate educational infrastructure.** Educational infrastructure includes both human and physical capital; infrastructure includes buildings, facilities, programs, and high-quality teachers and administrators.
- b. **Continue and enhance working relationships between city staff and the school district.** Planning and investment between City and School District need to be coordinated.
- c. **Support and promote activities to further early childhood education.** Early childhood education helps set the foundation for life.
- d. **Improve opportunities and quality of continuing education.** Determine the needs of continuing education in the community and identify actions/activities the City could undertake to improve the reach and quality of continuing education.
- e. **Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within the community.** Education is not just about classrooms but having opportunities to apply learning in the community. Cultural and recreational activities help play that role.

Goal 5: Provide services to protect public health, safety, and general welfare. Public health, safety and general welfare are the fundamental reasons that cities are granted regulatory authority and oversight. City regulation, including administration of the building and fire codes, land use planning and implementation of land use policies, and oversight of nuisances should improve and protect health, safety and general welfare.

- a. **Continue to administer building and fire code programs and regulations.** Building and fire codes ensure buildings are safe for families, employees, and patrons.
- b. **Continue to provide services that enhance the general welfare.** The City library, recreational programs, and other quality of life services are important for sustaining the community.
- c. **Clearly tie regulations, programs, and other services to health, safety, and general welfare goals.** Regulation is a tool to achieve Comprehensive Plan goals. Clearly demonstrating the link between Plan

goals and regulatory efforts will make for better administrative decisions and clarify regulatory purpose.

- d. **Periodically review regulations and programs for effectiveness.** Assess whether regulations and programs are achieving the desired goals, and modify, replace, or eliminate regulatory or programmatic efforts that do not advance City goals.
- e. **Provide consistent, standardized, and timely municipal communications to city residents.** Use a multifaceted, coordinated communication program to achieve a broad reach, support community dialogue, share critical information, and build momentum for Plan implementation.

Goal 6: Keep Grand Rapids safe by collaborating with and supporting local and regional first responders and emergency management staff. Public safety is fundamental to a high quality of life for residents, and visitor alike. The community will support first responders and safety professionals to provide a safe and welcoming community.

- a. **Promote community education and personal safety.** Continue community outreach and education campaigns for police, firefighters, and EMS.
- b. **Remain committed to inter-agency cooperation.** Grand Rapids is not only the regional economic center, it provides services to both City residents and residents and businesses in nearby communities. Capturing opportunities for inter-agency cooperation makes better use of limited funding, reduces upward pressure on taxes and fees, and generally provides for better service.
- c. **Remain responsive to the changing needs of the community and quality of life issues.** Continue to evaluate level of service on a periodic basis. Risk assessments identify critical gaps and emerging threats.
- d. **Evaluate facilities, equipment, and technology usage for emergency responders.** Emergency responders rely on functional facilities and advancing technology to capably perform their critical role in the community.

Implementation Strategies



The implementation strategies defined within the following pages provide specific actions and measures that the City can deploy to meet the goals and objectives of this chapter. The strategies identified in the following table should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the City continues to take action towards its desired future.

Additionally, this list should be updated and modified as strategies are accomplished

Implementation Strategy –
Defined action or measure that the city will work towards to achieve the goals and vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
<p>Energy Infrastructure</p>	<p>Continue to explore opportunities to use waste heat from industrial operations in a district energy system or related system, including the Blandin Foundation and the KAXE building.</p> <p>Continue to adopt local government best practices for improving energy efficiency in public buildings, encouraging private sector investment in local renewable energy, bio-fuels, and energy efficiency resources, and improving Grand Rapid’s energy sustainability. Take advantage of technical and informational assistance for best practices through programs such as Minnesota GreenStep Cities, Star Community Index, U.S Green Building Council standards, or similar programs.</p>	<p>Investigate solar energy potential for city facilities and the wind energy installation in the City’s rural areas.</p> <p>Investigate the use of waste heat or geothermal technology to heat public facilities.</p> <p>Monitor and expand the city’s energy infrastructure to provide quality service to residents.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>
<p>Utility Services</p>	<p>Continue to engage the public in dialogue on public utility planning and service assessment. Develop an outreach/education strategy to promote better understanding of improvement projects and their relationship to quality of life and the greater good of the community.</p> <p>Continue to provide customer service training to City and Public Utility staff.</p>	<p>Ensure that long range utility service planning and land use planning efforts work together to provide goals and guidance that work together.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>
<p>Communication and Technology</p>	<p>Continue to monitor changing trends and needs.</p>	<p>Take into account proven technology and competitiveness when reviewing, renewing, or assigning franchises.</p> <p>Encourage partnerships among appropriate parties that provide the most effective, lowest cost communication services</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
<p>Water Infrastructure</p>	<p>Provide efficient water service to Grand Rapids residents, business, and visitors.</p>	<p>Recognize and address the development and land use implications of the Drinking Water Vulnerability Areas when reviewing development proposals. Consider a formal process for mitigating risk for development in the Drinking Water High Vulnerability area.</p> <p>Consider demand-side management programs to sustain Grand Rapids' drinking water supply sources.</p> <p>Monitor and expand the city's water infrastructure to provide quality service to residents.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>
<p>Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure</p>	<p>Provide efficient sanitary sewer service to Grand Rapids residents, business, and visitors.</p>	<p>Exceed (within cost constraints) State and Federal effluent discharge standards for wastewater treatment systems.</p> <p>Maintain awareness of new wastewater treatment technology, including systems applicable in rural areas of the City.</p> <p>Monitor and expand the city's sanitary sewer infrastructure to provide quality service to residents.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
<p>Storm and Surface Water Infrastructure</p>	<p>Provide efficient storm and surface water management for Grand Rapids residents, business, and visitors and limits impacts to the area’s natural infrastructure.</p>	<p>Participate in regulatory processes to address impaired waters and continue to incorporate a range of best management practices in new developments and in public rights-of-way during street and trail construction.</p> <p>Monitor and expand the city’s storm and surface water infrastructure to provide quality service to residents.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>
<p>Infrastructure Expansion and Maintenance</p>	<p>Continue to monitor the performance and level of service to identify maintenance and expansion needs of all systems.</p>	<p>Identify potential environmental and natural resource conflicts concerning new facilities or upgrades to existing facilities prior to design phase. Consider criteria that identify and recognize environmental constraints, as described in the natural infrastructure section.</p> <p>Establish criteria and adopt and maintain an infrastructure plan as a part of the City Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) and the GRPUC CIP.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids Public Utilities</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Quality Facilities	Use a variety of tools in investment and management decisions to meet fiscal responsibility goals, including fiscal impact analysis, cost-revenue analysis, lifecycle cost-benefit analysis, impact on fees, and capital budgeting analysis.	<p>Use business planning procedures for facilities management to place responsibility and accountability on department heads for efficient budget expenditures, all under the guidance of the City Council or appropriate Commission or Board.</p> <p>Recognize that fiscally self-sustaining facilities and programs should be a management goal, but that some facilities and programs contribute substantially to or are essential to maintaining quality of life even if operations do not pay for themselves. Consider creating qualitative and quantitative criteria for measuring efficiency and investment priorities.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Parks and Recreation, Community Development</p> <p>Secondary: Engineering, Administration</p>
Grand Rapids Area Library	Continue to provide quality library services to Grand Rapids and Itasca County.	Pursue an equitable funding scenario for the library based on use statistics from the City of Grand Rapids and Itasca County.	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Library Board, Library Director</p> <p>Secondary: City Council, City Administrator</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Pokegama Golf Course	<p>Continue to work with School District 318 and St. Joes to bring Golf in Schools program to them. Focus is primarily, but not strictly, on grades K-5. Continue to work with Visit Grand Rapids & all area lodging facilities to promote golf/lodging business.</p> <p>Continue to invest in Pokegama Golf Course equipment upgrades/replacements, course improvements, and clubhouse maintenance. Continue to offer high quality instructional programs for all ages/caliber of students, with special emphasis on expanded junior opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to offer a variety of leagues and events for all ages/gender/caliber of golfers.</p> <p>Continue welcoming the community to view/use Pokegama Golf Course as a venue for a large variety of community/private events including charity fundraisers, weddings, birthday parties, retirement parties, and life celebration events.</p>	<p>Work with Minnesota PGA to access grant opportunities for the enhancement of the Golf in Schools programs and Pokegama Golf Course junior golf program.</p>	<p>Research creating offseason simulator/lesson facilities in either current clubhouse or new detached facility.</p>	<p>Primary: Pokegama Golf Course</p>
Central School	<p>Promote event use and tenant occupancy that funds operation and contributes to the vitality of downtown.</p>	<p>Consider funding alternatives for deferred capital upgrade.</p>	<p>Complete capital upgrades</p>	<p>Primary: Community Development</p> <p>Secondary: City Council, City Administrator</p>
Civic Center	<p>Ensure the future of the civic center through necessary capital improvements.</p>	<p>Replace the existing roof and refrigeration system of the West Venue.</p> <p>Consider ADA improvements when construction occurs.</p>	<p>Same as Short Term Actions</p>	<p>Primary: Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Secondary: City Council, City Administrator</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Quality Services	<p>Continue to look for efficiencies in managing regulatory processes to ensure prompt response to reasonable requests.</p> <p>Continue to support quality-of-life services including schools, library, and recreational activities. Build partnerships with private and public entities to provides programs and services more cost effectively while finding opportunities to enhance services.</p>	<p>Emphasize a service orientation in all interactions with the public and train City staff in the goals that programs and regulation should achieve.</p> <p>Engage the public through long range planning efforts and decision making processes.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: All Departments</p> <p>Secondary: All Commissions</p>
Collaborate	<p>Continue to collaborate with the Grand Rapids School District on long range and service planning.</p> <p>Continue to manage facilities to minimize lifecycle costs and to improve the learning environment.</p> <p>Involve school district staff in planning efforts and participate in district planning initiatives.</p>	<p>Develop an understanding of current and future school district infrastructure needs that recognizes temporary “bubbles” in the number school age children. Consider intergovernmental solutions to long-term, infrastructural, investments.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids School District, All Departments</p> <p>Secondary: All Commissions</p>
Connected Community	<p>Continue to pursue safe routes to school goals and implementation actions.</p>	<p>Continue to explore improvements and identify potential funding sources and partners.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids School District, Engineering</p> <p>Secondary: Community Development</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Community Education	Work with the Grand Rapids Schools District and other Community Education provides to provide learning options for all residents.	<p>Work with continuing education providers to determine the needs of continuing education in the community and identify any actions/activities the City could undertake to improve the quality of and opportunities for continuing education.</p> <p>Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within Grand Rapids.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Grand Rapids School District, All Departments</p> <p>Secondary: All Commissions</p>
Fire Department	Continue to provide quality fire services and safety within the community.	<p>Establish methodology for measuring level of service for fire response and capability. Review funding and staffing decisions within the context of measurable criteria, including response times and ability to address specific risks emergency risks.</p> <p>Continue to work with other city departments regarding fire code enforcement in new and existing construction.</p>	Same as Short Term Action	<p>Primary: Fire Department</p> <p>Secondary: Community Development, Engineering</p>
Service Evaluation	Continue to evaluate the service levels of all emergency services and identify opportunities for expansion.	Develop a methodology for evaluating development proposals in rural areas that addresses the impact such development will have on emergency services and the ability of emergency service systems to response to emergencies.	Same as Short Term Action	<p>Primary: Emergency Service Providers</p> <p>Secondary: Community Development, Engineering</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Police Department	Continue to provide quality police services and safety within the community.	<p>Monitor established criteria for determining what constitutes an adequate level of staffing to meet desired levels of service, including response times and visibility in the community. Periodically review officer staffing decisions within the context of the effect on measurable criteria. Continue to practice collaborative policing efforts with the community.</p> <p>Ensure public safety through meaningful traffic enforcement targeted toward areas, in which motor vehicle crashes occur, prompt response to all priority calls and preventative patrol.</p> <p>Continue to seek out opportunities to engage and collaborate with the local community.</p>	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Police Department Secondary: Community Development</p>
Hazard Mitigation	Perform hazard mitigation planning.	Continue dialogue and planning with other public and private sector entities and businesses on emergency and hazardous response planning. Create or update response plans for hazardous response to industrial and natural disasters.	Same as Short Term Actions	<p>Primary: Emergency Service Providers Secondary: Community Development</p>

Implementation Strategy	On-Going Action	Short Term Action	Long Term Action	Responsible Parties
Regional Planning	Continue to coordinate with surrounding communities on emergency service protection to maximize service coverage and minimize costs.	Same as On-Going Action	Same as On-Going Action	Primary: Emergency Service Providers Secondary: Community Development