

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

*NOTICE OF MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION*



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

Meeting Agenda Full Detail

Thursday, October 4, 2012

4:00 PM

Conference Room 2A

Planning Commission

*COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL - 420 N. Pokegama Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744*

Call To Order**Call of Roll**

Setting of Agenda - This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an agenda item by a majority vote of the Commissioners present.

Approval of Minutes

12-0634 Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.

Attachments: Draft Planning Commission-Minutes-Sept 6 2012

Public Input

Individuals may address the Planning Commission about any non public hearing item or any item not included on the Regular Meeting Agenda. Speakers are requested to come to the podium, state their name and address for the record and limit their remarks to three (3) minutes.

Miscellaneous\Updates

12-0635 Review of Land Use Objectives within Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments: Memo and goal list
Comprehensive Plan-Chapter 4 -3

Adjourn

*NEXT REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:
Thursday, November 1, 2012*



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 12-0634 **Version:** 1 **Name:** Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.

Type: Minutes **Status:** Approval of Minutes

File created: 9/27/2012 **In control:** Planning Commission

On agenda: 10/4/2012 **Final action:**

Title: Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: [Draft Planning Commission-Minutes-Sept 6 2012](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/4/2012	1	Planning Commission		

Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.

Background Information:

See attached draft minutes.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

NOTICE OF MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes - Final Planning Commission

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL - 420 N. Pokegama Ave.
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Thursday, September 6, 2012

4:00 PM

Council Chambers

Call To Order

Call of Roll

Present 7 - Commissioner Lee Anderson, Commissioner Julie Fedje-Johnston, Commissioner Shane McKellep, Commissioner Ron Niemala, Chairperson Michael Twite, Commissioner Mark Gothard, and Commissioner Marn Flicker

Setting of Agenda - This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an agenda item by a majority vote of the Commissioners present.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, Second by Commissioner Flicker to approve the agenda as presented. The following voted in favor thereof: Gothard, Flicker, Anderson, Twite, Fedje-Johnston, McKellep, Niemala. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Approve the minutes of the June 7, 2012, 4:00 pm regular meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, Second by Commissioner McKellep to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2012 regular meeting. The following voted in favor thereof: Gothard, Anderson, Twite, Fedje-Johnston, McKellep, Niemala, Flicker. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Public Hearings

Conduct a public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding a request to amend the approved Conditional Use Permit granted to Teridon Properties, LLP. d.b.a. L & M Fleet Supply in September 2008.

Motion by Commissioner Fedje-Johnston, Second by Commissioner Anderson to open the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Niemala, McKellep, Fedje-Johnston, Twite, Anderson, Flicker, Gothard. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Ms. Holly Quigg provided correspondence opposing the amendment request from L&M Supply.

Eric Andersen, L&M Supply would like to hear the concerns expressed by Holly Quigg. Addressing Ms. Quiggs concerns Mr. Andersen stated that there will be visibility at least 100 feet prior to the intersection so that is not a concern. As for the utilization of space L&M is currently at capacity and is in need of an over flow building.

Motion by Commissioner Flicker, Second by Commissioner Anderson to close the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Gothard, Flicker, Anderson, Twite, Fedje-Johnston, McKellep, Niemala. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding a request to amend the approved Conditional Use Permit granted to Teridon Properties, LLP. d.b.a. L & M Fleet Supply in September 2008.

Motion by Commissioner Niemala second by Commissioner Anderson that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public's best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby recommend that the City Council grant the following amendment to the Conditional Use Permit, approved under City Resolution No. 08-119, to TeriDon Properties, L.L.P., for the property legally described within the petition attachments:

- **For the placement of one 20' X 112' storage building as described within the CUP application.**

Commissioner Niemala read his considerations for the record.

1. Will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare.

No, it will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare.

2. Will not cause undue traffic congestion or hazards and will not result in a parking shortage.

No, adequate visibility for entry and exit traffic.

3. Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment or result in a decrease in value of other property in the area.

No, it is located in the GB zoning district.

4. Will not impede the orderly development of other property in the area.

No, it will not impede the orderly development of other property in the area.

5. Will not impose an excessive burden on parks and other public facilities and utilities.

No, it will not impose excessive burden on parks and other public facilities and utilities.

6. Is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Yes, it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

The following voted in favor thereof: Niemala, McKellep, Fedje-Johnston, Twite, Anderson, Flicker, Gothard. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Conduct a Public Hearing to consider a variance petition submitted by Jeff Peterson, Peterson Contracting, on behalf of Clementine Ward.

Motion by Commissioner Niemala, Second by Commissioner McKellep to open the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Niemala, McKellep, Fedje-Johnston, Twite, Anderson, Flicker, Gothard. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Jeff Peterson, Peterson Contracting applied for the variance for Clemintine Ward. Mr. Peterson worked with the truss company trying to find a way to feasiabliy rebuild the roof the proposed plan is the would be the best option. The proposed plan will not encroach the alley and there will not be any excess run off.

Motion by Commissioner Niemala, Second by Commissioner Flicker to close the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Gothard, Flicker, Anderson, Twite, Fedje-Johnston, McKellep, Niemala. Opposed: None, passed unanimously.

Consider the approval or denial of a variance petition submitted by Jeff Peterson, Peterson Contracting, on behalf of Clementine Ward.

Motion by Commissioner Niemala, second by Commisisoner Anderson that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public’s best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby grant the following variances to Clementine Ward (property owner) applied for by Jeff Peterson, d.b.a. Peterson Contracting for the property legally described as:

Lots 7-8, Block 10, Earl Addition to Grand Rapids, Itasca County, Minnesota

- **to allow a one time waiver of the requirements of Section 30-512-Table 2-A and Section 30-458(c)1 for the encroachment of a 83 sq. ft. addition to the existing home into the required 30 ft. rear yard setback area of the property, as described within the variance application submitted by Mrs. Clementine Ward and Mr. Jeff Peterson, Contractor.**

Commissioner Niemala read his considerations for the record.

1. Is this an “Area” variance rather than a “Use” variance?

This is an area variance.

2. Does the proposal put property to use in a reasonable manner?

Yes, it keeps the property residential and only enhances rather than detracts from the neighborhood.

3. Is the owner’s plight due to circumstances which are unique to the property and which are not self-created by the owner?

Yes, the storm of July 2, 2012 created the circumstances and the owner is trying to find the best practice to re-build.

4. Is the variance in harmony with the purposes and intent of the ordinance?

Yes.

5. Will the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the locality?

No, the property is R-1 and will remain R-1.

6. Is the variance consistent with the comprehensive plan?

Yes, this is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

General Business

Consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding amendments to the text of the Zoning Ordinance, which would permit the sale of automobiles within the BP/SBP (Business Park/Shoreland Business Park) zoning district.

Motion by Commissioner Fedje-Johnston, second by Commissioner Niemala that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public's best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby forward a unfavorable recommendation to the City Council regarding an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which would permit the sale of automobiles within the BP/SBP (Business Park/Shoreland Business Park) zoning district.

Commissioner Fedje-Johnston read her considerations for the record.

1. Will the change affect the character of neighborhoods?

Yes, it will change the character of the neighborhood auto sales require large parking areas with many cars.

2. Would the change foster economic growth in the community?

Yes, it will as handicap accessible cars will be purchased locally.

3. Would the proposed change be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance?

No, Business Park offers offices, limited production, small wholesale use, limited retail, training facilities. Car sales are much more high visibility.

4. Would the change be in the best interest of the general public?

Although the applicants use may have nominal impact with allowing for a use change would open the door for automobile dealers in this area which is an ill suited fit due to high traffic volume and traffic control surrounding the businesses.

5. Would the change be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?

No, the change is inconsistent, the newly zoned Business Park category was

developed to recognize the encroachment of smaller business office types into former industrial parks.

Public Input

Miscellaneous\Updates

Comprehensive Plan

Adjourn



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Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 12-0635 **Version:** 1 **Name:** Review of Land Use Objectives within Comprehensive Plan.

Type: Reports **Status:** Miscellaneous

File created: 9/27/2012 **In control:** Planning Commission

On agenda: 10/4/2012 **Final action:**

Title: Review of Land Use Objectives within Comprehensive Plan.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: [Memo and goal list](#)
[Comprehensive Plan-Chapter 4 -3](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Review of Land Use Objectives within Comprehensive Plan.

Background Information:

See attached Background information.

This process will take place in a worksession format.



Memorandum

Date: 9/27/2012

To: Planning Commission

cc: Chad Sterle, City Attorney

From: Rob Mattei, Community Development Director

RE: October 4, 2012 Meeting/Worksession: Review of Land Use Objectives within Comprehensive Plan

Please review the Future Land Use- Goals, Objectives, and Implementation portion of the Comprehensive Plan, and list 5 potential goals for the Planning Commission to address over the next year and a half.

It is the intent of the meeting that we will collectively review each Planning Commissioner's list of potential goals, and then narrow the list down to 5-6 goals, and prioritize them into a work plan for the Planning Commission to address.

If you have any questions regarding the October 4th Meeting/Worksession, give me a call or send me an email. **Please bring your Comprehensive Plan to the meeting.*

ram/EDT

Attachments

Planning Commissioner's list of potential goals

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



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.

