Chapter 5 – Goals, Objectives, Implementation

Priorities

This Chapter presents the goals, objectives, and implementation priorities for achieving the vision for Grand Rapids in 2030.

A. Introduction - The Infrastructure Approach

The Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan update uses an “infrastructural perspective” in examining the non-land-use elements of the Plan. The infrastructural approach to planning incorporates two concepts. First, it recognizes that multiple layers of systems - including built system like streets and natural systems like drainage and non-physical systems like sense of community – are all equally necessary for sustaining the well-being of the community. Second, it assumes that all systems are long-lived – that today’s actions have ramifications well into the future, frequently even beyond the planning horizon of the Comprehensive Plan.

For instance, decisions about where housing and what kind of housing will be built are frequently treated as a function of today’s market demand. Housing is, however, almost always infrastructural – the houses built tomorrow will probably still be there in 50 years. Virtually every home built will be in the community far longer than the people who choose to build it. When people move out of the community, they do not take their house with them. Therefore, the community has an interest in assuring that housing development is done in a way to sustain the community over the long run.

The same can be said for economic development decisions, decisions that impact natural systems, and decisions that affect social and community systems. The infrastructure approach requires the community to treat economic, natural, and social systems as having a past and extending indefinitely into the future. Systems, moreover, must be maintained or they will malfunction or stop functioning altogether. The goals, objectives, and implementation priorities of this Plan assume that infrastructure requires some level of community attention to maintain its function over time.

Each of the following sections is considered as an infrastructural layer of the Plan. For this reason, many elements are referred to as infrastructure. Natural resources are natural infrastructure, systems that have critical functions requiring maintenance, protection, and regular investment in order to sustain the community. Economic assets are economic infrastructure, components in a system that require protection and support. Public services, utilities, transportation, education are all community infrastructure that is integrated with other infrastructure and necessary for the community to survive.

Each of the following sections begins with a look back at what has happened in the City since the last Comprehensive Plan, and the trends that the City now faces that might be different than anticipated a decade ago. The “looking back” subsection provides an inventory of information, data, and trends that recognize the historic decisions that define the City’s current position or status, the place from which we look forward toward implementing the vision for 2030. Each section then describes that look forward, relating the Grand Rapids of today to the desired Grand Rapids of 2030. The “looking forward” subsection identifies issues, lays out goals and objectives, and recommends implementation priorities for achieving the community vision, values, and principles.
B. Demographics

The 2003 Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan included an analysis of the historic demographic changes in Grand Rapids, based on what was then recently released 2000 Census data. The community inventory for this update incorporates by reference the analysis and presentation completed in 2003, and focuses on the changes that have occurred since 2003, including current demographic forecasts. Since this comprehensive plan update is taking place at the same time as the 2010 U.S. Census, with results not available until after completion, this demographic update relies on interim surveys and estimates to assess population and household trends since 2000. These surveys and estimates were used in the Annual Estimates of City and Township Population, Households and Persons per Household, 2000 to 2008, from the State Demographic Center.

The changing demographics of Grand Rapids are affected by the City’s annexation of the majority of Grand Rapids Township. The City began an orderly annexation process with the Township in 2000, with annexations occurring at two-year intervals. The completion of this process in 2010 has tripled the physical size of the City and increased its population from approximately 7,700 in 2000 to approximately 11,000 in 2010. The new community inventory re-examines the historic population from the standpoint of the 2010 City boundaries, treating the City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Township as a single entity. However, the analysis is complicated by the fact that the area of Grand Rapids Township was not annexed in its entirety: the eastern portion was annexed into the City of Coleraine (in which approximately 600 people currently live). Combining City and Township population and household data overestimates the historic and current population of the area now within City boundaries, but provides a consistent baseline for looking at historic demographic trends and assessing future trends.

Historic Trends

According to the State Demographic Center, the combined population and number of household in Grand Rapids City and Township have increased in the past decade. Table 5-1 shows population totals for City and Township from 1980 to 2008 (estimated). Township population and City population have shifted throughout the decade primarily through annexation, with the total population remaining largely stable over time (an increase of approximately 30 people or 0.2 percent overall).

Table 5-1. Population and households, Grand Rapids City and Township, 1980 – 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Grand Rapids</td>
<td>7,934</td>
<td>7,976</td>
<td>7,764</td>
<td>9,690</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids Twp.¹</td>
<td>3,179</td>
<td>3,199</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and Township²</td>
<td>11,113</td>
<td>11,175</td>
<td>11,142</td>
<td>11,140</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5-1, while population numbers have remained largely constant, household numbers have increased significantly within the combined City and Township, by about 600 households or almost 15%. An increase in households is typical of many communities in the past several decades, due to decreasing average household size, which in turn is related to the general trends of smaller families and the aging of the population as a whole. Itasca County’s ratio of persons per household declined from 2.64 in 1990 to 2.42 in 2000. The household size in Grand Rapids is likely to be even smaller; households in the rural areas around Grand Rapids tend to have larger household sizes than those within the City, since the City provides more housing options for small households such as single individuals and seniors.

As shown in Table 5-2, population in most of the surrounding cities is estimated to have increased slightly since 2000, with the greatest increases in the cities of Cohasset and Coleraine, while population within Harris and Arbo townships declined slightly.
The age structure of the population was the primary demographic factor highlighted in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The 2003 Plan noted that both within the City and the surrounding region, the population in two age ranges – age 45-64 and age 65 and over – was growing rapidly relative to the population as a whole. This aging trend is typical of many parts of Minnesota, as the Baby Boom generation “population bulge” moves through the age structure. Figure 5-1, a population pyramid based on estimated population for Itasca County, shows a continuation of this pattern through 2010, with the largest population cohort in the 45 – 64 age range.

**Figure 5-1. Age Structure of Population in Grand Rapids Area and Itasca County, 2010**

Source: US Census Bureau and State Demographic Center

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Other relevant characteristics of the combined City’s population and housing, as measured by the 2000 census, include the following:

- The population was predominantly white; the most common other race was American Indian, with 195 people or 1.7% of the population, while 126 people, or 1.1%, identified as of two or more races.
- Approximately 10.5% of the population fell below the poverty level, as did about 8% of families.

### Table 5-3. Population and Housing Characteristics, Combined City and Township of Grand Rapids, 2000 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population under 18</td>
<td>2,796</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 65 and over</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total housing units</td>
<td>5,134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>4,884</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>3,314</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau and State Demographic Center

### Population Forecasts

The Office of the State Demographer generates 25-year population projections for cities and townships that are extrapolations from the county forecasts. These projections were last published in 2007. The County is projected to see an increase in population by 2035 from 2000 Census levels of 10.5%, or about 4,600 people. Projections for the combined Grand Rapids City and Township, in contrast, show a slight decline through 2035, dropping approximately 3% from the 2000 Census year population to a population of 10,810.

However, the extrapolated population for the City, as published by the State Demographer, does not attempt to incorporate changes in development patterns, annexation areas, or address one-time events such as the Essar steel mill. The 2006 Student Enrollment Projection for ISD 318 also examined the forecast information for the County and incorporated assumptions about a large project such as the Essar Mill into the population forecast. This forecast can serve in the Comprehensive Planning process as an indicator for what a more aggressive growth rate.

The Independent School District (ISD) 318 forecast estimated that a single large development project such as the Essar Mill could increase the 2020 County population by between 1,290 and 2,140 people over the Demographic Center forecast. This changes the forecast increase (by 2020) in the County from 4 percent to between 7 and 9 percent. To create a high-end City forecast, assume that the economic base remains stable, and the City population grows at an annual rate consistent with the ISD 318 report through 2030. Using this proxy for a high-end City forecast, the 2030 population of the combined City/Township area would increase between 16 and 22% from the 2008 Demographer estimate, or between 1,780 and 2,370 people.
This high end forecast is rooted in some unlikely assumptions, particularly that the economic growth from the Essar Mill would sustainably continue through 2030. The forecast is, however, useful for framing the planning goals in regard to potential changes in the community.

**Figure 5-2. Population Forecast, Itasca County, 2000-2035**

![Population Forecast, Itasca County, 2000-2035](chart)

*Source: US Census Bureau and State Demographic Center*

**Household Types**

The State Demographer forecasts the number of households in Itasca County to increase more substantially by 2035. From a baseline of the 2005 estimate, the Demographer forecasts an increase in number of household of over 21%, or 3,865 households. A commensurate increase in Grand Rapids would see 1,000 new households by 2035 to a total household count of almost 6,000. An increase of 1,000 households over the next 25 years period (2010 – 2035) is more than Grand Rapids realized over the previous 30 year period (1980 – 2010), with approximately 650 new households. For planning purposes, however, the types of households that are increasing and the resulting need for new housing units is likely to be considerably different than in the previous 30 year period, as indicated in Figure 5-3.

If the high-end population forecast is also considered, the number of households in Grand Rapids would increase by approximately another 750 to 1,000 households. These households would be somewhat more likely to include children and to demand traditional single-family homes.

As noted in the 2003 Plan, the primary demographic change in the population over the next 25 years will be the large increase in the number of older individuals. As shown in Figure 5-4 the State Demographic Center forecasts a decline or no change in every age cohort for Itasca County up to age 65 over the next 25 years. In the age cohorts older than 65, the forecast shows substantial percentage increases, over a 100% increase for the oldest age cohorts. In 2010, people over 65 years of age comprise about 18% of
the total County population. By 2035, people over 65 are expected to comprise over 30% of the total County population. The percentage of people aged over 65 in the City of Grand Rapids is likely to be even higher, as the City housing stock and amenities are better suited for older residents.

Figure 5-3. Household Type Change, Itasca County, 2010-2035

![Change by Household Type](image)

Source: US Census Bureau and State Demographic Center

Figure 5-4. Change in Population by Age, Itasca County, 2010-2035

![Percent Change in Population by Age](image)

Source: US Census Bureau and State Demographic Center
Demographics – Looking Forward

Demographic changes in a community usually occur incrementally, rather than in sudden and unexpected events. Grand Rapids is seeing some of these incremental changes within the community, and the changes are forecast to continue through the comprehensive plan planning horizon. In particular, the trend toward older residents and smaller households, noted in the 2003 Plan, will continue to have important ramifications for economic development, housing, and infrastructure needs well into the future. This and other demographic issues noted in the demographic inventory are described below.

- **Aging of the population.** The median age of the population is expected to continue its rise for the next 20 to 30 years. The percentage of city residents who are over 65 years in age will go from 18% to 30% by 2035. An older population demands different types of goods and services, needs different transportation options, and resides in different types of housing than a population of young adults or families.

- **Uncertain population growth.** The population of Grand Rapids and the surrounding area has grown over the recent decade, but at a very slow rate. Forecasts project a continued slow rate of growth for the County over the next 25 years. Several factors could, however, change the growth rate and result in an increase in population. The most prominent event is the expansion of well-paying natural resource industries, particularly mining. The range of population growth scenarios (high growth and low growth scenarios) is therefore fairly wide, making for difficult long-term planning for housing and other infrastructure.

- **Shrinking household size.** Related to the aging issue is the issue of significant changes in average household size. Older people are much less likely to have children, and much more likely to live alone, than young or middle-aged individuals. The shrinking household size and the growth in the retirement-age population will likely result in a demand for considerably different type of new housing than Grand Rapids has seen over the previous 30 years. Even if the high-end forecast occurs, the overall aging of the population will substantially change the demand for housing and other services by 2030.

- **Growth in number of households.** While population growth is uncertain, the number of households is almost sure to increase over the next 25 years. But an increase in number of households does not necessarily translate into a growth in total household income or ability to financially support City infrastructure and services. The City may face the need for serving more households without a commensurate increase in revenue.

- **Increasing cultural diversity.** The City population will likely continue to see an increase in the cultural and ethnic diversity of the population over the next 25 years. A changing cultural mix will also affect housing, school, and other government services.
C. Housing Infrastructure

Housing Infrastructure – Looking Back

Housing is both a type of land use and a basic human need that affects and is affected by demographic, land use and transportation trends. The buildings that provide our shelter also define our neighborhoods and enhance or detract from the sense of community. Moreover, housing is infrastructural in that once built it will typically define neighborhoods and community for generations – today’s housing decisions will shape the opportunities of residents, businesses, and local officials for decades to come. Providing an appropriate range of housing types for populations with varying needs and income levels is typically a central goal of community planning.

Housing in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan does not include a separate housing element; rather, the issue of affordable housing is considered as a component of the Economic Development plan element. Housing trends are discussed in the context of other demographic trends, as follows:

The expansion and promotion of affordable housing as an important element in retaining and attracting younger workers and families was explicitly discussed during focus group meetings. The discussions concerned the aging population of Grand Rapids as was identified in the economic overview and the implications that aging population has for both the long-term viability of the community and the availability of a large enough pool of workers to meet the needs of local employers into the future. Goal five, ‘provide affordable housing opportunities’, and its associated objectives, strategies, and action steps directly addresses this concern.

The background inventory of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan discussed housing issues primarily as part of the community survey, which included several questions on housing:

- What is your opinion of the overall appearance of housing in Grand Rapids?
  
  The vast majority of respondents (75%) selected “average,” while almost 15% selected “very good;” the remainder selected “poor” or “no opinion.”

- Do you feel there is an adequate amount of affordable housing in Grand Rapids?
  
  The majority (49%) did not feel that there was an adequate supply of affordable housing, while 18% felt that there was; the remainder answered “do not know.”

- What type of housing do you feel is needed in Grand Rapids?
  
  Many respondents identified more than one housing type. Responses are listed below. Only 4.4% indicated that no new housing was needed.
  
  o Single-family rental housing: 22%
  o Multifamily rental housing: 15%
  o Single-family owner-occupied housing: 28%
  o Senior housing: 24%
  o Other: 6%
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

Housing in the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan, 2006

One strategy of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan was the creation of a sub-area plan for the Downtown. The Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan was completed and adopted by the City Council in 2006. The plan identifies housing as “the future of Downtown.” The downtown land use plan designates two centrally located blocks for mixed use, including housing, as well as mixed use and transitional areas north and south of the downtown core. Housing is proposed for several specific sites, including the block where City Hall is located and Block 19. In general, multi-family housing types are envisioned for downtown locations.

Housing in the Riverfront Framework Plan, 2009

Another component of the 2003 Plan was to update planning and design preferences for the Mississippi River corridor that forms the southern boundary of the downtown. The initial Riverfront Framework Plan, completed in 2000, identified several housing projects that are now complete, including redevelopment of the former Grand Itasca Hospital into mixed-income housing, and the former Grand Rapids Clinic into an assisted living and senior housing facility. Additional housing redevelopment is not a primary focus of the 2009 plan update, although it recommends construction of multi-family mixed-income and market-rate housing in the Canal Street neighborhood to complement existing single-family housing and take advantage of the riverfront amenities in this somewhat isolated neighborhood.

Other Studies

Since 2003 additional housing studies have been completed for Grand Rapids and the greater Iron Range. These include:

- Housing Market Analysis and Demand Estimates for Grand Rapids, 2003
- Market Analysis for Housing Located in Downtown Grand Rapids, 2007
- Iron Range Housing Market Analysis, As of 2nd Quarter 2008

The 2003 Market Analysis and Demand Estimates and 2007 Market Analysis for Housing Located in Downtown Grand Rapids conducted by Maxfield Research looked at housing demand in Grand Rapids drawing from a primary market area of several nearby townships and municipalities and a secondary market which included all of Itasca County. The 2007 study focused specifically on six different redevelopment opportunity blocks within the downtown which were identified in the 2006 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan.

2003 Market Analysis and Demand

- The largest increases in population are expected to occur in the 55 to 64 age cohort as baby boomers age into their 60s. A corresponding increase in demand is expected for multifamily housing for empty nesters, active seniors, and people wishing to downsize from single family homes. This could include townhomes, condominiums, market rate rental, and market rate independent senior living.
- Approximately 85% of the ownership demand for single family homes will come from people outside of Itasca County looking for lakefront property and higher priced homes.
• There is an unmet demand for new entry level homes priced under $120,000. The City may want to provide incentives to builders to better meet this demand, or developers might explore methods for reducing development costs (i.e. smaller lot sizes, zero lot-line developments)
• About 20% of total housing demand is expected to be for rental units. The City of Grand Rapids is best suited to provide the majority of these rental units for the market area
• Opportunities for additional housing development were identified in four areas within Grand Rapids: Lakeshore Place, Forest Park West, Grand Rapids Middle School Site and the Hospital Site. These sites were determined to be well suited to the types of housing need identified in the study.

2007 Downtown Analysis

• Downtown Grand Rapids has several strengths (i.e. existing commercial district, walkability, natural amenities) which make it well suited for multi family housing. One weakness is the perception that downtown has little to offer potential residents.
• Block 19, located between 2nd and 3rd Streets N and Pokegama and 1st Avenues E, is the best suited for the first phase of redevelopment. This site was determined to have the best potential for housing due to its proximity to the river and historic buildings as well as best positioning relative to traffic.
• Based on analysis of demographics and housing demand the best use for this site would be affordable senior rental housing. A 40 unit building would be expected to lease-up within four to five months of initial occupancy.

Iron Range Housing Market Analysis, 2008

The Iron Range Housing Market Analysis (Bonestroo, 2008) looked at 31 communities and 54 townships straddling Highway 169 from Itasca County to the east edge of St. Louis County. The region was divided into five sub-regions based on the assumption that few people are willing to drive over 50 miles for jobs, schools or shopping. Grand Rapids is located in the Western Sub-region. The goal was to create a dynamic analytical tool to project housing needs in the Iron Range based on different economic development scenarios. Three job growth scenarios were tested to estimate housing needs from 2008 to 2013:

• Low Job Growth – Included three development projects that were underway or imminent.
• Medium Job Growth – Include the projects from the Low scenario as well as two projects that appeared likely to move forward in the next couple of years.
• High Job Growth – Included all Low and Medium growth projects as well as three more tentative projects.

Source: Housing Demand Model, Iron Range Housing Market Analysis
Key findings:

- The Western Sub-region is estimated to need 606 to 811 additional permanent housing units by 2013 based on low, medium and high job growth scenarios. Increases in permanent job numbers are expected to come from Minnesota Power and Excelsior Energy projects.

- The Western Sub-region is estimated to need 100 to 240 peak temporary housing units based on low, medium and high job growth scenarios. Increases in temporary job numbers are also expected to come from Minnesota Power and Excelsior Energy projects.

- Data in the model is time sensitive and will quickly become outdated; therefore the model is designed to be updated with new information over time. The methodology also included a number of assumptions. The authors suggest that many of the assumptions be revisited any time the model is to be used in the future to assess whether they remain valid.

**Figure 5-5. Job Market Effects on Housing Demand**

Source: Primary and Secondary Market Areas, Iron Range Housing Market Analysis
Current Housing Information

The American Communities Survey (ACS), released in December 2010, includes information based on surveys taken between 2005 and 2009. Because these figures are based on samples, they may have a high margin of error, particularly in places with a low population, and are should be viewed as estimates.

Grand Rapids falls into two large census tracts that take in outlying cities and townships: Tract 9809 includes portions of the city north of Highway 2, as well as La Prairie, most of Cohasset, most of Arbo Township, and a small portion of the Deer River unincorporated territory. Tract 9807 includes the southern portion of the city and areas to the east, including portions of La Prairie and Harris Township.

The ACS indicates that median housing value has increased in both tracts since 2000, as it has throughout Minnesota. However, because the ACS is based on surveys taken between 2005 and 2009, this increase may mask more recent declines in housing value.

The increase of 45% in median housing value in Tract 9807 may be related to increases in seasonal housing in surrounding areas, including recently annexed areas, as well as new suburban development. Monthly rents have shown parallel but smaller increases.

Trends in Development

Recent building permit data indicate moderate growth in construction of new single-family dwellings and multi-family units, combined with demolition and removal of smaller numbers of units:

Table 5-4. Residential Development, 2007-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New residential units – single-family with multifamily</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New residential – multifamily</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolitions and removals of units</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total new units</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Grand Rapids*

Since 2005, 98 assisted living units have been added to the housing stock in three separate developments. The largest of these was completed in 2010, River Grand Assisted Living, and has 62 units and is located just across the Mississippi River and east of downtown.

Table 5-5. Changes in Housing Value and Rent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tract 9809 (northern)</th>
<th>Increase since 2000</th>
<th>Tract 9807 (southern)</th>
<th>Increase since 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Housing Value</td>
<td>$138,900</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>$162,500</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Monthly Rent</td>
<td>$644 up 20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>$597 up 20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Grand Rapids*
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

In 2000, 67.9% of the city’s 4,884 occupied housing units were owner-occupied, while the remaining 32.1% were renter-occupied. Since then, approximately 100 multi-family units have been added, in addition to new single family homes. The multi-family developments, which include senior housing and market rate apartments and townhomes, are diversifying the city’s housing infrastructure and responding to the demographic trends of an aging population and smaller households.

Community Survey Findings

In the recent community survey, 39% of respondents saw “new housing built” as a positive step forward for the community. (This was one of the two top choices; the other was “downtown revitalization,” with 40% of respondents.) Similarly, the issue of “limited housing choice” was identified as a problem by only 16.4% of respondents.

Survey respondents’ showed a strong interest in seeing more affordable housing. There was fairly strong agreement (average of 3.75 of a possible 5 points) with the goal statement that “The City should work to improve housing options and neighborhood stability.

Housing and Redevelopment Authority

The Grand Rapids Housing and Redevelopment Authority (GRHRA) is a seven (7) member board made up of City residents. The GRHRA’s primary responsibility is managing five rental properties (five sites with seven buildings) consistent with the GRHRA’s mission.

The GRHRA funded and cofounded the 2003 housing study and the 2007 Downtown housing study. The Authority has an ongoing interest in ensuring sufficient housing options are available and that housing is affordable to workers, seniors, and families across economic cycles and demographic changes.

The five properties managed by the GRHRA include two market rate buildings with a total of 96 units, two public housing buildings with a total of 92 units, and a recent acquisition (Crystal Lake Townhomes) that is a project-based Section 8 building with 48 units. The GRHRA acquired the Crystal Lake Townhomes in 2010 and is administering a $2.5 million renovation of the entire facility.
Housing - Looking Forward

The housing inventory, the results of the community survey and the focus group process, and discussions with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee has identified a number of housing issues to be addressed in the Plan: Issues include:

- The population growth and housing demand based upon the job growth scenarios identified in the Iron Range Housing Market Analysis have not yet materialized, but should be considered as a real future scenario. Economic recovery will certainly occur within the Plan’s time frame and is likely to bring some job growth within the 2010-2015 period. Planning how to provide for or encourage the diversity of housing that may be needed for new temporary and permanent workers and families is a necessary contingency.

- As outlined in the Demographics section of this plan, while population numbers have remained largely constant since 1990, household numbers have increased significantly within the combined City and Township, by about 600 households or almost 15%. Itasca County's ratio of persons per household declined from 2.64 in 1990 to 2.42 in 2000. The household size in Grand Rapids is likely to be even smaller; households in the rural areas around Grand Rapids tend to have larger household sizes than those within the City, since the City provides more housing options for small households such as single individuals and seniors.

- Given the aging of the City’s population, mirroring that of Minnesota and the nation, demand for non-single-family housing types will likely continue to increase, particularly for older residents. The Future Land Use Plan designates sufficient land area for a great variety of multi-family housing, including townhouses, apartments and condos, and various senior housing options.

- In addition to housing type and affordability, the Plan should also consider issues of neighborhood character and livability. Focusing new housing development in and around downtown and existing neighborhoods will contribute to neighborhood connectedness and prevent the formation of isolated “pods” of a single housing type.

- Connecting new housing to job centers, through transportation tools or by strategic location choices, is a critical element to sustaining the community.

- Attending to the growing need for rental housing as demographics change.

- Rehabilitation of existing housing, the quality of all the City’s housing stock, remains a top priority and will continue to need attention and funding.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

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

Housing Goals

2003 Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2003 Plan included one explicit housing goal and several housing and neighborhood objectives under the first Land Use goal:

Economic Development Goal 5: Provide affordable housing opportunities.

Land Use Goal 1: Provide a sound basis for orderly development by establishing proper relationships among agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, and other land uses.

Objective 4: Protect and enhance the affordability, livability, and viability, of Grand Rapids’ residential neighborhoods.

Objective 5: Encourage new, planned mixed-use developments, in which the attributes of traditional neighborhood development dominate.

Each goal had multiple objectives and each objective had associated strategies and action steps.

2011 Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2011 Plan update creates a new hierarchy of goals and objectives, but incorporates the 2003 Plan goals and objectives into the updated housing section, as well as introducing new goals and objectives that address the new challenges and opportunities described in the inventory above.

Housing Goal 1: Facilitate the development of a diverse housing stock.

Grand Rapids has diversity in its housing stock, with a variety of single family homes, urban to rural neighborhoods, and multi-family housing from market-rate apartments to subsidized senior facilities. The City’s population is growing more diverse and the need for a wide variety of housing will continue into the future.

The City has identified objectives to define Goal 1.

a. Guide residential development to reflect a pattern of interconnected housing types. The Future Land Use Map shows a mix of residential housing land use areas that are intended to transition smoothly. Protect neighborhood character that adds value to housing infrastructure and fosters the small town feeling that is important to residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles


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.
b. **Allow secondary uses in each residential land use area.** Neighborhoods are enhanced when there is a mix of housing types. As described in the Future Land Use Map categories, all residential areas should include both a primary and preferred housing type and some secondary housing types.

c. **Encourage mixed use development that integrates housing and compatible commercial land uses.** The Future Land Use Map categories include mixed use categories (neighborhood mixed use, downtown mixed use) in which higher density residential uses are combined with commercial uses in either the same building (vertical mixed use) or in the same development (horizontal mixed use). Recognition that different commercial uses serve distinct markets and have distinct risks relative to housing will allow the City to capture synergy between residential and commercial uses.

**Housing Goal 2: Provide a mix of affordability in the City’s housing infrastructure.**

Providing affordable housing is a primary support for economic development initiatives. All workers must be able to live well in order to sustain economic development efforts. Young households and students need starter or short-term housing options, young families need affordable homes, and seniors need housing that can be afforded on a fixed income.

The City has identified objectives to define Goal 2.

a. **Guide residential development to reflect a pattern of interconnected housing types.** The Future Land Use Map shows a mix of residential housing land use areas that are intended to be interconnected rather than isolated by income or other demographic.

b. **Provide for lifecycle housing.** A sustainable community is one that has housing for people at all phases of life, from young to old, single-person to family, over a variety of incomes. In particular, the City will continue to see a need for more senior housing choices.

c. **Use a range of tools to sustain affordable housing options.** Market mechanisms, public management, non-profit management, and various hybrids of these options can all contribute to ensuring affordability in the City’s housing infrastructure.

d. **Maintain quality of housing stock.** Investment in existing housing stock is necessary to sustain the City’s housing infrastructure over time. The City should continue to remove barriers to reinvestment and rehabilitation, and to look for funding opportunities that can leverage private investment.
Housing Goal 3: Recognize the City’s distinct neighborhoods and neighborhood character.

The city has a wide variety of residential neighborhoods, from rural areas to fairly dense urban blocks. Neighborhoods have connection to natural amenities, such as lakes and rivers, commercial assets, and large institutions such as Itasca Community College. Land use decision should recognize the positive characteristics of each neighborhood as development, infrastructure, and programs have the potential to change neighborhood character.

The City has identified objectives to define Goal 3.

a. Consider context, including lot and building design, when integrating new development into existing neighborhoods. Many perceived conflicts between development rights and existing uses of adjacent properties can be mitigated through sensitivity to design.

b. Engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders in sub-area plans and large developments. Big changes can create big changes. People affected by decisions should ideally have an opportunity to shape the decisions and have a sense of ownership over them.

c. Maintain and improve neighborhood sense of safety. Consider perceptions about neighborhood safety in development and redevelopment actions. Development and redevelopment can enhance perceived safety or detract from it.

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 Values

Safety – Neighborhoods and Streets

Safety is a priority for us, especially in our homes, our neighborhoods, and on our streets. Safety means that our children have safe environments in which to grow and residents and visitors can walk, bicycle, and drive in safe, regulated traffic environments.
Implementation Priorities

The 2003 Plan included a number of specific recommendations for implementing the Plan’s housing and neighborhood goals and objectives. While some of the strategies and actions were completed, some are ongoing and still have relevance to the updated goals and objectives. Furthermore, new housing issues and needs call for additional implementation actions to be included in the updated Plan.

The following long and short term actions implement the goals and objectives described above. Actions are thus directed by and constrained by the goals and objectives. Implementation actions must be understood within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision, Values, and Principles; Future Land Use Map and Policies; and, Goals and Objectives.

**Affordable Housing**

1. Obtain periodic reports and updates from the City’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).
2. Ensure that the City and HRA work with affordable housing organizations and advocates for low-income households such as Itasca County HRA and KOOTASCA Community Action to track housing trends and maintain ongoing dialogue on current housing trends and issues.
3. Work creatively and collaboratively with partners in housing to structure financial options for affordable housing. Work with the GRHRA to ensure adequate long-term affordable housing.
4. Support the improvement of existing housing conditions and redevelopment strategies for housing in poor condition. Seek SCDP housing rehabilitation funds.
5. Proactively identify and support areas for development of new housing.
6. Investigate development of the community land trust model for equity-based protection of affordable housing.
7. Build relationships with major area employers to promote public/private partnerships in the development of affordable housing.

The Community Land Trust Model

Community land trust organizations use two key mechanisms to ensure homes remain affordable over time. First, they retain ownership of the land, while the homeowner owns the building. The ability to stabilize land costs keeps homes affordable while providing homeowners the same benefits as market rate homeownership. Second, community land trusts use a shared equity model that gives the land trust a share in the equity when homes are sold. This allows homeowners to build equity and gives future homeowners access to ownership at an affordable price.

*Source: Minnesota Community Land Trust Coalition Factsheet*
Diversity and Market Demand

1. Plan housing development contingencies that include aggressive economic growth scenarios, as noted in the Iron Range Housing Analysis. Planning for contingencies should address limiting financial and quality of life impacts on existing residents and businesses and minimizing risks to natural resources and systems.

2. Stage “green-field” residential development consistent with the Future Land Use Map and policies. Consider fiscal impacts to existing residents and businesses when considering extending utilities to accommodate new development.

3. Consider that new housing will be multi-generational, rather than responding only to current market conditions, in development review and permitting.

4. Make residential zoning map changes consistent with the Future Land Use Map to create a diverse yet integrated housing landscape.

5. Assist the development of housing in the downtown and Mississippi riverfront to maximize community benefits.

Neighborhood Character

1. Consider creating design standards that emphasize the existing neighborhood fabric.

2. Allow secondary land uses within neighborhoods, but consider reasonable limits to protect neighborhood character.

3. Continue to engage neighborhood residents in development decisions and plans.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

D. Public Infrastructure and Community Services

Public Infrastructure and Community Services – Looking Back

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory and description of the publicly-owned utilities and other community facilities in Grand Rapids, which are considered in this Plan as the City’s gray infrastructure. Several changes have taken place with the City’s gray infrastructure, but the system is largely the same as it was in 2003. In addition to managing the City’s publicly built infrastructure, the City manages many programs, regulations, and policies to serve the public’s need, and collaborates with other local governments and state agencies to provide other services. These services include education, public safety (other than emergency services that are covered elsewhere), economic development, and management of facilities and rights-of-way.

City Departments and Commissions

The organizational structure of the city facilities has not changed significantly since 2003. Four separate entities are engaged in overseeing the City’s gray infrastructure and the services associated with the infrastructure:

- **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 as responsibility for the maintenance and administration of most city facilities along with street lights and the stormwater utility.

- **City Engineer** - The City Engineer 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, building code and building safety and economic development.
**Public Utilities Commission**

The 2003 Plan described the various utility systems in Grand Rapids, including the various capacities and numbers of customers served. The system has expanded to some extent since 2003, as described in the public utilities section.

In September 2007, the Commission contracted with Collaboration Unlimited to assist with the development of a Strategic Business Plan (SBP). Work on the development and implementation of the strategic goals continued through the end of 2008. The SBP communicates 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. The Plan begins with a vision to the year 2015. Strategic Objectives have been prepared for a five-year implementation period from 2008-2012.

The Commission contracted with an independent consultant to benchmark utility operations. The comparison, using generally accepted industry measures of productivity, efficiency and service levels, showed that GRPUC performs better than average in almost all categories when compared to other municipal utility operations. According to the published report, GRPUC also compared favorably when benchmarked with standard national industry data as reported by the American Water Works Association, and the American Public Power Association.

Drinking water, wastewater, and electric utilities and are publicly owned and managed by the PUC. The telephone, information services (fiber optics), cable television, and natural gas service are privately owned and managed utilities with franchises granted by the City for use of public rights-of-way. Changes or additions that have occurred to both public and private utilities since 2003 are noted in the descriptions for each of these services below.

**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/Mn/DOT)
- Buildings 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 (i.e. libraries)
- Itasca County
- State of Minnesota
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

**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 rebuilding
- Utility improvements, such as building new or rebuilding existing stormwater management facilities, wastewater and water mains
- Planning for new trails or improved trails and sidewalks
- Rail crossing safety projects, working with the railroad companies (which are independent of the City)
- Managing the City’s Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Capital 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 Community Development Director 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 Community Development Director serves as the zoning administrator and staff support for the Grand Rapids Planning Commission.

- **Building and Property Maintenance Code**: Building Safety Division staff reviews building plans and permit applications, issues building permits, and conducts a wide range of field inspections.

To ensure buildings are constructed to minimum standards for safety and durability Grand Rapids has adopted the Minnesota State Building Code. Building Safety Division staff reviews building plans and permit applications, issues building permits, and conducts a wide range of field inspections to ensure compliance with state and local building and zoning codes.

Fire safety inspections are completed, as needed, throughout the community. Many code violations are minor in nature, however, they can easily be the main cause of a fire in your home or business. The Building Safety Division is responsible for ensuring the proper installation of life safety requirements, fire alarms, extinguishing systems, and to assist with pre-fire scene planning for the volunteer firefighters. The Fire Inspector also conducts routine fire inspections for commercial, industrial, and apartment buildings to ensure public safety and health and to obtain updated information on hazardous materials for the safety of the building occupants, the volunteer firefighters, and for our community.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

The Grand Rapids Fire Department works closely with residents and business owners providing fire safety information including building maintenance, fire code and property maintenance standards, and fire drills in public buildings. These inspections help ensure the safety of the occupants and keep the building ready for future progress.

Infrastructure and Services

Road 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 93 miles of roads throughout Grand Rapids. The city’s snow and ice control policy is now 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 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
- Blandin Park beach house
- City Hall
- Pokegama Golf Course clubhouse
- GRSC concession/washrooms
- Library
- Four warming houses
- Airport terminal
- Grand Rapids Township Hall

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.

The City is currently reviewing the need to expand the Veterans plot area. 115 burial sites are currently available for purchase.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

Libraries

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 2010, the Grand Rapids Library held 74,841 books and magazines, 3,221 audio items, 3,963 video items. Circulation for the library in 2010 was 203,188 items. The library also answered 11,340 reference queries in 2010.


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

- Books in hardcover, paperback, and large print
- 20 computers with Internet access
- Wireless Internet access
- DVDs
- Books and music on CD
- Interlibrary loan service
- Online resources in the library and online at www.grandrapids.lib.mn.us including:
  - Educational databases for adults and children
  - Health information and reference
  - Automobile and small engine repair information
  - Downloadable audio and eBooks via the Arrowhead Library System at www.arrowhead.lib.mn.us

Grand Rapids Area Library is part of the Arrowhead Library System (ALS) which serves northeastern Minnesota via 29 member community libraries along with special services for rural residents – Bookmobile and “Mail-A-Book”.

Electric System

Grand Rapids has a municipally owned and operated electric utility that is managed by the Grand Rapids Public Utility Commission. As described in the 2003 Plan, 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 5-6 shows the local electric distribution and transmission system and substations. Regional transmission lines shown on this map are owned by Minnesota Power.
As can be noted in Figure 5-6, 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 PUC provides electrical power distribution to 5,315 city customers, 1,199 rural customers, and 339 off-peak customers as shown in Table 5-6. Wholesale electric service is purchased from Minnesota Power under an exclusive contract that expires in 2013. Power is received at 115-kilovolts (kV) and converted to 22.9 kV. The 115 kV to 22.9 kV substation is jointly owned by the Grand Rapids PUC and Minnesota Power, allowing the PUC to purchase wholesale power at a reduced rate. The distribution system is made up of approximately 257 overhead and 169 underground conductor miles. The PUC is responsible for all construction, operation, and maintenance of the electric distribution system.

Table 5-6. PUC Customers by Electric Service Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Class</th>
<th>2000 Number of Meters</th>
<th>2009 Number of Meters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Residential</td>
<td>3,518</td>
<td>4,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Commercial</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>1,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>1,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Commercial</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Peak</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Meters</td>
<td>6,146</td>
<td>6,853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission
The electricity purchased by the utility, the amount of electric revenue and the number of meters serviced for the past five years are shown in Table 5-7.

### Table 5-7. Kilowatt Hour Sales, Electric Revenues and Customer Meters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>kWh Purchased</th>
<th>Total Revenues</th>
<th>Number of Meters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>175,360,400</td>
<td>13,226,944</td>
<td>6,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>180,044,840</td>
<td>12,369,743</td>
<td>7,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>171,377,400</td>
<td>11,515,707</td>
<td>6,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>169,938,920</td>
<td>10,489,735</td>
<td>6,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>167,745,544</td>
<td>9,872,370</td>
<td>6,885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission*

In 1997 the PUC entered into an agreement with the City of Grand Rapids regarding property taxes and electric utility services. The agreement was amended in December 2009. The agreement provides the terms and conditions under which the PUC will make payments in lieu of taxes to the City and how the City will pay for PUC supplied services. Currently, the PUC transfers 4.48 mills per kilowatt hour sold at retail to the City as an in-lieu-of-tax payment, which equates to approximately 7% of retail electric revenues with a minimum transfer of $823,000 per year.

The City worked with the PUC to make a number of investments to use electric energy more efficiently. Building and lighting energy efficiency improvements include the following:

- Wired metered systems so that ½ of the lights shut down between 11:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m.
- Installed photo eyes with atomic time clocks to shut down unmetered street lights from 11:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.
- Install LED fixtures on light poles beginning 2011.
- Retrofitting traffic signal lights with LED lights.
- Installed variable speed drive motors in the Arena and Library.

### 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 service boundaries and system size for the wastewater treatment infrastructure have not changed significantly since 2003. Figure 5-7 shows the City’s centralized sanitary sewer system. Wastewater collection and treatment services are provided to approximately 3,108 customers, as well as one industrial customer - Blandin Paper. The Itasca Community College and the cities of Cohasset and LaPrairie also receive service from Grand Rapids. The wastewater collection system within Grand Rapids is made up of 12 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. The PUC is currently relocating the Industrial Treatment Plant from its location along the Mississippi River to a location east of the airport at 2300 River Road. These facilities treat an average of 9.0 million gallons of waste effluent per day, 7.5 million gallons per day from industrial users, and 1.5 million gallons per day from domestic users. The current capacity of the secondary wastewater treatment facilities is approximately 15.2 million gallons per day.

Table 5-9 shows the total influent of wastewater treated for 2000-2009 within the PUC area.

Table 5-8. Domestic Influent, Revenue and Customer Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Influent Flow (gal)</th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Number of Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>473,000,000</td>
<td>1,147,116</td>
<td>3,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>507,000,000</td>
<td>1,112,009</td>
<td>3,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>504,000,000</td>
<td>1,100,136</td>
<td>3,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>490,000,000</td>
<td>768,500</td>
<td>3,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>481,000,000</td>
<td>801,175</td>
<td>3,271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission

The domestic and industrial wastewater influent for 2000 and 2009 are shown in Table 5-9.

Table 5-9. Wastewater Influent 2000-2009 (millions of gallons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Flow (gallons)</td>
<td>513.0</td>
<td>473.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Flow (gallons)</td>
<td>4,034.0</td>
<td>2,556.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Influent (gallons)</td>
<td>4,547.0</td>
<td>3,039.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission
The City’s centralized wastewater infrastructure is part of the City’s “gray infrastructure” system, but has critical relationships to the City’s natural infrastructure and economic infrastructure. As discussed in the Natural Infrastructure section, 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.

**Figure 5-7. Grand Rapids Sanitary Sewer System**

**Stormwater Infrastructure**

The stormwater system includes natural and constructed stormwater elements. The constructed systems includes 45.7 miles of storm sewer main, 73.5 miles of ditches, 703 culverts, 20 detention ponds, 2 treatment units, 1 infiltration pond, and 26 rain gardens, all of which are under the City’s jurisdiction and maintenance. Natural systems include soils that allow for infiltration, vegetation that disperses and absorbs rain water (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 was originally issued on July 1, 2007, and will be renewed on July 1, 2011. 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
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 on-site Best Management Practices such as detention/retention ponds, rain gardens, and green/timber spaces.

Figure 5-8 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. Additional discussion of this system is found in the Natural Infrastructure section.

Figure 5-8. Grand Rapids Stormwater Management
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 Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission provides water for 3,115 city 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. 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 55 miles of cast and ductile iron distribution mains consisting mostly of 6”, 8” and 12” pipe. Average water demand is approximately 1.2 million gallons per day with peak demand of 2.1 million gallons per day.

Figure 5-9. Grand Rapids Water System

The water supply system has expanded slightly since the 2003 Plan, primarily into the residential areas on the west end of the City north of Highway 2. Other than this extension, the service boundaries and system size are essentially the same as in 2003 (system is mapped on Figure 5-9). The map also shows other elements of the drinking water supply system, including locations of wells (both drinking water and other types of wells), minor watersheds, and the source water vulnerability areas.
The water production, revenue and number of customers for the past five years are shown in Table 5-10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gallons to System</th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Number of Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>435,536,000</td>
<td>1,403,625</td>
<td>3,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>468,470,000</td>
<td>1,412,272</td>
<td>3,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>456,612,000</td>
<td>1,400,847</td>
<td>3,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>439,160,000</td>
<td>1,425,864</td>
<td>3,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>459,382,000</td>
<td>1,482,556</td>
<td>3,322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission

One important element not discussed in the 2003 Plan was the Wellhead Protection Plan required by the Minnesota Department of Health (completed in 2005). These areas were defined by the Minnesota Department of Health for public water supplies across Minnesota as those areas where land activities could pose a risk to the drinking water supply. 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. These areas are discussed in more detail in the Natural Infrastructure section.

The annexation of much of Grand Rapids Township has created a large area within City boundaries 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.

Table 5-11. Grand Rapids Drinking Water Well Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unique Well No</th>
<th>Well ID</th>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Well Use</th>
<th>Aquifer</th>
<th>Aquifer Sensitivity</th>
<th>Well Sensitivity</th>
<th>SWPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00161444</td>
<td>Well #6</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Glacial Deposits</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Does not create a pathway for contamination</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00127276</td>
<td>Well #4</td>
<td>157.0</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Glacial Deposits</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00228862</td>
<td>Well #3</td>
<td>180.0</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Glacial Deposits</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00228873</td>
<td>Well #2</td>
<td>572.0</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Bedrock</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00228870</td>
<td>Well #1</td>
<td>176.0</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Glacial Deposits</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Health Website, /mdh-agua.health.state.mn.us/
**Education - 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 currently employs 227 full-time teachers as well as a full-time support staff of 224. Enrollment is approximately 3,750 students and is anticipated to grow to about 4,100 by 2020-2021 barring significant economic changes in growth or decline.

ISD 318 encompasses most of Itasca County, covering an area of nearly 2,000 square miles (Figure 5-10), 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).

The annual operating budget is $44 million dollars. In recent and projected years, school funding has been flat and continues to fail to keep up with rising costs. As a result of this, ISD 318 has been reducing costs while increasing class size. If additional funds from the State Legislature are not received, ISD 318 will consider an operating referendum. Currently, there are no plans for consolidating schools or school districts. As the space needs and educational delivery methods of ISD 318 evolve, building configurations and locations may change over time. School district and city officials should meet on a regular basis to communicate plans that may impact educational facilities and neighborhoods within the city. One effort to address this is a joint powers district formed by seven area school districts called Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (IASC). Members include ISD 318 and school districts from Deer River, Northland Schools, Hill City, Greenway, Naswauk / Keewatin and Floodwood. IASC members are focusing on collaborating on issues that might make each school district operate more efficiently. In addition to the buildings listed in the above table, ISD 318 leases space at the Itasca community College for the Area Learning Center, the Itascan Juvenile Center for children in placement and the Itasca Resource Center for Early Childhood programs.
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. The college was ranked as the 5th best two-year college in the nation in 2010 by the Washington Monthly. 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 has an enrollment of more than 1,300 students and 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.
Public Infrastructure and Community Services – Looking Forward

The Public Infrastructure and Community Services inventory, the results of the community survey and the focus group process, and discussions with the Comprehensive Plan Technical Committee has identified a number of issues to be addressed in the Plan:

- **Maintaining service quality.** Grand Rapids residents and businesses have given high marks to the City-provided utility services. Maintaining good service quality was a clear priority from the community survey respondents. Targeted investments and regular maintenance are an important goal for keeping service levels high.

- **Keeping utility costs low.** Utility costs can squeeze household and business budgets. Keeping costs low without degrading service quality is a delicate balance for utility managers. Increasing demand puts upward pressure on all rates.

- **Economic use of gray infrastructure.** Giving priority to development and redevelopment within the existing service boundary allows the City to capture economic benefits without incurring the costs of extending services. However, in order to capture economic growth opportunities, some extension of the City’s gray infrastructure may be needed. The City has identified areas where infrastructure extensions are needed to enhance the service reliability of existing customers, and places where extension is relatively easy given topography and capacity within other infrastructure (community, transportation, natural).

- **Proactive and reactive extension of gray infrastructure.** Extending centralized services to the former Ainsworth industrial site (designated on the land use map for industrial redevelopment) is extremely costly. On-site capacity is available, and sufficient other industrial land with services now exists to serve industrial expansion for some time. At some point, however, circumstances may require extension of services. Speculative extension without a source of outside funding is risky, putting upward pressure on the service costs of existing customers.

- **Maintaining and improving information technology and infrastructure.** Communications and information technology has, since 2003, become an increasingly important component of economic development and to meeting quality of life expectations. Grand Rapids has a fiber optic delivery system throughout most of the City. Continuing to improve capability will enable Grand Rapids to maintain and extend its competitiveness.

- **Challenges and opportunities for sustainable energy use.** Grand Rapids has local supply and demand-side resource that can provide energy to local and regional markets. Since the 2003 Plan, energy markets have become increasingly uncertain in regard to fuel supply, environmental regulation, and risk associated with capital intensive projects. Transitioning energy systems and capturing the opportunities of local energy resources requires a number of challenging infrastructural decisions for the City.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

**Community Vision**
Grand Rapids offers an excellent quality of life to residents of the region with outstanding educational opportunities, excellent medical care, exceptional cultural, natural, and recreational amenities, and an unequaled sense of community spirit. . . .

**Public Infrastructure and Community Services Goals**

The Comprehensive Plan update looks at the goals and objectives for Public Infrastructure and Community Services recognizing that these cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the city’s vision, values, and guiding principles. The goals and objectives for Public Infrastructure and Community Services are identified below.

**Public Infrastructure Goals**

**2003 Plan Goals and Objectives**

The 2003 Plan included two public utility goals with objectives and each objective had associated strategies and action steps.

- **Public Utility Goal 1**: Meet the basic needs of Grand Rapids citizens with cost effective and quality services.
- **Public Utility Goal 2**: Facilitate healthy growth and prepare for long-term development within the City of Grand Rapids.

**2011 Plan Goals and Objectives**

The 2010 Plan update creates a new hierarchy of goals and objectives, but incorporates the 2003 Plan goals and objectives into the updated Public Infrastructure and Community Services section, as well as introducing new goals and objectives that address the new challenges and opportunities described in the inventory above.

**Public Infrastructure Goal 1: Provide cost effective and quality City services.**

The City’s grey 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 Comprehensive Plan goal.

**Community Vision**
Grand Rapids is a unique blend of small town hospitality and character with big city conveniences and opportunities . . .
The city has identified five objectives to define Goal 1.

a. *Sustainably operate and maintain drinking water infrastructure and facilities.* Protection of water supply, delivery of quality potable water, and appropriate management 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.

d. *Sustainably operate and maintain Grand Rapids energy system.* 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. *Continue to provide effective, low cost communication and information services.* Grand Rapids is a leader in providing broadband information services, and should continue to seek opportunities for enhancing service to residents and businesses.

**Public Infrastructure 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. The City has identified objectives to define Goal 2.

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.*

c. *Use technology enhancements 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 projects in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).* The community should understand why priorities are set and the rationale behind decision.

e. *Maintain and enhance open and on-going dialogue in the community.* To ensure quality service, information needs to flow to

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**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.

**Guiding Principles**

**Principle 7. Practice community participation.**
Community participation is a necessary part of sustainable growth and development. Regular and routine communication with residents, businesses, and visitors should direct and help create support for City investments, regulatory actions, and management choices.
and from utility and service customers.

f. **Maintain and enhance open and on-going cooperative efforts with other governments, private-sector utilities, and community organizations.** Grand Rapids’ utility serves surrounding communities and the City is similarly served by the private sector.

g. **Enhance and expand access to communications and information networks.** Information networks are a critical component of business competitiveness and residential quality of life.

### Community Services Goals

#### 2003 Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2003 Plan included one community facility goal and one education goal related to community services. Each goal had associated objectives and each objective had associated strategies and action steps.

**Community Facilities Goal 1:** Ensure the most efficient use of public assets to create and maintain the city’s physical and service infrastructure.

**Education Goal 1:** Seek to maintain high level of educational excellence and a positive learning environment for all citizens, young and old.

#### 2011 Plan Goals and Objectives

The new hierarchy of goals and objectives in the 2011 Plan incorporates the 2003 Plan goals and objectives and introduces new language to address new challenges and opportunities. New challenges and opportunities came from the Community Survey, the community focus group process, and discussions in the Plan Steering Committee.

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

Using public assets efficiently is a primary component of the Comprehensive Plan. The City should continue to evaluate efficiency of use and investment, and set clear criteria for making decisions.

The City has identified **objectives** to define Goal 1.

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.** Hard questions on how to balance quality of service and fiscal impacts are inevitable. Sustaining the basic public assets requires investment and maintenance.
Community Service Goal 2: 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.

The City has identified objectives to define Goal 2.

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 City 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 to those being regulated the desired result.

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.

Communities Services Goal 3: Educational excellence for all.

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.

The City has identified objectives to define Goal 3.

a. **Ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate educational infrastructure.** Educational infrastructure includes both human and physical capital; infrastructure is both buildings and facilities 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 quality of and opportunities.

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.

### Implementation Priorities

The 2003 Plan included a number of specific recommendations for implementing the Plan’s community services and public infrastructure goals and objectives. While some of the strategies and actions were completed, some are ongoing and still have relevance to the updated goals and objectives, and others are incomplete and need to be rolled into the new Plan. Furthermore, new infrastructure and service issues and needs call for additional implementation actions to be included in the updated Plan.

The following long and short term actions implement the goals and objectives described above. Actions are thus directed by and constrained by the goals and objectives. Implementation actions must be understood within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision, Values, and Principles; Future Land Use Map and Policies; and, Goals and Objectives.

Implementation priorities are presented in four categories: public infrastructure, community facilities, education, and community services.

#### Public Infrastructure Implementation Priorities

1. 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.

2. Consider demand-side management programs to sustain Grand Rapids' drinking water supply sources.

3. 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.

4. Exceed (within cost constraints) State and Federal effluent discharge standards for wastewater treatment systems.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Continue to investigate solar energy potential on the Library and the potential for wind energy installations in the City’s rural areas.
8. Complete and implement the design for utilizing waste heat from the UPM/Blandin plant for heating the Library.

9. 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.

10. Maintain awareness of new wastewater treatment technology, including systems applicable in rural areas of the City.

11. Establish criteria and adopt and maintain an infrastructure plan as a part of the City Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) and the GRPUC CIP.

12. Take into account proven technology and competitiveness when reviewing, renewing, or assigning franchises.

13. Encourage partnerships among appropriate parties that provide the most effective, lowest cost communication services.

14. 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.

15. Continue to provide customer service training to City and public utility staff.

**Community Facilities Implementation Priorities**

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

**Community Services Implementation Priorities**

1. Continue to look for efficiencies in managing regulatory processes to ensure prompt response to reasonable requests.

2. Emphasize a service orientation in all interactions with the public and train City staff in the goals that programs and regulation should achieve.

3. 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.
Education Implementation Priorities

1. 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.

2. Continue to manage facilities to minimize lifecycle costs and to improve the learning environment.

3. Continue to support safe routes to school goals, including safe walking routes to and from school through the provision of appropriate sidewalk infrastructure and strategically placed stoplights and “dark sky” compliant lighting, crosswalks, signage, and crossing guards.

4. Involve school district staff in planning efforts and participate in district planning initiatives.

5. 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.

6. Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within Grand Rapids.
E. Emergency Services Infrastructure

Emergency Services – Looking Back

Emergency services, including police, fire, and ambulance and other emergency responders, are a critical component of the community's public service infrastructure. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan gave an extensive summary of emergency services, including:

- Law enforcement services and crime prevention programs
- Fire protection and hazardous materials response
- Ambulance services
- Disaster relief

The primary change since the 2003 Plan is the completed annexation of Grand Rapids Township. Understanding emergency services in the context of land use planning becomes more important for the 2010 Plan update. Extensions of the urban area have potential ramifications on the cost of providing emergency services and the response time of each service. The former Township areas were served by Grand Rapids emergency services prior to annexation other than law enforcement provided by the County Sheriff. Over the long run, however, service expectations can change for rural residents who pay City taxes. Existing service obstacles can also be exacerbated by growth in some areas of the City. The train tracks separate portions of the City from one another, requiring a separate fire station down by the airport to meet emergency response services. Currently, there are no planned bypasses or underpasses to alleviate the emergency service issues associated with the railroad crossing.

Law Enforcement Protection

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 enhance the quality of life throughout the City of Grand Rapids by working cooperatively with all citizens to preserve the peace, enforce the law, reduce the perception of fear and provide for a safe and caring environment. The police department headquarters are located in City Hall and the police garage is located next to the fire department. The police impound building is located near the Showboat landing at the former Public Works garage, an area that has been designated for future expansion of Blandin/UPM paper company.

The annexation of Grand Rapids Township increased both population and service territory; the geographic area of the City increased by 194%. The GRPD has 21 full-time personnel including: one Chief of Police, one Assistant Chief, four Patrol Sergeants, two Investigators, two School Liaison Officers, seven Patrol Officers, one K-9 Officer, a Community Assistance Office and two Secretarial/Dispatch staff. The department is also supported by a 15-member Volunteer Police Reserve Unit. In addition, the GRPD has mutual-aid agreements with every law enforcement agency within Itasca County.
Chapter 5 – Goals Objectives Implementation

**Police Reserves**

In addition to the full-time police force, the Grand Rapids Police Reserve unit assists the department with a force of civilian volunteers. The Police Reserves assist with traffic direction and crowd control, assisting officers at accident and crime scenes, area saturation during special events in the City, assisting at City events such as parades and sporting events, and participating in ride-alongs with officers. In addition, several police officers along with members of the Police Reserves use bicycles to patrol neighborhoods and the downtown area.

**Crime Prevention and Safety Education Programs**

There are a number of other crime prevention and safety education programs in the City of Grand Rapids including the following:

- Citizens Academy
- National Night Out
- Neighborhood Watch
- Operation Identification
- Child Safety Seat checks
- Crime Prevention Tips
- Crime Mapping

The GRPD is present in the schools. Three officers from the GRPD teach Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) at the middle school to the fifth grade classes. Officers from the GRPD go to schools one day a week for 10 weeks and teach a curriculum on how to resist drugs and violence. The GRPD also provides two school liaison officers to ISD #318 that alternate duty at the middle school and senior high school. These officers are responsible for handling juvenile complaints and investigations.

**Table 5-12. City of Grand Rapids Historical Part I Crime Offenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offense</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Rape</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated assault</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle theft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Part I Offenses</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data Not Available

Source: GRPD

Table 5-13 identifies the number and type of Part II offenses reported by the GRPD between 2001 and 2009. The FBI identifies Part II offenses as all offenses other than Part I crimes, juvenile offenses, and traffic violations. Part II offenses include forgery and counterfeiting, fraud, embezzlement, buying, receiving, or possessing stolen property, vandalism or destruction of property, weapons violations, prostitution and commercialized vice, sex offenses, narcotics offenses, liquor law violations, gambling violations, offenses against family and children, driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, and all other offenses.
### Table 5-13. City of Grand Rapids Historical Part II Crime Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offense</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other assaults</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery and counterfeiting</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen property</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons offenses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sex offenses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics offenses</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gambling offenses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offenses against family or children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving under the influence</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor laws</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly conduct</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other offenses (except traffic)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Part I Offenses</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data Not Available

Source: GRPD

### Fire Protection

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. The annual budget increased from $314,000 in 2002 before the annexation to $579,000 in 2010. Much of the increase is due to changes in the formula that determines contract amounts for the townships. The GRFD has mutual-aid agreements with each community in Itasca County, plus Hill City and Jacobson, located in Aitkin County. The GRFD service territory covers about 272 square miles.

The GRFD is made up of 30 part-time firefighters with the option to carry up to 2 firefighter trainees. In 2008, a part-time fire inspector was added to assist in enforcing the fire code. In 2009, an honorary fire chaplain position was added, but the GRFD only pays for the training, uniforms, pager, and personal protective equipment for this position. The City has two fire stations, one each on the north side and the south side. The north fire station contains seven fire engines and the south station contains two engines. The fire department averages about 206 calls for service per year including fire calls, rescues, and hazardous material spills and leaks with a chemical assessment team. The average response time varies, depending on the location of the incident. In 2009, the average response time to incidents within the city limits of Grand Rapids was 5.9 minutes and the average response time to the areas farthest...
from services was 15.3 minutes. The Grand Rapids Fire Department also is contracted as one of the State’s Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams.

Table 5-14. City of Grand Rapids Fire Department Annual Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GRFD

Emergency Medical Services

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 and employs 38 people, of whom 13 are full-time and 26 are part-time or seasonal employees. Meds-1 has four ambulances, three of which are ALS /critical care units and one is a basic unit. Three of the four ambulances are owned by Itasca County.

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 additional subsidies from Itasca and Aitkin counties, as well as a fee for call subsidy.

Meds-1 also provides event stand-by and medical support within the service area. These required services provides personnel and equipment, but no ambulance to support such activities as athletic events, county fairs, community-wide festivals, and any event requiring on-site EMS medical support as dictated by insurance or licensing. These operations occur weekly in the PSA and include multiple patient contacts not listed in the call volume data. For example, they routinely treat in excess of 70 patients with wide-ranging issues at the Itasca County Fair (non-billed services).

Meds-1 covers an approximate call radius of 25 to 30 miles. The average response time is 6.2 minutes for 54.6% of call requests (call from 911 to time on scene) and 9.8 minutes for 26.7% of call requests. Table 5-15 provides a history of annual calls for emergency medical services.

Table 5-15. Emergency Medical Services Annual Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls</td>
<td>2,101</td>
<td>2,349</td>
<td>2,438</td>
<td>2,557</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>3,064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Meds-1
Emergency Services – Looking Forward

Emergency Services Goals

2003 Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan included one goal related to emergency services and three objectives.

*Emergency Services Goal 1: Ensure the safety and security of the Grand Rapids community.*

2011 Plan Goals and Objectives

The 2011 Plan update retains this emergency services goal and creates new objectives that address the new service territory, expansion issues, and economic situation.

*Emergency Services Goal 1: Ensure the safety and security of the Grand Rapids community.*

A community’s sense of safety and security often hinges on the quality of emergency services. Quality emergency services require planning and assessment of risks prior to emergency events.

The City has also identified several objectives that define the Emergency Services goal.

a. *Provide for police patrol visibility in residential areas and newly annexed areas of Grand Rapids.* Visibility of emergency service providers, especially police, creates a sense of security within the community.

b. *Ensure adequate emergency service response times.* Grand Rapids has some particular challenges to maintaining adequate response times to calls for emergency services, including separation of the community by the railroad and large rural areas to the north and the southwest of the urban city.

c. *Continue to promote inter-agency cooperation (mutual-aid) in providing services to Grand Rapids and surrounding communities.* 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.

Community Values

*Safety – Neighborhoods and Streets*

Safety is a priority for us, especially in our homes, our neighborhoods, and on our streets. Safety means that our children have safe environments in which to grow and residents and visitors can walk, bicycle, and drive in safe, regulated traffic environments.

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.
Implementation Priorities

The 2003 Plan included specific recommendations for implementing the Plan’s emergency service goal and objectives. Most of the strategies and actions are ongoing considerations and are thus incorporated in the new Plan.

The following long and short term actions implement the goal and objectives described above. Implementation actions must be understood within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision, Values, and Principles; Future Land Use Map and Policies; and, Goals and Objectives.

Implementation priorities are organized into long and short term action categories. Long-term actions are more general in nature and are expected to be undertaken five or more years out. Short-term actions are fairly specific and are expected to be undertaken within three years and completed within five years.

1. Establish criteria for determining what constitutes an adequate level of staffing to meet a designated level of service, including response times and visibility in the community. Review patrol officer staffing decisions within the context of the affect on measurable criteria. Consider community policing practices to improve visibility.
2. Ensure public safety through adequate traffic enforcement. Establish criteria for determining what constitutes an adequate level of traffic enforcement.
3. 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.
4. 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 respond to emergencies.
5. 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.
6. Continue to coordinate with surrounding communities on emergency service protection to maximize service coverage and minimize costs.
7. Plan for the relocation of the police impound building in order to prepare the site for industrial expansion in the area.